



Annual Impact Report

2025 Special Issue: **Community Spotlight**

INTRODUCTION

Table of Contents

A Letter from our Executive Director Christina Llamas	3
About Code Savvy Minnesota’s challenge & our approach	4
2025 Program Highlights: Impact Snapshots	
Student Program Highlights	8
Educator Program Highlights	12
2025 Community Spotlight: Impact Stories	
Alumnae Spotlight Technovation 10 Years Later by Bree Volker	17
Mentor of the Year Award Adriana Belinski	20
Partner Spotlight U.S. Bank	21
How Every Dollar Makes an Impact Financials & resource allocation in 2025	22
Our Community 2025 staff and community	23



A Letter from Our Executive Director



Dear Friends,
Since 2013, Code Savvy has been reducing gender, race, and socioeconomic gaps in computer science by empowering youth & teachers to create with technology.

We continue to refine our programming in response to the needs of our communities, and to expand our reach so we can offer free computer science exposure and education to even more students. We kicked off the 2025 school year with an educator roundtable to center the voices of teachers. Based on their input, we made updates to our curriculum resources, added programming to fill gaps they identified, and launched a new Educator Professional Development Series built for flexibility.

Our programs, as always, aim to empower young people and offer exposure to computer science that builds confidence and ignites interest. We do this through our direct-to-student programming, as well as tailored resources for educators that extend the reach of computer science education. Research has shown that exposure to even one high-quality computer science class in high school makes students significantly more

likely to pursue computer science in college. Computer science coursework increases students' likelihood of being employed, and raises early career earnings¹. In this special issue of our annual impact report, we'll follow some of our alumnae to see this in action in our "Technovation 10 Years Later" series, developed by alumna Bree Volker, who now serves as Code Savvy's Youth Tech Storytelling Contributor. We're very proud of the accomplishments of our students and alumnae, and thrilled to showcase their successes.

We'll also take a look at how important our collaborators are to Code Savvy's work, with stories featuring our volunteer Adriana Belinski, and our partner U.S. Bank. It's heartwarming to see different parts of the Minnesota community come together in support of our young people. We're grateful to the volunteers, mentors, sponsors, partners, and donors who make this work possible. Thank you.

With gratitude,
Christina Llamas

¹ Liu, Jing; Conrad, Cameron; Blazar, David (2024) : Computer Science for All? The Impact of High School Computer Science Courses on College Majors and Earnings, IZA Discussion Papers, No. 16758, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA), Bonn

