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# General Assembly Partners with State, Other Tech Entities for Tuition-Free Courses

Qualified students could learn career-spurring tech skills at no cost

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Career and tech educator [General Assembly](#) pulls no punches on its website's main landing page: "The world evolves at the speed of tech. You and your business should, too."

For the individuals — and companies — unsure of how to learn at the pace of these changing times, General Assembly aims to bridge that knowledge gap with both full-time and part-time courses, events (more than 200 a year) and networking opportunities, ultimately empowering students of all stripes to embrace and understand new tech.

The company has presence in cities across the country (think Austin, Boston, San Diego), Europe, Asia and Australia. And, as of the fall of 2016, Providence.

"There's a lot of potential in the state of Rhode Island to have a tech community, moreso than there is," General Assembly Partnership Specialist Mei Li Zhou told Rhode Island Inno in an interview. "You don't have to leave the state for opportunity."

Zhou pointed to the state's burgeoning startup ecosystem as well as opportunities within GA as specific points of interest for fledgling entrepreneurs, especially [its course held in partnership with RI Department of Labor and Training, Tech Collective and TechHire](#).

It works like this: GA will provide free tuition for up to 30 Ocean Staters who qualify — meaning, the individuals are based in Rhode Island, are at least 18 years old, have a high school (or equivalent) degree, are unemployed or underemployed and are authorized to work in the U.S. Interested participants [must apply](#) for the next cohort that begins Oct. 9.

The course itself is called "[Web Development Immersive](#)," and it's GA's flagship course in the state that take 13 weeks to complete. It's described as an opportunity to prepare students "with in-demand web development skills and increase the overall pipeline of tech talent for local businesses." Ultimately, like all of GA's offerings, it looks to give participants skills for "competitive, full-time jobs post graduation."

Zhou said that if this particular course itself isn't for folks looking to get involved in GA, there's other events, like [Introduction to Coding: HTML & CSS](#) and a [Meet & Hire: Web Developers](#) networking opportunity. There are additional full-time course offerings as well, and a suite of part-time courses like [Product Management](#), [Digital Marketing](#) and [Data Analytics](#).

She added that there are bootcamps and workshops that are also great options for business looking for short and sweet ways to train their employees.

In the future, Zhou said that GA hopes to provide more options for classes and workshops, "[to] really help the market see potential to have more of a permanent presence [in Rhode Island]."

The current course offerings, however, still draw a diverse crowd.

"There are students who are right out of college, we have students who have been working in the field for 10 plus years," Zhou said.

Regardless of age, they come away from GA with more skills — and often, jobs. Zhou said companies like GE and Upserve had handled GA participants.

"For all the student and graduates who completed our full-time track, we help them with securing a job; it's the benefits of enrolling in our coursework," Zhou said. "We're really transforming how we see the talent pipeline."

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