



TechSpark Fellows 3-month Impact Update

January 2024



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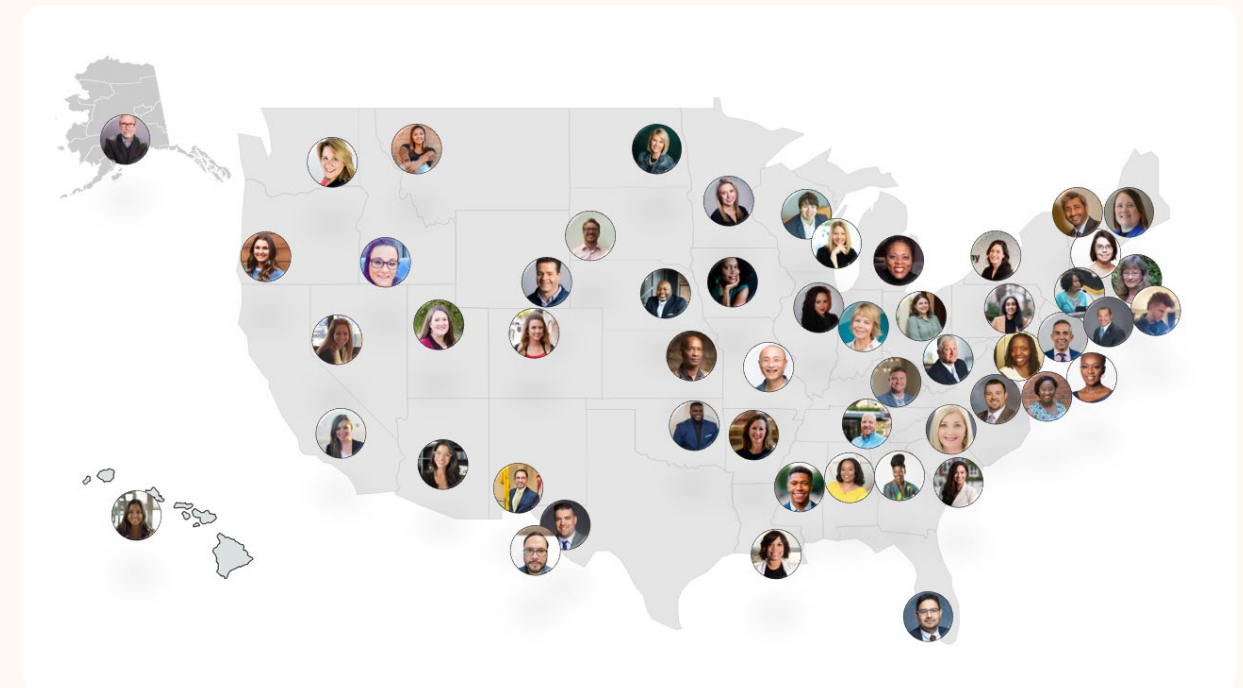
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Engage local communities

In 2023, Microsoft TechSpark partnered with 41 nonprofit organizations to join the Fellows program. The program is based on insights gained from TechSpark's six years of deep community engagement work and apply these learnings in all 50 states.

Microsoft plays a key role as a partner and supporter of the TechSpark Fellows featured in this 3-month Impact Update, as part of our commitment to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

Microsoft understands that change happens locally. That's why we work closely with communities across the United States to understand their specific needs, challenges, and strengths – so we can best support them in their progress.



Learn more: [The 2023 Impact Summary-Building a responsible future](#)

TechSpark Fellows

Across the United States, 41 nonprofits were selected to participate in the [Microsoft TechSpark Fellows](#) program.

These nonprofits play a pivotal role in driving change by harnessing the unique strengths and addressing the specific needs of their communities.

Within the first three months, Fellows were able to **collaborate**, **focus**, and **create** new digital programs in their communities to expand opportunity.



Collaborate

between different stakeholders, including public, private, and nonprofits, to create and support projects that address digital inclusion and innovation.

1



Focus

on providing education, training, mentorship, and resources to communities who face barriers and challenges in accessing and using technology.

2



Create

and implement programs that are driving skills, opportunities, and outcomes of the participants, and contributing to the social and economic development of the region.

3

Focus areas

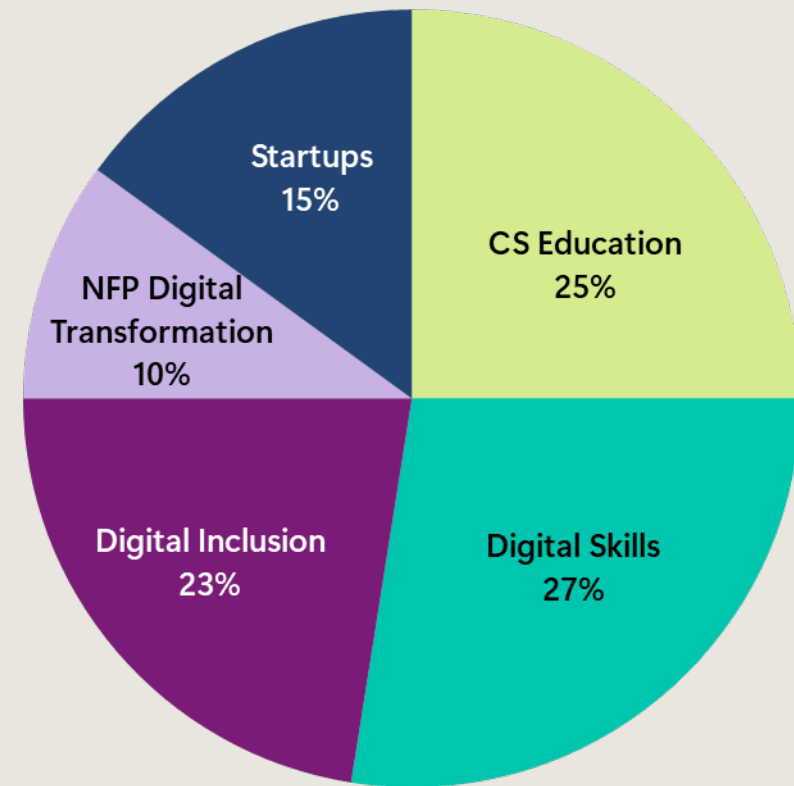
Microsoft has long been committed to ensuring people have access to technology, skills, and opportunity needed to thrive in a digital economy. Together with our partners, we've developed programs and resources to support communities in creating inclusive economic growth.

[Microsoft TechSpark](#) partners public, private, and nonprofit partners with across these focus areas: **Computer science education, digital skills, digital inclusion, startups, and nonprofit digital transformation.**

Half the TechSpark Fellows are focused on helping communities harness the power of AI.

Learn More: [Nonprofit Digital Inclusion Resources](#)

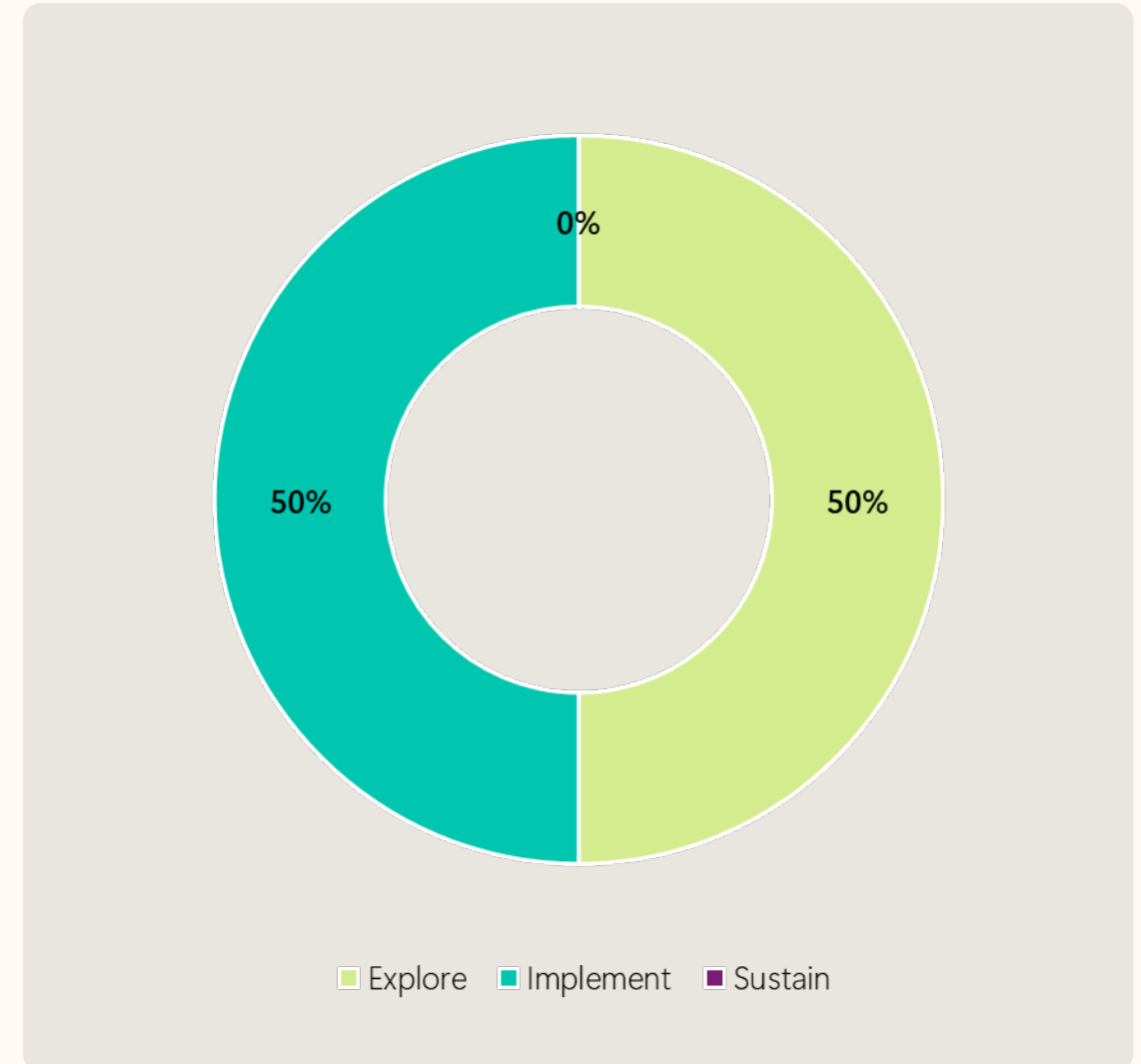
TechSpark Fellows focus areas
with 50% harnessing the power of AI