ABOUT CODE SAVVY

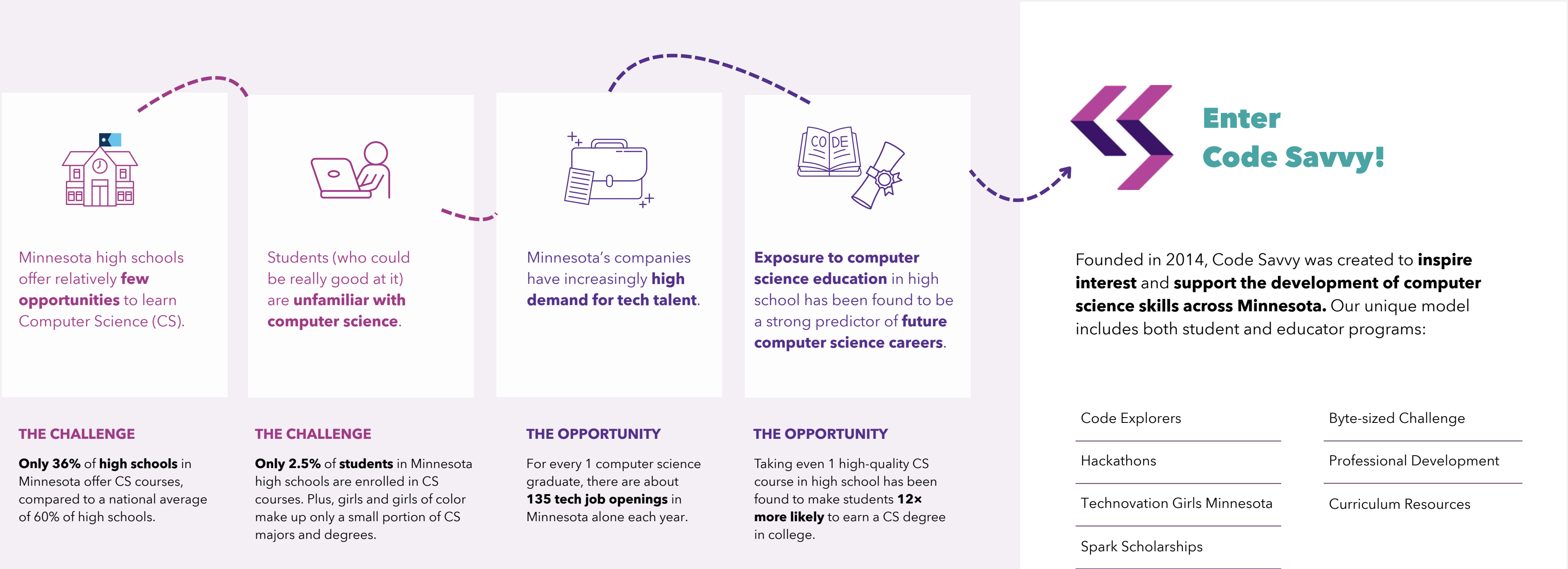
Our Mission

is to **interrupt & counteract**
existing gender, racial, and socio-
economic gaps in computing

by **equipping youth & educators**
with the knowledge, skills, and
support to create with technology.



Our purpose & approach



Sources: <https://csforallmn.org/>; Gallup; Amazon Science Publication; Liu, J., Conrad. C., & Blazar, D. (2024); US Census Bureau; US Bureau of Labor Statistics; ComputerScience.org

ABOUT CODE SAVVY

Program Overview

A key differentiator of our program model is that we serve youth directly and we also equip educators with free professional development & curriculum support.

This allows us to scale our impact across classrooms statewide and get computer science in front of even more students.



Student Programs

Code Explorers

A free and friendly environment for students to explore computer science with industry mentors.

Hackathons

Hands-on event where youth collaborate to design and prototype tech-based solutions to real-world challenges.

Technovation Girls Minnesota

A 12-week program that empowers girls ages 8-18 to identify real-world problems and develop innovative technology-based solutions through mobile apps and business plans.

Spark Scholarships

Scholarships for students interested in computer science or business entrepreneurship training. Available to students ages 8-26 who have participated in any Code Savvy Program.



Educator Programs

Byte-Sized Challenge

A teacher-led, introductory micro:bit and design thinking curriculum delivered in the classroom, where students create solutions to community needs using the micro:bit

Professional Development

Educator-informed opportunities to build knowledge, skills, and strategies in equitable computer science education.

Curriculum Resources

Free, end-to-end instructional and curricular resources for educators to bring computer science education to their students.

IMPACT SNAPSHOTS

Program Highlights



I feel like I want to do coding forever!
– HACKATHON PARTICIPANT, AGE 10

Code Explorers

A free and friendly environment for students to explore computer science with industry mentors.

Code Explorers

Hackathons

Technovation Girls Minnesota

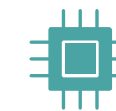
Spark Scholarships



Coding Languages

Code Explorers introduces students to languages like:

- Python
- Scratch
- HTML
- Thunkable
- Java



Physical Computing

In 2025, we introduced physical computing to our sessions, giving students hands-on experience with hardware alongside software, including:

- micro:bit
- Edison robots
- Robotics tools



Community Reach

Code Explorers also expanded our reach this year, bringing free sessions to new locations:

- Ramsey County Library, Roseville
- St. Paul Public Library, Dayton's Bluff

Hackathons

Hands-on events where youth collaborate to design and prototype tech-based solutions to real-world challenges.

