



**mke  
tech**

**2022 Impact Report**



# Contents

- 3** Letter from the MKE Tech Hub  
Coalition CEO and Board Chair
- 4** Our Story
- 6** Our Work
- 8** Building diverse tech talent
- 18** Attracting businesses and  
individuals
- 21** Scaling the Innovation Ecosystem
- 26** Connecting Community
- 29** Supporting Community Efforts
- 31** Thank you





# Letter from the MKE Tech Hub Coalition CEO and Board Chair



As we enter our fourth year at the Coalition, we find ourselves reflecting on what's been accomplished and excitedly looking forward to what's to come.

Our impact report provides a glimpse into the Coalition's work this past year. But it only tells part of the story. As a nonprofit, we know how much system-wide work is needed to impact the region for decades to come. There are countless others with whom we work alongside doing this important work, and for that, we're grateful and optimistic about the future of Milwaukee.



As we begin 2023, we are excited to focus on scaling our existing key programs that support the journeys of early and experienced talent, and turning their dreams into reality, whether it is to protect and create new value in an existing tech environment or to build the next high growth startup.

Our programs produce the most visible contributions toward our mission of inclusively growing the tech ecosystem to drive long-term economic prosperity and create life-changing opportunities. In addition, we continue to forge connections, build community, and influence policy to create long-term impact on scale.

We know that to truly create transformational change, we need a multi-prong approach that focuses on building programs and systems, creating a connected ecosystem, and advocating for public and private partnerships that produce measurable scale. Successful ecosystem growth is also inclusive, and we remain committed to building a more equitable tech sector that creates opportunities for all communities.

We're honored to be recognized with a 2022 Wisconsin Inno on Fire Award for our work as an ecosystem builder. Ecosystem builders connect, empower and collaborate in order to build and lift up the whole community to achieve long-term growth. This speaks deeply to our mission, to bring together corporations, startups, nonprofits, government, K-12, post-secondary, reskill providers, and others to inclusively grow tech opportunities and talent in Southeast Wisconsin.

As we continue to progress our mission and understanding ecosystem builders can come in all forms, we encourage you to join us in this collective work!

-- Kathy Henrich, CEO & Molly Mulroy, Board Chair





Working together to  
sively double t  
nt in Milwa

# Our Story



## Working together to drive transformational change

Formed in 2019, the MKE Tech Hub Coalition is a nonprofit member organization committed to inclusively growing the Milwaukee tech sector.

Since the beginning, the Coalition has collaborated with members, partners, and other system entrepreneurs to connect, empower, and advocate for inclusive tech sector growth. Through **four key strategies** focused on closing the gap between opportunity and talent, the Coalition seeks to create lasting regional transformational change for the Milwaukee region.

- 
- Attracting businesses and talent
  - Building diverse tech talent
  - Scaling innovation ecosystem
  - Connecting community

**Ecosystem building exists at the intersection of economic and community development**



A young woman with long dark hair, wearing a maroon sweatshirt, is looking towards a whiteboard in a classroom. The whiteboard contains several diagrams, including a flowchart with green and blue lines and a diagram with blue arrows. Other students are visible in the background, and a yellow object is hanging from the ceiling. The text "Our Work" is overlaid in large yellow letters on the right side of the image.

# Our Work



# 2022 at a glance

In 2022, your support helped the continued expansion of key initiatives, which seek to serve those in the tech ecosystem by identifying gaps and creating life-changing opportunities.

Hosted **250** events with over  
**2,300** professional and  
**20,000** student attendees

Surpassed target of at least **50%**  
participation from  
demographics traditionally  
underrepresented in tech

Winner of the 2022 Wisconsin  
Inno Fire **Award** in the  
category of Ecosystem Builder



**210**  
program  
participants served

**\$390K+**  
distributed grants

**330**  
hours of staff time  
donate to the  
community

**332**  
purposeful  
connections made

Grew to **125** members



A woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a purple zip-up top, is speaking into a microphone. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. On her left chest, there is a circular gold-colored pin. To her right, another person is partially visible, wearing a dark blue shirt with a name tag that reads "Jennifer Wisconsin Tech Week". The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text "Building diverse tech talent" is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters across the bottom half of the image.

