



Youth Building ICT Fluency Through Design

# Planning Your Work with ICT Professionals

## Getting Ready to Work with ICT Professionals

### Why is it important for youth to interact with ICT Professionals?

Introducing youth to minority professionals in ICT directly challenges youth' stereotypes about the types of careers available in ICT, the characteristics of people in ICT careers, and their lives outside of work. While hands-on activities can spark interest and give youth' confidence in ICT, ***having youth interact with ICT professionals is critical to encouraging youth to consider ICT careers.***

### How can we find and recruit ICT professionals?

Take a look at the *Example List of ICT Professionals* for ideas. Consider who you know in your area who has an ICT job or who is connected to ICT or more broadly, minorities in STEM careers. Brainstorm names and organizations to contact. You might divide your list into categories such as **direct contacts** (actual minorities in these careers), **organizations** that employ ICT professionals, and **ICT professional resources** (organizations that are well-connected to the ICT field).

You, your executive team, or board members might have **direct contacts** of ICT professionals whom you can call to participate as well as ask who they might recommend as possible visitors and field trip locations.

Next, there are **organizations** in your area who have ICT professionals. The company may have a focus on ICT, such as Intel, Google or Motorola, or have employees who do ICT work (e.g. web development, database management, network support). Be creative, but remember these folks should have specific technical backgrounds and/or skills. If you don't have a direct contact at these organizations, contact their HR department and explain your mission. They may have an outreach or community service program that fits with having their employees inspire youth to pursue ICT careers.

To cast your net wider and to really get connected to the ICT community, consider ICT professional organizations in your area that may provide professional support to minorities in ICT. Universities and colleges may have Women or Minorities in STEM programs. The following organizations may have local chapters you can contact for ICT professionals or for youth specific activities:

- Society of Women Engineers (<http://societyofwomenengineers.swe.org/>)
- National Society of Black Engineers (<http://www.nsbe.org/>)
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (<http://www.shpe.org/>)

- Expanding Your Horizons (<http://www.expandingyourhorizons.org/>)
- Black IT Professionals (<http://www.blackitprofessional.com/>)
- Hispanic IT Executive Council (<http://www.hitecglobal.org/>)
- Association for Women in Computing (<http://www.awc-hq.org/>)
- National Center for Women & Information Technology (<http://www.ncwit.org>)

### **Why is important to maintain ongoing relationships with these ICT professionals?**

As you know, recruiting takes time and resources. Maintaining relationships with ICT professionals who interact with the youth each year can save you effort and be an opportunity to refine and enhance the activities the ICT professional does with the youth. Keeping track of and enabling repeat performances of the ICT professional interactions that were engaging and encouraging for youth will improve the success of your program and the experience for the youth.

### **Before, During & After an ICT Professional Visit or Field Trip**

#### **Before the ICT professionals visit or field trip**

- Determine the dates for ICT professional visits or field trips. Note a couple of dates in order to work with professionals' schedule.
- Contact former ICT professionals
- Brainstorm ideas for new ICT professionals if needed, begin contacting them.
- Schedule ICT professional visits or field trips at least a month in advance.

#### ***With the ICT professional***

- Provide the ICT Professional Packet to the professional as soon as she agrees to participate.
- Schedule a time to talk through the visit. Make sure you prepare them for interacting with middle school youth in general, and if necessary, anything specific about your youth. During this call, determine the activity the ICT professional will do with the youth. See the ICT Professional Packet for details on what they should do with the youth.
- Follow up with a call a day or two before the schedule visit or field trip.

#### ***With staff and youth***

- Provide staff training on how to work with ICT professionals.
- Prepare youth in advance: The youth should be prepped to be respectful and ready with questions for the ICT professional.
- Have the youth and ICT professional exchange short bios of youth.

### **During the ICT professionals visit or field trip**

- Support the ICT professional by acting as a co-leader: prompt youth with questions to connect ideas from the ICT professional's presentation to what youth are learning in the curriculum, and help to keep the youth on task.

### **After the ICT professionals visit or field trip**

- Send thank you notes. Both you and the youth must send thank you notes. No more than two thank you notes per professional. The note can be via email or postal mail. Be specific in your thank you; include what the youth did.
- Have a debrief conversation with the ICT professional. Talk with them about how it went. Keep records of the experience with the ICT professional so staff can refer to it for next time.
- Additional types of follow ups:
  - Follow up with manager or CEO of the company and include why these interactions are important. ICT professionals can gain status/reputation in their company for being involved.
  - Two months or a year later, youth may share their thoughts about the field trip or ICT visit. Write a note to the ICT professional or her organization letting them know the impact they had.
- Keep in mind that these professionals and their organizations are potential funders of your affiliate as well. You want to treat them well so they consider supporting your program with their time and potentially their dollars.