Community engagement

Microsoft TechSpark uses a [Community Engagement Framework](#) to help build local ecosystems that expand opportunity. This approach is not intended as a perspective method for program creation, instead, it is designed to be a guiding framework that community leaders can use to shape their thinking and apply in the ways that make sense for their specific community.

In three months, 100% of the Fellows are exploring local opportunities with 50% already implementing new digital programs and partnering to develop new ecosystems.



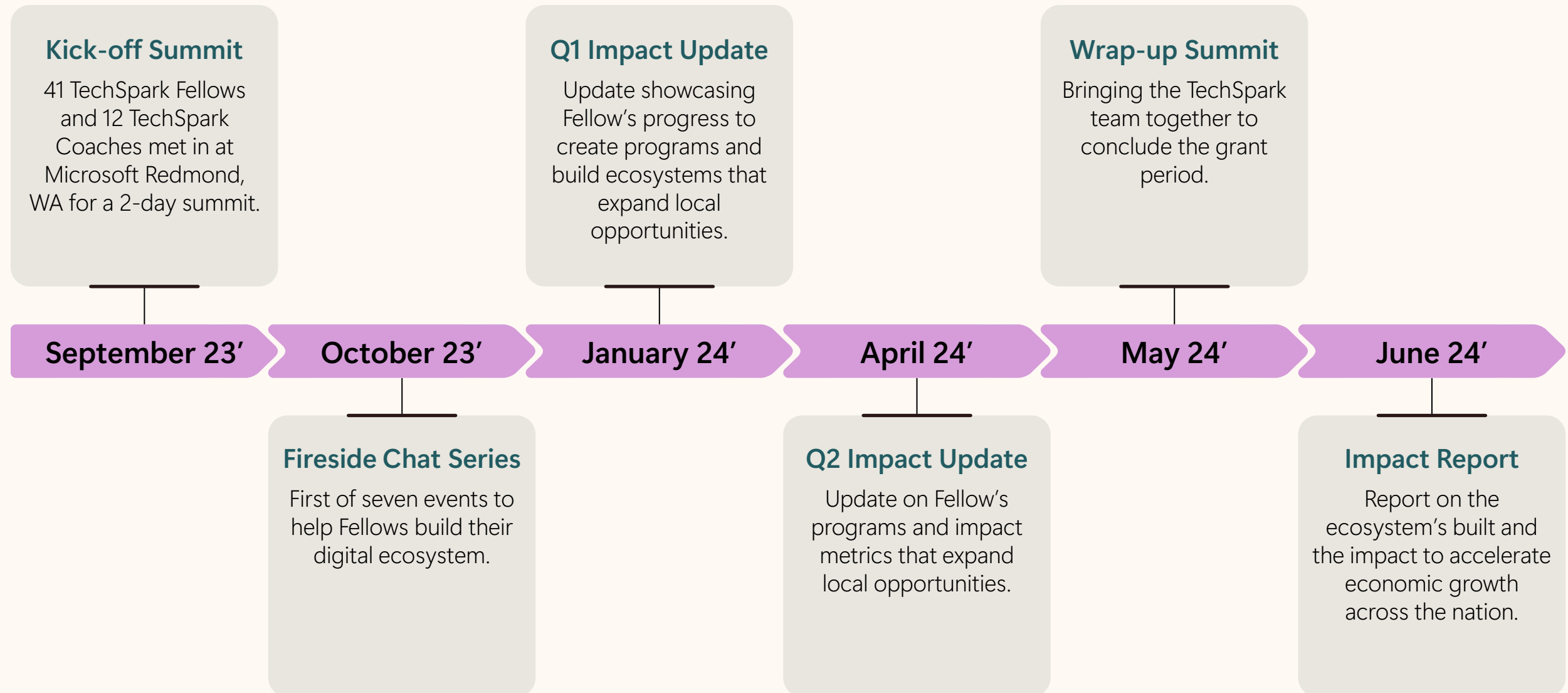
Sustainable funding

Sustainable funding provides essential support for initiatives deeply rooted in communities, allowing organizations to address localized challenges.

In the first three months, TechSpark Fellows raised over \$4 Million in funding to expand opportunities in their communities.



Fellow's timeline





TechSpark

Fellow's 3-month update





TechSpark Fellows

The Microsoft TechSpark program is designed to accelerate local economic opportunity across communities in the United States. Whether it's promoting digital skills and employability or increasing access to broadband, TechSpark provides opportunities in places where talent often gets overlooked.

Alongside our partners, Microsoft is focused on providing this community first, community-driven approach nationally.

View each state's TechSpark Fellow and their progress to expand opportunity.

TechSpark Fellow by state

Alabama	Louisiana	North Carolina
Alaska	Maine	Ohio
Arizona	Maryland	Oklahoma
Arkansas	Massachusetts	Oregon
Colorado	Michigan	Pennsylvania
Connecticut	Minnesota	Rhode Island
Delaware	Missouri	South Carolina
Florida	Montana	South Dakota
Hawaii	Nebraska	Tennessee
Idaho	Nevada	Utah
Indiana	New Hampshire	Vermont
Iowa	New Jersey	Washington D.C.
Kansas	New Mexico	West Virginia
Kentucky	New York	

TechSpark West Virginia High Technology Foundation, Fairmont



High Technology Foundation

James Estep

Focus Area: Startups

County Population: 56K

Experience TechSpark

Enabling

“The one word I would use to describe our experience is “enabling.” While the funding provided by Microsoft is important the biggest value is the collaboration and access to the amazing TechSpark team. The interaction and access to knowledge is a powerful resource to an organization like ours. It has really added another dimension to our strategic thinking.”

Engage our community

We’re developing an innovation hub in north-central West Virginia for the commercial climate and weather industry, capitalizing on our unique combination of NOAA-operated facilities and a supercomputing center. This “Big Data” advantage gives us a competitive edge, and our collaboration with local support services and universities aims to expand the sector, estimated to be worth billions.

Our “Cloud Data Analytics Fellows” program at WVU involves four professors using NOAA datasets and **Microsoft Azure** tools in their curriculums. This program introduces students to the commercial potential of NOAA’s data and Azure’s environment, resulting in startup proposals. Microsoft’s collaboration with NOAA, the NOAA Open Data Dissemination (NODD) program, supports our initiative. We’ve already submitted a proposal to the Appalachian Regional Commission ARISE program for additional funding to grow our efforts further.

Activate our ecosystem

West Virginia University

Our story

- [High Technology Foundation Selected as Part of Microsoft’s National TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in West Virginia – West Virginia Executive Magazine \(wvexecutive.com\)](#)

TechSpark Washington D.C. Horton's Kids, Washington D.C.



Horton's Kids

Nadine Wilson

Focus Area: Nonprofit Digital Transformation

County Population: 600K

Experience TechSpark

Collaborative

“To move projects forward we work across the organization to ensure alignment and uptake of systems, drawing on the expertise of other partners and contributors. To comprehensively tackle all the areas we are exploring, we need to draw on the expertise of other partners and contributors.”