- Code Explorers
- Hackathons**
- Technovation Girls Minnesota
- Spark Scholarships



First-ever Innovate for Good Hackathon
50 students participated in this hands-on day of coding, creativity, and collaboration.



Real-world guidance
The event was supported by **20 industry volunteers & mentors** who brought real-world perspective and guidance to students alongside experienced facilitators.



Strong impact

- **91%** of students reported learning new CS skills
- **88%** felt more confident working in teams, and
- **85%** were inspired to continue exploring STEM.

Technovation Girls MN

A 12-week program that empowers girls ages 8-18 to identify real-world problems and develop innovative technology-based solutions through mobile apps and business plans.

- Code Explorers
- Hackathons
- Technovation Girls Minnesota**
- Spark Scholarships



Participation
The 2025 Technovation Girls MN season included:

- **85** girls on
- **30** teams alongside
- **30** dedicated industry mentors.



First-time Innovators
Notably, **53%** of participants were new to the program, underscoring its continued success in reaching and inspiring first-time innovators.



All-State Awards
10 teams earned state-level recognition and were celebrated at our annual Code Savvy Celebrate awards ceremony.



10 Years of Mentorship
We celebrated the 10-year anniversaries of 3 mentors:

- **Ann Dixon**
- **Laurie Aaronson**
- **Kate Indrelie**

Spark Scholarships

For students ages 8-26 who have participated in any Code Savvy program to help them pursue computer science or business entrepreneurship training.

- Code Explorers
- Hackathons
- Technovation Girls Minnesota
- Spark Scholarships**



Scholarships awarded
14 students earned scholarships between \$500 and \$1,250 each for demonstrating creativity, curiosity, and a commitment to technology & entrepreneurship.



The Rebecca Award
3 students were honored with the Rebecca Award, recognizing students who **embody the spirit of Code Savvy's founder, Rebecca Schatz.**



The Spark Spirit Award
1 student received the Spark Spirit Award for promoting **inclusion** and a **passion for technology.**

Byte-Sized Challenge

A teacher-led, introductory micro:bit and design thinking curriculum delivered in the classroom, where students create solutions to community needs using the micro:bit



Byte-Sized Challenge

Professional Development

Curriculum Resources



Expanded Offering

We continued to grow & refine the Byte-Sized Challenge, offering the program **2x per year** to fill summer programming gaps.



Participation Growth

We served our largest number of educators to date:

- **14 new educators**
- Returning participants who run the challenge year after year because their students love it!



Continual Improvement

We continued to refine the curriculum based on educator feedback, ensuring it remains **accessible, engaging,** and **easy to implement.**



4 Languages

All four language versions of the curriculum were available and in active use, offering the program in English, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong.

Professional Development

Educator-informed opportunities to build knowledge, skills, and strategies in equitable computer science education.



Educator Roundtable

We started the year **centering educator voices** – we gathered valuable feedback and input to shape our programs and offerings.



Virtual PD series

We launched a new series of **free, 1.5-hour virtual sessions** designed for educators and community members to build CS skills in a flexible, drop-in format.



CS Education Week: AI in the Classroom

We celebrated national Computer Science Education Week by hosting a virtual training for educators alongside our regional partner, Code.org as well as a virtual AI coding activity for students.



Coaching for Equity

We wrapped up our National Science Foundation-funded Coaching for Equity program, training over **100** educators to implement equitable CS practices.

Byte-Sized Challenge

Professional Development

Curriculum Resources

Strong impact

- **10,000** students impacted through our educator programs.
- Educators using the strategies from our PD series reported **increased confidence & engagement**
- **75** educators participated in our PD Series, impacting
- **over 7,500** students across MN.