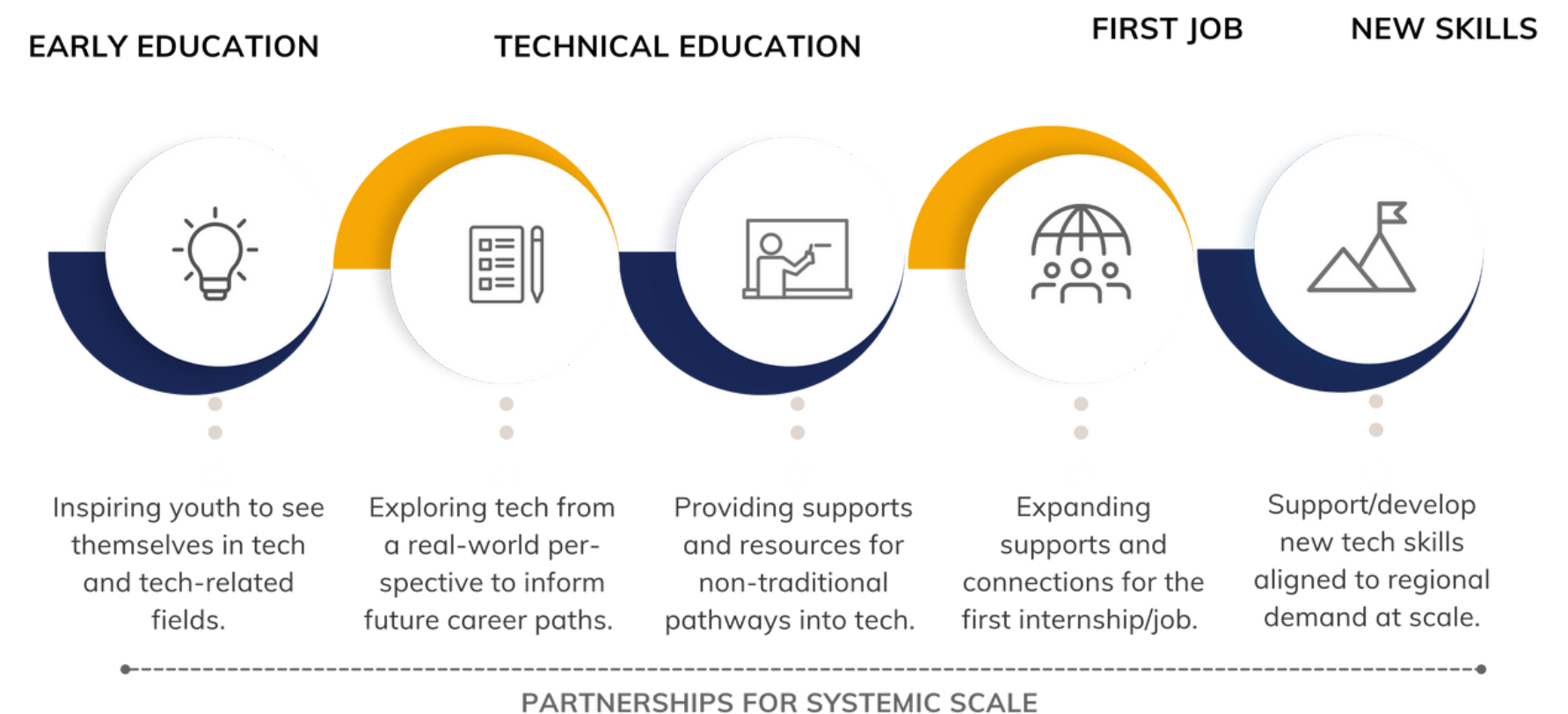
# Building diverse tech talent



# Bridging the talent gap for lasting local impact

A skilled technical workforce is vital to the future innovation economy. Developing non-traditional pathways into tech and removing employer barriers presents the opportunity to shape tomorrow's tech talent and increase racial and gender equity in tech.

Through our programs and partnerships, the Coalition strives to increase diversity in the tech workforce and grow opportunities for all communities of Milwaukee.