Engage our community

Our organization is digitally transforming by improving collaboration, efficiency, and access to professional development. We are using:

- **Microsoft Teams** for communication
- Asana for project management.
- **LinkedIn Learning** for staff training.

This transformation is leading to building STEM education programs and exploring entrepreneurship opportunities for community caregivers and adults.

- Externally we provide STEM Education, Horton's Kids **Girls Who Code** programming, exposure to cybersecurity career pathways, and research skills.
- We collaborate with partners like Sanofi and Leidos to deepen STEM offerings, and meet family needs by developing internships, job and training opportunities, and offering digital literacy through THRIVE training series for adults.

Microsoft in the community

In November, [Jeremy Satterfield](#) and [Allyson Knox](#) visited Horton's Kids to introduce the organization's 2023-2027 strategic plan to corporate supporters. The purpose was to present Microsoft's \$50,000 TechSpark Fellows grant investment as a case study for corporate partnership. The Corporate Ideation Summit aimed to inspire HK Champions to deepen their commitment to helping us meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Our story

- [2023-TechSpark-Press-Release](#)
- [Post](#) | [Feed](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

TechSpark Vermont Technology For Tomorrow (T4T), South Burlington



Technology for Tomorrow

Vijay Desai

Focus Area: Digital Skills

County Population: 170K

Experience TechSpark

Bridge

“At our organization, we envision a world where the digital divide is eradicated through comprehensive and accessible technology education. We believe that every individual, regardless of their background or location, should have equal opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the digital era. Our vision is to bridge the digital divide by empowering individuals with the tools and resources they need to become digitally literate, confident, and capable. Through our technology education initiatives, we aim to foster a society where everyone can leverage technology to enhance their lives, education, and careers.”

Engage our community

We developed two 10-week digital skilling courses that start January – March 2024:

- Digital Literacy skilling includes **Microsoft Edge, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote.**
- AI skilling includes **Bing Chat, Cortana, & Ethics.**

T4T prioritizes digitally skilling aging adults so they can access digital health and connect with family.

We use **ChatGPT** and **Bing Chat** to brainstorm creative ways to frame and teach our classes, and to optimize our curriculums.

Activate our ecosystem

Senator Kesha Ram Hinsdale, Vermont Community Broadband Board, South Burlington Public Library, UVM

Microsoft in the community

In December, [Michelle Schuler](#) kicked off roundtable conversation on how to address the challenges and opportunities with digital inclusion. Guests included Sen.

Kesha Ram Hinsdale, Vermont Community Broadband Executive Director Christine Hallquist and Vermont nonprofit leaders. The event, hosted at South Burlington Public Library marked the beginning of an ongoing conversation toward economic and technological solutions for Vermonters.

Following this event, Vermont Broadband office partnered with T4T to write an EDA UVM Grant for \$250K and UVM included T4T in the Vermont Federal Tech Hub designation grant application.

Our impact

- 36 Public & Nonprofit leaders
- 2 Federal grant applications

Our story

- [Technology for Tomorrow \(T4T\) is selected as Part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in Vermont](#)
- [Nonprofit leaders work to close digital divide | Vermont Business Magazine \(vermontbiz.com\)](#)

TechSpark Utah Tech-Moms, Ogden



Tech-Moms

Robbyn Scribner

Focus Area: Digital Skills

County Population: 250K

Experience TechSpark

Empowering

“The strength of having Microsoft’s name behind us is powerful. The fellowship has opened doors for us, helped with fundraising, and allowed us the flexibility to build a program for our students. The support of the other fellows, coach, team, and Microsoft organization has provided valuable insights and expertise to our Tech-Mom’s community.”

Engage our community

We are launching a transformative IT/Cybersecurity bootcamp for our graduates, targeting Security+, A+, and Network+ certifications. Anticipated program launch on January 20, 2024.

Engaged with over 20 local partners, finalizing training partnerships, and curriculum. Secured commitments from 4 industry partners for post-program opportunities; actively pursuing 6 more. Confidence in meeting all commitments and creating impactful opportunities for our students.

While we haven’t determined the specific integration of AI into our program, we plan to initiate a community-wide learning activity. This involves inviting our Tech-Moms alumni group of 430 women to complete the Career Essentials in AI pathway on LinkedIn Learning. Updates on the progress will be provided in our next report.

Microsoft in the community

In November, [Lisa Karstetter](#) visited Utah joining us for lunch with Tech-Moms co-founders and graduates. The next day, she attended our fall graduation, witnessing 20 women showcase their websites and share experiences. Lisa's presence, representing Microsoft, showcased strong support and left a lasting impact. Her in-depth conversations and personal connections underscored the positive influence of our program.

Accelerated impact

- 25 students
- 20 local partners
- \$30K additional funding

Our story

- [High Technology Foundation Selected as Part of Microsoft’s National TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in West Virginia – West Virginia Executive Magazine \(wvexecutive.com\)](#)

TechSpark Tennessee

Chattanooga Chamber Foundation, Chattanooga



Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce

Bill Lupia

Focus Area: Startups

County Population: 361K

Experience TechSpark

Enlightening

“I have received so much support and knowledge in a short time that has been so extremely enlightening. Learning about all the tools available to us has been amazing as well as rejuvenating.”

Engage our community

We have entered into an agreement with an early seed/seed venture firm, Brickyard, focused on marketing Chattanooga to tech founders and entrepreneurs to Chattanooga. For startups which Brickyard invests in, their founders will need to locate in Chattanooga and operate out of the Brickyard’s facilities. This will expand opportunities for tech workers to engage with other likeminded community members and bring more VC backed startups to the region, growing our overall tech landscape. The next stage will be to develop the marketing campaign to highlight why Chattanooga is a great place for tech start-ups and how we can also gear efforts to supporting diverse founders.

Activate our ecosystem

Brickyard

Activate our ecosystem

In November, [Mike Egan](#) and [Naria Santa Lucia](#) attended our client Thanksgiving lunch and entrepreneurship fair. Great networking and connections.

In December, [Matt Adamczyk](#) visited and taught a class on AI for 40 clients. We toured the city and met with graduates. We also met with Brickyard, our venture capital fund.

Our story

- [Microsoft TechSpark awards \\$50,000 grant to Chattanooga Chamber - Teknovation.biz](#)

TechSpark South Dakota

Elevate Rapid City, Rapid City



Elevate Rapid City

Dillon Matuska

Focus Area: Startups

County Population: 109K

Experience TechSpark

Steady

“We are introducing the Microsoft Founder’s Hub resource to the local start-up community and getting our partners to align their programs with this resource.”

Engage our community

We are working to increase resources for local SaaS startups to accelerate their development and funding. We are utilizing **Microsoft Founder’s Hub** in collaboration with our local partners including Wildfire Labs.

We are exploring ways to introduce AI into the program.

Activate our ecosystem

Wildfire Labs, Microsoft for Startups

Microsoft in the community

In December, [Dennis Ellis](#) attended our annual meeting and Christmas mixer. He met community partners to understand the cohesive effort that the Rapid City community is making to sustainably create our own innovation district.

Our impact

- 1 Founders Hub Company

Our story

- [High Technology Foundation Selected as Part of Microsoft’s National TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in West Virginia – West Virginia Executive Magazine \(wvexecutive.com\)](#)

TechSpark South Carolina Charleston Chamber Foundation, North Charleston



[Charleston Chamber Foundation – Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Celeste Granger](#)

Focus Area: Digital Skills

County Population: 114K

Experience TechSpark

Overwhelming

“There are more resources available than I realized and so it can be a bit overwhelming determining how to utilize them as well as how to package them to the appropriate target audience. I’m also realizing so many more opportunities to utilize resources that I had not initially thought to use.”

Engage our community

We applied for this grant to leverage an EDA grant for regional training systems providing equitable economic mobility for individuals who have traditionally had barriers to education or employment.

- We are started a pilot digital skills program, with larger enrollment in 2024.
- We partnered with Charleston County Public Library to provide digital literacy training to residents and create digital literacy/skills kits for checkout.
- We utilized the [Microsoft Digital Equity Dashboard](#) to apply for BEAD funding.

I’m working with the Barbara Bush All In Literacy Network and the National Center for Families Learning to discuss how leveraging technology for skills learning and verification could value employers.

Activate our ecosystem

Charleston County Public Library,
Barbara Busch All in Literacy Network

Our impact

- 5 Participants Digitally Skilled

Our story

- [Charleston Metro Chamber Selected as Part of Microsoft’s National TechSpark Program - Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce \(charlestonchamber.org\)](#)

TechSpark Rhode Island

Fuerza Laboral, Central Falls



Fuerza Laboral

David Molina-Hernandez

Focus Area: Digital Inclusion

County Population: 660K

Experience TechSpark

Necessary

“Our community has had this particular need for a long time now, especially among older workers. Our mission is to bring economic equilibrium, digital literacy is necessary.”

