

2020

# IMPACT REPORT



GREATER WASHINGTON  
PARTNERSHIP

# Letter from our CoLAB Managing Director

If you had told me a year ago that we would spend the year building the region's diverse digital tech workforce while parked in various corners of our homes dodging pets, kids, and partners, I would not have believed you. Despite being faced with the unprecedented pressures of a global pandemic, our employer and educator partners mobilized to drive the CoLAB's work of engaging over 45,000 students and adult leaders in digital tech pathways by 2025, at least half of whom are from underrepresented backgrounds.

When we began 2020, we took as a given that the Capital Region's economic success will be determined, in large part, by our ability to achieve inclusive growth that meets the demand for tech talent. The pandemic has underscored this urgency, as women and minorities are especially vulnerable in this economic downturn.

Our year's work was rooted in three goals: Deliver on the promises we made, chart a bold vision for the future, and develop the infrastructure to grow a scaled and sustainable program.

As you will see in this impact report, our programmatic efforts across these goals have been robust and partner-driven. I am especially proud of our willingness to grapple with the thorny—and systemic—problems that have hampered prior efforts like ours. Our partners and the CoLAB team inspire me every day, with an insistence on equity, collaboration, innovation, and scale.

In less than a year, we have engaged over 800 students in the Digital Tech Credential. Students will begin flowing through our K-12 pathways pipelines in 2021 and we continue to add new employer and educator partners to our collaboration. The CoLAB staff has doubled in size and our partner universities have awarded their first digital tech credential badges.

I often say that if this work were easy, we would have done it already. Creating change requires thinking differently about seemingly intractable problems and striving for inclusive outcomes.

Our partners' willingness to engage in this uncharted territory inspires me daily. The work of building new structures and relationships can be inherently risky and challenging but especially in 2020, the potential rewards have never felt more meaningful.

With gratitude,



**Dr. Jeanne Contardo**

*Vice President and  
Managing Director*



## Capital CoLAB Advisory Committee Members

### **Wes Bush**

*CoLAB Advisory Committee Chair*

### **Russ Ramsey**

*Greater Washington Partnership Board Chair*

### **Amy Gilliland**

*President  
GDIT*

### **Peter Scher**

*Head of Corporate Responsibility &  
Chairman of the Mid-Atlantic Region  
JPMorgan Chase & Co.*

### **Frank LaPrade**

*Chief Enterprise Services Officer &  
Chief of Staff to the CEO  
Capital One*

### **Kathy Warden**

*Chairman, CEO and President  
Northrop Grumman*

### **Scott Rutherford**

*Senior Partner  
McKinsey & Company*

### **Ardine Williams**

*Vice President, Workforce Development  
Amazon*

## About the Capital CoLAB

The Capital CoLAB's vision is to make the Capital Region—from Baltimore to Richmond—the most diverse digital tech workforce in the country, which we do by partnering with employers and educators to build industry-aligned digital tech pathways that ensure inclusive growth. The CoLAB's industry-led model includes 20 of the largest employers in the Capital Region as its members. Since 2018, the CoLAB has also grown to encompass a network of 24 higher-education institutions (community colleges and four-year universities) and five K-12 systems focused on building the most diverse digital tech workforce in the country.

**Vision:** The Capital Region will have the most diverse Digital Tech workforce in the country.

**Mission:** Build the Capital Region's diverse digital tech ecosystem by partnering with employers and educators to build industry-aligned digital tech pathways that ensure inclusive growth.

**Key Outcomes:** By 2025, CoLAB will (i) have engaged over 45,000 students and adult learners in digital tech pathways (ii) ensure at least 50 percent of the people we engage are from underrepresented populations, and (iii) double the number of partner organizations working to scale CoLAB initiatives.



## Our Values

1) **The CoLAB places diversity, equity, and inclusion at the center of our work.** We believe that creating change requires thinking differently about seemingly intractable problems and striving for inclusive outcomes. We actively seek diverse perspectives and people to help us drive inclusive growth. We aim to invite new partners to the table who will help us achieve our vision for the Capital Region, and we use data to hold ourselves and the region accountable for diversity goals.

2) **Bravery, risk, and integrity.** The work of building new structures and relationships can be inherently risky and challenging. We value bravery, setting bold goals and striving to achieve them, and testing those strategies that might help us forge new paths. We also commit to acting ethically and responsibly—bravery and risk are never to take precedent over our own integrity and doing what is right for the citizens of the Capital Region.

