



# Newsletter

First Edition, August 2023

**Dear Techforce Community,**

Welcome to the **first edition of the 21st Century Techforce Newsletter** that our team put together to keep the community members up to date with the latest in this transformative project.

The “**21st Century Techforce**” program is driven by a clear and determined vision - to ensure enhanced educational access for all residents of Puerto Rico and to simultaneously position the island as a thriving technology talent hub, playing a vital role in fostering its economic development.

Given this transformative impact, with each edition of this newsletter, we aim to keep you well-informed by featuring the latest advancements of our program, providing an overview of past and upcoming events, and sharing other valuable information to keep you engaged and up to date. This inaugural edition highlights all the significant milestones achieved since the program's launch in April.

Thank you for your continued support, I eagerly anticipate sharing the progress and success of the program in future editions.

Sincerely,



**Manuel Cidre**  
Secretary of PR DEDC

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## 21st Century Update

Since the launch of the 21st Century Techforce initiative in April, our team has been working on initiatives in the K-12 and the short-form credentials space. These efforts are paving the way towards our goal of making **Puerto Rico one of the top 10 states/territories in tech talent.**

### What is happening in K-12?

We are working with **nine schools across the island** to establish “**Tech Lighthouses**”. These schools were selected through a competitive process that started with 21 schools nominated by the Department of Education (PRDE). To select the final schools, a spirited competition called the “**Teacherthon**” was held in May, where each institution presented their innovative proposals.

### What about the short-form credential space?

With the objective to increase the availability of short-form technical credentials in Puerto Rico, we launched **two grant programs** in April. The first focuses on **developing stackable credentials** in Bachelor programs, while the second seeks to **enable short-form providers to scale**. We received nearly 50 impressive proposals from organizations in Puerto Rico and beyond. After a meticulous evaluation, we selected **5 universities and 9 short-form credential institutions** (will be announced soon) **to receive these grants.**

We extend our **congratulations to the grant recipients** and commend their dedication to advancing education on the island. Also, we remain open to partnering with additional institutions in the future to further strengthen Puerto Rico's tech talent landscape.

**Stackable Credentials Grant Recipients:**



## 21st Century in the News

### Gobierno presenta iniciativa “21st Century Techforce”

The 21st Century Techforce initiative was officially launched in April of this year, with the support of Secretary Cidre, who shared some inspiring words and Governor Pierluisi, who emphasized the ambition of the program.



### Se gesta una revolución industrial fundamentada en la tecnología

Armed with a grant fund of \$50M, the DEDC and the PRDE joined forces in an unprecedented initiative to train 50,000 workers and develop a knowledge economy in Puerto Rico.



## Cinco universidades crean certificaciones digitales para mejorar la empleabilidad de sus alumnos

The 5 selected universities participated in a working session where they fostered collaboration and received information of grant logistics to start this transformative education journey.



## Latest and Next Events

### Latest Events

- **04/25:** Project Launch
- **05/05:** Webinars and Q&A with potential grantees
- **05/17:** “Teacherthon” event to select K-12 Lighthouses
- **07/13:** Stackable Credentials Press Conference

### Upcoming Events

- **August:** Announcement of Short-Form credential grant awards
- **August:** Employers Roundtables to gather input for new programs being developed
- **August:** MoU with PRDE

## Thought Leadership

### Why Digital Transformation Starts with Talent Transformation?

The organizations that successfully achieve digital transformation initiatives understand that they need the requisite technology skills to power and sustain them.

### Credentials of Value

Stuart Andreason, managing director at the Burning Glass Institute, gives a sneak peek at a project to measure the quality and ROI of non-degree credentials.

### States Go Short-term

Almost \$4B in state spending on short-term credentials, among 59 different state-led initiatives across 28 states. Most launched in the past five years.

## Talent Spotlight



### In Juan Cancio school (Lajas, PR), a new vision is growing

The school's team propose an innovative idea to link agricultural education with the K-12 initiative. Developing a new course as "Introduction to Robotics" was not enough. They decided to include robotics in their agriculture class, to have cutting edge technology for farming and seeding.

## Follow us



We encourage you to actively engage with us and share your thoughts by emailing us at: [21stcentury@ddec.pr.gov](mailto:21stcentury@ddec.pr.gov)

## Our Story

In April of this year, the Department of Economic Development and Commerce (DEDIC), jointly with the Department of Education (PRDE) and the private sector in Puerto Rico introduced the visionary "**21st Century Techforce**" program. With a firm commitment to generating over **50,000 skilled workers** and propelling Puerto Rico into the **top 10 territories for 21st century talent**, this initiative is revolutionizing education on the island.

Bolstered by a substantial **grant fund of \$50 million**, the “21st Century Techforce” is committed to three main initiatives that will transform education for young and adult learners. The first one is **K-12 Lighthouse**, focused on innovative curriculum development and teacher training programs at schools; the second one is **Short Form Credentials**, developed to provide short, targeted courses that provide practical and industry-relevant knowledge; and the third one is **Stackable Credentials**, designed to allow individuals to customize their learning journeys and obtain specialized certifications.

The “21st Century Techforce” program is dedicated to improving educational access to all residents, empowering them to pursue their aspirations and shape their own futures.

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