

Microsoft Philanthropies TechSpark

Technology is reshaping our economy

Rapid advancement in technology is creating new opportunities in a digital economy. But these opportunities remain out of reach for many in rural and remote communities, who often lack the broadband access, resources, or digital skills required to succeed. We are working to ensure that all people—not just those in the biggest cities—can benefit from the opportunities the digital economy provides.

Together, we can advance a future that is for everyone.

Our approach to strengthening communities

TechSpark is a civic program designed to foster greater economic opportunity and job creation in rural and smaller metropolitan communities. By partnering closely at the local level, we learn about unique regional challenges and explore ways to spark local economic growth. We will share our learnings broadly so other communities can adopt what works. Our efforts are rooted in local partnerships and focus on five key areas:



Increase access to **digital skills and computer science education**

Through grants, technology, curriculum and programs like Technology Education and Literacy in Schools (*TEALS*), we help schools and nonprofits bolster their ability to offer digital skills and computer science education.



Provide **career pathways for greater opportunity**

We partner with local communities to help reimagine the labor market for the 21st century, working to close the skills gap and create a skills-based market that connects people and employers in new ways.



Increase access to **rural broadband**

Our Airband team partners with equipment makers, internet access providers, and local entrepreneurs to expand affordable broadband access to areas where it is currently lacking.



Help local business thrive through **digital transformation**

We work with start-ups, small and medium businesses, and established companies to use technology to develop new lines of business, which fosters economic growth.



Support nonprofits to further their impact

Recognizing the important role nonprofits play in addressing local needs, we provide financial and technology support to nonprofits through a variety of programs, partners and offers.

Why TechSpark?

- There are nearly **500,000 open computing jobs** in the US, but **fewer than 50,000** computer science students graduated last year.¹
- **More than 50%** of today's jobs require some technology skills, and **77%** will require them in less than a decade.²
- At least **19.4 million** Americans living in rural areas lack access to the economic, educational, and health opportunities broadband internet access provides.³
- **Nearly 90%** of business executives anticipate their industries will be greatly or moderately disrupted by digital trends, but **only 44%** say their organizations are adequately preparing.⁴
- **85% of donors & volunteers** are more likely to support a nonprofit if it shows how it is using technology to run its programs in a better way.⁵



“As technology transforms every sector of the economy, we must work to ensure everyone has the right skills to fill today’s jobs and pursue tomorrow’s opportunities.”

—Brad Smith, President and Chief Legal Officer, Microsoft

Some of our partnerships

We work across sectors with governments, economic development organizations, businesses, universities, nonprofits and school districts. Every partnership is unique. Some examples across each of our focus areas include:

Code.org

Partnering to offer teacher training and encourage every young person to try coding through an Hour of Code event. code.org

National 4-H Council

Helping young people become local leaders by empowering them to use technology to solve community challenges. [4-H.org](https://4-h.org)

National FFA

Preparing 650,000 youth as future leaders through a program to bring technology, science, research and entrepreneurship to schools. ffa.org

Declaration Networks

Using TV white space technologies to bring broadband to rural counties, connecting residents to greater educational, economic and social opportunities. aka.ms/declaration

Join us: help advance a future that is for everyone

Tackling these issues is complex and demands collective local effort. We’re creating cross-sector partnerships in communities in North Dakota, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and the El Paso, Texas/Juarez, Mexico region, to help spark economic investment, job creation, and opportunity. Learn how you can join us.

When everyone has a chance to achieve more, we all benefit.

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Borderplex Economic Alliance Foundation

Cross-sector effort to identify labor trends and inform recommendations to enable advancement and pathways to 21st century jobs. borderplexalliance.org

Ethisphere

Helping organizations of all sizes better manage cyber risks through awareness, assessment and education. ethisphere.com

Riverview Gardens

Empowering a job training program with AI, the Internet of Things, and other transformative technologies to let them focus more energy on the people they serve. aka.ms/Riverview

Tech Impact

Enabling nonprofits to successfully adopt technology to increase their local impact. techimpact.org

SPOTLIGHT:

TitletownTech

In each TechSpark region, we will have a signature project to accelerate the community’s transformation. In Wisconsin, we partnered with the Green Bay Packers to launch TitletownTech, a project that will include:

- an innovation lab to support local technology development
- a venture studio where new and emerging business models are developed into stand-alone startups
- a venture fund to invest in local high-growth startups

Through partnerships with companies, academic institutions, experts and technologists, TitletownTech will serve as a creative center for digital solutions. It will help the region to create new businesses, nurture local talent and attract new world-class talent to catalyze economic development in Wisconsin.