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Synchrony Launches First-of-Its-Kind Program in Stamford to Prepare Underserved Youth for the Digital Economy

New Program Supports Synchrony's \$50 Million Commitment to Expand Access to Higher Education, Skills Training, and Financial Knowledge

Partnership with District Arts & Education, UConn and Future 5 Aim to Build a Stronger, More Inclusive Digital-First Future

STAMFORD, Conn., Nov. 4, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Synchrony (NYSE: SYF), together with Connecticut non-profits [District Arts & Education \(DAE\)](#), the [University of Connecticut's Engineering Ambassadors](#) and [Future5](#), today announced a first-of-its kind program in Stamford to equip high school students from underrepresented backgrounds with digital and software skills.



"Access to skills training is essential to growing our digital economy and building a more inclusive future." - DJ Casto

Synchrony and the Synchrony Foundation will donate grants totaling \$300,000 to the three non-profits in support of the Synchrony Skills Academy High School Program. Twenty-five students will gain real-world experience through an eight-month training program and receive college and technology career assistance and an additional 25 students will participate in a summer immersion program. The Program will launch in early 2022 at the

company's new state-of-the art skills center located in its Stamford headquarters when the center officially opens its doors.

In the next decade, [one billion jobs](#)— almost one-third of jobs worldwide—are expected to be transformed by technology [1]. [Nearly 40 percent of Connecticut employers](#) cited the lack of needed skills and expertise as the key challenge to finding qualified young workers [2].

"Access to skills training is essential to growing our digital economy and building a more inclusive future," said DJ Casto, Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer at Synchrony. "Investing in these public-private partnerships will help unlock career opportunities for underrepresented youth and grow the next generation of Connecticut leaders."

Earlier this week, Synchrony kicked off its STEM Immersion Day at its skills center where dozens of youth from [Stamford High School](#), [Westhill High School](#) and the [Academy of Information Technology & Engineering](#) engaged in interactive group activities around coding, engineering and virtual reality. The students also learned more about what the new High School Program entails and how to apply.

Through a robust curriculum developed and taught by instructors from DAE, the Program's first cohort of high school students will tackle real-world projects and hone critical skills in web development, UX design and data analytics. The program, aimed at high school juniors and seniors, will take place after school at Synchrony's skills center. DAE will also provide career support to help students apply for entry-level tech roles, prepare for interviews or complete college applications. Next summer, Synchrony and DAE will also host an eight-week intensive program focused on web development and digital content creation for social media and marketing.

"The Synchrony Skills Academy High School Program perfectly aligns with our mission to bridge the gap between the world of corporate America and the needs and realities of underserved communities," said A.M. Bhatt, co-founder and CEO of DAE. "The opportunity to help reverse a decades-long trend in radical underrepresentation in tech careers is just as important to us as the development of the tech workforce and we're delighted to collaborate with Synchrony on this dual mission."

Student representatives of the University of Connecticut's School of Engineering will help raise awareness of this new initiative through its Engineering Undergraduate Ambassadors who inspire and empower high school students to pursue engineering and tech fields. Stamford-based non-profit Future5 will serve as the program's vital connection to local resources, high schools and the Stamford community and will help guide the program's first cohort after they graduate high school as they navigate their future paths. Both UConn Engineering Ambassadors and Synchrony employees will mentor students throughout the program.

"As engineers, we make things that help people and we try to change the world," said Justin Rastinejad, UConn Engineering Ambassadors. "Through this partnership, we want to open students' eyes to the opportunities that are out there so they can see themselves in STEM-related industries, and in the process teach them critical social skills and build their self-esteem."

"Future 5 believes there is a path to success for every young person," said Amanda Dubois-Mwake, Executive Director of Future5. "We help connect motivated young people to their community, themselves and the tools they need to unlock their full potential. This program will help directly impact our local high school students and the community at large, as well as companies in Stamford."

Synchrony's new skills center will also support programs for local community college students and workers with the support of General Assembly – a pioneer in education and career transformation specializing in today's most in-demand skills. Synchrony will collaborate with local governments, schools, and skills-credentialing organizations to prepare students and individuals seeking to reskill or reenter the workforce.

This program is part of Synchrony's [Education as an Equalizer](#) initiative designed to expand access to higher education, skills training in high-growth fields, and financial literacy for underserved communities and its own workforce. The company will invest more than \$50 million during the next five years, including more than \$20 million in philanthropic grants from the Synchrony Foundation to help increase educational and reskilling opportunities for individuals and students from low-income and underrepresented communities, particularly Black, Hispanic, and Native American communities. The remaining funds – approximately \$30 million – will go toward training and upskilling opportunities for the company's workforce, as well as programs to build a diverse talent pipeline and strengthen financial literacy skills for all.

About Synchrony

Synchrony (NYSE: SYF) is a premier consumer financial services company. We deliver a wide range of specialized financing programs, as well as innovative consumer banking products, across key industries including digital, retail, home, auto, travel, health and pet. Synchrony enables our partners to grow sales and loyalty with consumers. We are one of the largest issuers of private label credit cards in the United States; we also offer co-branded products, installment loans and consumer financing products for small- and medium-sized businesses, as well as healthcare providers. Synchrony is changing what's possible through our digital capabilities, deep industry expertise, actionable data insights, frictionless customer experience and customized financing solutions. For more information, visit www.synchrony.com and Twitter: [@Synchrony](#)

About Districts Art & Education (DAE)

District Arts and Education is a Connecticut non-profit providing educational, developmental, and creative opportunities—including technical and professional training and certificates—that serve as a catalyst for transformation in the lives of individuals and communities that have been historically and systemically under-resourced.

About UConn Engineering Ambassadors

UConn Engineering Ambassadors engage a diverse student population, our university and the greater community in activities that inspire them to explore a variety of creative solutions to the problems facing humanity. We develop ourselves as passionate engineers of the future with the power to express engineering concepts through fundamentals of science and mathematics.

About Future5

Future 5 helps motivated, under-resourced students in Stamford connect to their full potential, leading to independence and productive citizenship. Our goal is to connect our students to the people, resources, and experiences essential to making the transition to post-secondary education and careers.

[1] [World Economic Forum](#), January 22, 2020

[2] [2020 Survey by the Connecticut Business and Industry Association](#)

Media Contact

Angie Hu
Synchrony
Angie.Hu@syf.com

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