Engage our community

Fuerza Laboral is a labor justice community organization that helps people improve their work situation by developing worker-owned co-operatives. The organization provides bilingual education in computer and digital literacy, online work-related systems, labor and human rights, and job search skills.

Microsoft in the community

In November, On the 27th, [Omar Saucedo](#) met our staff and toured the city. We held a meeting with over 30 community members where Omar and I shared our plan to bridge the digital divide. The presentation was met with much excitement, enthusiasm, and great food. These community members will be both participants and voices for further recruitment for our tech programs.

TechSpark Pennsylvania

Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce, Wilkes Barre



[Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Shanie Mohamed](#)

Focus Area: Startups

County Population: 325K

Experience TechSpark

Connected

“It feels like being a part of a very supportive network that makes it comfortable to lean into other fellows and coaches for assistance. There are resources everywhere you turn that we can leverage for greater impact.”

Engage our community

We are developing a TechCelerator program:

- 10-week early-state startup program offering weekly workshops and mentoring sessions.
- Topics include business models, customer development, value propositions, basic financials, funding options, and basic legal.
- Participants will develop a business plan and pitch it to a panel of experts at a graduation ceremony.

Microsoft in the community

In October, [Dennis Ellis](#) was the keynote speaker at our Connect Conference, centered around innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development. His presence energized our community for the future of the region through digital transformation.

We provided tour of our downtown and Project Elevate, revitalizing a blighted location for Chamber operations and workforce development.

Our story

- [Greater WB Chamber selected as part of Microsoft National TechSpark Program - Times Leader](#)

TechSpark Oregon

Integral Youth Services, Klamath Falls



[Integral Youth Services](#)

[Taylor Hampton](#)

Focus Area: CS Education

County Population: 69K

Experience TechSpark

Rewarding

“My Fellows experience has felt Rewarding. Rewarding to hear students talk about the impact the class has made on them and hearing them encourage others to join. Rewarding to watch the relationships other agencies have built with the students who have been working within the Career readiness class, and watch our students leave an impact on them. Most of all, it feels rewarding to be a part of the TechSpark program and get the opportunity to work & network alongside other agencies throughout the nation.”

Engage our community

We implemented a Career Readiness Club, currently in its second 10-week session. Transportation was a barrier, which has been addressed in session two. The class serves youth facing living insecurities and has expanded beyond its original intended audience.

One success story is of a girl with developmental challenges who struggled with computer functions but was able to complete the work and have a positive outlook on entering the workplace.

Activate our ecosystem

Klamath Community College, Klamath Housing Authority, and Pacific Crest Federal Credit Union.

Microsoft in the community

In November, [Lisa Karstetter](#) met with IYS Executive Director to discuss the organization and its mission. She then toured five off-campus facilities, met with residential staff and youth in the programs, and saw the students' living arrangements. She attended the Career Readiness class, where she gave coaching tips and inspired the students. The visit made the class feel more valuable and built buy-in from staff and participants. It also inspired the organization to invite more constituents and partners to tour the facilities, leading to a successful open house for the new Youth Shelter.

Our Impact

- 8 students
- 2 students received scholarships
- \$1000 additional funding through student scholarships

Our story

- [IYS Career Readiness Club named as part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program – Integral Youth Services\](#)

TechSpark Oklahoma

Black Tech Street, Tulsa



Black Tech Street

Tyrance Billingsley

Focus Area: Digital Inclusion

County Population: 650K

Experience TechSpark

Empowering

“Knowing that Black Tech Street has streamlined access to Microsoft resources makes me feel as though I can equip the hard-working members of the Tulsa ecosystem with the tools they need to succeed. Whether it be Microsoft for Startups or Microsoft TEALS in schools.”

Engage our community

Hack the Future of Greenwood is a pilot project to develop a community-owned AI ecosystem in a marginalized community.

- Host 3 community activations to educate leaders, establish working groups for 6 pillar challenges: entrepreneurship, creative expression, religious & spiritual engagement, education & learning, economic & community development, and social & criminal justice.
- Develop a mechanism for AI ecosystem development.
- We plan to have 60-80 people at the activations and up to 300 at the event.
- We will gain support from local and national funders.

Microsoft in the community

In November, [Mike Egan](#) and [Naria Santa Lucia](#) toured historic Black Wall Street and convened a roundtable of ecosystem partners and funders. All parties were blown away by the visit and we were able to prospect and match organizations in the ecosystem with specific Microsoft resources and programs.

Our impact

- 6 funders engaged

Our story

- [Black Tech Street Announces Alliance with Microsoft to Digitally Transform Historic Greenwood \(prnewswire.com\)](#)
- [Black Tech Street Partners With Microsoft For Greenwood's Digital Transformation \(peopleofcolorintech.com\)](#)

TechSpark Ohio

Richland Community Development Group, Mansfield



Richland Community Development Group

Angie Cirone

Focus Area: CS Education

County Population: 125K

Experience TechSpark

Enlightening

“I am gaining a deeper knowledge of my community partners and what resources they need for digital skilling.”

Engage our community

We are creating a digital education ecosystem of digital education:

- Became a **Girls Who Code** Community Partner to empower school districts and local organizations to start clubs.
- February 2024, we will start hosting tech career days, in partnership with ES Consulting a technology solutions provider, introducing K-12 students and adults to careers in cybersecurity, networking & infrastructure, and business & IT management.
- June 10, 2024, planning a tech-related careers teacher bootcamp with Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center.
- June 17, 2024, hosting a **Microsoft Minecraft** middle school student camp in partnership with North Central State College and Pioneer Career & Technology Center.
- June 24, 2024, in partnership with the 179th Cyberspace Wing, we'll host an Arduino Camp for high school students.

Activate our ecosystem

Girls Who Code, 179th Cybersecurity Wing, Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center, North Central State College, Pioneer Career & Technology Center, ES Consulting.

Our impact

- 25 Students
- 30 Teachers
- 9 School Districts

Our story

- [RCDG selected as part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program to grow economic opportunity in Richland County - Crawford County Now](#)

TechSpark North Carolina

Apparo, Charlotte



Apparo | Amplifying Nonprofit Impact

Stephanie McKee

Focus Area: Nonprofit Digital Transformation

County Population: 1.12M

Experience TechSpark

Support

“I use the word support to describe my TechSpark coach. He is always available for questions, and he is wonderful to work with and get to know. Also leveraging all the resources and tools that Microsoft has created to share with our nonprofit clients and the connections that JJ is making for us. For example, he invited [Chemere Davis](#), Microsoft, to attend our nonprofit meeting so she could see the impact firsthand. She is going to connect us with her contacts for volunteering in CLT, Raleigh, and Atlanta.”

Engage our community

Our community project is focusing on the growth of our Tech Therapy program, which offers free technology advice and guidance to other nonprofits. Our goal is to help these organizations with their digital transformation by building long-term relationships based on trust and empathy. We also provide a free online technology maturity model to help nonprofits assess their current technology capabilities.

We secured funding from Bank of America to deliver security workshops, assessments, and resources to a cohort of 9 nonprofits.

We are creating an AI Strategy playbook to share with nonprofits. Since AI is becoming the topic of conversation and nonprofits are needing direction.

Activate our ecosystem

Bank of America, OMITT Innovation Solutions, Dress for Success Charlotte, Veteran’s Bridge Home.

Microsoft in the community

In November, [JJ Townsend](#) visited with nonprofit partners to learn about their missions and how has helped them through technology. Apparo celebrated its 20-year anniversary and JJ joined the event to meet staff, board members, and donors.

Our impact

- 121 Nonprofits served
- 241 Nonprofit touchpoints
- 447 Volunteer Hours

Our story

- [Microsoft TechSpark Fellowship to grow economic opportunity in North Carolina](#)

TechSpark New York TechBuffalo, Buffalo



TechBuffalo

Sarah Tanbakuchi

Focus Area: Digital Skills

County Population: 1M

Experience TechSpark

Empowering

“To be plugged into such a capable, resourced, and networked world-class organization is game changing for TechBuffalo. We feel empowered to pursue our mission and serve our community connected to a leading organization that provides us with access to best practices, tools, and relationships. And even more importantly, we can bring those resources to bear for the benefit of the broader WNY community.”

Engage our community

We plan to pilot a Community Skill-a-thon & Family Code Nights to increase access to tech training, connect the community with partners, trainers, & resources, and reduce barriers to tech through parent & child sessions.

Community Skill-a-thon leverages **Microsoft’s free LinkedIn Learning career pathways**, while Family Code Nights introduce CS and digital literacy through **Minecraft Education**.

Goals include:

- 500 Community Skill-A-thon participants
- 24 families in Family Code Nights
- Highlighting and connecting participants with local programs

Microsoft in the community

In November, [Jonathan Childress](#), [Darrell Booker](#), and [Ariana Caplan](#) visited Western New York (WNY). We co-hosted an event to help nonprofits learn about **Microsoft**, with Darrell and JJ as featured speakers. JJ and Ariana also joined a group of business and ecosystem leaders to discuss TechSpark. Attendees were impressed with Microsoft’s commitment to underestimated communities. TechBuffalo joined a Microsoft meeting with the Buffalo Bills and had lunch with an advisor to NYS Governor Kathy Hochul.

