



MOVING GENERATIONS TO STEM

- 860-398-9061
- P.O. BOX 2321
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457
- CONTACT@STEAMTRAININC.ORG

STEAM Train Inc. Selected for Second Time as a Microsoft TechSpark Fellow to Grow Economic Opportunity in Connecticut

Middletown, Connecticut – On December 5, 2024, STEAM Train Inc. announced that it has been selected by Microsoft as a continuing Fellow as part of its TechSpark program to bring science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) to underserved populations in the state of Connecticut. STEAM Train, which was founded by Donna Hylton, CEO, in 2017, is an organization whose programming focuses on STEM education, skill development, and apprenticeship opportunities for minorities all across Connecticut. Microsoft recently announced the second cohort of the TechSpark Community Engagement Fellowship, which supports nonprofit organizations across the country working to expand economic opportunities in their communities.

STEAM Train's Fast Track Academy (FTA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Community Skilling initiatives were the main STEAM Train programs supported by the Microsoft grant. FTA is a workforce development program designed to offer under-employed, underrepresented, and unskilled individuals, especially those who are single parents with dependent children who live below a living wage, opportunities to develop skills for the STEM workplace. The STEAM Train's FTA offers digital skilling which prepares participants to earn certificates as IT Support Specialist and Helpdesk Professionals. The program's curriculum includes Windows Desktop Setup and Troubleshooting, Computer Networking and Systems Administration, and Microsoft Teams. The latest cohort also received AI training and earned certifications to complement the cadre of other IT credentials earned in the program.

STEAM Train will collaborate with Microsoft to support free AI skilling workshops in its community. This year, STEAM Train was able to host several events dedicated to AI skilling for diverse and underrepresented populations in Middletown, Meriden, and West Hartford and plans to continue these workshops in 2025.

"Collaborating with Microsoft as a Tech Spark Fellow has been an instrumental part of the STEAM Train programming, particularly in light of the new AI world we live in," said CEO Hylton. "It is our mission to educate our communities not only on the practical use of AI, but to give people the skills necessary to obtain employment in the field."

"Microsoft's TechSpark program works closely with local community organizations to develop digital skills, support nonprofits and create jobs," said Mike Egan, Senior Director, Microsoft TechSpark. "By working together with STEAM Train Inc., we can help them deliver resources, education and digital skills for students that create greater economic opportunity in Connecticut."

Last year's cohort of TechSpark Fellows secured over \$177 million in funding support, reached 48,000 community members, and engaged 548 partners to help build economic opportunities in 42 communities across the nation. Read more about Microsoft TechSpark [here](#).

To learn more about STEAM Train, visit our website at <https://www.steamtraininc.org/>.