3) **Transparency and accountability.** Our partners trust the Capital CoLAB to act on their behalf, and in partnership with them, to bring a scalable solution to developing diverse digital tech talent in the region. We believe our partners have the right to see into our accountability measures regularly and to ask questions about how we are implementing the CoLAB.

4) **Avoid unnecessary duplication across the region.** Intermediary work is inherently messy and overlapping. While some redundancy within the system ensures we avoid a single-point of failure, we will seek to partner with other organizations to compliment and amplify our work. At times, this may mean ceding some control by supporting other organizations doing good work for the betterment of the Capital Region.



## Members and Partners

The CoLAB has 20 employer members engaged in one or more of our programs. In addition, we have partnerships with 19 universities and 5 K-12 jurisdictions (plus their postsecondary partners).

### Employer Partners



### University Partners



### Jurisdiction Partners



## The Capital CoLAB Welcomes Two New Members

Marymount University and Deloitte joined the Capital CoLAB in the fall of 2020, adding to the strong team of universities and businesses propelling the program.

*"As the economy transitions to the future of work, it will be critical to prepare our workforce with the key skills needed to remain competitive in this rapidly-changing, tech-driven marketplace. Deloitte is excited to join this forwardthinking program and is committed to playing an integral role in helping strengthen the talent pipeline for the entire region."*

Tamika Tremaglio, Greater Washington Managing Principal, Deloitte

*"Our Strategic Plan vision at Marymount is to achieve national recognition for our unmatched, innovative curriculum, and that is why Capital CoLAB is an ideal partner for us."*

Irma Becerra, Ph.D., President, Marymount University

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a large, diverse group of people walking on a light-colored, possibly paved, surface. The people are scattered across the frame, some in small groups and others alone. They are wearing various casual and business-casual clothing, including jackets, sweaters, and trousers. The overall scene suggests a busy public space or a large gathering. The text "2020 Key Accomplishments" is overlaid in the center-right of the image.

# ***2020 Key Accomplishments***

## BY THE NUMBERS

31%

Black/African  
American and  
Hispanic/Latinx  
engaged in the Digital  
Tech Credential

6

University  
partners  
added

15

Universities  
offering the  
Digital Tech  
Credential

46%

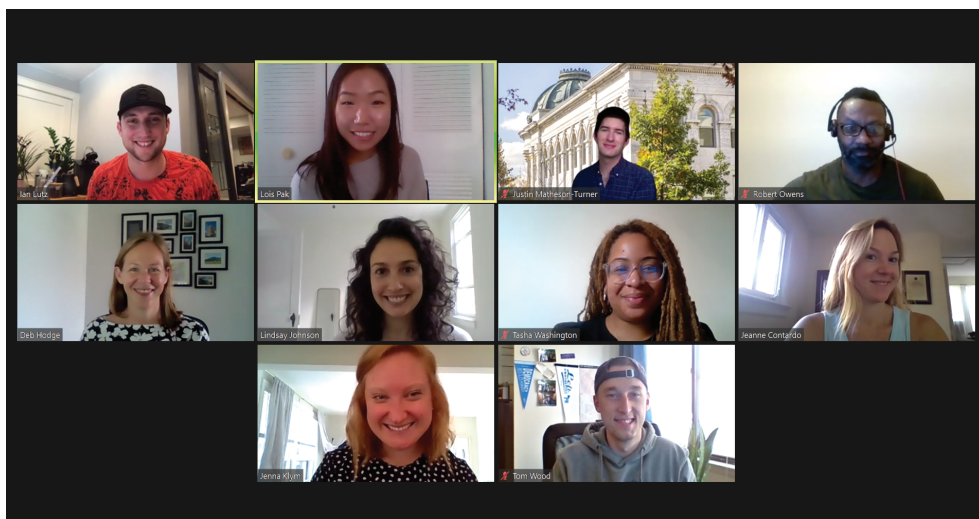
Females  
engaged in the  
Digital Tech  
Credential

## Program Overview

Through the CoLAB, the Greater Washington Partnership has launched programs designed to expand the pipeline for digital tech talent and more effectively prepare learners for entry level jobs in the Capital Region. Our programs meet learners where they are—starting in high school, moving through postsecondary education, and into the workforce.