Our impact

- 90 +WNY attendees representing over 100+ nonprofits

Our story

- [Buffalo Inno - TechBuffalo to join Microsoft’s national TechSpark program \(bizjournals.com\)](#)

TechSpark New Jersey

Urban Food Alliance, Franklin Park



Urban Food Alliance

Mushi Bhuiyan

Focus Area: NFP Digital Transformation

County Population: 345K

Experience TechSpark

Transformative

“The seminar in Seattle, WA, was a revelation, showcasing the diverse and innovative ways in which non-profits are leveraging technology to drive economic development and community advancement. Witnessing the intersection of people, politics, and processes through the lens of AI and technology has significantly expanded my horizons. This experience has not only broadened my understanding but also reinforced my commitment to integrating advanced technology in addressing community challenges.”

Engage our community

We are working on a project called SalamConnect, a platform designed to increase minority engagement in civic duties, with a focus on the Muslim community and its allies. The platform is successful in Nassau County, NY, and uses an AI-powered chatbot to personalize conversations and provide tailored responses about candidates. We are tracking user engagement metrics and have received positive feedback from the community. We are seeking additional funding and partnerships to scale and enhance the platform and are committed to empowering minority voices in the democratic process.

Microsoft in the community

In December, [Omar Saucedo](#) visit included a comprehensive plan of activities such as strategy workshops, community engagement planning, scaling and expansion discussions, networking and partnership development, pilot program evaluation, marketing and promotion workshops, and collaborative opportunities with Microsoft. The goal is to enhance SalamConnect’s capabilities and impact, aligning with the mission to empower minority voices in civic engagement.

Our story

- [New Path in Tech Employment | Urban Food Alliance](#)

TechSpark New Hampshire United Way of Greater Nashua, Nashua



[United Way of Greater Nashua](#)

[Sara Ceaser](#)

Focus Area: Digital Inclusion

**11 County Region Population:
196K**

Experience TechSpark

Thrilling

“The Fellows experience - at the conference and through the grant - was a thrilling opportunity to learn about the tech needs in the US. I was very interested to hear about all the great work other Fellows are doing in their communities and inspired to really dig into what can be done to solve the problems in the tech deserts in my state.”

Engage our community

We are in the research phase of our project to improve broadband and tech access in New Hampshire. We are working with our local Regional Planning Commission, National Collaborative for Digital Equity, and University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. The NCDE and UNH have been awarded \$5 million federal contract to develop NH’s four-year digital equity plan. We have convened a committee of local stakeholders that are working to determine the needs of our community and will establish a tech donation program.

Our volunteers will refurbish donated laptops and train recipients how to use them. They will also hold quarterly "how do I use my tech" drop-in sessions and will help people navigate signing up for low-cost broadband.

Activate our ecosystem

Regional Planning Commission, National Collaborative for Digital Equity, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.

TechSpark Nevada

Dress for Success, Reno



[Dress for Success Reno](#)

[Beth Crockett](#)

Focus Area: Digital Skilling

County Population: 278K

Experience TechSpark

Rewarding

“My passion has always been to bridge the technology gap for women and help them compete in today’s workplace.”

Engage our community

We work with numerous workforce development agencies and organizations. We are on listening tour to learn where the gaps in training are throughout northern Nevada. The team is also designing a resource hub for Dress for Success women to access opportunities through our communities. TechSpark in Nevada will be using AI as a tool for the non-profit and also introduce and train clients in AI for their careers. The Nevada TechSpark project will bring resources, training, and opportunities to underemployed women. The mission of Dress for Success is to empower women to be successful and financially independent both at work and at home. Since the grant was awarded, TC Energy has donated \$25,000 to match part of Microsoft’s grant and Dress for Success has written other match grants as well.

Activate our ecosystem

TC Energy

Microsoft in the community

In March 2024, [Linda Nguyen](#) is visiting as part of International Women’s Day and Women’s History Month. She is participating in an event hosted by Dress for Success and we are also using this opportunity to provide exposure to our new program. The Dress for Success community-wide campaign, Your Hour, Her Power, honors women and asks for a donation of one hour of pay to support its programs.

Our impact

- \$25K Additional Funding

Our story

- [LinkedIn post: dress-for-success-reno-northern-nevada microsoft-techspark](#)

TechSpark Nebraska

Code Black Professional Tech Network, Omaha



Code Black Tech Community

David Pollock

Focus Area: Digital Inclusion

County Population: 600K

Experience TechSpark

Ambitious

“In the pursuit of our overarching goal, the Code Black initiative remains resolutely ambitious. Our unwavering commitment to fostering positive change within our community and state is fueled by the steadfast support and encouragement that envelops our endeavors.”

Engage our community

We are actively working to strengthen our support infrastructure by enhancing resources such as mentors, career support, and capstone projects. Despite challenges in securing consistent instructors and funding, we remain resilient.

- We have been invited for a grant funding interview with United Way of the Midlands, presenting a crucial opportunity to bolster our financial foundation.
- We are also identifying an optimal Learning Management System (LMS) to capture essential metrics and enrich our data-driven approach.
- We are proud to announce a collaboration with the Urban League of Nebraska to deliver a specialized course on **ChatGPT** and **Copilot** for high school students, empowering the next generation with cutting-edge skills.

Activate our ecosystem

United Way of the Midlands, Urban League of Nebraska.

Microsoft in the community

In July 2024, [JJ Townsend](#) will visit and set the stage for the inaugural Code Black Tech Expo. This landmark event will bring together business partners, and minority students from local universities and community colleges, fostering networking opportunities, insightful keynote speeches, and the potential for on-the-spot student interviews.

Our story

- [David Pollock | LinkedIn](#)

TechSpark Montana

Accelerate Montana, Missoula



Accelerate Montana

Ticia Cliff

Focus Area: Digital Inclusion

County Population: 118K

Experience TechSpark

Empowered

“I feel so empowered sharing the same space as so many amazing fellows. Everyone has different goals, but all goals align with making paths for other people achievable.”

Engage our community

We are exploring ways to assist seven tribal communities in Montana by providing training opportunities and helping to bring affordable broadband access to these communities. This is a great initiative that can have a significant impact on the lives of people in these communities.

Microsoft in the community

In September, [Taya Spelhaug](#) visited Missoula to discuss different ways to address collaborating in rural and indigenous communities in Montana. During her visit we met with Accelerate Montana’s Director, Cognizant, Missoula College’s Dean.

Our story

- TechSpark New Jersey, Urban Food Alliance (UFA) has created and shared a blog on our websites

TechSpark Missouri Neighborhood Innovation Center, St. Louis



Neighborhood Innovation Center

John Chen

Focus Area: NFP Digital Transformation

County Population: 1M

Experience TechSpark

Inspiring

“The Microsoft TechSpark program is inspiring because it not only showcases impactful work across the Country but also demonstrates Microsoft's commitment to supporting our initiatives. This experience has provided valuable insights and encouragement in our endeavors.”

Engage our community

We're launching a Microbusiness Incubator (MBi) using Generative AI to support Urban Eats Food Incubator and The Wink! Retail Incubator in Dutchtown. Our microlearning library, powered by tools like ChatGPT and **Bing Chat**, helps bridge knowledge gaps for members, enhancing customer discovery and product development.

In addition, we lead the 'Safer Dutchtown' initiative, employing innovative solutions for community safety, including technology-driven approaches and a 'Safer Dutchtown Summit.' While we've secured a space and partial funding, we're actively seeking financial support from partners like economic development bodies and community organizations to fully implement MBi. Our goal is to create an AI-powered, human-assisted program that not only boosts business success but also contributes to Dutchtown's safety and development.

Activate our ecosystem

Missouri Department of Economic Development, Cortex Innovation District, Dutchtown Community Improvement District, Dutchtown Mian Street

Microsoft in the community

In November, [Taya Spelhaug](#) played a key role during our Dutchtown TechSpark Day. This event emphasized the integration of technology, particularly generative AI, in enhancing small business and community life. It included keynote sessions, demonstrations, and interactive discussions, all aiming to showcase the transformative impact of technology in the Dutchtown and surrounding communities.

Our story

- [Missouri-department-of-economic-development teamed-mo-helpingmissouriansprosper](#)

TechSpark Minnesota TechFluent Academy, Minneapolis



TechFluent Academy

Liz McGlennen

Focus Area: Digital Skills

County Population: 1.25M

Experience TechSpark

Transformative

“Microsoft’s selection of TechFluent as a grant recipient has been a game-changer for our organization. The financial boost provided by the grant has not only allowed us to expand but has also catalyzed a transformative growth, enabling us to scale our impact significantly. We are now better equipped to upskill and mentor more individuals, fostering career launches in the Microsoft tech industry. The partnership with Microsoft has transformed our capabilities, and we are eager to continue this journey of transformation, making a lasting impact on both our organization and the Microsoft Biz Apps industry.”