# Developing tomorrow's tech leaders

The annual **MKE Hour of Tech** initiative brings tech professionals directly into the classroom to introduce students to technology and inspire them to pursue tech careers. Activities during the week-long event focus on expanding awareness of tech through immersive experiences for students that allow them to explore, learn and grow.

Hour of Tech is powered by Connect Business Consulting



**32,856**  
total mentor  
hours

**355**  
schools and  
organizations

**300**  
events across  
SW WI

**20,009**  
students  
reached

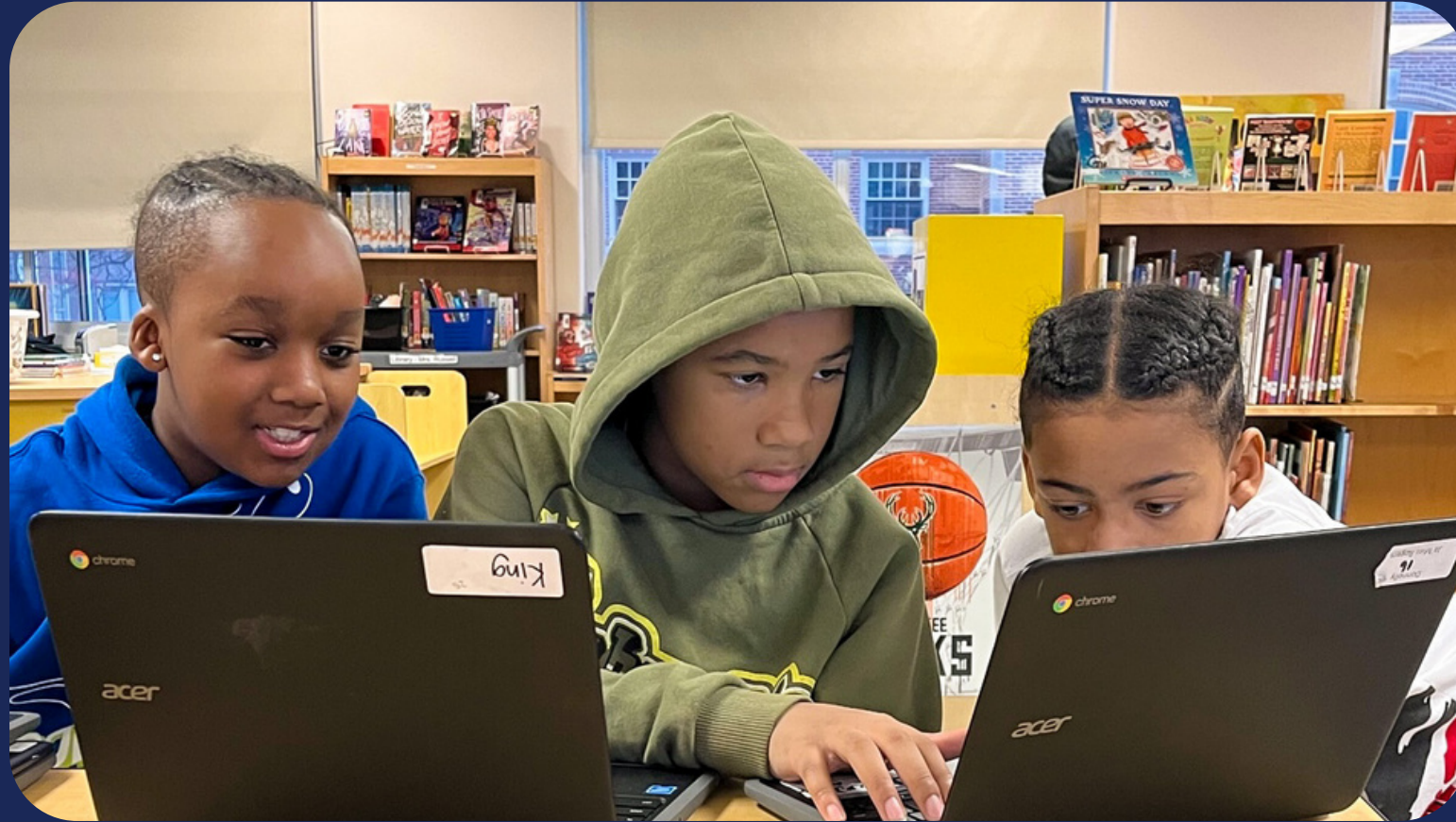


"As the hour of tech movement expands around SE Wisconsin, we intentionally reached out to diverse schools, girls, and students with limited tech access by exposing them to technology-related activities and fields. We wanted to show that tech is everywhere, including fashion design, coding, VR, and user experience. I am excited and encouraged regarding the new partnerships and relationships we have established across the region that will contribute to expanding the program and creating our next generation of diverse tech talent!"