Capital CoLAB's signature programs include:

- TalentReady (CoLAB Pathways Initiative)
- Digital Tech Credential
- Upskilling/Reskilling



*The CoLAB team has been working hard to scale its programs, even through the abrupt switch to a virtual work setting*

## 2020 Program Milestones

Administered **\$1.8M of sub-grants** to five jurisdictions to create and enhance IT pathways.

Hired four postsecondary **subject matter experts** to facilitate conversations with employer partners and develop KSACs.

Recruited 30 **Industry Advisors** from 19 employers to develop KSAs.

Completed four **KSAC pathways** and shared with jurisdiction partners to begin curriculum alignment (Cybersecurity, Data Management, Networking, and Software Development).

Launched the **Employer Signaling System (ESS)** website.

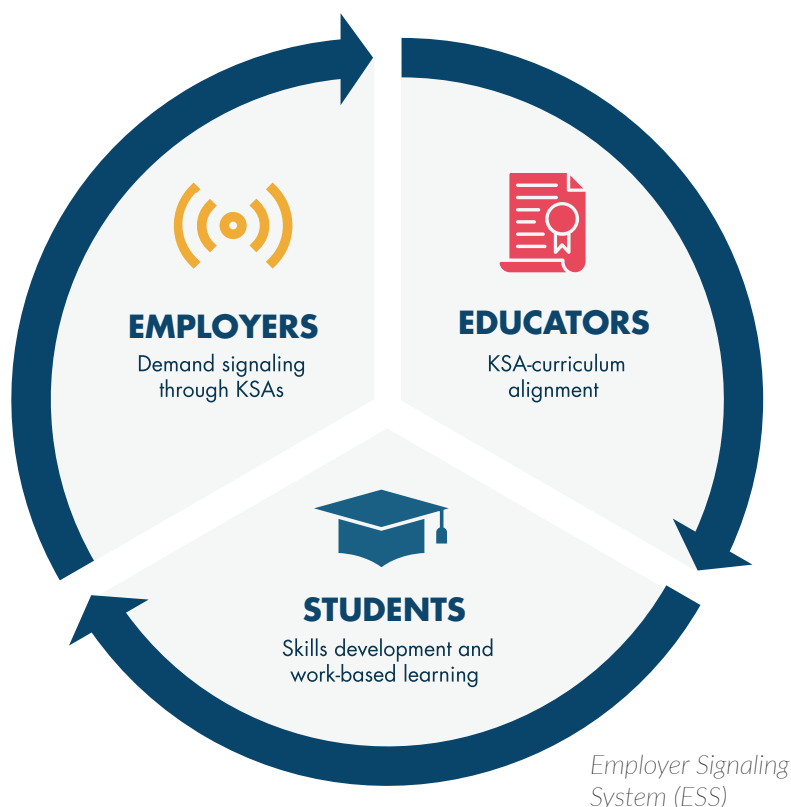
Organized **Regional Collaboration Network convening** that brought jurisdiction partners together to discuss a regional work-based learning strategy.

Produced a mini-brief and report about **work-based learning**, which centered on equity and digital tech in the Capital Region.

## TalentReady (CoLAB Pathways Initiative)

With generous funding from JPMorgan Chase and Bloomberg Philanthropies, TalentReady (CoLAB Pathways Initiative) launched in December 2018 to create and enhance IT pathways for students in five jurisdictions: Baltimore City, District of Columbia, Fairfax County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County. The program has three key components:

- **Employer Signaling System (ESS)** – a process combining labor market information and employer insights to surface high demand IT occupations that lead to a family sustaining wage at the entry level. CoLAB currently showcases these findings on its ESS Website.
- **Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Credentials (KSACs)** – employer-validated competencies linked to high demand, entry level IT occupations. They are articulated in a way that is easy for educators to embed into curriculum, ensuring learners graduate with the most industry-relevant competencies (starting in high school).
- **Work-Based Learning** – a spectrum of relevant work experiences that CoLAB employers and other employer partners design for students enrolled in IT Pathways.



## 2020 Program Milestones

Hosted first virtual **Credential Month** with 112 student attendees. The event featured career chats with employers and Campus Ambassadors.

Launched **Campus Ambassador program** at eight universities.

