LaunchCode Brings Free Tech Training Program to NWA, Partners with ACDS for Apprenticeship Placement

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS - LaunchCode, a nonprofit providing free, accessible pathways to digital careers, announced the launch of its flagship computer programming and job placement course in Northwest Arkansas.

Supported by the Walton Family Foundation and the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences (ACDS), LaunchCode will enroll around 120 individuals to its free, job-focused LC101 course – an intensive, part-time 20-week coding fundamentals training program. ACDS will then work to place job-ready graduates into paid apprenticeships with companies seeking entry-level technical talent.

LaunchCode's program is unique in that they open doors to digital careers for individuals historically shut out of the industry due to high tuition costs or other barriers. While careers in technology have traditionally been reserved to those who can afford a four-year computer science degree, LaunchCode's programs are free and accessible to motivated individuals who are assessed for passion, drive and aptitude rather than credentials.

"Thanks to the Walton Family Foundation and ACDS, we're eager to train hard-working people in Northwest Arkansas for tech careers and help provide the talent companies need in today's digital economy," said Jeff Mazur, LaunchCode Executive Director. "As the pandemic changes workforce needs, we believe investing in human capital with digital skills training is economic development at its finest."

"We welcome LaunchCode to Arkansas as an additional IT Training Partner with the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences," said Bill Yoder, Executive Director of ACDS. "We know LaunchCode's proven reputation of increasing the IT capability of participants, and we look forward to connecting those participants to ACDS' Registered Apprenticeships across IT developer occupations in Northwest Arkansas."

"The availability of LaunchCode's training program in Northwest Arkansas is great news for the region," said Nelson Peacock, president and CEO of the Northwest Arkansas Council. "Developing a pipeline of tech talent for area companies is critical to the region's future economic growth and this innovative program will further that effort."

According to Code.org, there are over 800 open computing jobs in the state of Arkansas, each with an average salary of $72,662, – significantly higher than the average statewide salary.

Applications are now open on LaunchCode's website and those interested do not need existing tech skills to apply. An info session will be hosted on August 25. This course will be held virtually until further notice.

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