Equipping Tulsa for the Future of Work

CYBER SKILLS CENTER

Impact Report

TULSA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Table of Contents
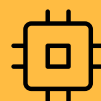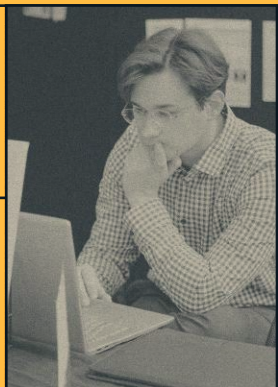
Executive Summary

In 2022, Tulsa Community College and Tulsa Innovation Labs launched the Cyber Skills Center (CSC), a bold initiative to build Tulsa's tech talent pipeline and redefine what inclusive workforce training can look like.

Designed for working adults, CSC delivers accelerated, part-time training in cybersecurity, data analytics, and artificial intelligence. Courses are led by industry professionals, powered by edX, and supported by full scholarships for 90 percent of learners—along with laptops, coaching, and career navigation.

The Cyber Skills Center has helped hundreds of Tulsans gain in-demand skills and access real career opportunities. It was built for people with talent and drive who want to grow, pivot, or advance but haven't always found the right fit in traditional education or training programs. More than a program, it's a new model for how accelerated, high-quality training can connect learners to the tech economy with speed, purpose, and support.

Over 50 alumni have expressed interest in mentoring future learners, helping build a peer-driven ecosystem of growth and opportunity.

As AI and automation reshape the future of work, the Cyber Skills Center is evolving to scale its impact, deepen employer partnerships, and contribute to building a future-ready workforce for Tulsa's innovation economy.

Impact Snapshot

160

graduates across four cohorts

Among early graduates who started
below Tulsa's living wage,

the majority now earn
$60,000 or more,

with many seeing income gains of
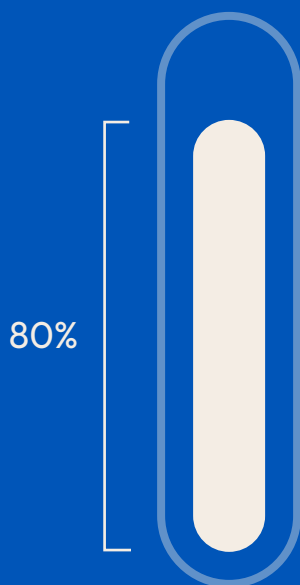$30,000+ within a year.

71%

graduates from
underrepresented
populations.

+$18,750

median annual income gain for job seeking graduates from the first three cohorts[1]

80%

Graduates who landed new jobs rated their job satisfaction at an average of 8 out of 10.

The Cyber Skills Center has brought together a diverse mix of learners, from those launching a tech career to working adults looking to pivot or advance. Each cohort includes people with different backgrounds and motivations, creating an environment where ambition builds, peer support grows naturally, and learners push forward together.

As part of measuring outcomes, we applied a five-tier Labor Market Attachment (LMA) framework that measures employment quality and stability before and after the program. Using a standardized rubric to code and compare job titles, we tracked shifts across a spectrum—from unemployed to full-time, career-track positions.

On average, graduates advanced nearly one full tier.

A one-tier gain might mean moving from part-time or freelance work into a full-time role with benefits, or from a stable non-tech job into a tech-aligned position with upward mobility.
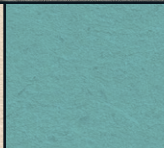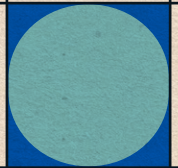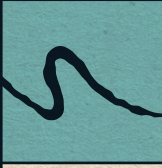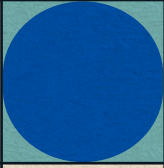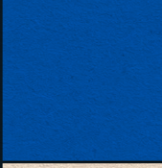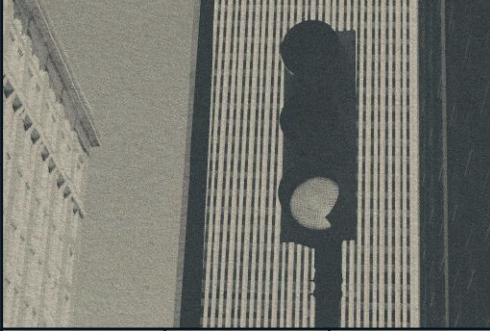
A Shared Vision for Tulsa

The Cyber Skills Center emerged from a shared belief: everyone deserves a fair shot at the jobs of the future. Tulsa can't afford to leave talent on the sidelines.

