



## RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

### Joint Inclusion Committee

#### Recommendation Number: [20260325-029]: FY 2026-2027 Expanding Digital Literacy and Technology Career Pathways

#### **Recommendation**

The City of Austin has a long-standing commitment to economic mobility, workforce development, and equitable access to opportunity for all residents. As technology continues to play a significant role in the regional economy, expanding access to digital skills training and workforce readiness opportunities is increasingly important to ensure that more residents can participate in the technology sector and access career opportunities. However, many low-income residents and communities of color continue to face barriers to entering and advancing within the technology workforce.

Community-based organizations in Austin work to address these barriers by providing digital literacy training, workforce readiness programming, and exposure to technology career pathways. Expanding access to these types of programs can help ensure that more residents can participate in Austin's technology economy and access higher-wage career opportunities.

#### **Description of Recommendation to Council**

- Provide \$2 million annually to support community-based digital literacy and technology workforce development programming.

#### **Rationale**

Austin's technology sector plays a significant role in the regional economy and continues to create economic opportunities. However, many residents, particularly those from low-income households, communities of color, and historically underrepresented groups, lack access to the resources, training, and professional networks necessary to enter the technology workforce.

Universal Tech Movement (UTM) is one example of a community-based organization providing programming that introduces participants to digital skills and technology career pathways. Through community-centered programming, the organization helps address barriers to entering the technology workforce. To date, UTM has served more than 1,000 participants across Texas, representing 111 unique zip codes, and has built partnerships with employers, community organizations, and local institutions to expand access to careers in the technology sector.

Many participants in UTM programs come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Approximately 60% of participants live below the poverty line, and a majority report annual

incomes of less than \$13K, highlighting the need for accessible workforce development opportunities that can lead to stable, higher-wage employment.

Programs such as UTM's Community Catalyst Program and similar initiatives help participants develop foundational digital literacy and workforce readiness skills while introducing them to career opportunities within the technology sector.

Funding would support the expansion of programming that:

- Provides digital literacy and technology training to residents who face barriers to entering the technology workforce
- Supports workforce readiness programs that prepare participants for employment in technology-related fields
- Connects participants with mentorship, networking opportunities, and employer engagement within Austin's technology ecosystem
- Expands program capacity to serve approximately 300 participants annually in Austin

Investing in programs that expand digital literacy and workforce pathways can benefit not only individual participants but also the broader Austin economy. By preparing residents for technology-related careers and strengthening connections between community members and the tech ecosystem, these programs help ensure that the benefits of Austin's economic growth are more broadly shared.

Allocating \$2 million annually to support community-based digital literacy and technology workforce development programming would expand access to training and career pathways for hundreds of Austin residents each year while advancing the City's goals related to economic mobility, workforce development, and equitable access to opportunity.

**Date of Approval:** March 25, 2026

**Motioned By:** Commissioner Laake-Stanfield

**Seconded By:** Commissioner Parsons

**Vote:** 10-0

**For:** Vice Chair Bondi, Commissioners Alvizo, Benson, Castaneda, Chang, Laake-Stanfield, Kanawati, Oliva-Martinez, Parsons, Thakkar

**Against:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Recuse:** None

**Off the dais:** None

**Absent:** Chair Afifi, Commissioners Bullard, McNary, Melendez

**Attest:** *Ryan Sperling*  
(Ryan Sperling, Staff Liaison)