

Northeast Ohio Opportunities in Tech

Expanding IT workforce pathways in Northeast Ohio.



What is the Northeast Ohio Opportunities in Tech?

The NEO Opportunities in Tech is an Ohio TechNet consortium initiative led by Lorain County Community College, Cuyahoga Community College, Stark State College and Lakeland Community College to increase our capacity to meet the Information Technology workforce needs of area employers, as well as the skill development needs of untapped talent. Partners are supported by regional economic development leaders at the Greater Cleveland Partnership and Team Northeast Ohio.

This project is funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and is in partnership with the Ohio TechNet, a statewide consortium of over 40 community colleges, universities and technical centers focused on accelerating innovation to meet manufacturing workforce needs.



What is our purpose?

The NEO Opportunities in Tech project addresses identified workforce gaps in specific in-demand Information Technology occupations, including:

- End User Support
- Information and Cyber Security
- Network Systems and Maintenance
- Application/Software Development
- Data Analytics

The three main gaps we will be addressing include:

1. Student Engagement & Enrollment
2. Student Progression & Completion
3. Connecting Students to Employment

How will we do this work?

Employer Engagement Model:

Business & Industry Leadership Team (BILT) Model Expansion and curriculum redesign with integration of work-based learning

Program Design & Implementation:

Curriculum course redesign to include credentials and work-based learning, and comprehensive student services to include coaching and advising

Advancing Untapped Talent Regional Engagement Strategy:

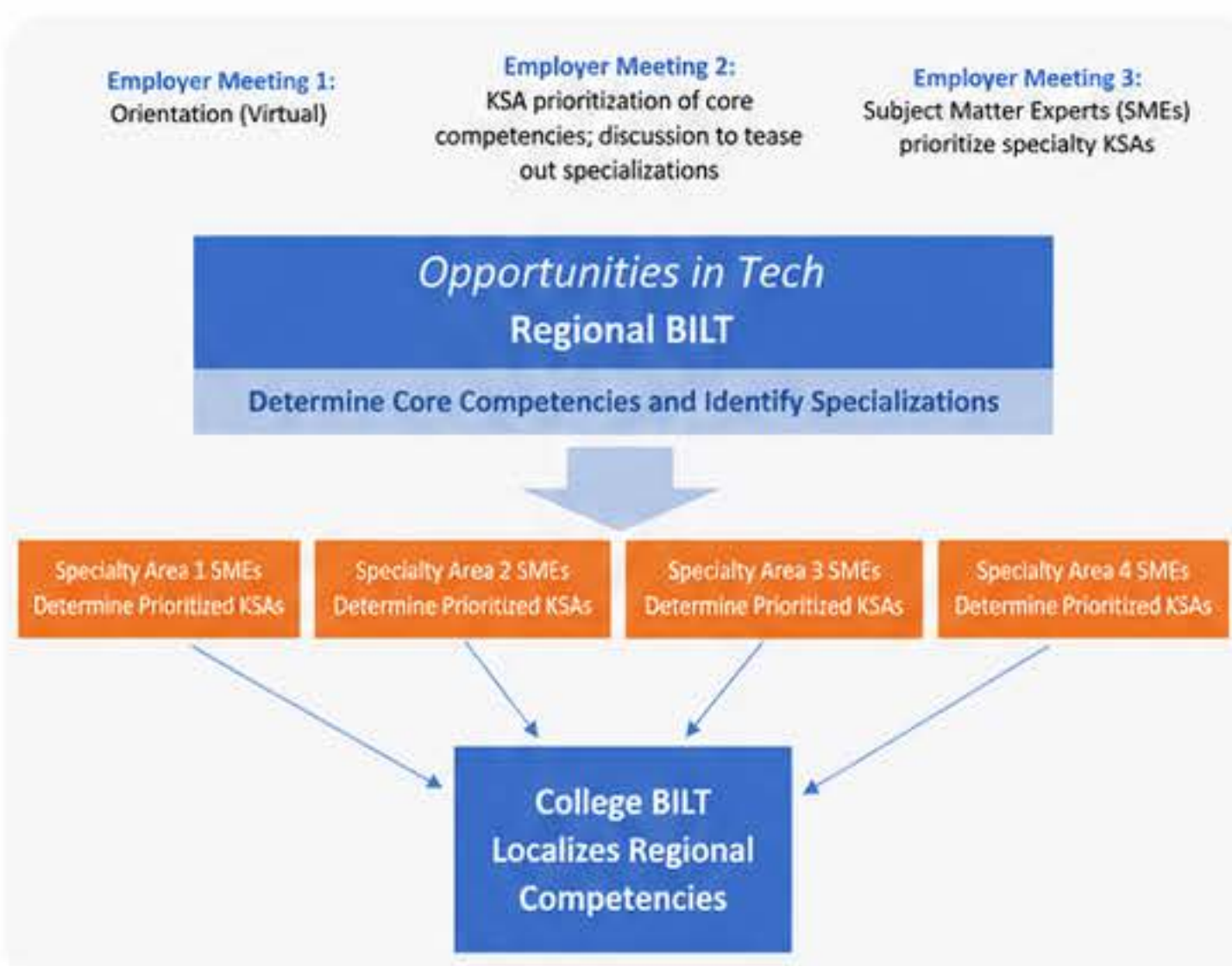
Partner with Community-Based Organizations to recruit participants into IT Pathways, and to expand dual enrollment into communities where untapped talent live.





