MID-TECH STRATEGIC COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN

Defining Mid-tech

"Mid-tech" refers to middle-skill tech jobs that do not require a bachelor's degree. Brookings Institution's Mark Muro utilized the public database, Bureau of Labor Statistics, to identify tech jobs nationwide that employed workers without a bachelor's degree in 2018 – primarily *computer network architects* (52%), *computer network support specialists* (50%), *computer systems analysts* (31%), *programmers* (22%), and *information security analysts* (12%) (percentages indicate those who work in these roles, but do not have a bachelor's degree). Additionally, it is estimated that 20% of job postings for software developers in northeast Ohio do not require a bachelor's degree. Computer support specialist is an example of a high-demand tech job that does not require a bachelor's degree.

Challenge

- Black residents are underrepresented in tech positions. 15% of Summit County is black while only 10% and 6% of computer support and computer programmer roles, respectively, are black

- A workforce lacking digital skills in Akron's rapidly growing digital economy will limit our community's ability to grow and capitalize on the opportunity to establish Greater Akron as a tech industry hub

Opportunity

Build a foundation of digital literacy in our community to lay groundwork to position Akron as a tech industry hub and increase access to good and promising tech jobs for Akron's black residents by:

- Increasing the number of black residents in entry-level tech positions that offer a career pathway

- Creating a new pool of untapped talent while adding diversity to the tech workforce

- Supporting companies to upscale entry-level tech staff into higher level tech positions

- Promoting Excel skill development which is a common skill in tech job postings

How

- Engage companies to review labor market data to verify current/projected future demand for skills and garner buy-in

- Focus on IT occupations that jobseekers can obtain relatively quickly with short-term training and represent the highest quantity of opportunity (based on labor/demand data)
    - **Phase 1 (2020-2021)**: Train for Help Desk/Computer Support Specialists and increase access to Excel training
    - **Phase 2 (2021-2022):** Train for mid-tech positions listed above that are in demand. Tech positions may require higher credentials and/or experience without necessarily requiring a bachelor's degree

- Identify education and t raining resources currently available for these tech roles
    - High Schools with IT pathways
    - Organizations delivering IT programming
    - Career technical programs
    - Colleges and Universities
    - IT Certification Training
    - Workforce programs
    - Public Libraries
    - Job Center

- Build strategic outreach strategy to reach the black population
    - Faith community
    - Barber and beauty shops, restaurants
    - Community/recreation centers
    - Subsidized housing
    - Public workforce system/ community-based workforce programs
    - Educators
    - Industry ambassadors
    - Specific neighborhoods
    - Good Jobs Neighborhood Roadshow
    - Social media campaign

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