

THE NEW BOHEMIAN INNOVATION COLLABORATIVE

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2023**

**NEWBO⚡CO**

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# COLLABORATION.

The concept of someone selecting their “word for the year” has become increasingly popular. Essentially, it’s a word that defines how someone wants to show up and live their life in the upcoming year.

As I look back over the course of 2023, the word collaboration rings true as NewBoCo’s word for 2023. It is how we chose as a staff to show up and work with our team members, it is how we showed up to work with our community partners, and it is a word that will always be one of the core values for the organization and the people who work here. I am proud of that.

Over my various career experiences, I have had the opportunity to see how collaboration between public and private entities, community partners, corporate partners, and volunteers can all have an immense impact on an organization’s ability to provide meaningful work to our community. You will see throughout this report many examples of how this was exemplified throughout 2023.

We had the opportunity to once again embrace the corridor we call home by partnering with Greater Iowa City, Inc. to create an educational speaker series for our entrepreneurs and business owners. Thanks to support from public partners like the Iowa Economic Development Authority, we were able to solidify and grow our work in SE Iowa and expand to Council Bluffs. Through partnerships from partners such as Collins Aerospace and BAE Systems, we were able to grow our teacher professional development opportunities and expand our Girls Who Code Clubs. That was in part due to financial support and the support of volunteers. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of volunteerism in our community for NewBoCo’s efforts and non-profits as a whole.

Our Kiva program helped more businesses than ever grow, and increased opportunities for our staff to engage with communities throughout the state. And our home of Cedar Rapids embraced our fresh ideas with open ears and a “yes, and” attitude. (That is for our 2024 report, so stay tuned!)

Throughout all of this work, the collaboration amongst our team has remained the key to our ability to do impactful work. Not only did we spend time working with our many partners but we took time in 2023 for internal reflection to determine how we can challenge ourselves to always be driven, talented problem-solving trail-blazers in everything we do. As we look ahead to 2024, we have the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate 10 years of this organization. It is also time for us to reflect and learn from the past to launch us into the next 10 years.

We have and will continue to drive economic development by igniting entrepreneurship and tech education. We do this to build stronger communities, local economies, and people. We have big goals as we look to 2024 and 2034. That should surprise no one. We will need YOU to collaborate with us to make them happen. I look forward to the conversations to come and if you are interested in joining us on this journey, please reach out. I’d love to grab a cup of coffee and see how we can collaborate.

Our word for 2024? Ignite.

Jill Wilkins  
 Executive Director





## COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW

**NewBoCo brings programs and support to other cities throughout the state**

From tech education to supporting entrepreneurs, NewBoCo's work has drawn plenty of interest across the state. So it's only natural that other communities would want to learn more about it.

That's where the Community Partners program comes in.

"The visibility of NewBoCo across the state has raised a lot of interest," said Alex Taylor, Managing Director of ISA Services. "People are coming to see what we're doing. And they're excited. So it made sense for NewBoCo to start looking at ways that we could partner with those communities."

The Community Partners program got its start two years ago, when NewBoCo invited several dozen city and economic leaders from across the state to chat about needs in their communities.

They quickly honed in on a universal need to build an ecosystem that supports entrepreneurs and helps them grow.

### 'BRINGING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL VIBE'

For Mount Pleasant – the first community to sign on with NewBoCo's Community Partners program – the gaps are primarily tech education and access to startup capital.

Ray Vens is the Director of Traction Steam Communications, a co-working and entrepreneurial center in Mount Pleasant. Vens says he is excited about the partnership with NewBoCo.

**"The visibility of NewBoCo across the state has raised a lot of interest."**

Alex Taylor  
Managing Director of ISA Services

"Filling in these gaps will help communities like Mount Pleasant and Fairfield to stay competitive, attract employers, and build new businesses from the ground up," he said.

Kellen Gracey is a tech professional who lives in Mount Pleasant but works remotely for GoDaddy. For him, his town's partnership with NewBoCo is more than economic. It is cultural.

"NewBoCo is bringing an entrepreneurial vibe to Mount Pleasant," he says. "There is a feeling of growth and innovation that has been lost in recent decades. This is exactly what my generation is looking for in a community."

### TAKING SHAPE

Each community partnership takes place around a foundation of established NewBoCo programming. Informed by NewBoCo's values and experiences, that programming addresses four focus areas that are critical to a community's success:

- **Entrepreneurship:** programs providing mentorship, eco-system builders, and access to capital for entrepreneurs with businesses of a variety of industries and sizes
- **Program examples:** Iowa Startup Accelerator Services, networking events, educational programming, Kiva Iowa, and our ISA Ventures partnership
- **Tech Education:** programs providing technical skill training for adults, youth, and teachers
- **Program examples:** DeltaV Code School, CoderDojo, and K-12 computer science professional development
- **NewBoCo Studios:** access to software and services that would not otherwise be accessible to startup or small businesses
- **Services examples:** software development, digital marketing services, and branding and graphic design

Community partners provide unique access, insights, and resources, while NewBoCo provides programming frameworks and ongoing analysis and support.

"We believe that this holistic, yet localized approach to entrepreneurial ecosystem development is necessary for greater equity, innovation, and prosperity in entrepreneurship in Iowa," said Mike Heaton, NewBoCo's former Director of Development.

Anthony Betters, Jr. serves as NewBoCo's Community Engagement Manager, working regularly with each community partner. He's thrilled about the direction the now two-year-old program is going.

"We pride ourselves on the big ideas here in Iowa," Betters said. "And community partnership is definitely one of those huge ideas that we can see expanding further and further and further."

### LISTEN UP

Alex Taylor chats more about NewBoCo's community partnerships in this episode of the Iowa Innovation Podcast.





## CELEBRATING SMALL BUSINESS

Two years after launching Kiva Iowa, NewBoCo held a special event in November to spotlight its success

More than two years since the launch of Kiva Iowa, a celebration was in order. So NewBoCo invited the public to An Evening With Kiva Iowa, a special celebration event during Global Entrepreneurship Week in November.

“The stories of our Kiva Iowa borrowers are so incredibly inspiring,” says Jill Wilkins, Executive Director at NewBoCo. “We felt this was the perfect opportunity to share those stories and celebrate them with our larger community.”

NewBoCo launched Kiva Iowa in 2021 in response to the lack of accessible micro-loans available to small business owners and budding entrepreneurs.

“It’s difficult to get capital unless you make it to a certain size, with a certain revenue under your belt,” says Kaitlin Byers, Capital Access Manager for Kiva Iowa. “And if you’re a woman, a person of color, or someone with a low or non-existent credit score, it’s even more difficult.”

Kiva Iowa provides entrepreneurs access to a microlending platform, allowing them to raise zero-interest, zero-fee loans ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000, with lenders

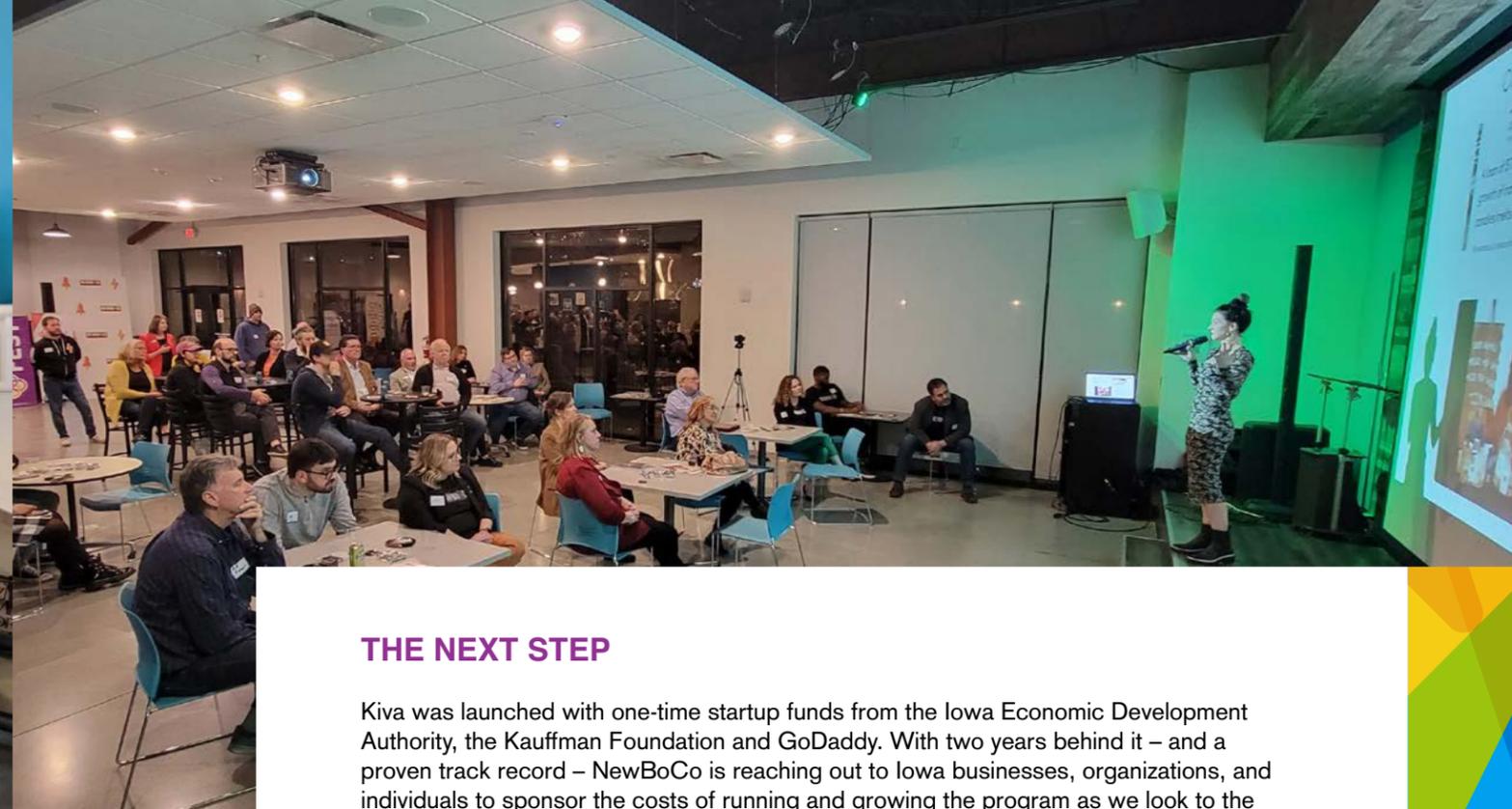
who are able to participate by giving as little as \$25 at a time. Kiva Iowa also offers borrowers access to an array of business mentorship and leadership growth programming and events and mentors through NewBoCo.

