

SUCCESS STORIES

America's Promise Grants

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (CUNY)

— 90-DAY UPSKILLING CHALLENGE —



City University of New York (CUNY) – One of CUNY's many employer partners with the America's Promise grant program is Google and CUNY staff wanted to help more participants obtain jobs with the tech company. CUNY staff worked with Google employees to develop online workshops so participants would be able to learn skills that would be valuable to Google and other technology firms as well as have exposure to the company before applying. This initiative that started with America's

Promise participants was so successful that CUNY and Google decided to expand the program to all CUNY students. The partnership was going well until local restrictions forced all learning to transition to virtual and interest in the additional online classes dropped. America's Promise program staff again took the lead and inspiration from an upskilling challenge in another state and decided to create their own challenge to encourage participants and students to take additional online courses that would provide transferable skills and in some cases certifications.

CUNY decided to expand their virtual skills classes by partnering with nine companies —IBM, General Assembly, Revature, Accenture, Cisco, Google, HP Life, Coursera, and Salesforce Trailhead— to curate a list of no-cost virtual skills trainings which normally cost hundreds of dollars. This list was the beginning of what became the [CUNY 90-Day Upskilling Challenge](#) that provides all CUNY students, including America's Promise participants with access to free trainings in high-demand skills to make them more competitive and attractive to prospective employers.

The Upskilling Challenge was an amazing success with over 14,000 registered participants and will endure as part of the sustainability plan to continue the success that was created by the America's Promise program. The program will continue working with individual CUNY campuses as sub-grantees and stakeholders to administer specific upskilling trainings designed by the campuses. For students that wish to continue training beyond the free course, CUNY will provide training vouchers to 10,000 students to obtain industry-recognized credentials over the course of two years funded by BNY Mellon and U.S. Department of Education grants.

— PARTICIPANT SUCCESS —



Shoko, CUNY Class of 2021 – “I started my Upskilling Challenge while completing my MBA capstone course at Baruch College. Prior to COVID-19, I didn't have much success with online learning, but as all my courses transitioned online, it seemed like a great time to delve deeper into areas that interested me. The CUNY Upskilling Challenge served as a great resource as I'm working towards earning my Master's in Data Analysis at the CUNY Graduate Center. I look forward to completing my modules in the next few weeks!”

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Julian, CUNY Class of 2020 – “I’ve enjoyed the Coursera experience. I’ve completed a Python course, a SQL Basic, and a SQL advanced course that counts towards the CUNY Big Data series which I will complete in a few weeks. The application of what I’ve learned has already been recognized by a few colleagues at work and I’m excited to see how the CUNY 90-Day Upskilling Challenge is helping me transition into a tech career!”

— ADDITIONAL RESOURCES —

- ★ **Bronx Times Op-Ed** – An Op-Ed from the university Chancellor highlights the CUNY 90-Day Upskilling Challenge as providing free virtual skills training and a resource built around partnerships with industry leaders like Google and IBM to connect students to employers that are hiring during COVID-19.

<https://www.bxtimes.com/op-ed-partnerships-with-employers-boost-students-bolster-economy-2>