Curriculum Resources

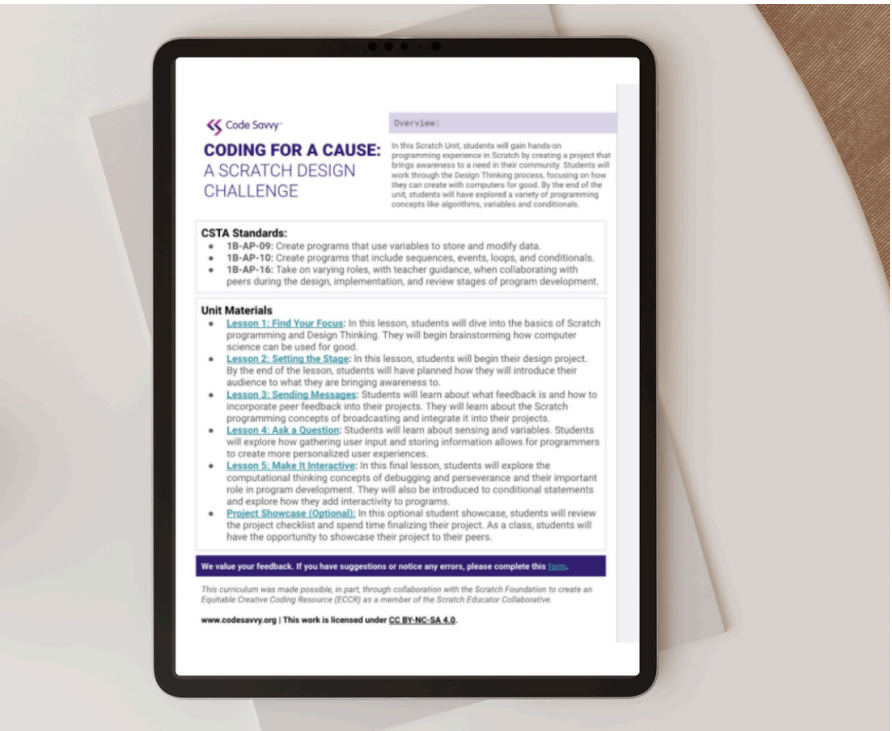
Code Savvy offers a variety of free instructional and curricular resources for educators to try with their students.

- Byte-Sized Challenge
- Professional Development
- Curriculum Resources



“Code Savvy lessons are structured in a way that make it easy for teachers with any CS experience to bring these lessons to their classroom in an engaging way!”

- MINNESOTA COMPUTER SCIENCE COACH



Global Reach

Code Savvy's free curriculum reached an estimated:

- **1,700** students through
- **17** educators across
- **7** U.S. states and
- **2** countries (Kenya and Ghana),

From Minnesota classrooms to community spaces as far away as Washington and Massachusetts.

Coding for a Cause was the most requested resource, making up more than half of all downloads.

In the words of
our participants....

**"I want to come back every year
until I'm 90!"**

– HACKATHON PARTICIPANT

**"It wasn't until I
participated in Code
Savvy's Technovation
Girls Minnesota program
that I understood I can
create technology too,
even with little to no
experience."**

– TECHNOVATION GIRLS PARTICIPANT

**"Code Savvy has not only
deepened my passion for
software development,
but has also shaped my
goal of using technology
as a way to empower
others and expand
access to opportunities
in the field."**

– SPARK SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

**"For the first time,
many students saw
their code generate
effects on the micro:bit
and they were
captivated."**

– BYTE-SIZED CHALLENGE
ELEMENTARY TEACHER

IMPACT STORIES

Community Spotlight



Alumnae Spotlight



Technovation 10 Years Later: Where are they now?

This year marked the launch of our "Where Are They Now?" alum blog series, written by Technovation Girls Minnesota alum **Bree Volker**.

The series puts a spotlight on the real stories of young women who got their start right here in the program and went on to do remarkable things.

