

Penn State New Kensington's Digital Foundry of Southwestern PA Makerspace Project Awarded \$1.5 Million by ARM Institute

The ARM Institute announced the \$1.5 million award to the Digital Foundry as part of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Region's "New Economy Collaborative."

NEW KENSINGTON, PA, UNITED STATES, May 9, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Digital Foundry at New Kensington](#), an initiative of [Penn State New Kensington](#) and the [Economic Growth Connection of Westmoreland](#), has been selected as one of four makerspaces in the region to receive funding to build upon and strengthen existing entrepreneurial and manufacturing assistance, knowledge and resources to organizations and individuals.



PennState
New Kensington

Penn State New Kensington

The ARM Institute announced the \$1.5 million award to the Digital Foundry as part of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Region's "New Economy Collaborative," which was awarded nearly \$62.7 million through the U.S. Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge.

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Sherri McCleary, Executive Director

“Penn State New Kensington is excited and proud to be part of this exciting initiative,” said Kevin Snider, chancellor of the campus. “This new support allows us to extend and build upon our growing innovation ecosystem in New Kensington and Westmoreland County, as well as continue to serve our University’s land grant mission within the

region and beyond. With future readiness as a focus of the campus, we look forward to what this new program brings for our area, its organizations, community members, and students of all levels.”

The award will allow the Digital Foundry to expand its technology offerings and workforce and robotics trainings, as well as be able to strengthen its partnership with The Corner Launchbox, Penn State New Kensington's Invent Penn State innovation hub, an established entrepreneurial learning and coworking space offering programming to help entrepreneurs and small businesses accelerate their growth and de-risk their business. Together, both facilities will offer a regional hub for entrepreneurial and workforce training, with a focus on the latest in smart digital manufacturing technologies.

"Funds from this grant will support the purchase of additional software, equipment, and tools for producing prototype products and mechanical and electrical operating systems in the areas of robotics, artificial intelligence, advanced smart manufacturing, and 3-D printing," explained Sherri McCleary, executive director at the Digital Foundry at New Kensington. "It will also support completion of additional workshop space available for technical makers and entrepreneurs and expand our training, mentoring, and technical assistance programs for existing and startup manufacturers and makers."

In addition to funding through the program and with the assistance of the ARM Institute, the Digital Foundry will also be able to learn from and collaborate with the other regional makerspaces in the program. The ARM Institute is the nation's leading robotics Manufacturing Innovation Institute. Since 2017, the Pittsburgh-based institute facilitates collaboration among industry, government, and academia to propel solutions that address urgent needs in manufacturing.

Through the grant, the ARM Institute will advise the makerspaces and help to expand the scope of their services to benefit small and medium-sized manufacturers and manufacturing entrepreneurs.

"We are thrilled and honored to have been selected as one of the regional makerspaces by ARM," said McCleary. "This is a recognition of the work that we have already started since our opening and will enable us to accelerate our missions around upskilling workers and assisting local manufacturers and startups with access to the tools and technologies to build or improve their products, processes, and business models."

The Digital Foundry, which opened in June 2022, offers technical assistance and skills training at all levels in robotics and digital manufacturing technologies for small- to mid-sized manufacturers, as well as current and future members of the workforce and K-16 educators and students. With its dedicated staff, the state-of-the-art facility offers capabilities and knowledge in topics such as industrial robotics; smart sensing and edge computing; data analytics; digital automation; computational modeling and digital twins; IIoT; connected systems; and digital threads.

About The Digital Foundry at New Kensington

The Digital Foundry at New Kensington, located at 855 Fifth Avenue in New Kensington, Pennsylvania, is a 15,044-square-foot innovation and manufacturing lab space aimed at building future-ready awareness and skill sets for the manufacturing industry, K-16 education sector, current and future workforce and community members in Southwestern PA. The lab, which is one of the country's seven Smart Manufacturing Innovation Centers, received \$5.5 million in funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, as well as a \$1 million matching gift from Penn State through the Economic Development Matching Program, an initiative of its current campaign, "A Greater Penn State for 21st Century Excellence." A collaborative effort between Penn State New Kensington and the Economic Growth Connection of Westmoreland, the Foundry's mission is to drive the growth of ideas, learning, and problem-solving through the application of digital technologies. Stay up-to-date with the Digital Foundry at DigitalFoundryNK.com.

About Penn State New Kensington

Penn State New Kensington is one of 24 campuses that are comprised of The Pennsylvania State University. Located just 17 miles from the city of Pittsburgh, the campus is nestled on 72 wooded acres of Upper Burrell, Pennsylvania, and is easily accessible from almost anywhere in Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Indiana, and Westmoreland Counties. Penn State New Kensington offers 11 baccalaureate and four associate degrees, as well as the first two years of almost all of Penn State's 275+ majors through the University's 2+2 plan. The campus continues to fulfill the University's land grant mission through its ongoing efforts in the city of New Kensington to drive economic development and revitalization and to prepare the Rust Belt region for the next industrial revolution. This work includes its Invent Penn State innovation hub, The Corner, and its digital manufacturing innovation lab, the Digital Foundry at New Kensington. For more information about Penn State New Kensington, visit www.newkensington.psu.edu.

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