Tech Council of Delaware: Making the American Dream a Reality

If you ask 100 people to define the American Dream, it is very likely that you will get 100 different definitions. It is also likely that the majority of those definitions will center on principles of hard work and education as being the primary drivers of economic mobility and prosperity. However, with just a bit of research, we can learn that the original concept of the American Dream was about equality, justice, and democracy for America and for all Americans, regardless of race, gender, and other personal characteristics. Dreams are meant to be attained and celebrated when they have been realized and achieved. The Tech Council of Delaware believes that there are residents living among us who dream of living a better life than their parents and grandparents; residents that dream of a day where living paycheck to paycheck is a thing of the past; residents that dream of homeownership and financial stability; residents that dream of taking exotic vacations and traveling the world; residents that dream of sending their children to college or going to college themselves; and residents like us that dream of a day where there is equality and justice for all citizens, and we can retire words like marginalized, disenfranchised, underrepresented, and disadvantaged. Dreaming is not enough for us at the Tech Council of Delaware as we are committed to making progress using our talents, expertise, and the financial resources we have at our disposal to make the playing field more equitable and the opportunity to launch a tech career more accessible. This is why we pursued, and subsequently received, a generous grant from Bank of America to launch the American Dream Academy here in the First State. Yes, Delaware was the First State to sign the Constitution of the United States, so, in many ways, it is fitting that we continue to be the First State to promote the original ideals of the American Dream, both in theory and in practice. By providing 100 young adult residents with the opportunity to enroll in and complete a free, online, self-paced technology
program while receiving valuable support and encouragement along the way, we progress toward the real American Dream of equality and justice.

The American Dream Academy, developed by the Milken Center for Advancing the American Dream, is a scholarship program for young adults from disadvantaged communities to complete a technology training course and earn an industry-recognized credential. The program includes durable skills training as well as valuable learner supports. The Tech Council of Delaware engaged in a strategic partnership with Milken to bring the American Dream Academy to Delaware and Bank of America provided the financial resources to make this worthwhile endeavor possible. Accordingly, the Tech Council of Delaware is pleased to launch the American Dream Academy & Learner Support Initiative for 100 young adult residents from underserved communities. Our Learner Support Initiative will complement the supports provided through the American Dream Academy and are designed to include young Delawareans into our state’s tech ecosystem in a meaningful way.

The Tech Council of Delaware’s primary goals are to build and expand inclusive tech talent pipelines, create a strong tech ecosystem in the state, and increase Delaware’s position and perception as a tech hub. By intentionally launching the American Dream Academy and inviting 100 young adult residents to complete an in-demand technology training program, we are building a new tech talent pipeline of future tech professionals that is inclusive of those often overlooked and left behind in the economic prosperity associated with high-wage tech employment. These 100 learners will have an opportunity to achieve an industry credential and join the Tech Council of Delaware with an Aspiring Tech Professional membership. This process serves to strengthen our tech ecosystem by producing new, young talent ready for higher-level training and the labor market.

During the six-month term (September 2023 – March 2024), the Learner Support Initiative will provide learners with dedicated support from an expert career coach, referrals to supportive services as necessary, access to financial coaches, and special sessions from member organizations about tech training programs, collegiate options, and employment opportunities.

While the first cohort of the American Dream Academy & Learner Support Initiative will serve as a pilot, we fully intend to continue offering this no-cost scholarship program to young Delawareans so that we are consistently cultivating inclusive and diverse tech talent pipelines in the First State. No matter how our residents and learners define the American Dream, we want them to know that the Tech Council of Delaware is a valuable resource and supportive partner to them as they work to prepare for and attain high-quality, high-wage technology employment and develop great tech careers right here in Delaware.

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