



January 29, 2024

Joint Legislative Budget Economic  
and Workforce Development Committees

To Whom It May Concern,

Helping individuals bridge the digital divide can significantly enhance economic mobility in our communities. N.T.'s journey with Can Code Communities serves as a powerful testament to this impact. As a military veteran and person of color, N.T. faced eight years of unemployment. He discovered our workforce development and software developer training program here in Albany, and he began to thrive. But during his workforce training program, his computer unexpectedly died, leaving him without access to a crucial tool needed for his success. N.T.'s predicament inspired our innovative laptop lending program, providing individuals like him with computers and hotspot internet access. This initiative has been a lifeline for many, addressing a staggering need.

N.T.'s journey was marked by resilience and determination. After completing our workforce training program, he joined a globally recognized consulting company as a software development apprentice, reaching a milestone with a starting salary of approximately \$40,000. Today, just four years later, N.T. earns over \$100,000, showcasing the extraordinary economic mobility our participants can achieve with the digital training and resources needed to be successful in a digital economy.

N.T.'s story is just one example of the transformative power of our work at Can Code Communities. We don't merely bridge the digital divide; we create success stories like N.T.'s that inspire hope, drive economic growth, and break down barriers to opportunity.

In today's digital age, digital equity isn't a luxury; it's a necessity. As highlighted by the National Skills Coalition study, 92% of all jobs require digital skills. N.T.'s success, along with many others we've empowered, underscores the urgency of including digital equity in the state budget.

January 29, 2024  
Page Two

Digital skills organizations cannot wait for federal dollars to arrive to address these critical workforce challenges and provide economic mobility for our New York neighbors. Digital Equity touches every area of life in New York State, from healthcare and civic engagement to education and beyond, underscoring the urgency of addressing the digital divide. We are lagging behind in investing in digital skills training to provide a more equitable and prosperous future for all, especially for individuals like N.T., who have immense untapped potential to shape the future of our economy, workforce, and communities. It is imperative that we include digital equity in this year's state budget to ensure no one is left behind in our increasingly digital world.

Regards,

*Annmarie Lamesey*  
Annmarie Lamesey (Jan 29, 2024 11:58 EST)  
Annmarie Lamesey  
Founder & CEO