

# **Alabama Selected as First Region to Benefit from Multi-Million Dollar Digital Skills Education Grant Received by the National Center for Women & Information Technology**

Multi-Region Initiative to Increase Women in Computing Will Launch in Birmingham, Alabama; Program Made Possible by \$4.1 Million Grant From Cognizant U.S. Foundation

The National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) will launch a new nationwide digital skills education program and technology awareness campaign in Birmingham, Alabama. This multi-year, multi-faceted initiative, designed to increase the number of technical women in the southeastern United States, will kick off on May 1, 2019. Birmingham has been selected as the launch site for the program, based on several criteria, including educational infrastructure, technical ecosystem, community support and demand, and city leadership.

Today's announcement results from the \$4.1 million grant made to NCWIT by the Cognizant U.S. Foundation in December 2018. By year-end 2019, grant-funded initiatives in Alabama powered by NCWIT will include AspireIT educational programs for middle school, high school, and college women; Counselors for Computing training opportunities for professional school counselors, and Aspirations in Computing Community scholarship, internship, and networking opportunities. In addition, women who become part of the Aspirations in Computing Community will have the opportunity to apply for workforce skill development funds

to further expand their digital capabilities.

In addition to Birmingham, two other cities in the Southeast will be identified for programming in 2020 and 2021. Combined, the three locations are expected to impact over 13,000 girls and women by 2022 through the build-out of the entire computing ecosystem.

“When examining regions for our initial program launch, Alabama quickly caught our attention, and Birmingham in particular, given the community support and local leadership that NCWIT is readily able to provide in the area,” said Lucy Sanders, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder, NCWIT. “We look forward to working with the Cognizant U.S. Foundation to expand computing pathways and opportunities in Alabama, ultimately making a lasting, positive impact on the state’s computing landscape.”

“We are thrilled to support NCWIT and their work to expand technology education and training opportunities for young women across the country,” said Kristen Titus, Executive Director, Cognizant U.S. Foundation. “While diversity initiatives have increased in recent years, markets across the country remain vastly underserved. NCWIT and the Cognizant U.S. Foundation are empowering women throughout Alabama to pursue opportunities in the state’s diverse and expanding digital economy. We can’t wait to celebrate their successes.”

“We are pleased to support this digital skills initiative to empower women, and look forward to a strong launch in the Birmingham community,” said Carol Cohen, member of the board of directors, Cognizant U.S. Foundation. “Cognizant has long been committed to developing programs that will lead students and workers toward careers in the digital economy. Working alongside community partners like NCWIT helps us advance this mission and support gender parity in the workforce across the U.S.”

About NCWIT

The National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) is a non-profit community of more than 1,100 universities,

companies, non-profits, and government organizations nationwide working to increase girls' and women's meaningful participation in computing. NCWIT equips change leaders with resources for taking action in recruiting, retaining, and advancing women from K-12 and higher education through industry and entrepreneurial careers. Find out more at <http://www.ncwit.org>.

#### About Cognizant U.S. Foundation

The Cognizant U.S. Foundation is a 501(c) (3) private foundation created and funded by Cognizant Technology Solutions Corporation to support STEM education and skills training across the United States. Learn more at: <https://cognizantusfoundation.org>.