-- Kenge Adams, Founder and CEO of Connect Business Consulting and Hour of Tech Program Manager

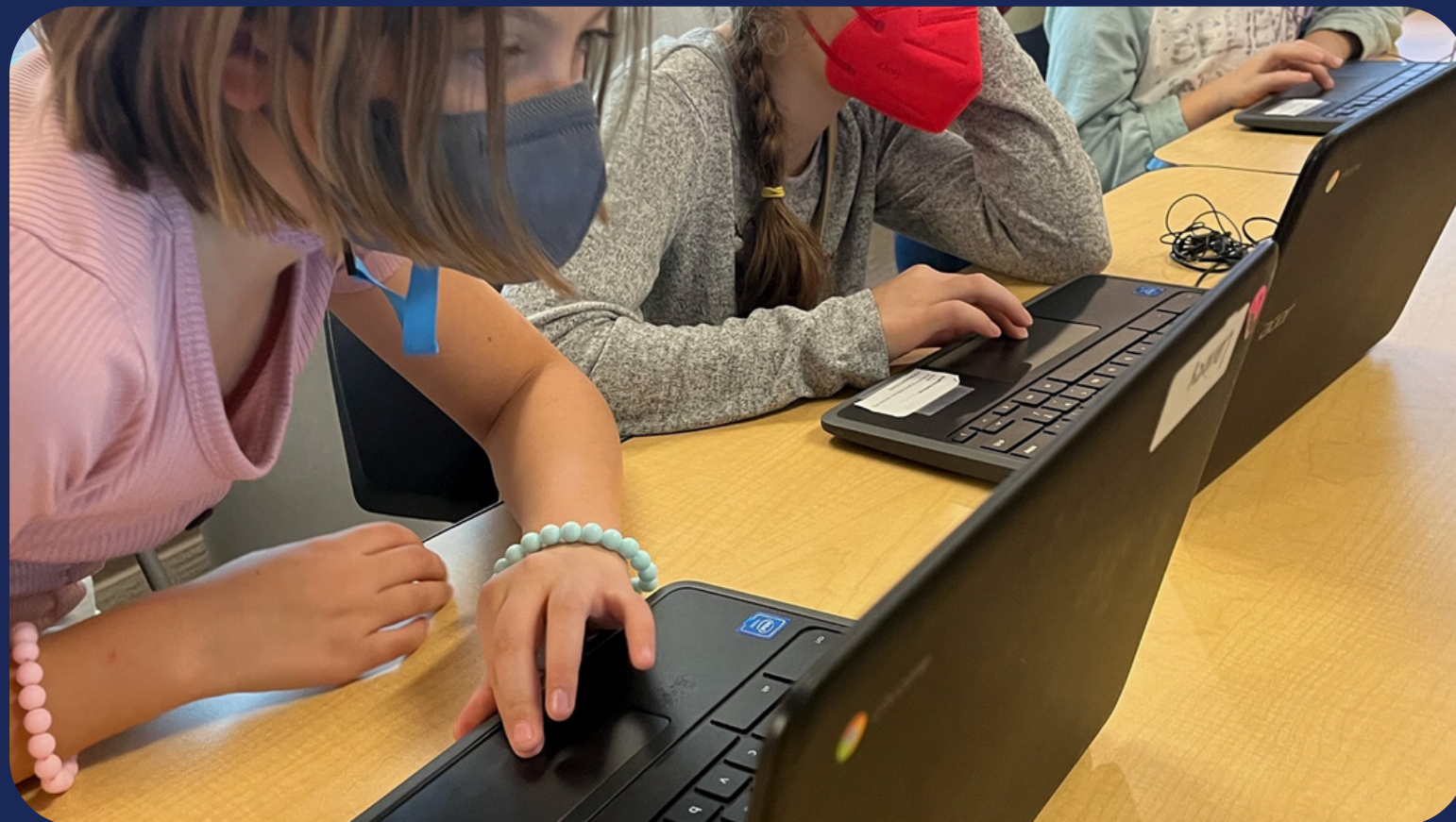






“Thank you so much for coordinating this for the students; the room was full of joy and it was really cool to see a few kids, one in particular, emerge as a leader.”

