



Training young people to help organizations

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New program teaches digital media skills

When in-person learning and working stops because of the COVID-19 health emergency, what do you do if you're an organization focused on creating pathways to employment? If you're Santa Fe nonprofit [Innovate+Educate](#), you launch a six-week program to train young people to help businesses with online and social media business marketing.

"When COVID-19 hit, I started trying to identify the type of training that would give young people skills that are especially in demand from businesses right now," says Jamai Blivin, founder and chief executive officer at Innovate+Educate. "Marketing and communication through digital media seemed the obvious choice."

The online Pro Skills Boot Camp ran June 17 to July 24 for low-income students aged 16-30. Around half the 21 enrolled students were from Santa Fe High and the Early College Opportunities high school, while the others were out of work or out of school. Nine are parents with small children under five, part of the Santa Fe Community Foundation's "Expanding Opportunities for Young Families" program.

Students completing the course received a Google Digital Marketing Credential, a Core Score Employability Skills Credential, two career reports and a Pro Skills Badge. Students, who were paid \$20 an hour for up to 40 hours as they learn, also received individual coaching and mentoring on career development and financial literacy and planning.

Once the course was completed, Innovate+Educate placed students in virtual internships, career paths, or education pathways of their desired field.

Students also heard from a panel of employers including the Laboratory, St. Vincent's Hospital, Nusenda Credit Union, City of Santa Fe and U.A. Local Union 412.

Funders for the program include the Laboratory's managing operator Triad National Security, the Nusenda Foundation, Samueli Foundation, Santa Fe Community Foundation, and Anchorum Foundation.

Blivin is very happy with the way the program worked out. "What is really exciting is how engaged the students are!" she says. "Businesses are having to adapt to this new world and these students are learning the skills to help them."

Read this story in the [July Community Connections](#).

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