Engage our community

Our project aims to expand the number of learners, introducing deep dive tracks on Microsoft **D365 CE, D365 BC, D365 F&O,** and **Power BI**. We’re a member of the **Microsoft Dynamics User Group**. We’re finalizing the 2024 schedule, targeting an April launch for the next cohort.

As of November 1st, I’ve transitioned to a full-time Executive Director role at TechFluent, which allows me to focus on the growth and scalability of the organization.

Goal:

- Expand from 25 to 100 learners.

Our story

- [TechFluent Awarded Microsoft TechSpark Grant \(techfluentacademy.org\)](#)
- [TechFluent founder and Microsoft MVP Liz McGlennen joins Dynamics User Group to continue learning and development mission | MSDynamicsWorld.com](#)

TechSpark Michigan

Sistahs Reachin' Out, Detroit



Sistahs Reachin' Out

Jenny Hutchinson

Focus Area: Digital Inclusion

County Population: 1.79M

Experience TechSpark

Transformational

“Through Microsoft technologies, Sistahs Reachin' Out (SRO) is reimagining how it can work, and through adoption of these technologies we are excited for the optimization of our work.”

Engage our community

The Career and College Access Center (CACAC), powered by Sistahs Reachin' Out (SRO), is a community resource that aims to disrupt economic inequality for underserved Detroiters through digital inclusion. The CACAC offers technology-enabled programming to prepare student and adult learners for careers and college through digital upskilling and increased access to technology.

With TechSpark funding and support from other entities, SRO will launch the CACAC in Q2 2024 and work with the University of Michigan to develop an AI camp for Detroit high school students in summer 2024.

Activate our ecosystem

State of Michigan, City of Detroit, United Way for Southeastern Michigan, higher education, career and technical education, public schools.

Microsoft in the community

In December, Erika meet with leaders making measurable change in the digital inclusion space in Detroit. She moderated SRO's Tech Capacity Building Workshop hosted in partnership with Microsoft for regional startup and BIPOC-led nonprofits.

Our story

- [News – Sistahs Reachin' Out \(srodet.org\)](https://srodet.org)
- [Technology Capacity Building Workshop Tickets, Thu, Dec 14, 2023, at 9:00 AM | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/technology-capacity-building-workshop-tickets-758484888888)

TechSpark Massachusetts

CSforMA, Inc., Revere



Computer Science for Massachusetts

Deborah Boisvert

Focus Area: CS Education

County Population: 1.53M

Experience TechSpark

Humbling

“It was amazing to meet rock stars at the convening in Redmond. I learned a lot and am sure that will continue throughout the process. We are so excited to have dedicated funding to take on these targeted projects.”

Engage our community

We have two initiatives: District Visioning and Capstone.

District Visioning is being conducted with 15 districts across MA, including rural and high needs urban areas. One workshop has been completed and three more are planned for the next 2 weeks. The process involves collecting data on the districts’ strengths, wants, and needs, and using this information to assess their current status and set short and long-term goals.

The Capstone project involves planning a course for data pathway students in a high needs district in Chelsea. The course aims to extend students’ skills through mentoring by industry professionals. Planning involves determining staffing needs, identifying student needs and interests, and securing mentors for the work.

Activate our ecosystem

Chelsea

Our impact

- 4 workshops
- # Attendees

TechSpark Maryland Code in the Schools, Baltimore



Code in the Schools

Stephanie Alphee

Focus Area: CS Education

County Population: 854K

Experience TechSpark

Collaborative

“The TechSpark funding encouraged our organization to think creatively and collaboratively in bringing a new initiative to life.”

Engage our community

After the Seattle kick-off, we were selected for Baltimore City’s Mayor’s Office of Economic Development (MOED) YouthWorks Year-Round Internship pilot. Traditionally summer-only, Year Round CodeWorks extends high school interns’ employment throughout the school year for certifications and tech skills.

Code in the Schools leverages partnerships for tech career pathways, supported by funding for the Year-Round CodeWorks pilot. The ongoing project began in October, continuing into the Spring semester. Participants, mostly juniors and seniors, work on personal and professional goals, earning certifications in web development or IT fundamentals.

In the Spring Semester, our focus is on sustaining engagement, connecting participants with mentors, and implementing an AI/machine learning certification program by year-end.

Activate our ecosystem

Baltimore City’s Mayor’s Office of Economic Development (MOED)

Our story

- [bmoremoed_our-youthworks-partner-code-in-the-schools-activity](#)

TechSpark Maine

Educate Maine, Portland



Educate Maine

Angela Oechsle

Focus Area: CS Education

County Population: 64K

Experience TechSpark

Inspiring

“My fellows experience has been inspiring because of the other nonprofits/fellows in the program with me. They inspire me, their programs and community engagement efforts are inspiring and the learners they are impacting are also inspiring. I am excited to see all the stories that come out of this! I know I am inspired to do good work, inspired to reach rural communities and have an impact in Maine.”

Engage our community

We are working with existing CS education champions and developing new partnerships to expand computer science education in rural communities.

- Launching an AI workshop, ‘Demystifying AI for Educators’, to help rural districts integrate AI into their K-12 courses
- Partnering with Maine Afterschool Network and Maine Discovery Museum to launch CS programming
- Goal is to launch 20+ Girls Who Code clubs
- Train teachers to implement CS Discoveries and CS Principles

Activate our ecosystem

STEMNext, Maine Afterschool Network, Maine Discovery Museum, Jobs for the Future, Learning Undeafated, Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance

Microsoft in the community

In December, [JJ Childress](#) visited to discuss the program experience & challenges. We had dinner with national partners including Jobs for the Future and Learning Undeafated. We held a symposium event with 20+ breakout sessions, including one led by me Elevating STEM Futures: Empowering Girls through Innovation and Regional Partnerships.

Our impact

- 500 event participants
- \$20K additional

Our story

- [News - Educate Maine Selected as Part of Microsoft’s National TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in Rural Maine](#)

TechSpark Louisiana Inclusive Tech South Foundation (NOLAvate Black), New Orleans



[NOLAvate Black](#)

[Sabrina Short](#)

Focus Area: Digital Skills

County Population: 384K

Experience TechSpark

Connected

“Since the kick-off of the TechSpark Fellowship in Seattle, I feel connected to a group of leaders also committed to digital equity work. It is affirming and validating to know there are other mission driven organizations with similar goals that are willing to share their knowledge, support and expertise toward our collective advancement in the space.”

Engage our community

The Explore Tech Talent Accelerator is a 6-week professional development program for entry-level and early-career professionals.

- Participants attend weekly sessions and are paired with a mentor to help them get hired in the tech sector.
- Skills assessments are administered to align participants’ skills and goals and develop a personal career plan.
- Graduates are placed in a paid position with an employer partner committed to building diverse and inclusive teams.

Additional funding was secured from the City of New Orleans through the ITSF to place BIPOC talent in entry-level tech roles. The Louisiana Office of Economic Development matched the city’s investment. Our work around digital equity was recognized by the City of New Orleans and the Mayor.

Building ecosystems

City of New Orleans, Louisiana Office of Economic Development

Microsoft in the community

In 2024, [JJ Townsend](#) will visit and engage on our Black Tech HBCU Tour. Our goal is to share our programming and get feedback on ways to expand our work to make a greater impact.

Our impact

- 15 applicants with 8 graduated (53%)
- \$ additional funding

Our story

- [Microsoft TechSpark Program Expands to Louisiana](#)

TechSpark Kentucky

Shaping our Appalachian Region (SOAR), Appalachian Region



Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR)

Colby Hall

Focus Area: Digital Inclusion

**54 County Region
Population: 1.1M**

Experience TechSpark

Optimistic

“Coming into the program, I had big hopes and dreams for what this could mean, not just for SOAR, but for all Eastern Kentucky. Inside three months from the kickoff meeting, we were able to host senior leadership from Microsoft in Benham, KY, a former coal town whose current population is under 500. I am hopeful and confident Microsoft is serious about leveraging its unique set of resources to serve overlooked and underrepresented communities like those SOAR covers. It has been an awesome start to the fellowship!”

Engage our community

Eastern Kentucky is among the top 5 most economically distressed regions in the US. SOAR believes the Internet can help rewrite this script by providing new infrastructure to unserved communities.

- Established an Office of Digital Equity & Inclusion, supported by the Microsoft TechSpark Fellowship, to focus on FCC Affordable Connectivity Program, devices, and digital skilling.
- Partnering with local libraries and community centers (health clinics 7 senior centers) to offer free digital skilling using **Microsoft Office** and job fairs for remote opportunities.
- Partnering with a nonprofit from Louisville, KY to bring Code Kentucky, a free 6-month training program for tech careers, to the region.