The "Where Are They Now?" series is ongoing, and these stories reflect what Technovation Girls Minnesota was always meant to do: give girls a door into technology and the confidence to walk through it.

[Read more on our blog →](#)

From Technovation to **Engineering**

Tracey Treat

is now on staff at Code Savvy as our Communications & Operations Coordinator. Tracey started as a Code Explorer in 2013, went on to compete in Technovation, served as a mentor, majored in computer science, and now helps shape the very programs that shaped her. A full-circle story!



From Technovation to **Medicine**

Prapthi Sirkay

is now a medical student at Saint Louis University School of Medicine, combining her love of research and science to pursue a career in medicine. Technovation helped her build resilience and persistence, which have proven key throughout medical school.



From Technovation to **Computer Science**

Ashley Chen

is now a PhD student in computer science at the University of Illinois. Before Technovation, she had no interest in coding. Now she codes every day.



From Technovation to **Cybersecurity**

Clare Dixon

is now a cybersecurity major at the University of Wisconsin Platteville, and has done internships in technology, security, and software engineering at SPS Commerce. Technovation's agile development cycles and teamwork experience helped prepare her for the fast-paced projects she tackles today.



From Technovation to **Product Engineering**

Ilisa Olsen

is now a Product Engineer at Johnson & Johnson MedTech, helping build heart pumps that support patients. She believes that collaboration and communication are not at odds with engineering, but critical to success in engineering.



From Technovation to **Climate Science**

Claire Jensen

is now a PhD student at the University of Washington, studying glacier seasonality in Greenland through remote sensing and machine learning. In her research, she uses the leadership and project management skills learned through Technovation.



Mentor Spotlight



2025 Volunteer of the Year: **Adriana Belinski**

Adriana Belinski was recognized as our Volunteer of the Year at Code Savvy Celebrate 2025, our annual Spring gathering. Adriana's time, heart, and impact are truly above and beyond. We are incredibly grateful that she shares her creativity, curiosity, and deep technical knowledge with our Code Explorers.

Drawing on her graphic design and programming expertise, Adriana guides students through Python bugs, building apps in Thunkable, exploring sorting algorithms, and designing project brand identities. She meets each learner where they are, encouraging them to solve problems, think critically, and discover creative solutions.

Adriana's thoughtful mentorship helps young people see coding as a creative, empowering tool—and themselves as the next generation of tech innovators.

Thank you to Adriana for living out the heart of Code Savvy's mission, and for helping us close the gap one meaningful moment at a time!

Partner Spotlight



2025 Sponsor Spotlight: **U.S. Bank**

We are grateful to U.S. Bank, our 2025 Technovation Girls Minnesota sponsor partner, whose support empowers the next generation of technologists, leaders, and changemakers.

The **U.S. Bank Challenge** (part of the Technovation Girls Minnesota season) invited teams of girls ages 8-18 to **build mobile apps addressing real community problems** connected to the U.S. Bank Community Possible Pillars: Work, Home, and Play.

The culminating pitch event took place at U.S. Bank's Technology Headquarters in Hopkins.

Participants' presentations included apps aimed to:

- Improve a local food shelf's reservation system
- Track water consumption
- Prevent bullying

The panel of U.S. Bank executives heard teams' pitches and offered them feedback from a leadership perspective to help refine and enhance their work.

