



gener8tor Skills Accelerator

[gener8tor Skills Accelerator](#) is a virtual, on-demand program for people looking for jobs in high-demand roles in their communities founded in partnership with Microsoft and [New North](#) in late summer 2020 in response to unprecedented pandemic related unemployment. The program has scaled to 14 communities across the county - both urban and rural - to continue the learnings in how to best serve communities.

The Skills Accelerator graduates build their confidence alongside their technical knowledge in small cohort-based groups where they receive one-on-one support to achieve their goals. Participants earn LinkedIn Learning certificates and, in certain programs, have access to reduced fee exams to secure industry-recognized certifications. All learning is self-paced to fit any schedule and takes approximately 15 hours per week.

Intended to support under and unemployed individuals gain meaningful employment in a variety of sectors (egs technology, insurance, finance and professional services) in roles in professional technical and administrative services. gener8tor and our graduates share a goal - graduates getting good jobs in diverse, professional workplaces where the skills they gain from the accelerator can be applied. Roles might be working in their community or in a remote role working for a company anywhere in the country.

This skills accelerator has advanced individuals' wages through promotion or by securing a new job in both "blue" and "white collar" jobs. Approximately one-third of the graduates share their new salary with us, on average it is \$47,382.

How does the Skills Accelerator work?

gener8tor's recruiting team work on all levels of a community from grasstop to grassroots to share the opportunity. We provide all tools necessary for organizations and individuals to be the best ambassador they can be for the program - social-ready graphics, template email language, flyers for places with in-person visibility. Additionally, by leveraging gener8tor's expertise in digital customer acquisition, we also find individuals who are not engaged with the traditional workforce safety net system. We have found our most successful graduates have given up on "the system" helping them for a variety of reasons.

After filling out a simple on-line application, gener8tor staff reach out to the applicant to talk more about the program. After this discussion to determine shared alignment about the program and applicant's goals and agreement on the commitment required for applicants we accept program participants. Under and unemployed and those who identify as historically marginalized

(egs. women, people of color, formerly incarcerated/justice involved) are prioritized with the goal of having a cohort of 35-40 individuals.

The programs last between 5-10 weeks, driven by the technical curriculum's length. Historically, the curriculum has been from Microsoft's [Global Skilling Initiative's ten most in-demand careers](#) from data on LinkedIn job postings (see below for full list). Wisconsin's Good Jobs Challenge's application will utilize these ten career paths but also other LinkedIn curriculum to expand options. This will allow for regional needs but also as job and skill demands change. An example of a program outside of the ten but very in demand is cybersecurity training. The ten technical learning paths draw from Microsoft, LinkedIn and GitHub. Additional programming, also curated from LinkedIn, rounds out participants' critical employability, communication and interpersonal skills. Technical curriculum will be selected in partnership with community leaders and ambassadors, taking into consideration transferable skills and goals of participants and local economic hiring needs. Data from multiple sources will be used to guide the curriculum discussion. Frequently used curriculums to date are Customer Service and Sales, IT Help Desk, Network Administrator and Project Management.

A distinguishing component of this Skills Accelerator is that the program is self-paced and fully virtual. This allows participants who have family caregiving responsibilities or are employed with unpredictable schedules to continue working while completing the program. If access to a computer or internet is an issue we work with individuals on a case-by-case basis to help determine a solution. That may be providing a refurbished computer and hotspot or working with a local partner that has a computer lab if, for example, focused and quiet time in their house is the issue vs. a computer.

Another unique component of gener8tor Upskilling is how community is built into the program. Participants learn alongside each other and keep each other accountable. All participants are assigned a "Career Coach" and a "Buddy or Pod." The "Career Coach" is a gener8tor employee who can assist with answering any questions, helping with needs that may arise such as trouble completing a course and emotionally supporting the participants in ways they may not be able to find with friends or family members. Program "Buddies" are fellow cohort members. They exchange contact information for the purposes of holding each other accountable for success and providing peer support as needed.

Concurrently with the digital skills learning, participants engage in job coaching services - crafting or refreshing their resume, LinkedIn profile and cover letters and participating in mock interviews.

Additionally, weekly "Lunch & Learns" allow participants to log into a live Microsoft Teams meeting to learn from and engage with workforce and technical experts. Topics include things participants may need for their job search like Optimized Job Search Strategies, How to Find a Job on LinkedIn, Interview Best Practices or how to enhance their technical learning to complement their LinkedIn learnings.

The last week of programming, participants are invited to interview with companies hiring for roles they have just gained digital skills in. Data shows that 40% of job seekers are hired at companies where they have a connection. gener8tor provides that network and connection. At gener8tor, our goal is to be as responsive as possible to the local community's needs. In this program that is both for employer needs but career interests and aspirations for the individual.