Remote learning and career opportunities are population-positive for the region, helping to retain local talent.

Activate our ecosystem

Code Kentucky

Microsoft in the community

In November Mike Egan and Naria Santa Lucia visited Benham, KY, and toured a coal mine to learn about the industry that defined Eastern Kentucky. Afterward, they returned to the Benham Schoolhouse for a community roundtable with about 25 people from around Eastern Kentucky to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the region and Microsoft’s role in supporting its recovery.

Our impact

- 25 Event Participants

Our story

- [SOAR Selected as part of Microsoft’s National TechSpark Grant | News | news-expressky.com](#)

TechSpark Kansas IBSA, Inc., Topeka



[IBSA, Inc.](#)

[Lazone Grays](#)

Focus Area: Digital Inclusion

County Population: 180K

Experience TechSpark

Challenging

“It can be a challenge to get people in high places to understand the tech challenges and opportunities faced by the underserved. With other issues i.e. homelessness, lack of affordable housing, a rise in mental health related incidents; on top of a record-breaking youth homicide explosion... getting those in high positions to focus is truly a challenge.”

Engage our community

I developed a digital access strategic plan for Topeka and Unified Gov't Kansas City Kansas and served on the State Advisory Board for the state Digital Equity Strategic Plan. I built a digital equity consortium, TSC Get Digital, and used the [Microsoft Digital Equity Dashboard](#) to gather data. I'm positioning these cities to apply for funding for devices, Wi-Fi networks, and digital literacy programs. We will host virtual sessions to link local nonprofits and businesses with Microsoft professionals. My goal is to apply for state ARPA funds and federal DEA funding, with the potential to be awarded \$3M for Topeka and \$6M for Unified Gov't Kansas City Kansas.

[City of Topeka: Affordable Connectivity](#)

Microsoft in the community

In November, [Erika Smith](#) visit increased our reach into educating the community. Her visit and presentation-built excitement across community organizations & educational institutions, and increased interest from the local government and

business leaders. The same can be said for the stakeholder engagement and presentation held in Kansas City, KS where representatives from Kansas City Kansas Community College, the Wyandotte County Economic Development Corp., three public school district superintendents, the KCK Chamber of Commerce, the primary utility company (BPU), the Office of the Mayor, and nonprofit representation from a zip code the worst impoverishment and unemployment rates in the whole state!

Our story

- [Kansas Nonprofit Selected as Part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program](#)
- [KCKCC | Community Leaders, Microsoft to Discuss AI and Economic Growth Opportunities at Wyandotte Economic Development Council](#)

TechSpark Iowa PI515, Des Moines



PI515

Nancy Mwiroti

Focus Area: CS Education

County Population: 214K

Experience TechSpark

Navigating

“The Fellows program has been a challenging yet interesting journey. The main difficulty lies in the lack of clear guidance regarding the use of resources. A more defined roadmap would greatly aid in utilizing tools like Power Apps for nonprofits effectively. Additionally, having access to educational resources that can be shared with the wider community would be beneficial. There are a lot of great tools.”

Engage our community

Our current project involves hosting a “Day of Innovation” in April. This event will feature an AI challenge targeted at college students and discussions on AI in entrepreneurship, ethical AI, and big data. The occasion also marks our 10-year anniversary, where we will showcase our impact.

We are leveraging **Bing Image Creator** to create AI-generated images for promoting this event.

Our story

- <https://www.businessrecord.com/pi515-selected-for-microsoft-techspark-program/>

TechSpark Indiana Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN), Lafayette



WHIN

Pat Corey

Focus Area: NFP Digital Transformation

County Population: 186K

Experience TechSpark

Courtship

“We hope that our TechSpark project opens the door with Microsoft to a strategic marriage of the two AIs, in partnership with Purdue University and WHIN. We believe that the WHIN region is the place to do this because of Purdue’s Institute for Physical AI as well as other university resources such as quantum computing expertise, and because, at the community level, WHIN’s Living Lab model offers real world environments that are already innovating PAI applications in agriculture, manufacturing, and other areas. The model is an adoption accelerator.”

Engage our community

We are extending IaaS to K-12 schools, enhancing school safety through IoT technology. The project, involving a pilot at New Market Elementary School, aims to vet IoT solutions for emergency communication, connecting teachers with first responders. The project addresses complexities in technology and human-machine interface, considering factors such as emergency validation and response coordination. Recent achievements include team establishment, addressing key questions, deploying LoRaWAN technology, and testing sensors.

The upcoming pilot will equip teachers with networked sensors, focusing on basic IoT capabilities. The short-term pilot aims to uncover insights for potential AI support in decision-making during emergencies. The project will deliver a white paper summarizing the pilot results and outlining the potential for physical and generative AI in evolving school safety systems.

Building ecosystems

Purdue University, New Market Elementary School

Microsoft in the community

In October, [Taya Spelhaug](#) visited and met with Purdue’s Senior Vice President, Alyssa Wilcox, and others to expand Microsoft’s relationship with Purdue and facilitate a conversation between President Chiang and Microsoft CEO Nadella. She also visited Solinftec shop, Dayton-Phoenix Corporation, and New Market Elementary School. Taya arranged for Johnny Park to meet with Naria Santa Lucia in Indianapolis to follow up on the discussion with Purdue.

Our story

- [Whin.org/news/WHIN-Microsoft-TechSpark-Program](https://whin.org/news/WHIN-Microsoft-TechSpark-Program)
- [LinkedIn Post](#)

TechSpark Idaho

Idaho Women for Education, Boise



Idaho Women for Education

Betsy Davies

Focus Area: Digital Skills

County Population: 500K

Experience TechSpark

Enlightening

“As we have taken a deep dive into the digital divide, we have found that there is a gender divide that is not only an inequity for women, but even greater for at-risk, underserved and under resourced women and girls. The data on this has dialed in our pilot program, which we have named Tech ConnectHER. ”

Engage our community

After completing exploration, we identified equities in the gender divide. Currently in phase 2 implementation, we've developed Tech ConnectHER, a brand featuring three learning series.

- First, a hybrid model of virtual and online courses, covering Working with Computers and Devices, Working and Collaboration Online, and Getting Started with **Microsoft 365**. Partnering with Idaho Women in Business for facilitation.
- Second, will focus on AI using the Microsoft platform, collaborating with resource partners.

We conducted a successful class in a local reentry prison, prompting a shift to ConnectHer for post-release engagement due to prison restrictions.

Activate our ecosystem

- Idaho Women in Business

Our story

- [Tech ConnectHER: Digital Skills Basics, 3-part series Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)

TechSpark Hawaii Project Vision, Honolulu



Project Vision Hawaii

Darrah Kauhane

Focus Area: Digital Inclusion

County Population: 350K

Experience TechSpark

Motivating

“I know this has been a crazy time for us but knowing we have Microsoft's support has been incredibly encouraging.”

Engage our community

We just received our tech center building which is the first permanent building on site of our 120 person homeless shelter for fire survivors. We just hired our tech center manager who is a resident. This is his first job in years and he is already taking ownership. He will be helping other residents create emails, bank accounts, **LinkedIn** accounts, resumes, send job applications and take them to get their legal documents, as well as stay in AA or NA. We secured \$6 million dollars for this site plus the rights to the land for permanent housing use. Construction of the tiny homes begins in February.

Our next three housing sites will open in January. We will follow the same model at these 2 new sites.

He will start our first official learning cohort in 2024.

Microsoft in the community

In January, [Linda Nguyen](#) is planning to visit.

TechSpark Florida

The Immokalee Foundation, Immokalee



The Immokalee Foundation

Daniel Linares, Florida Gulf Coast University

Focus Area: CS Education

County Population: 375K

Experience TechSpark

Transformative

“This initiative has not only provided insights and enriched my understanding but has fundamentally altered the way I perceive education, engagement, and collaboration. The TechSpark Fellowship has been a transformative experience, shaping my pedagogical approach, broadening my community impact perspective, and fostering meaningful connections with professionals across different domains. This journey has not only equipped me with new skills and perspectives but has instilled in me a sense of purpose and commitment to ongoing transformation within the educational landscape.”

Engage our community

We are developing TechSpark Immokalee a four week 12-session workshop starting in January for 6th-8th graders: Reality Capture, Digitalization and Visualization, Working with Data and Programming, and Machine Learning and AI. These workshops leverage **Microsoft MakeCode** and **Generative AI LinkedIn Learning**. The pilot study and metrics gathering is aimed to raise interest in digital skills, continuous education, and industry opportunities. Additional funding was provided by the Collier Industrial Development Authority

Activate our ecosystem

Collier Industrial Development Authority, Florida Gulf Coast University

Microsoft in the community

In October, James Caton held a Microsoft employee career panel discussion for Immokalee Foundation students. He is actively involved in the Immokalee Foundation. In November, Mike Egan visited Florida Gulf Coast University and

the community. In January, [Michelle Schuler](#) will visit Immokalee to kick off the TechSpark Immokalee workshop series.