That's why Tulsa Community College and Tulsa Innovation Labs came together to design a new kind of workforce development model, combining TCC's mission-driven commitment to accessible, high-quality education with TIL's strategic focus on building an inclusive, innovation-driven economy.

Together, we've built a program that delivers accelerated, career-aligned training for adult learners, anchored in employer demand and responsive to Tulsa's evolving tech economy.

This collaboration reflects our shared vision to:

Expand opportunity

Strengthen the region's tech talent pipeline

Position Tulsa as a national model for inclusive economic growth

Career-Centered Education for Today's Tech Ecosystem

The Cyber Skills Center was designed to do more than teach technical skills. It was built to provide an accessible, high-quality learning experience and a clear pathway into entry-level roles in the technology sector.

"My experience with the Cybersecurity bootcamp has been invaluable, and I truly appreciate the support. My instructor and TAs were the absolute best."

Renalla Hagen
Circuit Design Engineer, Zayo Group

World-Class Training Partner

As a global leader in online learning co-founded by Harvard and MIT, edX, brought world-class content and instructional design to the Cyber Skills Center. Through this partnership, the Cyber Skills Center integrated edX's rigorous, industry-recognized curriculum into accelerated bootcamp programs, creating flexible, career-aligned pathways tailored to adult learners.

Learner Satisfaction & Experience

Across four cohorts, Cyber Skills Center learners consistently reported exceptional satisfaction, underscoring the quality, relevance, and supportiveness of the program.

Experience Area	Promoters (9–10)	Neutrals (7–8)	Detractors (0–6)	Net Promoter Score (NPS)[2]
Instruction	82%	14%	4%	78
Student Support (SSM)	78%	17%	5%	73
Overall	74%	20%	6%	68

The Programs

Data Analytics

Foundational skills in:

- Microsoft Excel
- Python Data Analytics
- Databases
- Web Visualization
- Machine Learning

Cybersecurity

Foundational skills in:

- Security Fundamentals
- Systems Administration
- Networks + Network Security
- Defensive Security
- Offensive Security

Foundational skills in:

- Python Programming & Data Foundations
- Machine Learning Models
- Data Visualization & Interpretation
- Neural Networks & Deep Learning
- Transformers & Emerging Topics

Artificial Intelligence

A Network That Pays It Forward

A recent alumni survey (completed by 78% of graduates) showed a strong and growing connection to the CSC alumni network. Responses reflect a lasting sense of community and point to new opportunities for deeper engagement.

From Learners to Leaders

Mentorship

50+

alumni want to give back as mentors or employer partners

Continuous Learning

100%

of alumni surveyed are either continuing their education or intend to

Together, these signals reinforce what makes the Cyber Skills Center different: it's not just a one-time intervention, but the beginning of a long-term arc of mobility, mentorship, and momentum.

Transformation Learning

Real Stories.
New Futures.

CYBER
SKILLS CENTER

From Division 1 to Risk Analyst I

"The Cyber Skills Center was truly life-changing. It gave me the direction, confidence, and hands-on training I needed to break into a career I genuinely love."

Victoria Thompson
Cybersecurity Bootcamp
BOK Financial

It takes a special kind of person to be a Division I athlete, so it's no surprise that this intensity carried Victoria Thompson on to a new type of challenge: the Cyber Skills Center.

With a background in technical recruiting and sales, Victoria found herself at a crossroads. While searching for a career that ignited her passion, life threw her an unexpected challenge that led her to become a full-time caregiver for a close family member. But even in those moments, she kept her sights on something greater. The eventual loss of that family member marked a turning point for Victoria's future.

Victoria already had an interest in cybersecurity, but struggled to navigate self-study pathways. Seeking a more structured approach, she found the Cyber Skills Center and earned a program scholarship.

The cybersecurity program provided Victoria the guidance, support, and solid foundation she needed to land a full-time role. Just three months after the program, she became an Information Security Risk Analyst for BOK Financial and hasn't looked back since.

Not all heroes wear capes

"Looking back, I can confidently say it was one of the most rewarding and impactful decisions I've ever made."

Nickson Njau
Cybersecurity Bootcamp
Helmerich & Payne

Cybersecurity isn't just a career for Nickson Njau but a calling born from lived experience. After witnessing a devastating cyberattack that crippled his former employer's small business in Kenya, Nickson made it his mission to become a solution in a world increasingly shaped by digital threats.

Nickson chose to move to the U.S. to pursue a Computer Science Associate's degree from TCC. But in pursuit of continuous learning, he simultaneously committed to not one but two rigorous Cyber Skills Center programs, relying on faith, focus, and family to push through the pressure.