In just over two years, the program has served more than 7560 small business owners who have used their

loan to start or expand their businesses.

Wilkins is most impressed by how Kiva Iowa has been successful outside of its home base of Cedar Rapids.

“We have Kiva borrowers from Dubuque to Council Bluffs and most everywhere in between,” she says. “It is yet another example of how Cedar Rapids leads the way with innovative ideas and then shares the success across the state.”



## THE NEXT STEP

Kiva was launched with one-time startup funds from the Iowa Economic Development Authority, the Kauffman Foundation and GoDaddy. With two years behind it – and a proven track record – NewBoCo is reaching out to Iowa businesses, organizations, and individuals to sponsor the costs of running and growing the program as we look to the future.

That goal, Wilkins says, led to the creation of An Evening With Kiva Iowa as part of the citywide celebration of Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW). GEW is a massive worldwide campaign to celebrate and empower entrepreneurs in every country and community, and Cedar Rapids had events planned all week throughout the community.

“The Kiva Iowa Program has grown rapidly over the past two years and exceeded our expectations in regards to impact and reach,” Byers says. “Making time and space to celebrate the successes of our local business community is both essential and valuable. As we look forward to the future of this essential program here in Iowa, we also recognize a growing need for more targeted support in order for borrowers to have a higher chance of longer-term success.”

“The Kiva Iowa Program has been growing rapidly over the past two years.”

Kaitlin Byers  
Capital Access Manager for Kiva Iowa





### A DIVERSE LINEUP

“Starting a business is hard for everyone. It’s especially hard if you lack a safety net or resources at the beginning,” Byers notes. “Yet starting a business is a pathway to generational wealth. And, access to funding for underrepresented founders can unlock massive investment and innovation opportunities, leading to more inclusive and vibrant Iowa communities.” Byers notes that Kiva Iowa has served an incredibly diverse range of businesses, including Education, Health, Communications/Media, Crafts, Agriculture, Restaurant/Caterers, Arts, Retail, Food Production, Technology, Clothing, Cosmetics, and more.

“We’ve built a network of incredibly supportive partners across the state who maintain a strong working relationship with these business owners, while serving as incredible advocates of the Kiva Iowa program.” “We’ve got a lot of amazing trustees who support this program, and I’ve had a lot of meaningful dialogue with business owners and lenders across the state,” Byers says. “Over the past two years, we’ve really built a lot of credibility and shown this program is for real.”

In fact, for Byers – who once owned and operated her own business, and knows the challenges that can bring – Kiva Iowa has more than lived up to expectations since its 2021 founding.

“When we have a chance to bring our partners and small business community together - telling stories and celebrating wins - these intentional connections are incredibly meaningful,” she says.

To learn more about Kiva Iowa, apply for a loan, or support the many Iowa businesses currently seeking funding, visit [newbo.co/kiva](http://newbo.co/kiva).

### LISTEN UP

Check out Kaitlin Byers and Tone Da Boss, Founder of the Iowa Music Awards and CEO of T1 Entertainment, on NewBoCo’s Iowa Innovation podcast:



## COMMUNITY THROUGH CODING

### Girls Who Code program opened opportunities for Iowa students

Looking at the numbers, coding is still an industry dominated by men.

With Girls Who Code, NewBoCo looked to even the playing field.

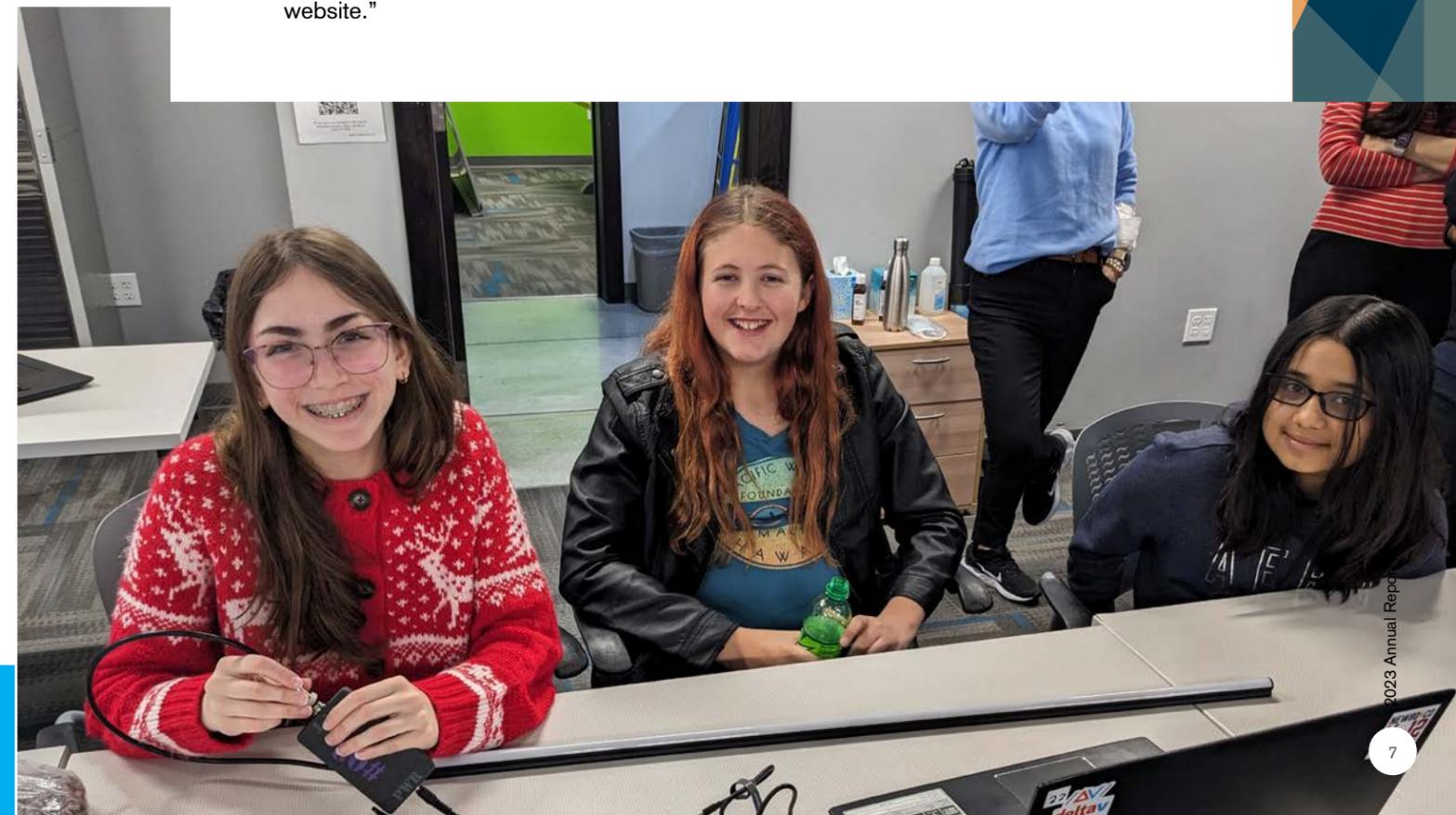
In 2023, NewBoCo had over 50 local students between 3rd and 12th grade in our Girls Who Code clubs. Taking place every Saturday for 10 weeks in the spring and again in the fall, Girls Who Code was offered free of charge for any student to take part.

“The program focuses on coding, learning about career opportunities, building positive relationships with peers, and doing projects throughout,” says Samantha Dahlby, Director of K-12 Education at NewBoCo. “Our sponsors wanted to help us support a demographic that is typically underrepresented.”

### FIXING THE BALANCE

According to a survey shared by Statista in 2022, female developers made up just five percent of all respondents. To change that, Dahlby says girls need to learn at an early age that there are opportunities for them in coding. And then they need to be encouraged to pursue those opportunities.

“We’ve had students who are now thinking about majoring in computer science,” Dahlby says. “We had one student who told us that she knew she wanted to start her own business one day, and would need to understand how to have a website.”



One former student is Allyson Schmidt, who works as the Business Development Leader at Bio::Neos, Inc, a software development company in Coralville. In July, Schmidt gave a presentation at EntreFEST in Iowa City, where she specifically credited Girls Who Code with helping her decide to continue studying computer technology at the University of Iowa, where she graduated in 2021.

"I attended Girls Who Code during my senior year of high school, unsure of what I wanted to pursue," she says. "Surrounded by other girls coding inspired me, and made me feel empowered."

Dahlby says it's the community and encouragement of fellow students that makes as much of a difference in Girls Who Code as the coding lessons themselves.