-- Maggie Tate-Techtman,  
Woodlands School Volunteer





# Preparing students for the future of work

**FUSE** is a collegiate-level summer bootcamp experience designed to infuse and build skills for the future of tech work. The program explores the ethics and impact of data and artificial intelligence and provides students the opportunity to develop a professional network, connect with local employers, and gain valuable career development skills needed for advancement.

FUSE is powered by The Commons, Rex Academy, and HERA. Our curriculum advisor is MSOE professor Gabriel Wright, PhD. U of WI – Milwaukee provides credit for earning the learning badge.





# FUSE Program Impact

**43**

participating  
students from

**27**

different schools

**63%**

overall diversity

**81%**

earned the HERA  
learning badge

**16**

participating  
mentors  
representing

**100%**

would recommend  
this program

**12**

local companies

**10**

local leaders  
providing workshops  
and presentations





“Tech is more than just learning how to code and obtaining technical skills, you must learn how to communicate and work with teams to set yourself apart. The FUSE program provided an opportunity to grow this skill to prepare me for the workforce. I also gained exposure to many tech leaders and believe Milwaukee is a tech hub on the rise.”

-- Sergio Jara Reynoso, Harvard University, Senior, Founder of Chekos Tech LLC





# Registered Apprenticeships

Tech apprenticeships are a modern take on a time-tested model that provides jobs for the new economy. Combining skills-based training with hands-on experience, apprenticeships create an agile, inclusive workforce and provide higher-wage opportunities that can transform the lives of those in the program.

Tech Apprenticeships are made possible through partnerships with Apprenti and the WI Department of Workforce Development

**31**

Software  
Development  
apprentices

**8**

employer  
champions

**5**

were previously  
unemployed

**72%**

diversity

**68%**

received a wage  
increase by joining  
the program

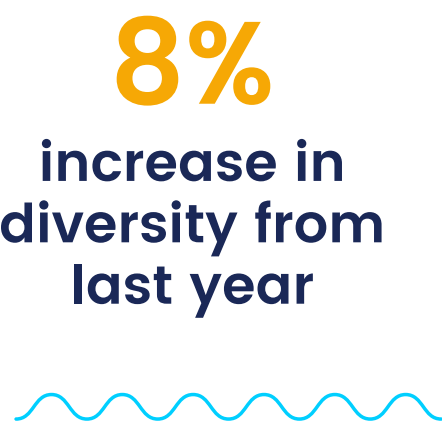
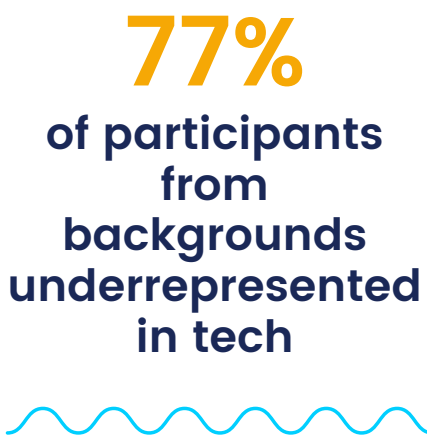
**\$247,500**

matching grants to  
employers



# Reskilling

The **Preferred Reskilling Provider Network** is a collaborative effort to offer training and mentoring in high-demand skill sets to individuals in SE WI. The Network is committed to diversity, creating pathways to employment, and ongoing mentorship and support.



The Preferred Reskilling Provider Network:

- Dev10/Genesis 10
- Employ MKE – TechHire
- Forward Careers – TechHire: WorkIT
- i.c.stars|\*Milwaukee
- MARS Returnship
- New Horizons – Business and IT Academy
- Registered Apprenticeship

# Upskilling

The **AI Academy** provides Artificial Intelligence training and competencies to local employees. With the national rise in demand for AI skills, this program leverages federal funding and provides a roadmap for future regional upskilling programs.

