



THE FUTURE IS DIGITAL CHALLENGE FAQ

What is the Future Is Digital Challenge?

The Future Is Digital Challenge is an initiative sponsored by the Center On Rural Innovation (CORI), a national nonprofit action tank working to advance economic prosperity in small towns across the country, and Udacity, an online learning platform whose mission it is to advance careers through tech education. The challenge focuses on training rural Americans interested in learning new digital skills to help them participate in the nation's growing tech economy.

As a member of CORI's Rural Innovation Network, we have the unique opportunity to invite members in our region to participate in this two part challenge:

In phase one, participants will learn the fundamentals of either digital marketing, business analytics or front-end development through a self-paced foundational course, sponsored by CORI and Udacity. Phase one requires a total commitment of 40 hours, or 10 hours a week over the course of one month.

In phase two, once participants have passed the final assessment in phase one, they will qualify for a scholarship to complete phase two, the advanced track nanodegree program. In this phase, participants will join a cohort of students working towards nanodegrees in their chosen program. This phase will require a commitment of approximately 10 hours per week over the course of 3-4 months. This flexible schedule will allow participants to continue to pace themselves to accommodate their own schedules. Through partnerships with a number of other tech companies, students will gain hands on experience in their field of study, and upon completion of a final assessment, will receive a Udacity Nanodegree.

Who Is eligible for the challenge?

CORI and Udacity will sponsor 3,000+ seats for the foundational courses and 300 scholarships in the corresponding Nanodegree Programs. Scholarships, each valued roughly between \$1200-\$1600, will be distributed across CORI's entire RIN network. There will be a screening process to ensure that scholarship recipients are living in rural areas covered by the Rural Innovation Network, and each community in the network is guaranteed 10 scholarships for students who qualify by passing the final assessment of the phase 1 foundational course. The rest of the scholarships will be distributed based on the foundational course performance.



When is the challenge?

For the foundational course in phase one, open enrollment begins on September 22, 2020 and goes through November 2, 2020. This part of the challenge is self-paced to encourage as many people to enroll as possible. Participants will want to sign up early enough to complete the course by November 2nd.

For the Nanodegree Program in phase two, participants can expect to spend 3-4 months on the course. These courses too are self-paced to accommodate different learners' schedules and needs.

What will people learn as part of this challenge?

Each Nanodegree program has a corresponding fundamental course that introduces the basic principles of each program. These foundational courses in and of themselves are wonderful learning opportunities for those looking to expose themselves to new ideas:

- Digital Marketing Foundational Course
 - Define what KPIs are and who are the best personas that fit a marketing strategy
 - Learn how to think in different marketing personas
 - Know what a value proposition is
- Business Analytics
 - Understand the different steps of the data analysis process
 - Calculate summary statistics using spreadsheets
 - Ask questions and answer them using data
- Front-end Web Development
 - Create and style web components using HTML and CSS
 - Position and display website elements
 - Debug HTML and CSS code
 - Build a responsive website layout

During the Nanodegree Program, participants can expect to build upon these skills and solve real-world problems and complete practitioner-level projects designed by industry experts. They will receive detailed project feedback from subject-matter experts and gain new skills that will prepare them for their future career.



Why are we taking part In this challenge?

Only 4% of rural workers in America reported working from home prior to COVID-19 and rural Americans are more likely to be employed in occupations that can only be conducted in person. Rural Americans need to prepare for the future of work that relies on digital skills in which rural Americans have as much access to a forward moving economy as their urban counterparts. Through this partnership with CORI and Udacity, we are bringing this opportunity to our community as part of our larger effort to develop scalable solutions for our community. Digital skilling is an essential aspect of a thriving digital economy ecosystem, and will provide the groundwork for a sustainable economic future for our community.

What is Udacity?

Udacity's mission is to power careers through tech education. They partner with leading technology companies to learn how technology is transforming industries, and teach the critical tech skills that companies are looking for in their workforce. With their powerful and flexible digital education platform, even the busiest learners can prepare themselves to take on the most in-demand tech roles.

What is the Center On Rural Innovation?

The Center on Rural Innovation (CORI) is a national nonprofit action tank advancing inclusive economic prosperity and investment in rural America. Working closely with its sister organization Rural Innovation Strategies Inc. (RISI), CORI's comprehensive approach to digital economic development involves building a nationwide network of local economic change agents; using mapping and data to highlight rural opportunities; making direct investment in underserved rural entrepreneurs; and closing the digital divide so all Americans can participate in the 21st century digital economy.

