

Emerge and Rise Launches Citywide Digital Literacy Program to Close Technology Gap for Small Businesses

Bridging the digital divide through workshops, mentorship, and access to automation, AI, and e-commerce tools.

SAN ANTONIO, TX, UNITED STATES, August 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Emerge and Rise, a San Antonio-based nonprofit venture development organization, has launched a comprehensive Digital Literacy Program [initiative](#) aimed at helping small business owners build real-world technology skills. The initiative targets underserved entrepreneurs who are often left out of digital transformation conversations, from those learning how to set up email and social media, to those ready to explore automation and AI tools.



Emerge and Rise - Together We Can

The new program is designed to reach more than 280 local businesses in its first year, offering workshops, mentorship, and ongoing access to digital tools. The curriculum spans three progressive phases: foundational skills, intermediate applications (e-commerce, marketing, mobile optimization), and advanced strategies using AI, automation, cybersecurity, and data analytics.

“Business owners are being hit with new tools, tech terms, and pressure to keep up, and it’s overwhelming,” said Lina Rugova, Founder and President of Emerge and Rise. “When words like artificial intelligence get thrown around, many just shut down. But the truth is, if they don’t adapt, they risk falling behind. This program is here to walk them through it, step by step, without the jargon.”

The program goes beyond one-time workshops. It will be delivered directly from the Emerge and

Rise space in District 10, offering bilingual instruction, hands-on learning, and one-on-one mentorship for participating business owners. The goal is to cut through the noise, build digital confidence, and help founders and their employees unlock new revenue streams, improve operations, and stay competitive in a fast-changing economy.

Early partners in the initiative include [The AI Cowboys](#), who have donated 10 laptops, and the [Founder Institute San Antonio](#) chapter, which will contribute expert mentorship and access to advanced tools.

The Digital Literacy Program aligns with Emerge and Rise's broader mission to support sustainability, economic inclusion, and tech adoption in small business communities. By upskilling local business owners, the program aims to prevent avoidable closures driven by fast-moving technology shifts, a critical step in reducing poverty for families and communities that rely on these businesses to survive. With future plans to integrate into citywide smart economy efforts, the program will also provide valuable data and insights to help shape San Antonio's digital equity strategies.

The initiative is currently supported by community sponsors and is seeking additional funding to scale citywide. A nominal \$55 participation fee will be waived or refunded upon graduation to ensure accessibility for all.

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