AI Academy is administered by North Carolina State and paid for through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor.





A photograph of four people in a workshop or office environment. On the right, a man with long dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt with a 'formlabs' logo and a name tag that says 'Sam Lee', is smiling and showing a cardboard box to an older man in the center. The older man has grey hair, wears glasses, and a dark grey jacket over a blue checkered shirt. To the left of the older man is a younger man in a blue long-sleeved shirt, looking down. On the far left, another man with grey hair and glasses is partially visible. In the background, there is a black bicycle and some cardboard boxes on a table. The text 'Attracting businesses and individuals' is overlaid in large yellow font across the middle of the image.

**Attracting businesses  
and individuals**



# The health of the Milwaukee tech ecosystem: Key metrics point to positive growth across the Milwaukee ecosystem

- A TECNA study, Tech Workforce Trends: The Migration of Tech Jobs Since the Pandemic showed regional tech talent grew by over **2450**, led by virtual workers.
- WI was listed as the **9th fastest-growing** new tech businesses by CompTIA
- WI continues to be **strong** in scientists/engineer talent per capita (13.6 vs 10.5 nationally).

Source: <https://wispolicyforum.org/research/2022-metro-milwaukee-innovation-datatool/>

Attracting and retaining top-notch businesses and talent requires establishing the Milwaukee area as a nationally-recognized hub for tech and innovation.

Tech sector growth:

**1000**

tech jobs announced  
by Milwaukee Tool



**510**

jobs announced  
by Experis



**150**

jobs brought to the  
region by Formlabs



**1000**

jobs announced by  
**Fiserv**

(750 preserved + 250 incremental)



## Strengthen our reputation as a tech hub

**ChooseMKETech.org** was launched to serve as a first-stop destination and resource center for individuals looking to learn more about the Milwaukee tech ecosystem. The site provides information on local companies, open jobs, and ways to connect to one another. A new national ad campaign was launched in November, reaching 300,000 people with 3,000 new site visits.

In an updated Voice of the Engineer survey, the perception that tech career opportunities in Milwaukee were “Good/Improving” **grew** from 27% in 2020 to **55%** in 2022.

## Partnering with members on new attraction opportunities

In April, the Coalition partnered with Dice to host a Virtual Career Fair with 7 companies, leading to **93 new talent candidates** and **13 immediate interviews**.

A photograph of a city skyline, likely Milwaukee, with a large blue circle overlay in the foreground. The circle contains the text "choose mke tech" in white, lowercase letters. A thin white line curves around the bottom left of the circle.

choose  
mke tech





# Scaling the Innovation Ecosystem



Entrepreneurs are essential to growing a thriving, modern innovation economy.

In its 3rd year, **FOR-M** continues to support tech entrepreneurs through facilitated support and curated coaching as they develop their startup concepts. Founders have gone on to receive funding, move into other startup programs, and continue to grow their businesses.

FOR-M is powered by program partners The Commons and WePivot. Grant selection by investors from Baird Financial, Gateway Capital, Milwaukee Venture Partners (MVP), Midpoint Ventures. Grant funding generously provided through parthnerships with Bader Philanthropies and WEDC.



**64**  
participants  
across two cohorts

**64%**  
diverse participants

**87**  
NPS Score

**\$80k**  
in grants given to  
FOR-M alumni

Winner of the BizTimes  
Nonprofit Collaboration of  
the Year: MKE Tech Hub  
Coalition, We Pivot, The  
Commons, Bader  
Philanthropies, WEDC



“FOR-M introduced me to like-minded individuals, coaches, and alumni that all have added value to my company through feedback, advice, and resources. When I reflect months and years from now on the FOR-M showcase experience it will forever be a pivotal point in the story of my company where I got my initial recognition and validation that my idea was interesting on a larger scale to the world.” (Pictured top, center)

-- James Washington, Founder, Fantasy Block







“I was excited to be accepted into the program as I was looking to learn about the "founder" world and how to launch the tech enabled division of my business. I loved the program! I learned so much about the framework of taking an idea from conception to pitch ready.”