"Some of it's just getting to know each other's favorite foods, or other things that create a connection so that when they're working together they have peers who they feel safe with," Dahlby says. "Some students start off very shy and hesitant to engage, and now they are leading and engaging and helping other students learn. You can tell their comfort level has changed and they're feeling more active and engaged in group activities in terms of projects."

## WHAT'S INVOLVED

The Girls Who Code camp is broken into two different age groups:

**3rd-5th Grade Clubs:** Aiming to build the foundational skills and understanding of computer science concepts and sisterhood, through a reading discussion and coding activities. Students learn from online tutorials and activities that help them build projects to share with friends and family.

**6th-12th Grade Clubs:** Provides even more hands-on opportunities to learn and practice computer science concepts and sisterhood, with students transitioning to typed coding.

Dahlby noted that even though it's called Girls Who Code, classes are open to students of any gender.

"The focus is to support female-identifying students and making them feel safe and excited about learning about coding and computer science," she said. "But we also want to include allies in that, so having those who do not identify as female as a part of the group is a way to fulfill that mission."

The programs are free for students, thanks to support by sponsors BAE Systems and Collins Aerospace.

Dahlby says programs like Girls Who Code are a crucial part of NewBoCo's work to ensure equitable access to computer science education.

"I really enjoy that we can find gaps that exist in our community, region, and state, and that we can develop or partner to create programs that address those gaps," she says.

## LISTEN UP



Hear Samantha Dahlby talk more about opportunities for girls in tech on this episode of the Iowa Innovation podcast



## TINY TECHIES, CODERDOJO BRING TECHNOLOGY TO YOUNG KIDS

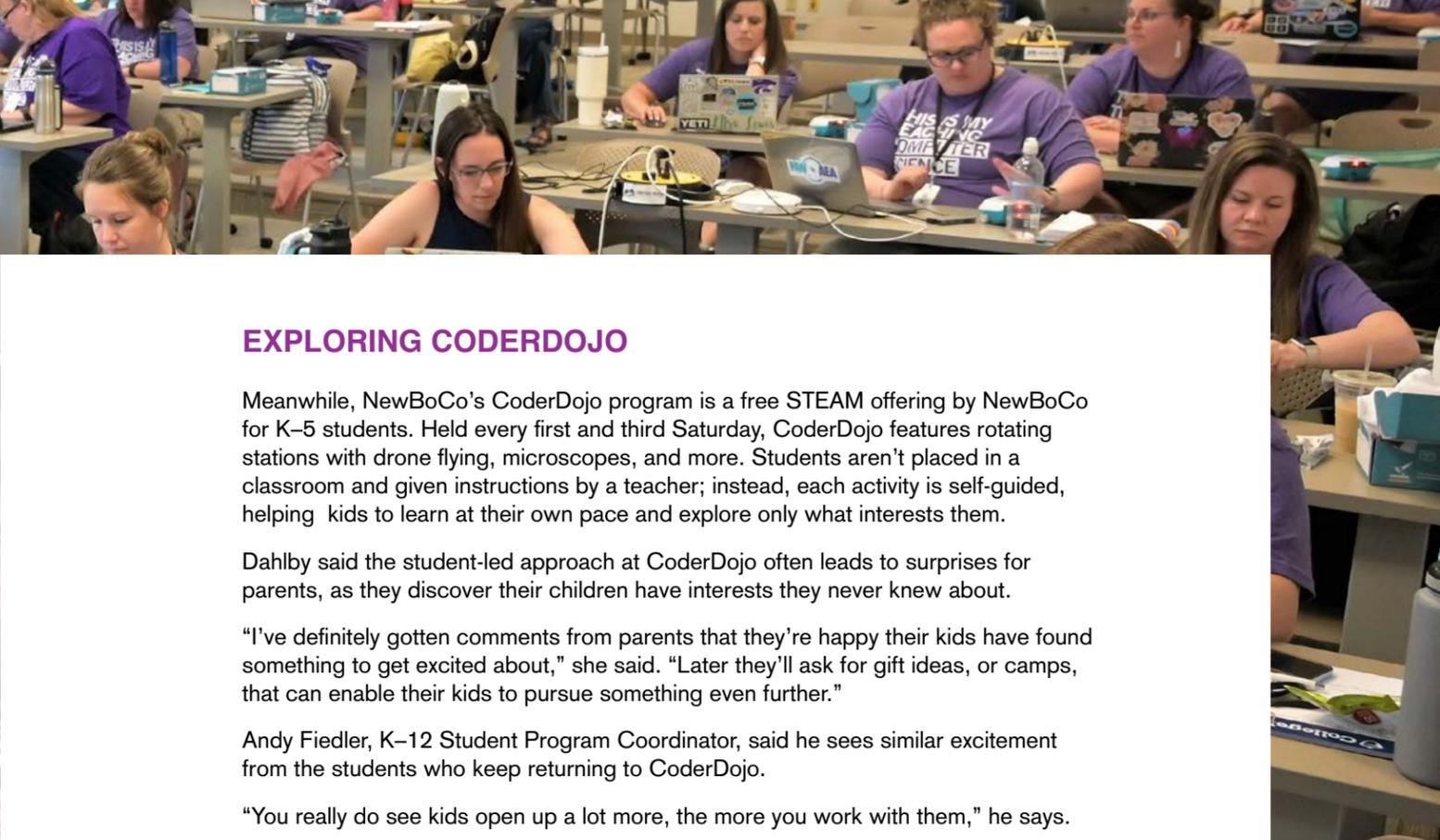
As computer science becomes a greater focus in Iowa classrooms, educators want young students to get as much of a head start as possible.

Two programs from NewBoCo – Tiny Techies and CoderDojo – help with that goal.

## SUPPORT FROM GOOGLE

Google announced in November that it had awarded \$10,000 to NewBoCo's Tiny Techies professional development program, which supports Pre-K through 2nd grade teachers with training on foundational computer science concepts. Tiny Techies workshops help teachers work with "Squishy Circuit" materials, basic robotics, pattern recognition, and more.

"Google is proud to support the Tiny Techies program because early childhood education lays a foundation for future success," said Shawdee Monroe, Google's Tech Education Outreach Lead. "The program helps provide the building blocks for computer science skills in an innovative way, and supports the educators who teach these young learners is the critical first step." By teaching the fundamentals of computer science, Tiny Techies helps to get students ready for the careers of tomorrow.



### EXPLORING CODERDOJO

Meanwhile, NewBoCo's CoderDojo program is a free STEAM offering by NewBoCo for K-5 students. Held every first and third Saturday, CoderDojo features rotating stations with drone flying, microscopes, and more. Students aren't placed in a classroom and given instructions by a teacher; instead, each activity is self-guided, helping kids to learn at their own pace and explore only what interests them.

Dahlby said the student-led approach at CoderDojo often leads to surprises for parents, as they discover their children have interests they never knew about.

"I've definitely gotten comments from parents that they're happy their kids have found something to get excited about," she said. "Later they'll ask for gift ideas, or camps, that can enable their kids to pursue something even further."

Andy Fiedler, K-12 Student Program Coordinator, said he sees similar excitement from the students who keep returning to CoderDojo.

"You really do see kids open up a lot more, the more you work with them," he says.

Yet there are no screens involved. No laptops. No iPads. Instead, organizers say, Tiny Techies helps students build computational thinking and problem-solving skills.

"Tiny Techies is approachable, creative, and gives educators the confidence to help our youngest learners think like computer scientists," says NewBoCo's Director of K-12 Education, Samantha Dahlby.

The Tiny Techies program was created by NewBoCo's K-12 Education Team to support early childhood educators to integrate computer science into their teaching.

## "Tiny Techies promotes engagement of all levels of learners."

Lori Randall  
Second Grade teacher at Osage Community School District

a second grade teacher at Osage Community School District in Osage, Iowa. "Tiny Techies promotes engagement of all levels of learners."

Assistant K-12 Education Director Alison Mohr says that while Tiny Techies can give young children a good foundation for computer science classes later on, it also provides them with skills they will need no matter what they're working on.

"They are more prepared for any subject," she says. "This program really focuses on thinking skills and problem-solving, and the skills that kids will need in order to be successful everywhere. So it helps them in computer science, yes, but it goes much further than that."

The creation of the Tiny Techies case study and video library will take place in 2024.

"It totally changed my teaching," said Lori Randall,



### LISTEN UP

Hear Andy Fiedler and Samantha Dahlby talk more about Tiny Techies on the Iowa Innovation Podcast.





## BUILDING SOMETHING SPECIAL

### NewBoCo Studios helps bring ideas to life

NewBoCo Studios came to be in 2016. The aim? To work with clients of all sizes to develop software solutions that meet specific requirements, and then deliver high-quality software products that are scalable, reliable, and user-friendly.

Eight years later, that idea has grown into a team that's not only served dozens of new companies, but also helped established organizations like UFG Insurance, the Cedar Rapids Community School District, and more.

"When we started, our goal was to provide services primarily to startups," said Jess Faber, UI/UX Developer for NewBoCo Studios. "But we've found that there's a pretty strong need for those services across the board."