Employer Engagement Model

With support from a US Department of Labor Strengthening Community College round 3 investment, the Consortium is implementing the **Business & Industry Leadership Team (BILT)** Model to strategically engage IT employers across the region, aligning our curriculum with market needs to ensure graduates are workforce ready. In April, nine regional employers identified key competencies for the IT workforce, focusing on four occupations: 1. Information and Cyber Security, 2. Data Analytics, 3. Network Systems and Maintenance, and 4. Application/Software Development. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in each area then met to prioritize the required knowledge and skills through electronic voting followed by discussion. The OiT team will use insights from these sessions to develop regional initiatives and programs, including an IT competency model.



Program Design & Implementation

Lakeland introduced 3 new degree programs—Associates in Information Systems, Information Technology, and Computer Science—facilitating seamless transfer to four-year universities. Collaborations with recruitment, marketing, and university partners (Bowling Green, Franklin University, Kent State) resulted in a new webpage highlighting these offerings.

LCCC has mapped short- to long-term credentials for four programs and is supporting students with the attainment of industry-recognized credentials. Work-based learning is being integrated into programs, and CISS 121, a gateway course for Networking and Software Development, is being prioritized for review and improvement.

Stark added three industry-related IT credentials (Cybersecurity Analyst+, Linux+, Cisco Certified Network Associate) to its offerings, and their professional certification program has utilized study guides to help students achieve certifications. Stark is also developing a placement model for work-based learning with their career services.

Tri-C is launching a new Cisco course in Fall 2024, allowing both noncredit and credit students to receive identical content and credentials. They are also offering noncredit courses to prepare students for AI-900 and Azure AI Engineer Associate AI-102 certification exams. The Noncredit Integration Committee at Tri-C developed process maps and action plans to better integrate noncredit and credit programs, with recommendations being implemented by executive leadership.



Advancing Untapped Talent Regional Engagement Strategy

The colleges have engaged multiple partners to support the recruitment and outreach of prospective students through exploration activities in IT career pathways. This includes the Passport to IT event with Greater Cleveland Partnership and the Big Brothers Big Sisters Wired Rockstars program. Both Tri-C and LCCC partnered with getWITit a women's IT association, who hosted networking events on our campuses for students, community members and professionals. The events opened and closed with networking and included a panel of women IT professionals who shared their expertise and advise with the attendees.

How Opportunities in Tech Supports the Student Experience



- **Exploring IT Careers:** The project provides opportunities for students to delve into various IT pathways, allowing them to explore potential career options.
- **Student Support Services:** By offering student-centric services, the project ensures that learners receive the necessary guidance and assistance throughout their educational journey.
- **Credential Attainment:** Encouraging students to pursue relevant credentials, the project empowers them with valuable qualifications that enhance their employability.
- **Targeted Coaching and Advising:** Through personalized coaching and advising, students receive tailored guidance, helping them make informed decisions about their academic and professional paths.
- **Professional Development and Networking:** The project facilitates networking opportunities and fosters professional growth, connecting students with industry experts and peers.
- **Work-Based Learning Integration:** By integrating work-based learning, the project bridges the gap between classroom knowledge and real-world application, preparing students for successful careers in the IT field.