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## **ARC Receives \$200,000 Google Support to Expand Youth Digital Skills and Career Pathways**

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) in partnership with the Technical College System of Georgia Foundation has received a \$200,000 contribution from Google to launch the Pathways to the Digital Economy (PADE) initiative, which aims to help young adults across metro Atlanta build digital skills and explore tech career paths.

The initiative is being led by WorkSource Atlanta Regional's NextGen Program, which is managed by ARC. NextGen is actively recruiting participants and employer partners to help implement the initiative.

PADE is an ARC-led initiative that enhances digital access and economic opportunities for youth in Cherokee, Clayton, Douglas, Fayette, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale counties. The initiative will support young adults aged 18 to 24 by offering industry-recognized IT and digital certifications, paid internships, and comprehensive support services.

"The PADE initiative reflects a strategic approach to closing opportunity gaps while positioning metro Atlanta to stay competitive in a technology-driven economy," said Anna Roach, ARC Executive Director & CEO. "By connecting young people to high-quality training and real-world experience, we are building a workforce that is both resilient and prepared for what's next."

Through PADE, participants will gain access to Grow with Google Career Certificates, along with career coaching, transportation assistance, and digital access resources. Credentials are available in high-demand fields such as IT support or cybersecurity without a traditional four-year degree.

Eligible individuals are encouraged to apply as recruitment begins across the region. Employers and community partners are also encouraged to participate by hosting interns or supporting program delivery.

“This is a significant opportunity for the NextGen Program to secure its first private investment through Google, expanding our ability to prepare young people to compete in emerging technology fields,” said ARC NextGen Director Marsharee O’Connor.

The initiative promotes national and state workforce goals focused on emerging technologies, digital skills, and AI literacy, making sure participants are ready for the future workforce.

"We believe that background or circumstance should not be a barrier to acquiring digital skills. Our mission at Google is 'to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful,' and supporting the PADE initiative helps us create more inclusive pathways into the technology sector," stated Jamal Jessie, Google Community & Workforce Development Manager for Georgia. Interested participants and partners can call 770-997-4511 for more information.

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*The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the official planning agency for the 11-county Atlanta Region, including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale counties as well as the City of Atlanta and 76 other cities. The Atlanta Regional Commission’s mission is to foster thriving communities for all within the Atlanta region through collaborative, data-informed planning and investments.*

*WorkSource Atlanta Regional, which is staffed by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and guided by the [Atlanta Regional Workforce Development Board](#), serves customers in Cherokee, Clayton, Douglas, Fayette, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties. The programs offered through ARC’s Workforce Solutions division are funded through the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.*