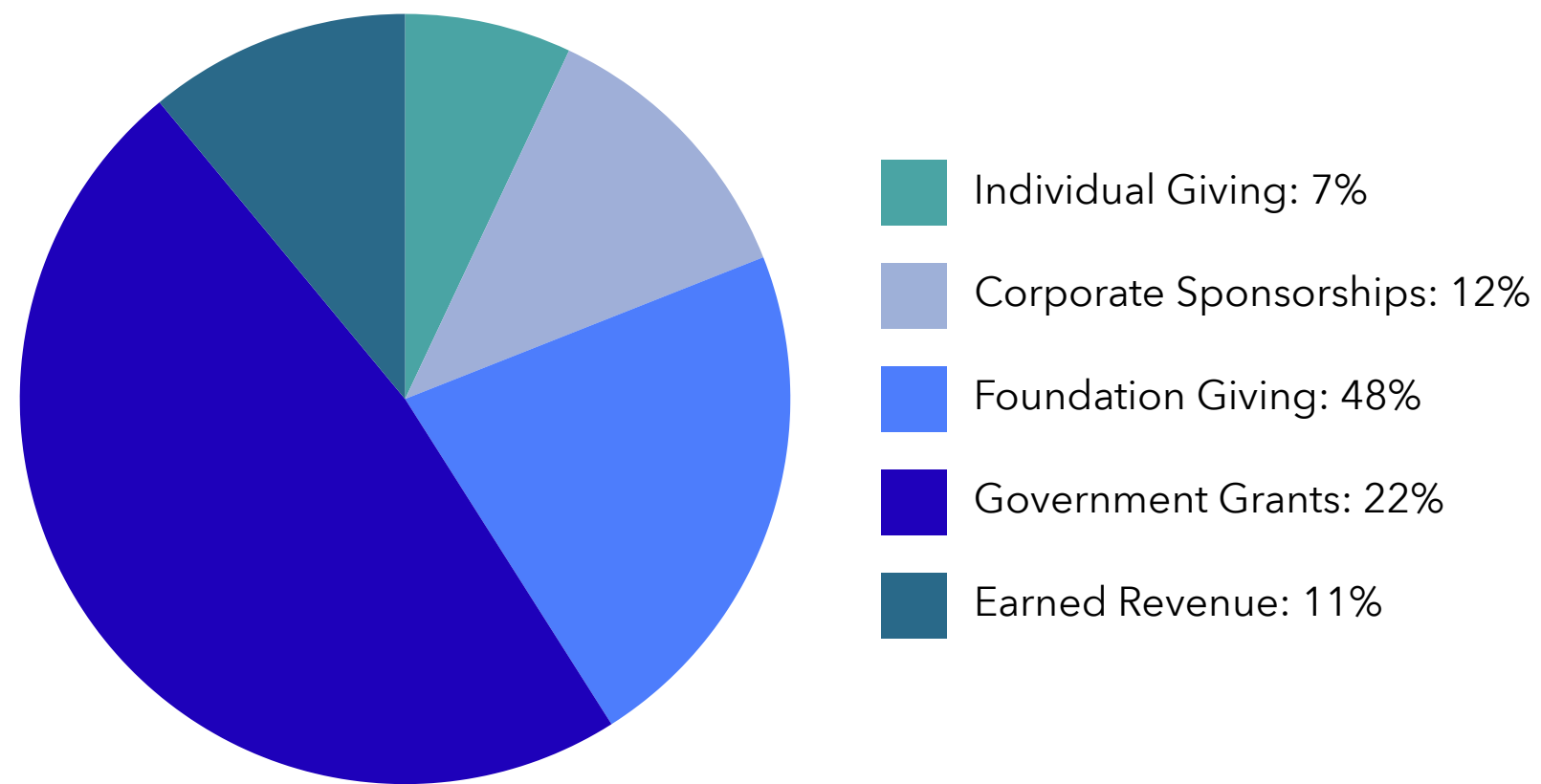


How every dollar makes an impact.