Today, Nickson works as a Cybersecurity Analyst I at Helmerich & Payne, where he's part of a top-tier security team defending digital infrastructure at scale. With hands-on skills in incident response and digital forensics, and a hunger for learning, he's building the future he once dreamed about and doing it with purpose.

Pivoting is part of the process

"The Cyber Skills Center is your first step on the path to a great career and their team will help guide you every step of the way."

Robert Thompson
Cybersecurity Bootcamp
ONEOK

For Robert Thompson, a career in cybersecurity wasn't a straight line, but years of determination, exploration, and the courage to start again. Pursuing a radio career didn't offer Robert the security necessary to stay, causing him to pivot to a full-time gig at Staples. After 5 years, an opportunity at a litigation support services company landed in front of him. While there, this role helped Robert learn where his heart truly was: in technology.

Earning his CompTIA A+ certification was the first step. The Cyber Skills Center became the next, offering him a scholarship to dive deep into cybersecurity and gain hands-on experience through our intensive boot camp.

After completing the program, Robert was selected for a competitive 3-month SOC apprenticeship with global MSSP BlueVoyant, a launching pad that led him directly into a full-time role as a SOC Analyst I with ONEOK. With a strong foundation in cybersecurity and a growing career he's proud of, Robert's not only fulfilling his personal passion, but building a future that supports his family and opens new doors.

Powered by Partnership

Employers don't just support the Cyber Skills Center, they hire from it.

The Cyber Skills Center works with an alliance of partners dedicated to building the tech talent pipeline in Tulsa. Local employers join our network to access a diverse pool of skilled candidates to strengthen Tulsa's tech workforce.

Where Our Grads Work

AAON

ADP

amazon

BOK FINANCIAL

CHEROKEE NATION
Businesses

CONQUEST
A BlueVoyant Company

Google

H&P

LexisNexis

Northwell Health

ONEOK

paycom

PHILLIPS 66

Williams

Erin Rogers
BOK Financial
SVP, Director of Cyber Security Risk and Compliance

"We've been extremely pleased with how the Cyber Skills Center prepared Victoria for her role on our team. She's quickly become a valuable contributor—immediately assisting with third-party risk assessments, asking insightful questions during onboarding, developing a PCI training course for our employees, and supporting upcoming cybersecurity initiatives. Partnering with the Cyber Skills Center has been a great experience, and we look forward to working with them again in the future."

BOK FINANCIAL

Jody Graham
AAON
IT Project Management

"The Cyber Skills Center Data Analytics Bootcamp provided Veronica with a skill set that has significantly enhanced her capabilities as an IT Project Manager on our team. The bootcamp knowledge enabled Veronica to effectively understand and synergize with various teams, including developers, programmers, business analysts, technology infrastructure, and engineering staff, to deliver successful project results."

Clint Underwood
Conquest Cyber
Formerly Director of Organizational Development

"Being new here in Tulsa, our office really felt the demand of needing more cyber talent as we continued to grow. We looked to the Cyber Skills Center as the solution for providing us with young talent ready to start entry-level jobs in the cyber space."

AAON

CONQUEST
A BlueVoyant Company

The Cyber Skills Center

More than a traditional workforce training program, the CSC is a regional talent engine launched to help drive Tulsa's transition to a tech-led, inclusive, and future-ready economy.

With support from edX, Microsoft, and Google, CSC is redefining what world-class tech education looks like in a mid-sized city.

"Best thing to ever happen to me. Very grateful for this program."

Steven Reed
Sr. Data Analyst at Helmerich & Payne

is a new model for tech talent

Rooted in TCC's mission of educational access and aligned with TIL's strategy to position Tulsa as a hub for tech-driven growth, the CSC delivers agile, employer-informed training built for working adults, career changers, and those historically excluded from the digital economy.

From day one, the CSC has prioritized deep community partnership, working alongside organizations like Black Tech Street and Madison Strategies Group to ensure learners have the wraparound support, industry access, and community connections they need to thrive.

grounded in access and built for impact.

Black Tech Street (BTS)

Black Tech Street has been a strategic partner in shaping the Cyber Skills Center since day one. Early in the collaboration, BTS played a key role in connecting CSC to Microsoft's Cybersecurity Scholarship Fund—unlocking critical resources for learners historically excluded from traditional tech pathways.

Today, BTS works closely with CSC to align talent development with Tulsa's economic future. From co-designing outreach to strengthening employer partnerships, BTS helps expand access to high-opportunity fields like artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. Together, we're building talent pipelines that reflect Tulsa's full potential.

