

TECH TALENT ACCELERATOR

CLOSING THE TECH SKILLS GAP IN CONNECTICUT

Connecticut's Tech Talent Challenge

In Connecticut, the demand for tech talent has increased significantly in recent years. From 2018 to 2023, tech job postings have increased by more than 17 percent. In September 2023 alone, more than 1,800 tech-related job openings were posted.¹ However, sourcing talent for these roles is a challenge. Over half of tech job postings require at least a bachelor's degree, and Connecticut colleges and universities struggle to produce enough graduates to keep pace with that demand.² As a result, Connecticut businesses believe that higher education isn't meeting the industry need and companies have "stressed a misalignment between higher education curricula and the practical skills needed within the workplace." This skills gap is negatively impacting Connecticut firms like General Electric, Pratt & Whitney, and Electric Boat, who have expressed concerns about their ability to remain competitive.³

CLOSING THE TECH SKILLS GAP: AN ACCELERATED APPROACH

To meet industry demand and keep Connecticut's workforce competitive, the state must deploy its entire higher education ecosystem—community colleges, public four-year institutions, and independent colleges and universities—to meet the challenge. Each sector has a critical role to play, whether reskilling or upskilling incumbent workers or producing graduates of four-year degree programs. Additionally, Connecticut businesses, through regional sector partnerships and advisory boards, must collaborate closely with the state's higher education institutions to signal their talent needs.

32,000+

Tech Job Openings

in Connecticut over the past 12 months.

1,800

Tech Job Openings

in Connecticut posted in the month of September 2023 alone for 21 tech-related occupations.

53%

Require a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Meanwhile, CT produces fewer tech-related degrees than any neighboring states.²

In Demand Skills

SQL, Python, AWS, Excel, API

1. Lightcast™. (2022). Retrieved 10 4, 2023.
2. P20 WIN. *Comprehensive Study on Technology Talent in Connecticut*, P20WIN Governing Board, 2018, www.theccc.org/Customer-Content/www/CMS/files/Tech_Talent_Study_1-25_final.pdf.
3. West, Debra. "Connecticut Needs More Coders, Engineers and Computer Science Pros." *Connecticut Post*, 17 June 2019, www.ctpost.com/local/article/Connecticut-needs-more-coders-engineers-and-14007119.php.

In 2021, the Connecticut Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) appointed the Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) and the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) to create and facilitate the **Tech Talent Accelerator (TTA)**, an initiative aimed at fostering innovation in higher education to address this critical tech talent gap in Connecticut. TTA is an industry-driven initiative anchored in BHEF's vetted, evidence-based strategic engagement methodology that:

1. Develops and sustains high-impact partnerships between business and higher education
2. Convenes business to extract key skills and hiring inputs using labor market information and existing partnerships
3. Maps these inputs to curricula gaps to create new or updated industry-engaged programs

“Bringing our educators to the same table as our businesses has been a priority of our administration since day one. Having businesses articulate what types of skills they need and working with Connecticut’s best educational institutions to create new programs that put people in high-quality careers is how we are building a nation-leading workforce.”

GOVERNOR NED LAMONT⁴

TECH TALENT ACCELERATOR 1.0

JANUARY 2022–JUNE 2023

In the first phase of the Tech Talent Accelerator, BHEF and NEBHE created seven business-higher education partnerships that developed newly tailored tech credentials available to Connecticut’s workers in fields like cybersecurity, mobile application development, and game development. Microgrants were given to faculty to create and update tech programs or embed tech credentials into programs, mapped to the needs of their industry partner(s). Ultimately, employers like Accenture, CGI, and Infosys, will gain quicker access to workers with modern, transferrable tech skills and certificates aligned specifically to their needs. Faculty grantees benefitted from participating in a community of practice that developed industry-validated programs and embedded in-demand credentials.

YEAR 1 OF THE TECH TALENT ACCELERATOR

7

High-Impact Partnerships

Developed and sustained between business and higher education.

79

Business, Higher Education, Nonprofit, or Government Partners

Engaged in the Tech Talent Accelerator 1.0

113

Learners Enrolled

In first cohort of new tech credentials.

TECH TALENT ACCELERATOR 1.0 + 2.0 GRANTEE

UNIVERSITY OF
SAINT JOSEPH
CONNECTICUT

USJ

The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) focused on providing students with the opportunity to obtain an industry recognized credential (IRC) in Google Data Analytics.

USJ successfully embedded the Google certificate into three computer science classes and one computer application in a business class. These opportunities were offered to students during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Twenty-one students enrolled in multiple courses related to the Google Data Analytics Certificate.

Students will be awarded \$400 if they complete the full certificate (8 courses) by the end of the Summer 2023 term.

USJ's industry partner, CGI, offered three summer internships to USJ computer science students.

4. "Governor Lamont Announces Seven New Technology Education Programs at Connecticut's Public and Private Colleges and Universities." CT.Gov, 15 July 2022, portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2022/07-2022/Governor-Lamont-Announces-Seven-New-Technology-Education-Programs.

TECH TALENT ACCELERATOR 2.0

SEPTEMBER 2023–OCTOBER 2024

The success of the first cohort of Tech Talent Accelerator grantees led OWS to award BHEF and NEBHE with a second round of funding that will expand the cohort of higher education grantees with strong business partnerships to 12. With this growth comes the engagement of over 20 Connecticut-based businesses.

Tech Talent Accelerator 2.0 will not only continue to create business-higher education partnerships that lead to new tailored tech credentials through additional grantees and business engagement, but it will also provide booster grants to expand the reach of current Tech Talent Accelerator grantees. TTA 2.0 will offer opportunities to advance the tech talent ecosystem in Connecticut, including a statewide tech talent summit bringing together industry partners, stakeholders, and experts to advance a strategic tech talent action plan, gain employer hiring commitments, and offer students the chance to network with hiring managers.

TECH TALENT ACCELERATOR 2.0 GRANTEES

Albertus Magnus College

Charter Oak State College

Connecticut College

Fairfield University

Mitchell College

Quinnipiac University

Southern Connecticut State College

University of Bridgeport

University of Connecticut – Stamford

University of Hartford

University of New Haven

University of Saint Joseph



“Tech talent is critical to businesses across all sectors in Connecticut. Tech Talent Accelerator is helping our state quickly increase its capacity to deliver the talent needed to keep our businesses competitive in Connecticut. Through this investment, our entire business community will yield the benefits of hiring diverse, well-trained, ready-to-work tech talent with the specific skills necessary for our businesses through our state’s world-class public and independent higher education institutions”

MARTIN GUAY, VICE PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FOR STANLEY BLACK AND DECKER AND A CO-CHAIR OF THE HARTFORD-BASED CAPITAL AREA TECH PARTNERSHIP⁴

CONTACT

Businesses interested in expanding and diversifying their tech talent pipeline through high-performing partnerships with two and four-year colleges and universities, should contact:

Candace Williams

director of regional initiatives

candace.williams@bhef.com

or visit bhef.com/techtalentaccelerator

or nebhe.org/connecticut-tta