Launched **CoLAB Connect**, an online portal offering resources, events, and internship opportunities to CoLAB students.

Issued **digital badges** via Credly to 21 students.

Hosted first virtual **Digital Tech Credential Career Fair**, with participation from 10 CoLAB employers and nearly 200 students.

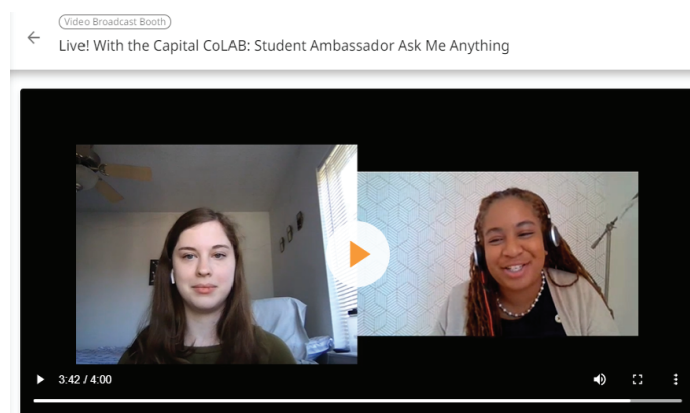
Launched the monthly publication, **CoLAB Student Snapshot**, that features CoLAB companies, student spotlights, and upcoming events.

## Digital Tech Credential

In 2018, Greater Washington Partnership created the CoLAB and its inaugural program, the Digital Tech Credential, to provide a scalable solution to update and align university curricula with the entry level KSAs that employers in the Capital Region need most. Once industry subject matter experts outlined these KSAs, university partners quickly mobilized to map curricula to the KSAs, identify gaps, and make the changes to better position students for entry level digital tech and tech adjacent jobs.

Today, the Digital Tech Credential program—which includes the Generalist, Cybersecurity Specialist, Data Analytics Specialist, and Machine Learning Specialist—is built on various components that enable regional collaboration between the business and higher education sectors at an unprecedented speed:

- Buy-in and commitment from CEOs and university presidents
- University Leadership Council and HR Leaders convenings that provide high-level direction on how the Digital Tech Credential evolves
- On-campus support from Campus Ambassadors and Career Center Leaders to convert interested students into active members of the CoLAB community
- Consistent communication with students and partners through monthly newsletters, quarterly meetings, and virtual events
- Technology solutions that enable student-employer connections and validation of KSAs, including CoLAB Connect (our online community portal) and digital badges (issued via the Credly platform)
- Involvement in broader conversations about skills-based hiring and learner records to keep CoLAB at the cutting edge of workforce and credentialing trends



*The Digital Tech Credential program hosted its first virtual Digital Tech Credential Career Fair in September 2020*

## 2020 Program Milestones

In partnership with BHEF, received a nine month, \$1M [NSF planning grant](#).

Conducted [landscape analysis](#) of 298 credentials from 12 universities in the Capital Region.

Administered [national survey](#) of 600 employers about gaps and opportunities in upskilling/reskilling strategies.

Interviewed 17 regional university representatives about [upskilling/reskilling capacity constraints](#).

## Upskilling/Reskilling

In September 2019 CoLAB and the Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) received a planning grant from the National Science Foundation to examine the effects of intermediaries on the following:

- Addressing gaps and opportunities in employers' upskilling/reskilling strategies
- Conducting relevant research in order to provide recommendations on how to address these gaps and opportunities
- Communicating with all stakeholders to create a common framework for action
- Supporting aligned efforts and mobilizing resources
- Establishing shared metrics and identifying success

The NSF Phase I work involved engaging our employers and university partners in a series of analyses, surveys, interviews, and focus groups to better understanding their needs and capacity constraints around upskilling/reskilling.

While CoLAB and BHEF did not receive Phase II funding from NSF, we used our learnings to engage McKinsey on an upskilling/reskilling strategy as part of our broader efforts to grow and expand programs. CoLAB will finalize and share this work in 2021.

**In the Phase 1 NSF Upskilling work, employers cited several credential characteristics important to them when making decisions about investing in upskilling training:**



Cost



Time



Quality



Modality



# *Laying the Foundation for Growth*

Seven areas will drive CoLAB's growth  
and impact through 2025.

