



State of Girls in Computer Science: North Carolina

Computing skills are the most sought-after in the US job market, with demand growing 3X the national average. These are the best-paying jobs in the country; they pay twice that of the average private sector job. North Carolina currently has 17,261 open computing jobs (2.8 times the average demand rate in NC). The average salary for a computing occupation in NC is \$105,459, which is significantly higher than the average salary in the state (\$63,510). The tech sector contributes 9.3% of North Carolina's overall economy, at \$46.4 billion¹, and tech jobs account for 7.6% of the overall workforce in the state.

Women are the primary breadwinners in 40% of American families², and leaving women out of this vital workforce in North Carolina will have drastic effects on the economy. Research reinforces the importance of a diverse workforce as a competitive advantage³. Only 11% of senior tech leaders were women⁴, and there is a persistent and growing gap among women of color.

Girls Who Code is an international non-profit organization working to close the gender gap in technology and change the image of what a programmer looks like and does. Girls Who Code has reached 185,000 girls to date through its programs. Girls Who Code alumni are choosing to pursue degrees in computer science, or related fields, at a rate 15x the national average. We advocate that states create gender-specific computer science policy that emphasizes the participation rate of girls, and focuses on implementing policy interventions to close the gaps that exist.

State of Girls in K-12 Computer Science in North Carolina

In North Carolina, four school districts around the state and five community organizations have shown commitment to gender-specific computer science education with Clubs Partnerships with Girls Who Code.

However, North Carolina could be doing much more to encourage equity and inclusion by girls by creating gender-specific computer science public policies. *Most importantly, North Carolina does not require tracking and reporting of participation in all computer science programs by underrepresented minorities, including female students. The only public data that exists on K-12 computer science participation is AP exam participation. In 2019, female students made up only 27.6% of the AP Computer Science exams in North Carolina.*

North Carolina has passed policies designed to increase access to computer science. However, our research shows that access alone does not lead to higher participation rates by girls. Some of these access-only policies include:

- State Computer Science Plan completed and K-12 Computer Science Standards in progress
- \$1.8 million in funding for computer science course offerings build-out
- Allowance for computer science to count toward a high school graduation requirement
- A clear computer science teaching endorsement

¹ https://www.cyberstates.org/pdf/states/CompTIA_Cyberstates_2019_NorthCarolina.pdf

² <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2016/12/19/295203/breadwinning-mothers-are-increasingly-the-u-s-norm/>

³ <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/06/20/silicon-valleys-diversity-problem-is-its-achilles-heel.html>

⁴ <https://www.rebootrepresentation.org/wp-content/uploads/Rebooting-Representation-Report.pdf>