Here are examples of three major projects NewBoCo Studios worked on in 2023:

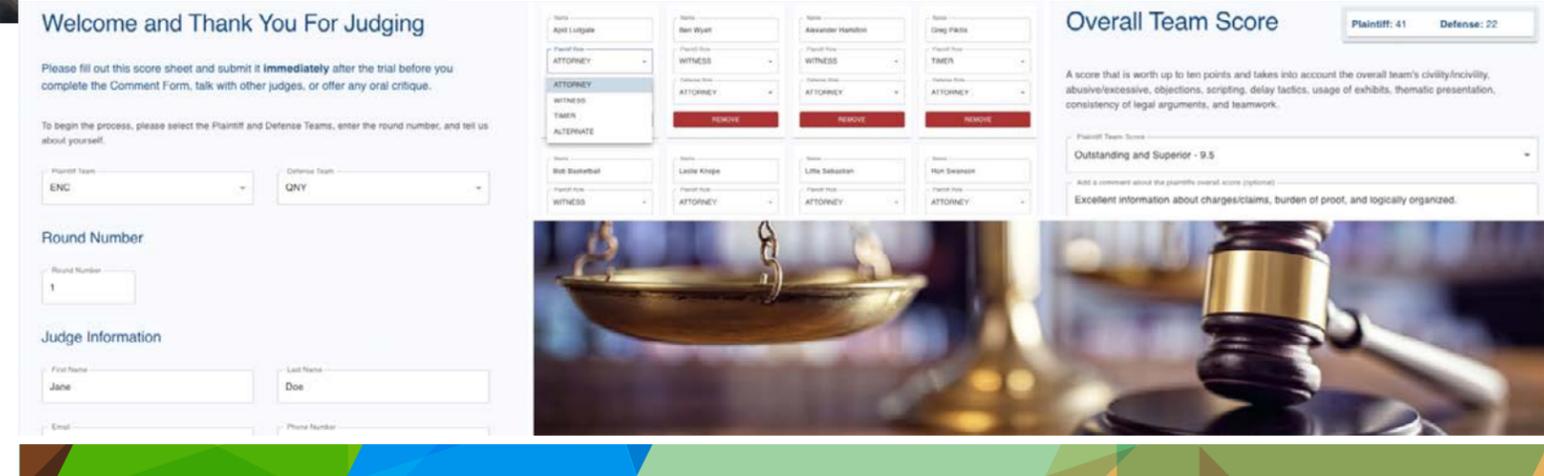
### RUMBLERANK

RumbleRank's founder and product owner, Jordan Taylor, came to NewBoCo Studios to create a product that could reduce ambiguity in collecting survey data. The idea was that by compelling participants to make difficult decisions within the engaging experience of a game, a person could reach beyond the limitations of self-reporting and unlock real answers to what people think. That would increase the integrity and validity of the data being collected.

First, NewBoCo Studios delivered a web-based prototype that Taylor could use to gather market research. From there, Studios built the prototype into a fully functional web app.

The team then turned its attention to building out an infrastructure that could collect and compute user data in a meaningful way while scaling with demand. To do this, NewBoCo Studios started by building an API designed to calculate and store rankings on any given list based on user data while enabling list creators to view and export that data. As this foundation came to fruition, the team built a front-end user experience that would stay true to RumbleRank's game-inspired roots.

"By presenting users with a series of head-to-head matchups while maintaining low latency rendering and intuitive design, we were able to achieve an engaging, game-like web app to collect survey data, just as RumbleRank set out to do," Faber said.



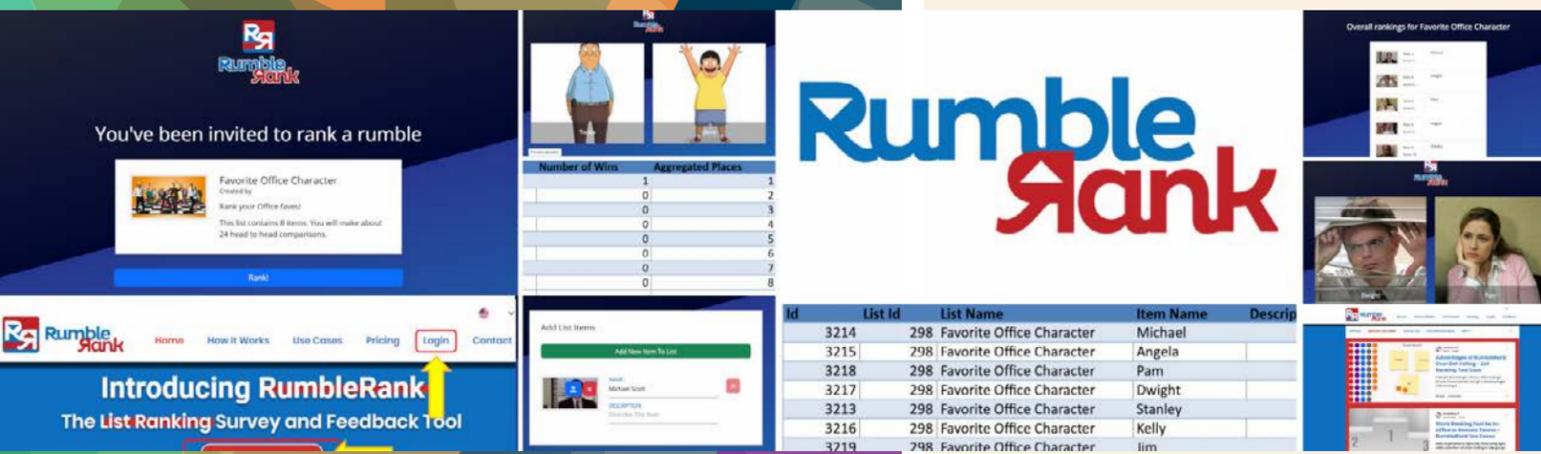
### IOWA MOCK TRIAL

In 2023, NewBoCo Studios developed a streamlined, user-friendly Iowa Mock Trial competition judging platform. These competitions, intended to educate and engage aspiring law professionals, required a robust and mobile-friendly judging system that could efficiently manage teams, handle roster management, and distribute ballots. Unfortunately, Iowa Mock Trial's existing judging system fell short in meeting these needs.

The NewBoCo Studios team decided to build the app using ReactJS with Remix, Material UI, and PostgreSQL. ReactJS with Remix provided a solid foundation for crafting a responsive and interactive user interface, as well as efficient rendering and optimal performance. Material UI, known for its accessible design system and pre-built components, allowed NewBoCo Studios to deliver a mobile-friendly and consistent user experience. Underpinning the entire platform was a PostgreSQL database, which NewBoCo Studios strategically designed to accommodate the intricate relationships between teams, judges, and ballots, ensuring that each aspect of the Mock Trial competition judging could be efficiently tracked and managed.

Throughout the development process, NewBoCo Studios maintained close communication with the client's team and incorporated their feedback seamlessly, ensuring that the end product aligned with their expectations. The result was a robust, comprehensive, and user-friendly Mock Trial competition platform that streamlined the way judging was conducted.

Could NewBoCo Studios be the right collaborator for your next project? Learn more at [newbostudios.com](http://newbostudios.com).



### LISTEN UP

So you have an idea for an app, but no idea how to make one. Now what? Jess Faber talks about building apps with clients at NewBoCo Studios on this episode of the Iowa Innovation Podcast:





## IOWA INNOVATION PODCAST CELEBRATES 50 EPISODES

### Cedar Rapids-based show celebrates milestone as it wraps its fourth season

Two years ago, Jennifer Smith wanted to create a show that featured the stories she saw every day in Iowa: educators, business owners, and everyday Iowans who were finding new and innovative ways to do what they do.

That show became the Iowa Innovation podcast.

Since launching in April of 2022, Iowa Innovation has featured guests ranging from Cedar Rapids Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell, to entertainer Alisabeth Von Presley, to Brucemore CEO David Janssen, to Alissa Gardner of Farm to Health Organics. In June, the show recorded its first-ever live episode from the stage of the Englert Theatre, and featured an interview with Debi Durham, director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Iowa Finance Authority.

When Smith co-hosted the show's 50th episode on Dec. 12, she marveled at how far the podcast had come in such a short time.

"I was so excited about what we had created, the potential of it, the feedback, and the response we got," she said. "All of those entrepreneurs who we interviewed, and being able to tell some of their stories for the first time on a podcast -- it was just like, there is something special that can be done with this. And I hope it continues to thrive."

## THE BIG 5-0

One of those entrepreneurs, Malia Gutenkauf, appeared on Iowa Innovation in June to talk about her Cedar Rapids consulting company, Little Miss Finance. Her story of helping peers save and invest money was soon being shared worldwide via Apple, Google, Spotify and other platforms.

"In my eyes, the Iowa Innovation podcast is about sharing stories, and getting real about what's happening with individuals in our communities," Gutenkauf says.

"The hope is always that by being vulnerable and transparent, others may be inspired or learn something new, to better their lives."

**"Anyone can benefit from being informed about what is happening right in their backyard. And we try to give it an energetic twist."**

Anthony Betters, Jr  
NewBoCo's Community Engagement Manager,

Cedar Rapids Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell appeared on the podcast June 14 and then returned in September to discuss the Mayor's Youth Summit. She said she appreciated the relaxed, conversational tone of the podcast. "It was a chance for me to exhale a bit, and talk about our city 'friend to friend,'" O'Donnell said.

Iowa Innovation co-host Anthony Betters, Jr. says the show is still focused on its main goal: To gather local stories of innovation and entrepreneurship, with the goal to inspire listeners who are working in similar areas.

"Anyone can benefit from being informed about what is happening right in their backyard," Betters said. "And we try to give it an energetic twist."

Jessica Abdoney, who works by day as NewBoCo's Marketing Coordinator, served as co-host alongside Betters when the podcast recorded its live episode with Debi Durham at EntreFEST 2023.

"It was nerve-racking to have an audience watching us," Abdoney said. "But I think it made us a better pair as interviewers, because it was just us and Director Durham. We couldn't turn to our producer or ask to take anything out."

"The experience was an amazing first for me," Betters agreed. "I was a little bit terrified of being on stage live, because we are not used to that. But the energy of the crowd, and having a professional like Debi Durham there with us, made it very enjoyable."