## Partner Growth and Engagement

We are thrilled to have added six new university partners in 2020: Bowie State University, Frostburg State University, Marymount University, Towson University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and University of Maryland Global Campus. Deloitte also joined CoLAB as an employer member.



*New partner additions in 2020*

We know that effectively expanding and diversifying the tech talent pipeline includes engaging with many stakeholders, which is why 2021 will entail more discussions with small and medium-sized businesses and their local intermediaries, postsecondary partners, school districts, and local and state workforce boards and agencies to determine best ways to scale our efforts and ensure the Capital Region has the most diverse digital tech workforce in the country.

## Working Groups

The CoLAB launched the University Career Center Leaders group in March. The monthly meetings ensure members help CoLAB strategize around ways to virtually engage students, provide a platform for sharing ideas across universities, and feature one guest employer each month.

The CoLAB formed the Talent Acquisition Working Group in October. This monthly convening of employers' frontline talent acquisition staff focuses on CoLAB's day-to-day work including student outreach, career fairs, internships, and other employer-educator connections.

## Equity and Inclusion

Equity and inclusion underlie CoLAB's efforts to engage 45,000 students and adult learners in digital tech pathways by 2025, at least half of whom will be from under-represented backgrounds. To that end, we will build specific metrics and an accountability plan for growing diverse tech talent in 2021.

In 2020, we extensively examined opportunities for under-represented students to engage in work-based learning in equitable, inclusive ways. This involved conducting a landscape analysis to understand our region currently and our 2021 strategy will be rooted in this work.

In addition to collaboration with our three HBCU partners (Bowie State University, Howard University, and University of Maryland Eastern Shore), we are designing a CoLAB Diversity Scholarship for underrepresented students pursuing the Digital Tech Credential in the rest of our academic institutions. As we work toward this outcome, we will simultaneously drive thought leadership around inclusive growth and become a national model for building diverse talent.

Once learners have entered the workforce, we also recognize the importance of assessing regional retention of diverse digital tech talent and expand program offerings based on those findings. Finally, we will continue conversations with other organizations focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion to as we scale our work.

