

Educate Maine Selected as Part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in Rural Maine

Educate Maine and Microsoft to work together to ensure regional computer science education expansion efforts.

Portland, ME – Educate Maine announced today that it will be working with Microsoft TechSpark to foster inclusive economic opportunity, job creation, and innovation in rural Maine.

Currently, only 61% of Maine high schools teach a computer science class. Further, computer science instruction represents great potential for supporting economic growth in our state. There are more than 2,150 open computing jobs in Maine, far exceeding the demand rate for most other professions. The average salary is \$81,965. The existing open jobs alone represent a \$176,224,750 opportunity in terms of annual salaries for Maine people.

Educate Maine is a business-led education advocacy organization. One signature program, Project>Login, has been leading the way along with Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance, UMaine, The Roux Institute, and other organizations to address the expansion of computer science education and ensure equitable access for all Maine students. This effort will be supported by a Microsoft grant to fund a TechSpark Community Engagement Fellow who will spearhead local efforts to expand computer science education. This Fellowship represents the first time TechSpark has worked in Maine.

"We are thrilled to be able to join the other fellows and engage collaboratively in a community of practice to leverage knowledge and expertise that will ultimately benefit the people of Maine," said Angela Oechsle, Project>Login Program Director at Educate Maine.

"Educate Maine is focused on equity; as the state's lead Girls Who Code Community Partner, they bring STEM and Computer Science programming to girls and nonbinary students who are underrepresented in the field. They are passionate about closing the gender gap in tech and feel strongly that every student in Maine deserves inclusive economic opportunities," Maine Connectivity Authority President Andrew Butcher said. "The Maine Connectivity Authority wholeheartedly agrees, as this is closely aligned with our work in digital equity and inclusiveness."

"Since we launched TechSpark in 2017, we've helped communities secure more than \$125 million in funding and helped create thousands of jobs," said Kate Behncken, Corporate Vice President, Microsoft Philanthropies. "By expanding TechSpark to all 50 states, we hope to continue our hyperlocal, partner-driven work to help communities realize the potential of technology and foster greater economic opportunity."

Earlier this year, Microsoft announced the expansion of its [TechSpark](#) program to tackle digital inclusion in four focus areas: digital access, digital skills, computer science education, and digital transformation with local-based organizations. Since its inception in 2017, TechSpark has

helped its eight communities secure more than \$125 million in community funding, skill 55,000 people, and create 3,300 jobs. Read more about Microsoft TechSpark [here](#).

Learn more online at www.educatemaine.org

A program of Educate Maine, Project>Login is the state's leading resource for anyone interested in the computing and IT field. We empower Maine educators and learners to prepare for the expanding career opportunities related to computer science and information technology.

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