Innovation & Technology

Delaware is a Tech Hub

How the Tech Council of Delaware is convening leaders to do the work

BY ZAKIYYAH ALI

THE LAUNCH of the Tech Council of Delaware in March 2023 came with the creation of six membership types, aligned to each aspect of the tech workforce system, and three new tech ecosystem committees. The tech ecosystem committees were formed to provide a framework for Council members to play an active role in advancing workforce initiatives, driving innovation, creating a strong tech ecosystem, and increasing Delaware’s position and perception as a tech hub.

While the Council offers many interesting and valuable member benefits, the Council, via its committees, is structured to foster active member participation and engagement in solutions-focused initiatives. Corporate members joined the Tech Leaders Roundtable committee to discuss industry trends, new and emerging technologies, talent needs, and workforce challenges, as well as craft solutions to common issues. Education and workforce providers joined the Tech Talent & Workforce Committee, which is a Community of Practice designed to improve workforce development outcomes, build inclusive tech talent pipelines, and produce graduates with in-demand skills and credentials who have options for attaining high-wage tech employment. Community organizations participate on the Tech Community Partners Collaborative, which is intended to identify and support career-focused residents—particularly those that are underrepresented in tech—with qualifying for, and applying to, workforce programs and becoming job-ready.

The three tech ecosystem committees have met over the course of several months to advance their respective goals. Having hit a stride with their individual committee efforts, members were ready to engage as a full Council to share information, learn from each other, and collaborate to advance goals together. To facilitate this collective engagement, the Council hosted a half-day Tech Ecosystem Conference on October 26, 2023, for members to strategize ways to strengthen workforce partnerships; leverage the new sectoral partnership (First State Tech Partnership) to collectively build inclusive tech talent pipelines; identify ways to support tech start-ups led by underrepresented founders; and clarify Delaware’s tech identity and the story we want to tell as a tech hub.

Council members recognize that it is not enough to simply say we are a tech hub; we as leaders must continuously do the work to make Delaware a tech hub. Knowing that we cannot do this work alone, the Council invited organizations that are leading initiatives in innovation, life sciences, small business, and economic development spaces to participate in the Tech Ecosystem Conference as key stakeholders.

Since the Tech Council of Delaware functions primarily as a workforce intermediary, our role is to ensure that there is a skilled workforce available to fill open positions with employers, which ultimately drives economic growth and mobility for residents and businesses alike. Having a skilled and talented workforce leads to innovation, allows businesses and communities to thrive, and is an attractive feature to companies and senior-level tech professionals who are considering relocating to Delaware.

The First State may be small, but we can compete with other nationally recognized tech hubs if we stay united, collaborate, and work together to make Delaware a tech hub.

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