## DIGITAL TECH CREDENTIAL PLANNED SCHOLARSHIP FOR MINORITIES AND WOMEN *SCHOLARSHIP SNAPSHOT*

**\$2,500**  
per  
scholarship

*Disbursing*  
**\$5 million**  
*over four years*

**500 students**  
*supported*  
*per year*

## Program Expansion

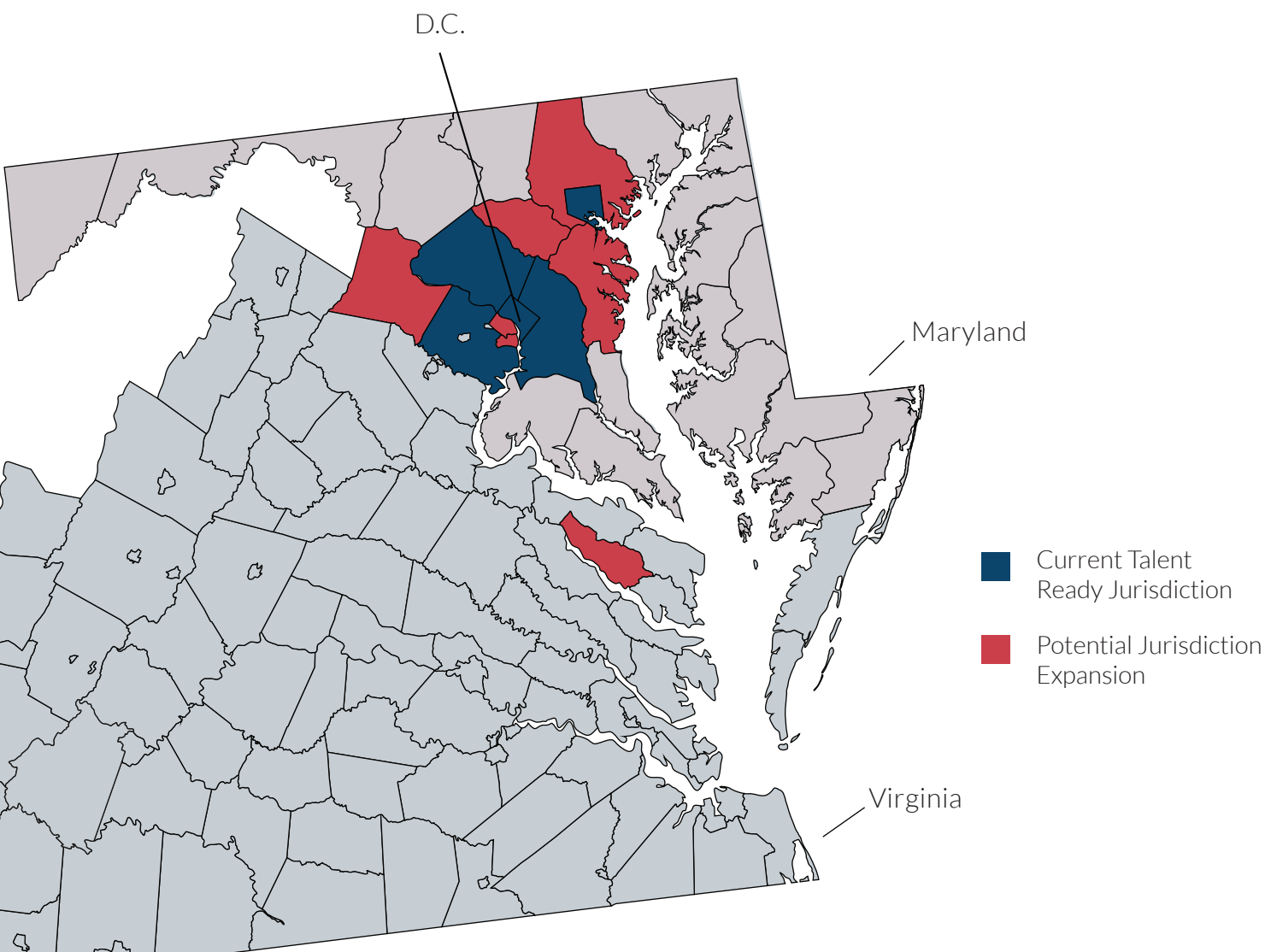
As CoLAB approaches its three-year anniversary, the team will continue building out existing programs and explore other programmatic opportunities to drive the Capital Region toward more inclusive economic growth.

In December 2020, we drafted our work-based learning strategy to foster an environment where employers can easily offer a spectrum of virtual work-based learning for secondary and postsecondary students. While this work will begin under our TalentReady (CoLAB Pathways Initiative) we believe it will inform all CoLAB programs and position the region as a thought leader in developing digital tech talent.

Thinking about how we link digital tech curriculum from high school through postsecondary education and into the workforce, we plan on

expanding pathways to additional jurisdictions with a specific focus on inclusive growth. As more and more learners become engaged in these programs, CoLAB will build an "adjunct" strategy to address teacher and faculty capacity constraints within K-12 and postsecondary digital tech education.

As learners accumulate academic credit and professional experience, we know that it will be critical to support employers in recognizing high-quality micro-credentials that demonstrate learner competencies. In 2020, we did this by launching digital badges with our university partners through the Credly platform and submitting a proposal for an ACE Blockchain Innovation Grant to help us advance our micro-credentialing efforts.



## Marketing and Communications

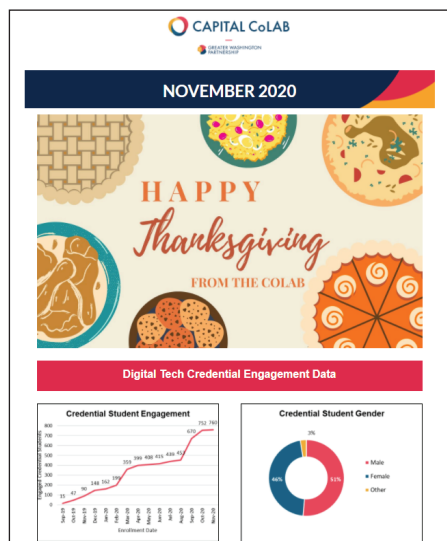
CoLAB communicates with a broad, regional audience of students, executives, and workforce development and education professionals as we expand the digital tech talent pipeline. In addition to our monthly and quarterly meeting cadence with many of these groups, we share updates and asks with our stakeholders through the CoLAB Monthly Newsletter and CoLAB Student Snapshot.