Employer Hiring Network

Our entrepreneurial, corporate and venture capital work in other parts of our company instantly created an opportunity to grow our hiring network through the over 3,357 corporate connections and 788 alumni companies we regularly work with. Consequently, many of these corporations and companies are actively engaged with and hiring gener8tor Skilling Accelerator graduates. Our dedicated employer network that we regularly work with for their hiring needs is currently 368 companies across a variety of industries.

Locally, we have been engaging with Wisconsin employers since the NE WI pilot started in 2020. There will be additional and intensive employer outreach in advance of the grant application for committed engagement with the graduates. Employer engagement will be a priority through the entire life of the program as sustainability includes employer support in the future but also because success is dependent on their engagement in our success.

In addition, gener8tor is a curated partner to supply candidates to Microsoft Career Connect. Career Connect is a service that will help place job seekers skilled by Microsoft's nonprofit and learning partners in tech-enabled jobs in the Microsoft supplier and partner network.

An example of the benefits of the gener8tor network can be found in our relationship with our startups. One of those, EatStreet, the Madison-based online meal delivery service company, participated in the gener8tor flagship accelerator in 2012. Since then and with the support of gener8tor, EatStreet grew exponentially. They now have over 3,000 full-time employees and are actively hiring. EatStreet has been dedicated to employing gener8tor Skilling Accelerator graduates by providing entry-level positions with the opportunity for upward mobility within the company.

Rachelle Katchenago, a graduate of the gener8tor Skilling Accelerator and NE WI resident, pursued the customer service and sales learning path. Within several months of graduating from gener8tor Skills Accelerator Rachelle was hired for a full-time position at EatStreet. Rachelle has shared her elation over making more money than she ever has before and how without the Skills Accelerator she never would have gotten this job. In the customer service department at EatStreet, Rachelle has learned new skills like using Salesforce software. She now has taken on new duties as an "implementation specialist," helping restaurants to adopt and use the company's online service. At EatStreet, workers move from customer service up to sales or data analyst roles, presenting a clear path for wage growth. Rachelle's exceptional story was highlighted in [Good Morning America](#), in the [New York Times](#) and by Microsoft in one of their "[Features](#)" articles.

Goals

The goal is to have 70% of our graduates hired or promoted into full-time, quality employment within three months. Our definition of full-time, quality employment means that an individual works somewhere between 32-40 hours per week, 50 weeks a year and receives benefits such as healthcare and makes a wage aligned with regional/national averages.

Graduates are supported in their job search until they request not to be. If a graduate is placed we continue to check in every six months in case circumstances change and they need to re-engage our support or if they would like to navigate additional skilling.

gener8tor currently also surveys enrolling participants to determine how they view their current ability to secure employment as a baseline. After graduation, we ask the same questions to assess how differently they feel prepared. We also include [Net Promoter Score \(NPS\)](#) survey questions to assess metrics about if they would recommend the program to a friend or family member - a gold standard of customer satisfaction.

gener8tor staffing model

Each regional program has three people hired dedicated to that program. The Program Manager and two career coaches will support 100 graduates through the program annually. Additionally, overarching staff support each region for recruiting individuals and recruiting and supporting hiring partners.

The Wisconsin Good Jobs Challenge will also layer additional support to ensure our state-wide strategy, data collection and wraparound service support for the skillers.

Community-driven

gener8tor's mission is to help communities invest in their best and brightest.

We work closely with the community to assess what jobs and skills workers are looking to gain while also learning from employers about the skills and qualifications they would like to see when hiring new employees. The flexibility of the Accelerator allows us to focus our curriculum to best fit the needs of the community.

Skills pathways currently offered for Global Skills Initiative

* programs that Skills Accelerator has used

Technical Skills

[Customer Service Specialist*](#)

[Data Analyst](#)

[Digital Marketing Specialist](#)

[Financial Analyst](#)
[Graphic Designer](#)
[IT Administrator*](#)
[IT Help Desk*](#)
[Project Manager*](#)
[Sales Representative*](#)
[Software Developer*](#)

Professional Skills

[Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging for All*](#)
[Job Seeking Skills*](#)
[Professional Soft Skills*](#)

Statistics as of 1.15.21

Stats from NE WI Skilling Accelerator:

4 cohorts (graduations from 8/20 - 11/22)
423 applicants
102 participants
77% graduation rate
36% graduates are people of color and 46% are women
86% of graduates are employed after 3 month
67% of graduates are employed

Overall Skilling Accelerator stats:

14 cohorts (graduations from 8/20 - 12/21)
2288 applicants
538 participants
77% graduation rate
44% graduates are people of color and 40% are women
68% of graduates are employed after 3 months*
50% of graduates are employed*
*9 cohorts have graduated between October 2021 - December 2021