Abdoney said the Iowa Innovation podcast gives NewBoCo the opportunity to showcase a side of Iowa that many don't see.

"When you think of Iowa you think corn, Midwest, and fields, but there are a lot of entrepreneurs who are doing big things here, and who deserve recognition and support," Abdoney said. "It's awesome to interview people who are making a positive impact."

## HEADING TO VIDEO

To produce each episode, NewBoCo teamed with another local company, Upload Media Group (UMG). Episodes are recorded weekly out of UMG's studio in Czech Village, and shared to a variety of popular podcast platforms, from Spotify to Apple.

"We've had the pleasure of working on a lot of podcasts, but Iowa Innovation remains one of our most impactful success stories," said Logan Schultz, Founder and CEO of UMG. "Iowa Innovation goes above and beyond to change lives, share diverse and meaningful human stories, and represent the best ways in which Iowa is leading the charge in innovation. We're certainly proud to have a hand in such a meaningful project."

For the latest season, UMG went from its producer role, to being the media sponsor for Iowa Innovation. As part of that partnership, episodes are now recorded on video, and made available via Facebook and Vimeo for those who prefer to watch rather than listen.

“One of our primary goals as a company is to elevate the voices of our community through podcasting,” Schultz said. “We found an immediate alignment with NewBoCo and Iowa Innovation, so it was only natural for us to continue to invest in and support the show as both we, and the podcast, grew.”

Other sponsors of the show have included the Nyemaster Goode, P.C. law firm, the City of Cedar Rapids (which partnered with Iowa Innovation on multiple episodes in Season 3), and Van Meter Inc. (which sponsors the current season).

“Iowa is the nation’s best kept secret when it comes to innovation and entrepreneurship, but Midwest humility means we don’t tend to pat ourselves on the back and show off,” said Mike Heaton, former NewBoCo Director of Development. “The podcast offers a perfect vehicle to share and inspire others who have the drive to think and build outside of the box.”

## BUILDING A LIBRARY

All four seasons of Iowa Innovation are available at NewBoCo’s website. Episodes are also available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google, and other popular podcast sites. Season Four released its final episode on Dec. 19.

“For me, when there’s a new episode in my feed, I get excited because it’s great content,” said NewBoCo board member Aaron Horn, who helped launch the podcast and served as a co-host for one episode. “The people they’re interviewing are doing amazing things, and considering how many brilliant Iowa innovators are out there, there’s plenty of content for seasons and seasons to come.”

Bettors hopes that people will be more willing to give Iowa Innovation a try now that the show has built a library of more than 50 episodes. He also hopes listeners will get behind the podcast’s mission of learning just how much innovation is taking place in Iowa.

“We’re talking about cutting-edge information happening in our state that is affecting the world,” Bettors said. “Our podcast will help people see that what we do in Iowa really matters.”

Rob Merritt, NewBoCo’s Director of Communications, has been a co-host of the Iowa Innovation podcast for all four seasons, and appeared with Bettors and Smith on the 50th episode.

“There are exciting and innovative things happening in the state of Iowa, highlighting that you don’t have to go to the East Coast or the West Coast to find those things,” Merritt said. “I think it’s been a big part of NewBoCo’s mission, as well as the mission of the podcast, to make sure people know that. For me, it’s been an honor and a privilege to be a part of this.”

## LISTEN UP



Check out all four seasons of the Iowa Innovation podcast.



## IOWA INNOVATION LIST OF EPISODES AND GUESTS

(all available at [newbo.co](http://newbo.co)):

### SEASON 1 (2022):

- April 13: Diversity and Inclusion in Technology** (featuring Keith Dahlby)
- April 20: Ecosystems and Rural Entrepreneurship** (featuring Mo Collins)
- April 27: Roots and Recovery** (featuring David Janssen)
- May 6: Innovation in Education** (featuring Kyle Kuhlbers)
- May 11: Women in Leadership** (featuring Rina Jensen)
- May 18: Rest Over Run** (featuring Alissa Gardner)
- May 25: Finding Inspiration** (featuring Lovar Davis Kidd)
- June 2: Turning Passion Into A Career** (featuring Alisabeth Von Presley)
- June 8: Building Ecosystems** (featuring Rob Williams)
- June 16: Live From EntreFEST Part 1** (featuring Dustin Rhoades, Emily Steele, and Nyemaster Goode)
- June 22: Live From EntreFEST Part 2** (featuring Billie Asmus, Jack Chimbete, and Anna Gannon)

### SEASON 2 (2022):

- Aug. 17: Funding the Future** (featuring Kaylee Williams)
- Aug. 24: Innovating Inclusivity** (featuring Angelica Vannatta and Stefanie Munsterman)
- Aug. 31: Reinventing Education** (featuring Marcia Hughes)
- Sept. 7: Veterans in Entrepreneurship** (featuring Jennifer Murphy)
- Sept. 14: Innovating the Female Work-flow** (featuring Alyx Coble-Frakes)
- Sept. 21: Introducing Cultures** (featuring Meggie of Megglam Boutique)
- Sept. 28: Innovation in Smaller Urban Communities** (featuring Amanda Pasket)
- Oct. 12: Taking Inspiration from John Deere and Disney** (featuring Clayton Mooney)
- Oct. 19: Protecting Your Business** (featuring Aaron Warner)
- Oct. 20: Funding Innovators** (featuring Eric Engelmann)
- Nov. 2: Girls Who Code** (featuring Jess Faber)
- Nov. 9: Finding Your Match** (featuring Cat Cantrill)
- Nov. 16: Telling the Story of Failure** (featuring David Hayes)
- Nov. 23: Innovating Community Connection** (featuring Robert Abbott)

### SEASON 3 (2023):

- May 10: Being the Financial Interpreter** (featuring Malia Gudenkauf)
- May 17: Artificial Intelligence in Media** (featuring Zack Kucharski)
- May 24: Leadership and ChickenGate** (featuring Regenia Bailey)
- May 31: Everything Is Marketing** (featuring Ryan Shenefeld)
- June 7: Passing the Vibe Check** (featuring Cedar Rapids Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell)
- June 15: Changing the Fashion Industry with Podcasting** (Featuring Emily Stochl)
- June 22: Live from EntreFEST 2023** (featuring Debi Durham)
- June 29: Making Innovative Apps** (featuring Jess Faber)
- July 5: Imposter Syndrome** (featuring Ally Schmidt)
- July 12: Innovating Retail and Dinner on Bridges** (featuring Monica Vernon)
- July 19: Keepin' Diversity and Inclusivity Real** (featuring Anthony Arrington)
- July 26: The Power of Live Theatre** (featuring Brian Glick)
- Aug. 2: Better Partnerships Make Better Popcorn** (featuring Rachel Hahn and Sydney Rieckhoff)
- Aug. 9: The Future is Virtual** (featuring Karim Malek and Major General Retired Stewart Wallace)
- Aug. 16: Diversity is Synonymous with Success** (featuring Dr. Tawana Grover)

### SEASON 4 (2023)

- Nov. 7: Live from the Mayor's Youth Conference** (featuring Cedar Rapids Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell)
- Nov. 9: How to Innovate a Chamber of Commerce** (featuring Alex Taylor and Liz Hubing)
- Nov. 14: Vaulting Forward Together** (featuring John Foster and Jordan Bergren)
- Nov. 21: Changing Your Life with Coding** (featuring Melissa Silver and Craig Barkley)
- Nov. 28: Future City** (featuring Samantha Dahlby and Andy Fiedler)
- Nov. 30: Funding Iowa Dreams** (featuring Tone Da Boss and Kaitlin Byers)
- Dec. 5: An Entrepreneurial Ecosystem** (featuring Mike Heaton and Alex Taylor)
- Dec. 7: Education For The Future** (featuring Samantha Dahlby and Andy Fiedler)
- Dec. 12: Building Business Through Events** (featuring Jennifer Smith and Jourdan McChesney)
- Dec. 19: Van Meter** (featuring Danielle Monthei and Gavin Palma)

## ENTREFEST CELEBRATES 15-YEAR MILESTONE

Annual event with focus on Iowa innovation was held June 8 and 9 in Iowa City

In June, hundreds of participants from across the state's business community gathered in Iowa City to hear from leading innovators from across the country. It's become something of an Iowa tradition – and in 2023, EntreFEST celebrated 15 years of it.

A two-day conference that “celebrates the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation,” EntreFEST took place June 8 and 9. The event is meant to bring professionals at every level together to tell their stories and share ideas for how to improve.



### MOVING AROUND IOWA

EntreFEST took place for the first time in Cedar Falls in 2008. Since then, it's been held in cities across the state, including Coralville, West Des Moines, Ames, Cedar Rapids, and Iowa City, where it took place again in 2023.

It's slated to return to Cedar Rapids in 2024, where venues will include the Geonetric Building and the Olympic Theater.

“EntreFEST celebrates the collaboration between people who make things happen,” said NewBoCo Executive Director Jill Wilkins. “For the last two years, we got to celebrate that collaboration in Iowa City, and we're thrilled that in 2024 we'll be bringing it to Cedar Rapids again. Every location gives us the ability to work with different partners, highlight various communities, give our attendees continued unique experiences, and keep the event fresh.”

### EMBRACING WHAT'S NEW

In a nod to the event's 15th anniversary, Mo Collins – an EntreFEST founder who helped bring the event to life back in 2008 – returned to the event as one of its keynote speakers.

Aside from celebrating this milestone, EntreFEST didn't spend much time looking over its shoulder at the past.

