

Partner4Work, Partners Join IBM to Provide Training & Employment Resources to Job Seekers, Small Businesses, Others

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[Partner4Work](#) (P4W) and partner organizations have joined forces with IBM (NYSE: IBM) to make Pittsburgh the first city in the U.S. to launch IBM's "[Service Corps Reignite](#)," a career readiness platform to support businesses, job seekers, and non-profit organizations as they emerge from the economic disruption of COVID-19.

IBM's effort includes accredited learning content from IBM with personalized, 1:1 career development coaching from IBM Service Corps volunteers, and other experts at no cost to the user. The program combines these resources with free workshops, referrals, and resume-building experiences arranged by not-for-profits and businesses.

Wayne Balta, an IBM vice president and senior IBM executive for the Pittsburgh area, said, "Even before coronavirus, it was clear that jobs are changing due to automation trends. These disruptions require businesses, not-for-profits, and governments to make a fundamental shift in retooling the workforce. IBM Service Corps Reignite helps focus learners on cultivating practical and professional skills to meet the challenge, and helps employers grow their businesses while making their workplaces more diverse and inclusive."

Locally, Partner4Work has united other leaders to assist as part of the IBM Service Corps Reignite program. Partners include the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, Community College of Allegheny County, Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Hillman Family Foundations, Human Services Center Corporation, United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, and the global law firm Jones Day.

"As the region's businesses and job seekers recover from the economic impact caused by the COVID-19 health crisis, the nimble response of local leaders, IBM, and Jones Day to provide pathways to opportunity for businesses and job seekers is a sign of stronger days ahead," said David J. Malone, President and CEO of Gateway Financial and Chairman of the Partner4Work Board of Directors.

Collaboration with these organizations will play a key role in addressing local needs. For example, entrepreneurs looking to create detailed plans to relaunch their business can work with Jones Day to learn about legal considerations, work with mentors to refine market research, engage with experts regarding economic development grants and financial management, or learn about the latest digital marketing techniques.

Meanwhile, job seekers and workers can access job referral networks; gain practical experience with hands-on projects; learn about workplace trends; hone professional and soft skills such as resume-writing and time management; take in-person and online classes that are relevant to tech and non-tech jobs.

As part of IBM Service Corps Reignite, job seekers and entrepreneurs can access IBM's [SkillsBuild](#) learning and education platform. SkillsBuild provides job seekers -- including individuals displaced from previous employment, transitioning from the armed forces to civilian jobs, returning to work after leave, or those changing professions -- with accredited digital learning content from IBM and partners. Users receive personalized coaching and practical learning experience, as well as foundational knowledge about digital technologies and professional skills to help them re-enter or advance in the workforce. These skills, needed for both technical and non-technical careers in all industries, are often "New Collar" positions, such as Web developers or customer service specialists, which often don't require a traditional, four-year college degree.

The IBM Service Corps Reignite program will also provide legal education and legal clinics for small businesses and nonprofits. "This IBM platform allows Jones Day to provide small businesses and non-profit organizations with the same kinds of legal education and training that we provide to Fortune 500 companies," said Laura Ellsworth, Partner-in-Charge of Community Service Initiatives for Jones Day.

Platform offerings will be expanded locally to assist the region's business community to prepare and recruit skilled talent in industries including health care, financial services, energy, and others.

IBM SkillsBuild is traditionally offered in cooperation with local non-profit organizations in more than 15 countries with 30,000 users. The platform is often combined with 1:1 mentoring provided by IBM volunteers in from the company's Service Corps program of pro bono consulting.

"With the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that flexible, quality training and learning tools will be the key to helping individuals reinvent their future careers while helping businesses prepare and recruit talent," said Earl Buford, CEO of Partner4Work. "Bringing this global tool to the local market is a step in the journey toward a stronger future."

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