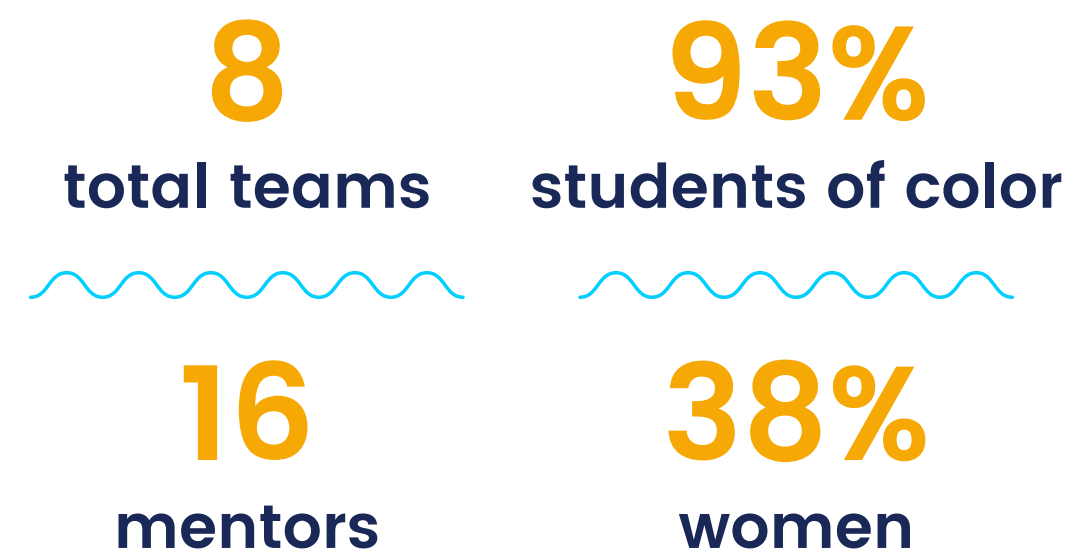
-- Elzie D. Flenard, III, Founder & CEO,  
Podcast Town



# Discovering the next great idea

Reverse Pitch High School Edition shows student technology and entrepreneur thinking, as they help solve challenges and a chance to win cash prizes and internships.

This program is powered by Y.E.S.



## Reverse Pitch MKE Community Showcase

Reverse Pitch MKE provides opportunities to entrepreneurs to help solve industry challenges.

Following the Reverse Pitch MKE Pitch Competition that kicked off in Fall 2021, 5 teams of entrepreneurs participated in the spring Community Showcase with Evidia Solve taking the prize.

Special thanks to industry judges, Dana Guthrie, Managing Partner, at Gateway Capital, Dan Renouard, Managing Director of Strategic Initiatives, at Baird, and Nyra Jordan, Social Impact Investment Director, at American Family.



A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a dark blue patterned blazer, is speaking into a silver microphone. She has a name tag on her lapel that reads "Northwestern University", "Vis", "Teresa Esser", "Silicon", and "Host". The background is a blurred stage setting with a blue and white light gradient. A large, bold, yellow text overlay is at the bottom.

# Connecting Community



# Meaningful Connections

A key element to building a connected ecosystem is bringing people together, creating relationships, and fostering conversations.

Started as Startup Milwaukee Week in 2016, **Milwaukee Tech Week** is a weeklong celebration of tech, designed to connect, educate, and celebrate innovation in Southeast Wisconsin.

Events are created by the community, for the community with tracks for entrepreneurs, educators, and technologists.



**1800**  
participants



**40**  
events



**8.5**  
NPS Score





## Steve Case and Rise of the Rest comes to Milwaukee for in-depth conversations

Steve Case, co-founder of AOL and chairman & CEO of Revolution, gave a keynote during MKE Tech Week to discuss his book “The Rise of the Rest: How Entrepreneurs in Surprising Places are Building the New American Dream”. Earlier that day, Steve Case led several roundtable discussions related to the future of the MKE Tech ecosystem, engaging over **100 new individuals** in meaningful conversation.







# Supporting Community Efforts



Throughout the year, the Coalition supported several community partners and events aimed at growing the tech ecosystem.