“The common thread of the EntreFEST story is how the entrepreneurial and innovation community in Iowa and the Midwest comes together to make this ecosystem stronger,” said NewBoCo Director of Events Jourdan McChesney. “It's great to look back on what's made this event so successful for 15 years. But at the same time, the idea of embracing what's new is exactly what has made EntreFEST successful—and that's what has us the most excited about what's to come.”



FOR TICKETS AND INFO ABOUT ENTREFEST 2024



## EXPERIENCES FROM ALL OVER

In addition to Collins – who specializes in entrepreneurship economic development with 20 years of experience – EntreFEST’s lineup of speakers in 2023 included Debi Durham, who serves as Director for both the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Iowa Finance Authority. Durham has led the IEDA for over 13 years, successfully securing billions of dollars for economic development projects throughout the state.

**“The common thread of the EntreFEST story is the entrepreneurial and innovation community in Iowa and the Midwest comes together to make this ecosystem stronger.”**

Jourdan McChesney  
NewBoCo Director of Events

In addition to keynote speakers, EntreFEST featured “breakout sessions” that focus on the biggest current issues facing business owners and entrepreneurs.

“The topics are not generic; they are impactful and innovative,” said Ben Snyder, founder of Copper Black Services in North Liberty and a regular EntreFEST attendee. “This conference feels like a break from the tried and tired conferences. From the venues, speakers, topics, and other perks, it’s on the front line of change.”

“EntreFEST is an event for every business owner in Iowa,” says Claudia Schabel of Schabel Solutions in Des Moines. “It’s not just for those who are starting their business now, or only in a specific industry. I would recommend this event to every business owner. I am excited to learn more every year.”

Learn more about EntreFEST 2024 at [www.EntreFEST.com](http://www.EntreFEST.com).

## LISTEN UP



The Iowa Innovation Podcast interviewed keynote speaker Debi Durham in front of a live audience at EntreFEST 2023.



## OFF TO A GREAT START

**Business Startup Speaker Series launched in 2023, sharing tips and tricks between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City**

When organizers launched the Business Startup Speaker Series in January, they were responding to questions that brand-new owners have about starting a business.

What they quickly discovered is that many longtime business owners have those questions, too.

The Business Startup Speaker Series is a joint venture by NewBoCo in Cedar Rapids and Greater Iowa City, Inc. (formerly Iowa City Area Development Group, or ICAD). It features monthly sessions on branding, accounting, legal issues, advertising and communications, and more.

“Our original target audience was entrepreneurs who were starting businesses and needed information to help them grow,” said Alex Taylor, Managing Director of Iowa Startup Accelerator Services. “But we’re finding that anyone can benefit from these programs, no matter how long they have been in business.”

## RECOGNIZING A GAP

Each month, the series leads entrepreneurs through a critical component to start and grow a business. In an effort to make the sessions accessible to both Cedar Rapids and Iowa City, sessions would be held one week at the MERGE co-working space in Iowa City and then at The Vault co-working space in Cedar Rapids the following week.

**“We’re finding that anyone can benefit from these programs, no matter how long they have been in business.”**

Alex Taylor  
Managing Director, Iowa Startup Accelerator Services

series would maximize our impact. It makes it a lot more accessible for people with different work schedules and locations. We’ve loved being able to offer more opportunities for people based on what works best for them.”

The first speaker in the series was Julie Lammers, President of Lambo Business Services. Lammers spoke in January about administrative basics, covering what needs to be done to get registered, licensed, and “officially” established. Lammers returned to present on the topic again in September.

## FOR VETERAN OWNERS TOO

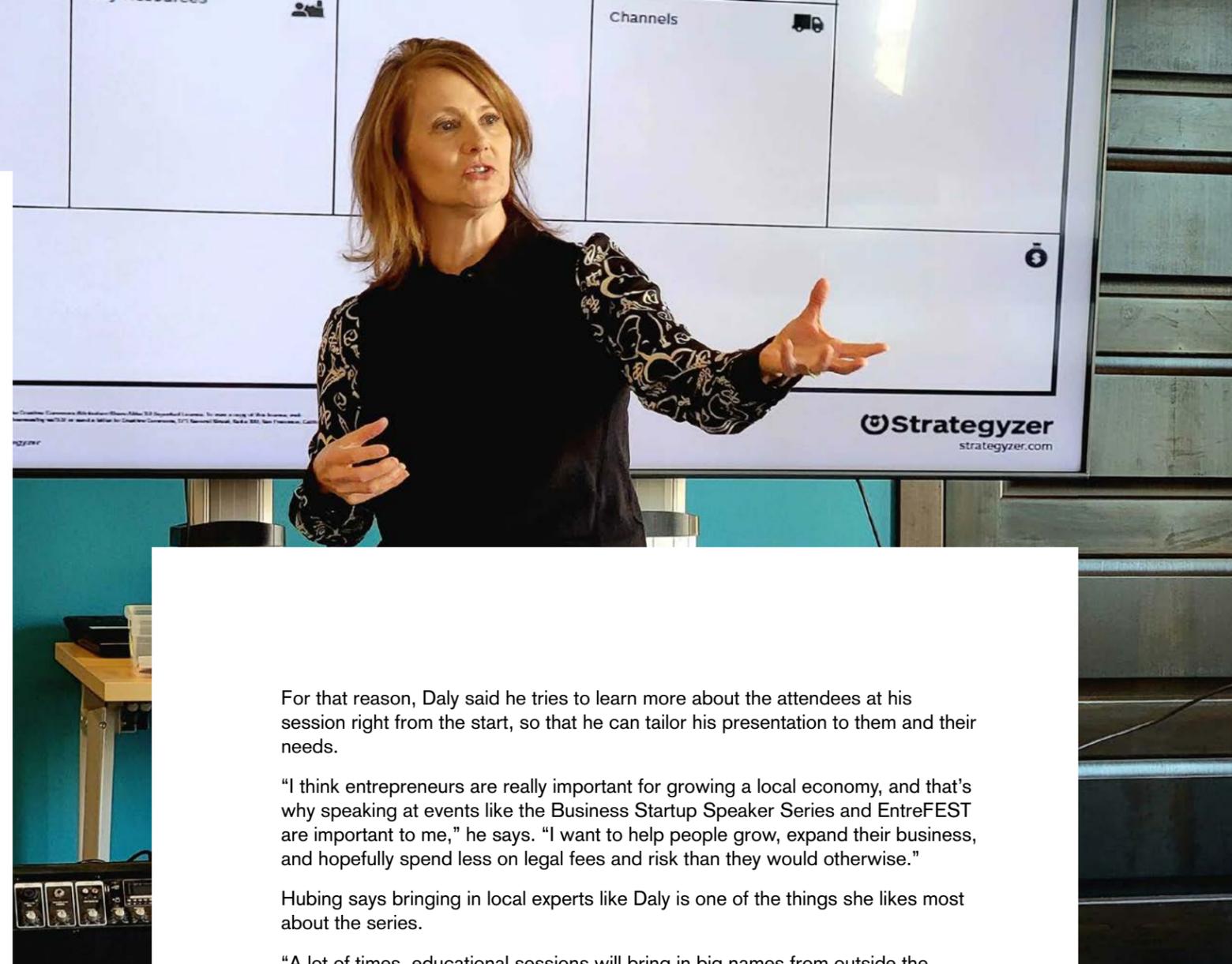
As it turns out, the series addresses topics that plenty of longtime business owners also want to know more about.

“For me, the biggest surprise has been that at each session, we have completely different attendees,” Hubing said. “We’ve had a few people who have come to multiple sessions, but for the most part we see people who are attending specific sessions. For someone who might know about marketing, but doesn’t know anything about legal, it’s great that we can offer a one-off educational opportunity for them.”

Bill Daly, an attorney and Senior Vice President with Shuttleworth & Ingersoll, P.L.C. in Cedar Rapids, gave a Legal 101 presentation at the Small Business Speaker Series in February and again in October. Daly said the lessons being taught in the series apply to veteran business owners as well as those just starting out.

“It is very common for people to be operating their business for multiple years one way, and then they expand or make a change and it causes them to re-think how they have been doing things,” Daly said. “So the lessons we’re teaching in this series apply to them, just like if they were starting a new business. Once a business owner can get into a frame of mind of spotting issues and realizing they need to ask about them, that is their best way to keep growing.”

“There are so many incredible resources for entrepreneurs in our community, and these presentations help connect participants to those resources,” said Liz Hubing, Greater Iowa City’s Director of Entrepreneurship and Community Engagement. “It was clear that joining forces with NewBoCo on a regional



For that reason, Daly said he tries to learn more about the attendees at his session right from the start, so that he can tailor his presentation to them and their needs.

“I think entrepreneurs are really important for growing a local economy, and that’s why speaking at events like the Business Startup Speaker Series and EntreFEST are important to me,” he says. “I want to help people grow, expand their business, and hopefully spend less on legal fees and risk than they would otherwise.”

Hubing says bringing in local experts like Daly is one of the things she likes most about the series.

“A lot of times, educational sessions will bring in big names from outside the community,” she said. “But I think getting to use local experts to talk about things they know well, and connect them to others in their community, is really special.”

## CONTINUING TO GROW

Taylor says the success of the program could eventually grow to include other cities as well, such as Council Bluffs, Fairfield, and Mount Pleasant.

For now, though, Taylor and Hubing are waiting to see how the next few sessions go, and whether participants will be as enthusiastic in 2024 as they were in 2023.

“It’s an experiment for us,” Hubing said. “So we’re excited to see how people continue to respond.”

## LISTEN UP

Alex and Liz talk in more detail about the Business Startup Speaker Series on this episode of the Iowa Innovation Podcast.