Our impact

- \$50K Additional Funding

Our story

- [Microsoft chooses Immokalee for National Pilot Program to teach students about tech](#)
- [Microsoft Kicks off TechSpark Immokalee program with career panel for Immokalee Foundation students](#)

TechSpark Delaware

Upendo United Foundation, Wilmington



[Upendo United Foundation](#)

[Regina Reithii](#)

Focus Area: CS Education

County Population: 570K

Experience TechSpark

Frustrating

“I need help accessing and settling up Microsoft free resources and tools.”

Engage our community

In Delaware, we are coordinating:

- Dec 2023, Game Night, featuring registration for summer program
- Summer 2024, 6-week summer program using **Microsoft MakeCode**, targeting trainers
- Talking with **Microsoft TEALS** program

We participated in a pitch competition with local funder Peter Dupont Foundation securing a top 10 spot for funding and mentoring. Received \$10K from New Castle County. We secured two other funding grants.

In Kenya, we launched a 6-week Microsoft Office holiday program with a university intern, benefitting four students. Plans are underway to make it free for more orphans and at-risk youth. In January 2024, I'll be in Kenya delivering 40 donated computers, establishing a Technology Hub, training 12 teachers using **Microsoft MakeCode** and Avi-IT to empower them to educate local children and youth.

Activate our ecosystem

New Castle County, Peter Dupont Foundation, Harvest Christian School, Laffey Mchugh, Lions International

Our impact

- 4 students in Kenya
- 12 teachers in Kenya
- \$23K Additional Funding

TechSpark Connecticut STEAM Train, Inc., Middletown



[STEAM Train](#)

[Donna Hylton](#)

Focus Area: Digital Skills

County Population: 164K

Experience TechSpark

Awesome

“We are learning how to build greater community impact through digital skilling.”

Engage our community

We developed and are recruiting for our Fast Track Academy (FTA) to provide tech skills to unemployed or underemployed individuals.

We hosted a fundraiser to secure additional funding and sponsorships via program ads and we picked up new sponsorship.

There is also an opportunity to be the first to bring Generative AI training to our community.

Microsoft in the community

In December, [Omar Saucedo](#) was a guest speaker at our inaugural awards and fundraising banquet. He met our staff, board members, and partners including our City's Mayor, a State Senator, past students, and many leaders in our community.

Our story

- [STEAM Train Inc. | LinkedIn](#)
- [LinkedIn | we-would-like-to-give-special-thanks](#)

TechSpark Colorado Innosphere Ventures, Fort Collins



Innosphere Ventures

Emily Wilson

Focus Area: Startups

Rocky Mountain Plains Region

Population: 1.1M

Experience TechSpark

Door-Opening

“The Fellows experience has been door-opening due to: leveraging grant dollars to help secure a funding opportunity from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to fund a regional incubation program for Life Science startup companies, funding travel to partner universities to meet faculty who are seeking startup support services to start their own companies, and through TechSpark Manager Dennis Ellis, fostering connections with the startup community and workforce development partners in Wyoming as we seek to build out a two state initiative with Colorado and Wyoming around climate technologies.”

Engage our community

We seek to expand our nine-month Life Sciences Incubation program to support entrepreneurs in six states: Colorado, Nebraska, Utah, Texas, New Mexico, and South Carolina. The program offers access to prospective funding, investor networks, industry mentorship, and business development support. The vision is a Regional Life Science Incubator to stimulate economic growth, create high-value jobs, scale the tech pipeline, generate regional interest, and increase capital access.

We leveraged Microsoft TechSpark Funding to win the U.S. EDA grant to launch their Regional Life Sciences Incubation Program in 6 states.

Activate our ecosystem

Bio Nebraska, BioUtah, Colorado BioScience Association, Colorado State University-CSU STRATA, Medical University of South Carolina-Zucker Institute for Innovation Commercialization, Texas Tech University-Office of Research

and Innovation, University of Colorado – Anshutz Ventures, University of Nebraska Medical Center, University of New Mexico-UNM Rainforest Innovations, University of Utah’s Vice President for Research.

Microsoft in the community

[Dennis Ellis](#) connected us with the Cleantech community in Wyoming.

[Matt Adamczyk](#) will be presenting in Innosphere’s 2024 series called “Meet the Investors” and he will visit Colorado when we launch our 2024 cohorts for both Life Sciences and Cleantech entrepreneurs.

Our impact

- \$2M US EDA grant
- 6 state program

Our story

- Cross TechSpark community collaboration [Colorado and Wyoming Partnering to Become National Leader in Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Technologies](#)
- [Innosphere Ventures Receives \\$2 Million U.S. EDA Grant](#)

TechSpark Arkansas

Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub, North Little Rock



Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub

Errin Stanger

Focus Area: Digital Skills

County Population: 400K

Experience TechSpark

Empowering

“I am stunned at the amount of information I am learning about Microsoft and the very supportive community within our TechSpark Fellows!”

Engage our community

Founded in 2020, Skills to Launch is a 10-week scholarship-based hands-on program, designed to provide technical skills and soft skills training to individuals, 18 and older, in a variety of interesting trades, such as industrial operations, production welding, HVAC, Information Technology, and Solar Panel Installation. Our goal is to create an opportunity for individuals looking for a career in a trade industry, but do not have the funding to complete the necessary training. The TechSpark funding allows IT students to join the program for free.

Microsoft in the community

In November, [Mike Egan](#) visited the Innovation Hub. He spoke with Skills to Launch IT students, saw our after-school program, and met our staff. Hub. It's an honor to show a funder the fruits of your labor and to see their joyful reaction. The Skills to Launch students were nervous when Mike greet them but relaxed when he spoke kindly and empathetically.

In December, [Linda Nguyen](#) visited our graduation ceremony of Cohort VII! We are thrilled to have her speak with our students.

Our story

- [The Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub Selected as Part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in Arkansas](#)
- [Arkansas-regional-innovation-hub microsofttechspark](#)

TechSpark Arizona

Coding in Color, Phoenix



Coding in Color

Diana Lee Guzman

Focus Area: CS Education

County Population: 1.6M

Experience TechSpark

Eye-Opening

“There are more opportunities to go after and with the help of our mentors, we have access to leverage their experience to continue reeling in partnerships, opportunities and funding.”

Engage our community

We continue to support our ongoing programs that engage students in CS including Workshops, Hackathons, and Summer Camps.

Our pilot program is sustaining interest through Web Development Certification. We will be installing this with a new school partner starting spring 2024.

In December, we hosted our 5th hackathon in collaboration with Phoenix College, marking a significant milestone. During this event, students dedicated their skills to crafting an iOS application for a local business, Taylor Candle & Co. The overarching goal was to contribute to the regional economy by catalyzing digital transformation in small businesses and fostering the growth of tech talent. Throughout the hackathon, our students not only acquired new skills but also had the opportunity to establish professional profiles on **LinkedIn**, complemented by headshots from the talented local photographer, Francis Andrea.

Activate our ecosystem

Salt River Schools, Phoenix College, University of Advancing Technology and Hope Academy High School.

Microsoft in the community

In December, [Linda Nguyen](#) visited and led a LinkedIn Workshop for the students at our Hackathon; she helped students create their profiles and emphasized the importance of their professional image as they begin to transition into college and post-secondary education pursuits.

Our story

- [‘Coding in Color’ brings the world of computer science to underrepresented teens \(abc15.com\)](#)
- <https://codingincolor.net/local-non-profit-creating-opportunities-for-students-to-build-apps-and-websites-for-local-businesses/>

TechSpark Alaska

Covenant House Alaska, Anchorage



Covenant House Alaska

Joseph Hemphill

Focus Area: Digital Skills

County Population: 290K

Experience TechSpark

Informative

“I have learned a great deal about the gaps that exist among working professionals who are digitally fluent and those who have not had the exposure to those trainings and opportunities for skill-building that can elevate one's economic mobility.”

Engage our community

We are in the early stages of defining our project goals to offer Microsoft certifications, including AI certifications, to the youth that we serve and our staff and other non-profit partners.

TechSpark Alabama STREAM Innovations, Birmingham



STREAM Innovations

Adrienne Starks

Focus Area: CS Education

County Population: 670K

Experience TechSpark

Possibilities

“As a Microsoft TechSpark Fellow, I am excited about the possibilities that will come from this collaboration and the impact it will have on the communities we serve.”

Engage our community

The project is STREAM Nexus classes for 6th-11th grade students, connecting Science, Reading, Engineering, Art, and Math with Tech and AI. Classes will be hands-on and hosted in Birmingham, AL, with tools such as 3D printers, VR glasses, and microscopes. The project aims to explore the nexus between various fields and tech. Funding is provided by the City of Birmingham and we've applied at local foundations.

Activate our ecosystem

City of Birmingham

