

Local Employers Launch Community-Focused Tech Bootcamp to Build More Inclusive Workforce, Connect People to Technology Jobs

ACV Auctions, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of WNY, Moog, Rich Products brought together by M&T Bank's Tech Academy to create regional solution to the national tech talent shortage

BUFFALO, N.Y., Jan. 19, 2022—Several of Western New York's largest tech employers are teaming up to solve a challenge facing companies across the country: developing and attracting technology talent. [ACV Auctions](#), [Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York](#), [M&T Bank](#), [Moog](#) and [Rich Products](#) are investing in the region's first [Data Analytics Bootcamp](#), a free training program that will empower community members to learn in-demand skills that lead to tech jobs.

As the economy gains momentum, this push to develop homegrown talent will help accelerate regional job growth by expanding the skilled labor force — a need [frequently cited](#) as critical to future job creation and economic expansion. The program is facilitated by M&T Bank's Tech Academy, led by global expert in skills training [General Assembly](#) and bolstered by [TechBuffalo](#), the regional nonprofit dedicated to growing an inclusive and accessible technology ecosystem.

"This collaboration will help Western New York develop, attract and retain talent to fuel our growing technology and innovation ecosystem," said Kelly Martin, Senior Manager of the Tech Academy. "The significant need for technologists nationally is a challenge we're solving locally through collaborative programs designed to serve traditionally underrepresented communities. By coming together to launch this Data Analytics Bootcamp, our employer partners are creating new pathways to tech careers and preparing our region's workforce to drive inclusive growth."

Focused on expanding access to skills training among disadvantaged communities, the bootcamp partners have been intentional about eliminating barriers to ensure the program is accessible to anyone interested in a career in technology. With all costs covered by the sponsoring employers, Western New Yorkers are participating in the program for free. No technical experience or college education is required to participate, and students will receive a stipend to cover living expenses during the program.

The 12-week Data Analytics Bootcamp provides immersive, hands-on training in data collection, analysis and visualization. Students learn how to transform data into compelling stories and actionable insights to help organizations make data-informed decisions — which is a skillset in high demand regionally and nationally. Classes start this month and are held at the Tech Academy on the 23rd floor of the Tech Hub at Seneca One.

Upon graduation, participants will immediately become job candidates for available data analyst positions with many of the tech employers supporting the program.

General Assembly, which M&T engaged as the educational partner for the Tech Academy, has developed and administered similar programs in other cities that have proven successful in creating community-based talent pipelines that lead to more diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

"The Data Analytics Bootcamp will provide the training people need to land technology jobs. It's perfect for Western New Yorkers looking to change careers, get a fresh start or find more meaningful work," said Tom Ogletree, Vice President, Social Impact and External Affairs at General Assembly. "With no previous tech experience or education needed, students will learn in-demand skills to excel as a data analyst. As a program designed with inclusion and accessibility top of mind, the instruction will be supplemented by support from career coaches and social impact specialists who help participants navigate any challenges and successfully complete the program."

The Data Analytics Bootcamp accepted applications from residents of 12 counties across the greater Western New York region, including Erie, Monroe, Niagara, Chautauqua, Ontario, Wayne, Cattaraugus, Livingston, Genesee, Allegany, Orleans and Wyoming counties. The Tech Academy and its employer coalition worked with TechBuffalo and several other community-based organizations to source applicants from diverse communities across the region. They led outreach and engagement efforts focused on reaching people of color, women, veterans and other underrepresented groups in the technology sector.

"One of the biggest challenges facing employers today is the demand for skilled workers," said TechBuffalo President and CEO Sarah Tanbakuchi. "TechBuffalo recognizes the need to grow our local tech talent pool and make careers that leverage in-demand digital and tech skills more attainable, especially in communities underrepresented in tech. This initiative is essential to that growth. By bringing together and actively engaging

this coalition of regional employers, the training experience and career opportunities that follow are more meaningful for our community.”

About the Tech Academy

Embedded inside the Tech Hub at Seneca One, the Tech Academy helps develop, attract and retain the technology talent that Western New York needs to compete in the modern economy. As a community asset that emphasizes access for all, it develops and delivers educational programming that creates pathways to tech careers for the community and upskills and reskills the existing tech workforce. Launched by M&T Bank in late 2020, the Tech Academy collaborates with community partners and regional employers to build a more diverse, inclusive workforce and make the region an attractive destination for technologists.

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