Madison Strategies Group (MSG)

Through its Retrain Tulsa initiative, Madison Strategies Group has been a vital partner in providing holistic support to CSC learners. In 2023 alone, MSG delivered more than 150 one-on-one sessions—offering everything from job readiness coaching to emergency rent assistance and mental health referrals.

MSG has also referred over 30 learners into CSC programs and collaborated on cohort selection to ensure outreach reaches those with the most to gain. By removing real-world barriers to participation and completion, MSG helps learners stay engaged, advance with confidence, and achieve meaningful outcomes. Their partnership was a cornerstone of CSC's learner-first model.

From Bootcamps to a Skills Engine

The Cyber Skills Center is evolving to meet the needs of Tulsa's skills demand with the launch of the Skills Lab.

Fueled by new investment from the Oklahoma Workforce Commission and the State of Oklahoma's Grow with Google initiative, the Cyber Skills Center is transforming into a next-generation skills engine for workforce innovation.

Launching in the summer of 2025 at Gradient, Tulsa's Innovation Hub, the Skills Lab marks a bold next chapter. This new space is designed to deliver modular, industry-led projects, and employer-aligned upskilling—built around the real needs of working adults and regional employers.

Acknowledgements & Data

We are deeply grateful to the many individuals whose insight, leadership, and partnership helped bring the Cyber Skills Center to life.

The Cyber Skills Center's strategy, implementation, and day-to-day operations were led by Jeremy Wade and Tyus Heinrich-Schwieger, whose drive to rethink workforce education for a fast-changing tech landscape shaped the initiative from concept to reality.

At Tulsa Community College, we are especially thankful for the leadership of Dr. Pete Selden, Dr. Angela Sivadon, Dr. Leigh Goodson, and Kari Shults, whose vision and commitment to workforce innovation made this initiative possible. We also gratefully acknowledge the support of Emily Morrison, Ramona Curtis, Shannon Schwaebler, Ellie Selden, and Christine Allison, each of whom played a vital role in advancing this work behind the scenes.

We are also thankful to the early team at Tulsa Innovation Labs, including Nicholas Lalla, Connor Godfrey, whose vision helped seed this project in its formative stage, support from Justin Kits, Daniel Plaisance, Daniel Te and Precious Okoruwa, as well as Jennifer Hankins and Tori Burris for their continued collaboration and alignment.

At Madison Strategies Group, we benefited greatly from the early advisory leadership of Karen Pennington, a key partner in the foundational stages of this initiative. We also thank Steve Tumpkin and Allison Denton for their thoughtful support throughout.

From Black Tech Street, we are honored to have worked alongside Tyrance Billingsley II, whose leadership has helped define Tulsa's inclusive innovation landscape, and we also thank Allen Collins for his continued contributions to partnership and program design.

We extend sincere thanks to Shelli Vazquez, Juanita Soranno, Mia Bartlett, and Symone Gittens and the entire edX team, whose expertise and partnership have enabled us to deliver world-class, career-relevant learning experiences to every learner.

Finally, we are deeply appreciative of the George Kaiser Family Foundation for their generous support and unwavering belief in the power of accessible, high-impact workforce education. We especially thank Monica Basu and Ben Stewart for their partnership and trust.

To everyone named—and the many more who supported us along the way—thank you.

"Your team gave me all the tools I needed to succeed in the Data Analytics bootcamp. I am very grateful!"

Veronica Ostapowich
IT Project Manager, AAON

"The technical training was great, but what really helped me was being pushed into professional tasks like updating my resume and interview training."

Troy Gray
Applications Security Analyst, Arvest Bank

Endnotes

1 Median Annual Income Gain
This report draws on outcome data from four Cyber Skills Center cohorts (2022–2025). Annual median income gains were calculated from job-seeking graduates from Cohorts 1–3. Pre-program income was self-reported as total household income at enrollment. Post-program income was collected in January 2025 via survey responses indicating individual income ranges. These ranges were converted to midpoint annual values to enable directional comparison. We report a median individual income gain of $18,750, based on the 46 graduates who met the above-mentioned criteria and provided post-program income data in the follow-up survey.

2 Net Promoter Score
Income was collected in January 2025 via survey responses indicating individual income ranges. These ranges were converted to midpoint annual values to enable directional comparison. We report a median individual income gain of $18,750, based on the 46 graduates who met the above-mentioned criteria and provided post-program income data in the follow-up survey.

CYBER SKILLS CENTER

TC TULSA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Cyber Skills Center is a leading workforce development program at the Tulsa Community College offering innovative and skills-based training to bridge the tech talent gap in Tulsa.