In 2020, we also created a Marketing Toolkit for university partners launching the Digital Tech Credential, launched the CoLAB Connect portal for students to join our community, and produced a report on digital tech talent in the region.

Looking ahead, we will grow our communications strategy by integrating thought leadership, social media, earned media, and paid ads to grow awareness of the CoLAB and drive K-12 and postsecondary student engagement and credential completion. As we make progress toward our 2025 goals, we will continue positioning CoLAB as a national thought leader in building diverse digital tech talent pipelines.



CoLAB's 2020 Marketing Toolkit



**CoLAB Connect!**  
Hi CoLAB Students,  
We are excited to introduce CoLAB Connect! This unique portal is your guide to work-based learning and professional opportunities in the Capital Region. Our employer partners offer a range of opportunities — from uniquely designed projects for Digital Tech Credential students to prioritized hiring for listed jobs and internships.

Need to perfect your resume?  
CoLAB Connect features helpful resume templates, tips, and techniques for students to download and use.  
Sign Up for CoLAB Connect today!

[CoLAB Connect Login](#)

**CoLAB Connect Login**

Welcome to CoLAB Connect! This portal is your guide to work-based learning and professional development opportunities designed to help you build a career in the Capital Region's tech ecosystem. Our employer partners offer a range of opportunities — from uniquely designed projects for Digital Tech Credential students to prioritized hiring for listed jobs and internships.

Please check back often to view new opportunities. If you haven't yet created an account with us, please sign up using the link below.

[Join the CoLAB Community](#)

University Email Address:   
Password:   
[Login](#)

(Order from left to right: CoLAB Monthly Newsletter, CoLAB Student Snapshot, and CoLAB Connect web portal)

# CoLAB Connect

As a CoLAB Community member, you have access to resources and professional development opportunities designed to help you build your career in the Capital Region's tech ecosystem.

As you are applying for CoLAB opportunities, please make sure to identify yourself as a CoLAB Community student on your resume. See a [sample resume](#) on how to stand out to our employer partners! Please feel free to email [CoLAB@greaterwashingtonpartnership.com](mailto:CoLAB@greaterwashingtonpartnership.com) with any questions you have.

*The Capital CoLAB launched CoLAB Connect in the fall of 2020. Registered Credential students can use the portal to access resources and opportunities*

## Systems and Analyses

Now more than ever, it is crucial to have technology and systems that support our internal operations, improve connections with our stakeholders, and track our impact as we strive to meet our goals by 2025. Over the last year, CoLAB has built more robust enrollment tools to streamline the process for students pursuing the Digital Tech Credential.

We will continue investing in significant CRM and CMS capabilities to support our student engagement and tracking. From a partner perspective, we closely collaborate with university partners to ensure the digital badging process is capable of capturing student completion and links to employers. As we flesh out our current programs and work-based learning strategy, we will identify additional metrics related to tech and tech-adjacent gaps, with key performance indicators for major activities and sub-populations to hold ourselves accountable to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## Enhancing our Resources

Across the abovementioned areas, CoLAB recognizes where additional resources will better position our growth toward our goals. In 2021, our partners can look out for refreshed CoLAB and Greater Washington Partnership websites that reflect the progress we have made with our programs and activities in the Capital Region.

Throughout next year, we will recruit paying business members and pursue new foundation funding aligned with our values to grow and scale agreed upon programmatic activities. We will also identify new products we can build or revenue share agreements we might partner to create.



Collaborative of Leaders in Academia and Business is an action-oriented partnership of business and academic institutions that develops the talent needed for the jobs of today and tomorrow.



The Greater Washington Partnership is a first-of-its-kind civic alliance of CEOs in the region, drawing from the leading employers and entrepreneurs committed to making the Capital Region—from Baltimore to Richmond—one of the world's best places to live, work and build a business. Working in collaboration with leaders across our communities, the Partnership connects and leverages the region's extraordinary assets to advance inclusive, actionable solutions that strengthen the Capital Region as a leading global region and center for commerce and innovation.

CONTACT US:  
[CoLAB@greaterwashingtonpartnership.com](mailto:CoLAB@greaterwashingtonpartnership.com)  
[info@greaterwashingtonpartnership.com](mailto:info@greaterwashingtonpartnership.com)