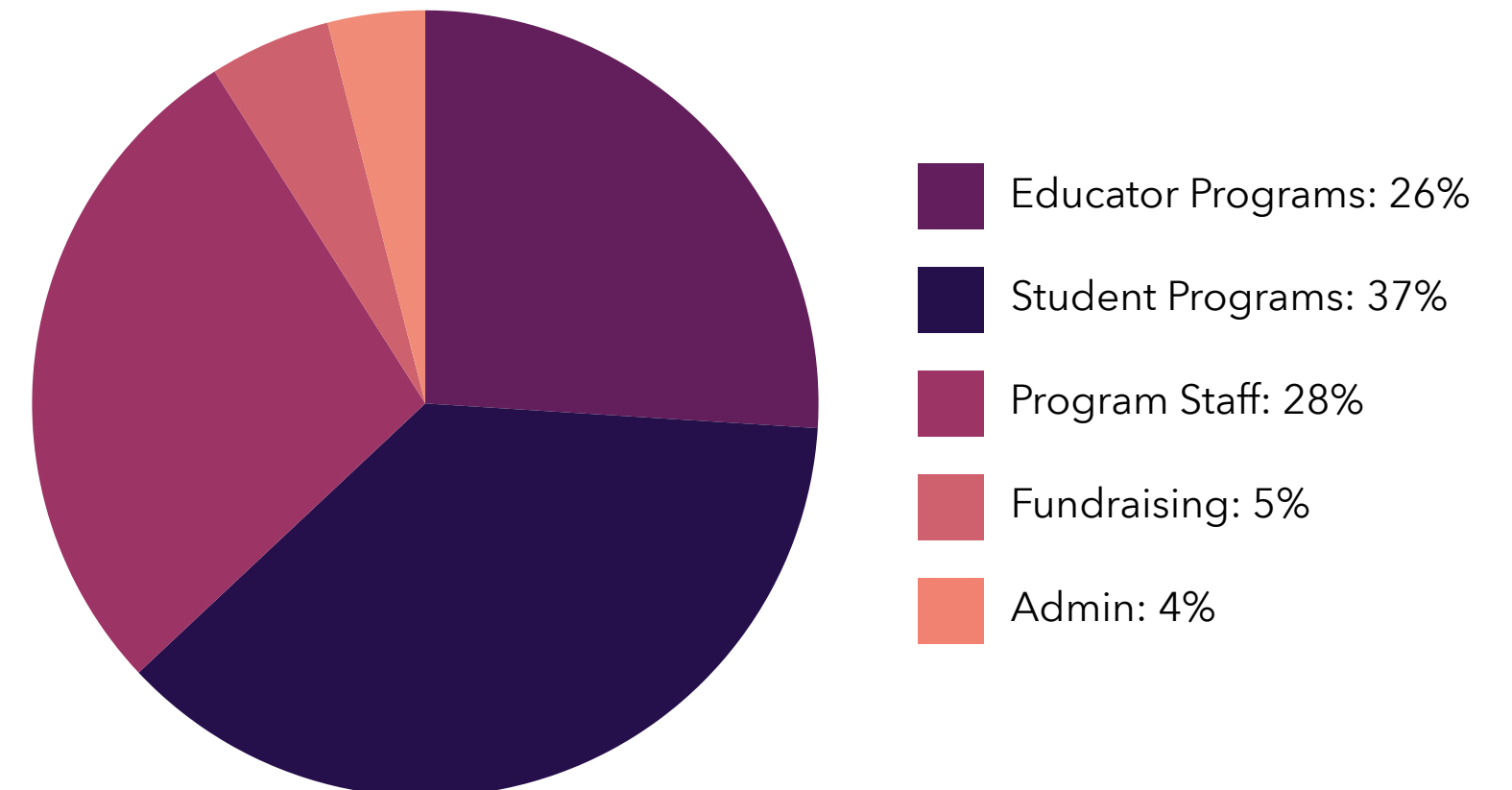
22

We run a lean 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, aiming to maximize the impact of every investment by focusing on program designs that make computer science education accessible to as many Minnesota students as possible, and build strong connections with our MN community. Together, we can empower all students to create with technology!

Income



Investment



Thank you to our community & contributors!

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Marie Gottschalk

Code Explorers Coordinator

Jean Weiss

Technovation Girls Minnesota Chapter Ambassador

Christina Llamas

Technovation Girls Minnesota Chapter Ambassador



Thank you!

Visit us at
codesavvy.org