## VAULTING FORWARD TOGETHER

### Remote workers find friends and colleagues in NewBoCo's coworking space

When Jordan Bergren decided to quit his day job and start his own business, he quickly realized that working from home wasn't for him.

"I would get wrapped up in everything, just working all the time with no delineation between work mode and home mode or family mode," he says. "It was super inefficient, and I wasn't taking care of myself. So after six months of that, I made the decision to start checking out coworking spots."

One of the first places he looked at was Vault Coworking Space in Cedar Rapids' Geonetric Building. Right away, he knew he'd found the right fit.

"Having a place like Vault, you show up and you have your brain kind of turn on, like 'Okay, I'm going to work now,'" he says. "I just like being around other people. It kind of gives you that energy, hearing other conversations going on."

### BUILDING A COMMUNITY

Jordan isn't alone. According to John Foster, the community manager at Vault Coworking Space, the advantage of being part of a community – even when you are your own boss – is what makes people stay.

"There are a lot of people who don't particularly care for working from home, and feel like they need to figure something out," Foster says. "Maybe they're looking for an office, or maybe they just need to be around people and be part of a community."

"People imagine that working in the same space as a lot of other people will make it tough to concentrate," he adds. "But it really is a great working environment, with a lot of opportunities for collaboration."

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

For Raine Hayden, the people who work around her at Vault have become her "unofficial co-workers."

"I first joined Vault because I needed to get out of the house, but now, I come because I enjoy seeing the people," she says. "We all have different jobs and goals, but we're all supportive of each other. The other members are people I probably wouldn't have met otherwise, but now I consider them my friends and coworkers."

One of those "co-workers," Jessica Abdoney of NewBoCo, became friends with Hayden through having nearby desks at Vault. After going to a few Whiskey Friday events together after work, Abdoney mentioned that she was going to Scotland in the fall of 2023. Hayden says she jokingly asked if she could come along.

**"I first joined Vault because I needed to get out of the house, but now, I come because I enjoy seeing the people."**

Raine Hayden  
Vault Member

"She said 'yes!' and the joke started to become a real plan," Hayden says. "Jessica went over before me and spent a month in Edinburgh on her own, and I joined her on her last week. We spent a week exploring Scotland together and from there, flew to Italy."

The two say they've become good friends as a result.

"I love that I have 'coworkers' who aren't coworkers, and sharing a space with people who have skills in other areas, have different expertises, and have different views," Abdoney says. "It's fun to be able to make friends in a working space, while not requiring a coworker relationship, which can strain friendships. I love getting to come in, and see new and familiar faces."





## HOW TO JOIN

Four years on from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Foster believes Vault has fully bounced back to being the vibrant community that it was before 2020.

“During the pandemic, Vault was empty,” he says. “But then slowly and surely, we started getting those people who want to try it out, just like back when we started in 2015. And they’re saying ‘Hey, this works for me.’ Today we’ve got a good collection of people, and it’s a great community again.”

There are multiple ways to join that community:

Day Passes are ideal for occasional users or visitors to a limited set of amenities.

A Community Membership is an annual membership for users who need access a few days a month.

A Resident Membership provides a full array of services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Vault Community and Resident members have the ability to upgrade their membership with private offices.

NewBoCo also features “Vault On Demand” free coworking Wednesday, featuring a free day of community and collaboration. John Foster can answer any questions about memberships, specific space availability, and more. To learn more, visit <https://newbo.co/vault-coworking/>



## ‘WE BUILT THIS CITY’

### Encouraging forward thinking with the Future City Competition

How would you build a city on the moon? How do you design a city where power only comes from renewable sources? And how do you keep everyone employed and happy?

These are the kinds of questions middle schoolers nationwide get to wrestle with each winter during the Future City competition. In Iowa, those students come together each January in Cedar Rapids to see whose ideas are the best. Students do research, write essays, build a physical model, and create team presentations to showcase their cities.

According to NewBoCo’s Director of K12 Education, Samantha Dahlby, NewBoCo chose to get involved in running the Iowa portion of the competition because “accelerating life-changing ideas is part of the mission at NewBoCo, and Future City absolutely does that.”

“Our goal at NewBoCo is to give students access to innovative and engaging STEM education,” she said. “A lot of research shows that students start to self-select out of STEM careers in middle school, because they don’t see people like themselves. So projects like this can really make STEM exciting and fun, and bring that competition feel to it and get kids excited.”

## FEATURES OF THE SPACE INCLUDE:

- Up to 10gbps blazing fast fiber internet
- Meeting space and conference rooms
- Private phone rooms
- Cafe and kitchen access
- Complimentary beverages & snacks
- Complimentary off-street parking
- Indoor bike parking
- Showers

## LISTEN UP

John Foster and Jordan Bergren talk more about the experience of Vault Coworking on this episode of the Iowa Innovation podcast:



## TEAM EFFORT

Each Future City team is required to have a minimum of three students. However, NewBoCo K-12 Student Program Coordinator Andy Fiedler – who serves as Future City Iowa’s Regional Co-Coordinator – said that he saw teams of “upwards of 30 to 40 kids per team” at the 2023 national competition.

In 2024, the theme was “Electrify Your Future.” Students were required to design a city that is “100 percent electrically powered city with energy generated from sources that keep their citizens and the environment healthy and safe,” according to FutureCity.org.

Each year students will write an essay to explain their city’s concept, and then design a physical model of it that features at least one moving part. Fiedler notes that each team is limited to \$100 or less for materials to build the model. “That incentivizes them to use recycled materials, since they don’t go toward the dollar total,” he says.

Students also put together a presentation to give before judges, which Dahlby explained leads to a lot of creativity from the students. They have approached the presentation as a tour by the mayor; a game show with trivia about the city; and more.

“That’s where the creativity really shines,” Dahlby said. “They get to show off not only the city that they have researched and designed, but also get to tell their story to make it more exciting and engaging.”

“That’s where the creativity really shines,” Dahlby said. “They get to show off not only the city that they have researched and designed, but also get to tell their story to make it more exciting and engaging.”

## BUILDING OTHER SKILLS

Organizers note that different teams excel in different areas, and the awards presentation at the end of the day is designed to reflect that. Some teams are brilliant model builders, while others are great presenters, and others teams put their most creative ideas into the essay.

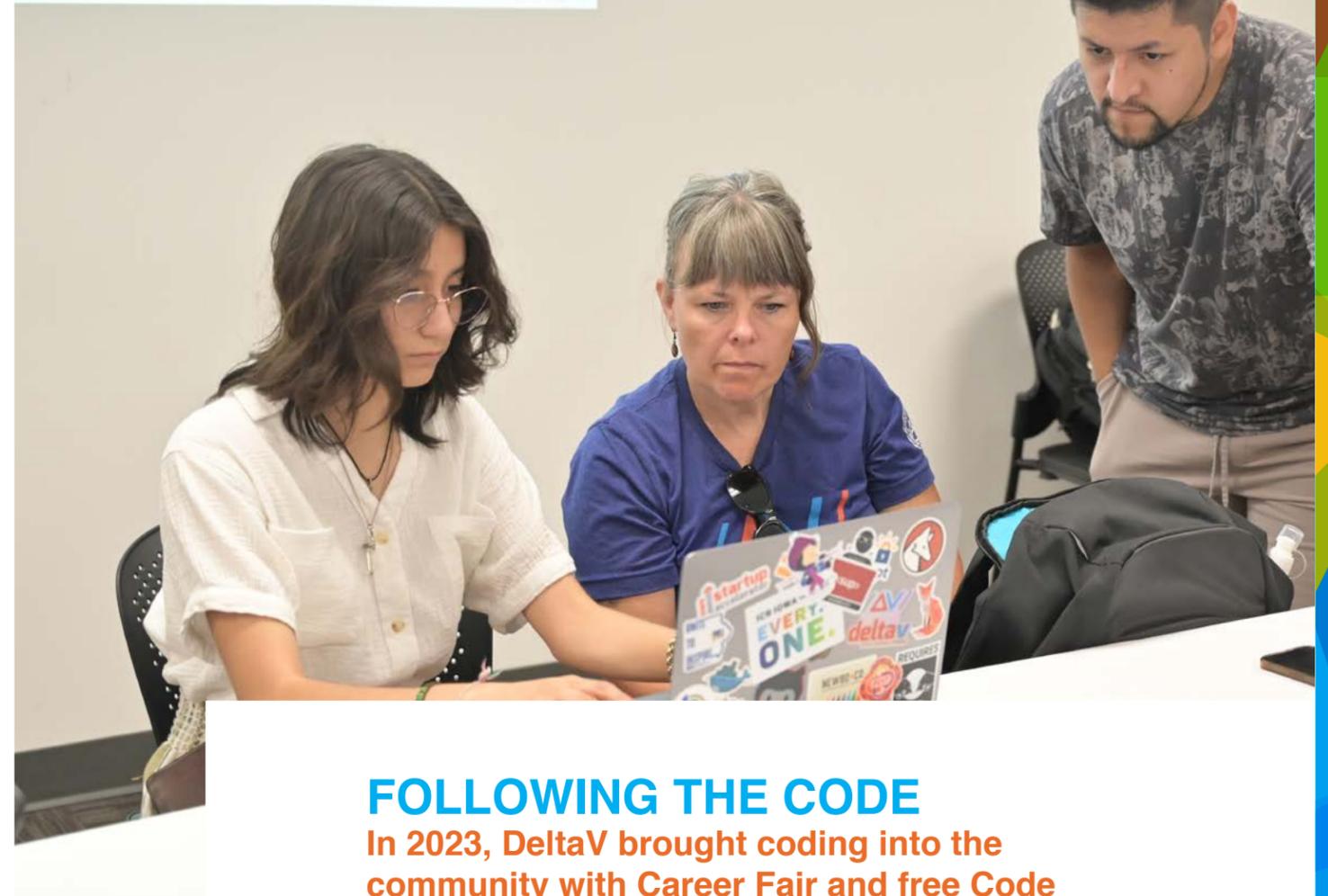
“We have awards for the best use of recycled materials, or awards that are built around that year’s theme,” Dahlby said. “Judges want to recognize areas in which certain teams excelled in, even if they didn’t make the top five overall.”