Over **350 Hours were contributed** to the following community organizations advancing our mission in the region:

AAEIO, Afrotech, BizStarts, Employ MKE, gener8tor, Greater MKE Stem Ecosystem, IcStars MKE, Lead the Movement, MACICS, MISC, MPS Tech Advisory Board, NCWIT- WI, Professional Dimensions, Racine Tech Prize, StemForward, Summerfest Tech, Tempo, Titan 100, Tech United, United Way, UW Extension ITM, UW Milwaukee Tech Ed Frontiers, Wisconsin Policy Forum, WTA, and many others

Private and public collaboration brings innovative solutions and greater impact.

Earlier this year, Members met with Milwaukee Mayor Johnson to discuss the importance of creating equitable pathways to tech careers and how the tech community can come together collectively to make an impact in Milwaukee and showcase our vibrant, fresh coast city.







Thank you to our members and  
partners for your continued  
support. Our work can only be  
accomplished through your  
generosity and involvement.



# Our Members

## Founding

Northwestern Mutual

## Gold

Advocate Aurora

Kohls

JCI

WEC

## Silver

Froedtert

Rockwell Automation

## Bronze

Accenture

Associated Bank

Badger Meter

Baird

Brooksource

Bucks

CapGemini

Childrens Hospital

Clarios

Codeworks

Concurrency

Data Holdings

Deloitte

EY

## Bronze (cont)

Godfrey and Kahn

GalaxE.Soltuions

GE Healthcare

HSA Bank

Infosys

Johnson Financial

Landmark Credit Union

Mars Solution Group

Medical College of WI

Milwaukee Tool

Molson Coors

PWC

Syslogic

Skygen

Tek Systems

UFS

Vaco

Verizon

West Bend Mutual

## Community

AeroX

Alliant Energy

ATD

August Brown

Aurora WDC

Beyond Stem

## Community (cont)

BioForward

BlockTime Financial

Booth Central

Carroll University

Centare

CGI

CLA

Cohesity

Concordia University

Connect Business Solutions

Continuous Tech

Comcentia

Collabera

Data You Can use

Dematic

Dev10

Dinvy

Experis

Expedient

Farwell

Formlabs

Frantz Group

Gearbox

Harquen

Healthtech MKE

HPGM

HPS

## Community (cont)

Husch Blackwell

ic Stars

Ideawake

Journey House

Lanex

MATC

Marquette University

Maydm

Milwaukee Business Journal

Milwaukee County

MMAC/M7

MSOE

Naviant

NCWIT

New Horizons

New Resources

Newaukee

Northwoods

Nvisia

NVNG

Penta

Pyramid

Randstad

Rex Acadamy

River Run

Safenet

Sharp

## Community (cont)

SIM

Signalwire

Silver Lining

Skills Pipeline

StemForward

Talimer

TEALS

Trivium

Tuatara

United Way

University of WI - Milwaukee

Visit MKE

Water Council

WI IoT Council

Wisconsin Inno

WI Startup Coalition

Wisconsin Tech Council

Wisconsin Veteran Chamber

Women In Tech

Womens Entrepreneurship Week

Yahara Software

Yes

Xorbix

zizzl

zywave



## Our Board

Molly Mulroy Chair, WEC

Sangeetha Rai, Vice Chair, Northwestern Mutual

Dan Renouard, Treasurer, Baird

Rebecca Janutis, Kohls

Wendy Schafer, Advocate Aurora Health

Eric Senn, Johnson Controls

Rashi Khosla, MARS Solutions Group

Mara Lord, Medical College of Wisconsin

Gordon Nameni, PhD, August Brown

Marlena Eanes, Microsoft TEALS Program

Matt Cordio, Skills Pipeline

Jason Fields, Madison Region Economic Partnership

## Our Team

Kathy Henrich, CEO

Melissa Howard, Director of Marketing

Jasmin Treske, Director of Early Talent

Sarah Sewell, Director of Workforce Planning & Upskill/Reskill Programs

Antonio Davis, Manager of Content

Shakkiah Curtis, PhD, Manager of Member Growth & Engagement

Aaron Drews, Research and Grant Manager

Valerie Linton Reed, Operations Manager

Gwen Viegut, Marketing Intern





mke  
tech