Dahlby and Fiedler both noted that competitors in Future City gain skills that go far beyond engineering. They have to work as a team. They need to use time management. Plus they’re learning critical thinking skills as they discuss real-world issues.

“Any time kids take into account politics or the economic structure of a city they’ve designed – that certainly isn’t something that they have to do, but it’s cool to see middle schoolers thinking about ‘How should we govern? How should we distribute wealth?’” said Fiedler. “This program makes me really hopeful for the future.”

**“Our goal at NewBoCo is to give students access to innovative and engaging STEM education.”**

Samantha Dahlby  
NewBoCo’s Director of K12 Education



## FOLLOWING THE CODE

**In 2023, DeltaV brought coding into the community with Career Fair and free Code 101 classes**

For years, instructors at DeltaV talked about the incredible career opportunities available in computer science in Iowa.

Now the program is working to prove it.

In August, DeltaV held its first Career Fair at the Geonetric Building. Area employers were able to set up tables, engage with students, and share insights about job openings, career paths, and other opportunities available within their industries.

DeltaV also went out into the community to offer day-long Code 101 classes for free, in locations like the Opportunity Center in the LADD Library and IowaWORKS in Cedar Rapids. It’s part of a strategy to bring more Code 101 classes to students, rather than asking the students to come to DeltaV.

For Melisa Silver – who joined the DeltaV team in 2022 as its Director of Student Services – the Career Fair and the Code 101s are part of an effort to make computers and coding more accessible, particularly for lowans who are looking for a new professional direction in life.

“There are so many people who don’t know what their next career step is, or think ‘There has to be something more out there for me,’” Silver says. “And the DeltaV program can give them that.”

## LISTEN UP



Hear Samantha Dahlby and Andy Fiedler talk more about the Future City competition on the Iowa Innovation Podcast.



## NEW BEGINNINGS

DeltaV offers a full-time coding curriculum that promises to turn inexperienced students into full-stack developers in just five months. The program is aimed at both young students looking to launch their careers, and older students looking for a fresh start.

The code school was founded in 2017. It addresses Iowa's severe technical workforce crisis. According to DeltaV staff, on average, there are 6,400 open programming jobs a month in Iowa, but state universities only graduate approximately 775 computer science majors a year.

Silver's role is to manage the complete student experience, from the moment they apply to the moment they graduate. She previously connected people with new job opportunities through Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Career Connections/Goodwill of the Heartland.

"As someone who has always loved helping people start new careers, NewBoCo and DeltaV felt like this beacon of hope and change," she says. "I get to be the bridge that links students to a whole new life."

Bryan Gonzalez was one of those students. In 2022, Gonzalez was working in health care when he became interested in teaching programming basics to himself with online tutorials. But when he saw the DeltaV program, he knew it would allow him to truly take the next step toward a new career with computers.

"I really needed structure, and I realized that I could learn a lot better if I was getting instruction in person," Gonzalez said. "You can do a lot on your own, but here, you get access to a lot of information just by working with other people. With DeltaV, not only will I be prepared for a job in tech, but with the problem-solving skills that they teach, I'll be better prepared for a new career anywhere."

## MEET ME AT THE FAIR

Local employers and sponsors that attended the Career Fair included CCR, LeapFrog, Cargill, Alliant Energy, and Top Rank Staffing.

Silver believes the hands-on approach will make it easier for students to make informed decisions about their professional journey. She notes that DeltaV already features a career-development component, where instructors teach interviewing skills and work with students on their resumes.

"Employers know that with DeltaV, they will get students who already have experience in developing those kinds of interpersonal skills," said Silver.

Silver also hopes that more employers will consider sending their existing staff through DeltaV, to develop from within rather than seeking new staff for tech needs.

"Right now, many people are only staying at jobs for a couple of years, but if you invest in employees and help them grow their skills, they tend to be more loyal to the employer that invested in them," she says.

**"Employers know that with DeltaV, they will get students who already have experience in developing those kinds of interpersonal skills"**

Melissa Silver  
Director of Student Services

## OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY

Expanding into more communities is next for DeltaV. The program has played a key role in the launch of community partnership pilots in locations like Mount Pleasant.

Silver hopes future partnerships will include the NewBo City Market, the Catherine Macauley Center and more. Bryan Gonzalez has offered his services as a bilingual teacher, opening up the classes to even more members of the community.

"We'd love to have opportunities to teach a Code 101 class in a very public place, for more people to see just what it involves," Silver says.

As DeltaV continues to expand, Silver says the promise the school offers – to give students a new career and new start, no matter their background – continues to inspire her.

"There's something so magical about learning this skill set without having to get a four-year degree," she says. "This is a genuine career path that is meaningful, and allows people to stay in Iowa while working in the technology field. And that's something that we really need right now."

To learn more about DeltaV or to see the catalog of courses offered, visit [deltavcodeschool.com](https://deltavcodeschool.com).

## LISTEN UP



Members of the DeltaV team talk more about the program on this episode of the Iowa Innovation podcast.



## 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

### Kiva Iowa

34 borrowers, \$204,500 disbursed

12 cities were represented—including Eldridge, Waterloo, Clear Lake, Des Moines, and Council Bluffs—with some cities being home to multiple borrower businesses

#### A DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF THE 34 BORROWERS INCLUDES:

76% are minority-owned businesses, with 18 of the minority-owned businesses identifying as black-owned, 3 identifying as hispanic-owned, 1 identifying as East Asian or Asian American, 1 identifying as Native American or Alaskan American, and 3 choosing not to specify

70% are female business owners

29% identify as LGBTQ+ business owners

### Entrepreneurship support

Over 200 mentor meetings hosted in 2023 alone to provide additional mentorship and business coaching opportunities to startup and small business entrepreneurs

### EntreFEST

EntreFEST 2023 brought over 400 speakers and attendees together to learn, connect, and celebrate entrepreneurship

### DeltaV

We facilitated a two-day course on site at Circle Computer Resources with 19 attendees learning Python

DeltaV Code School had a 75% graduation rate in 2023

DeltaV Code School had 60 participants in 2023 across all available courses. We also hosted 13 Code 101s, two of which were at the Ladd Library in the Opportunity Center in Cedar Rapids with other 101s hosted in Iowa City at Merge, in Mount Pleasant, and in Mason City

We believe that our state has the potential to be a national leader in opportunities for STEM education, business and economic development, and innovative advancements in Iowa's top industries—and all of NewBoCo's work is dedicated to making this vision a reality.

## NEWBOCO IS INCREDIBLY THANKFUL FOR THE SUPPORTERS WE HAD IN 2023

Aaron Horn	Farmers State Bank	New Leader Manufacturing
AARP	Gina Rooney	NIACC Pappajohn Center
Aegon Transamerica Foundation	Google, Inc.	Nyemaster Goode, P.C.
Alex Taylor	Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation	Raygun
Alliant Energy	Hills Bank and Trust	Raytheon Technologies
Amy Clefisch	Hy-Vee, Inc.	Renew Rural Iowa
Ashley Hromatko	Idea Fund VC	Samantha Dahlby
BAE Systems	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Samantha Hofer
Bankers Trust Company	ImOn Communications	Shive Hattery
BioConnect Iowa	ITC Midwest	Shuttleworth & Ingersoll, PLC
BrownWinick Attorneys at Law	Jack Evans	Small Business Administration
Bruce Nesmith	Jessica Conner	Sustainable Living Coalition
Carol Olson	Jessica Horaney	The Blackbaud Giving Fund
Chase Dittmer	John P & Lawrence J Giacoletto Foundation	Think Iowa City
Circle Computer Resources	JPEC	Thomas & Mary Cilek
City of Cedar Rapids	Julie Lammers	Tim Klima
City of Iowa City	Katharine Brown	Traction Steam Communications
Code.org	Leepfrog Technologies	TrueNorth Companies LLC
Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust	Master Packing & Rubber Company	Upload Media Group
David Castagne	McGrath Automotive	Van Meter Inc
Delta Dental of Iowa	Mo Collins	Vernon D Beninga
DiscoverE	Molly Monk	Wells Fargo Foundation
Don Frazer		Wendy Nielsen
Eastern Iowa Airport		William Daly
Eric & Amy Engelmann		

### K12 Education

More than 300 Iowa educators participated in computer science professional development workshops to learn how to teach computer science concepts to their students

#### GIRLS WHO CODE CLUB ATTENDEES

3rd-5th grade: 26

6th-12th grade: 22

Total: 48 students joined us for Fall 2023 Girls Who Code Clubs between the 3rd-5th grade and 6th-12th grade clubs

#### CODERDOJO ATTENDEES

More than 400 participants at CoderDojo events throughout the year

### Iowa Innovation Podcast

Recorded its 50th episode and its fourth season

#### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

NewBoCo was recognized at the 2023 CSEdCon (The Global CS Education Conference) for the most new K-5 Code.org Teachers trained to teach computer science, as well as for helping to reach Iowa's 273% increase in female students participating in computer science

NewBoCo was one of 40 winners nationally for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Investment and Innovation (OII) Growth Accelerator Fund Competition in 2023 for our Community Partners program, with our goal to bring more entrepreneurial resources, networking, and education to rural communities focused on Southeastern Iowa

**NEWBO⚡CO**

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