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## Wayfair taps Resilient Coders to find qualified women and men of color in Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan

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Virtually every business in the country relies on computer programs to operate. This has created a huge demand and a resulting nationwide shortage of software developers. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics states that by 2020, there will be 1.4 million more software development jobs than there are qualified applicants who can fill them. Additionally, the majority of existing software developers are white males.

Resilient Coders in Boston strives to fill the gap by training people of color to be software engineers by offering three, 14-week boot camps each year.

“We’re unique from other coding boot camps because we’re highly competitive, and we’re free,” said David Delmar, founder and executive director of Resilient Coders. “We also offer our students a stipend. This gives us the luxury of being very selective in whom we admit to the program and whom we allow to graduate. When students leave our boot camp, they’re 100 percent ready to step into a full-time job.”

At Resilient Coders, students learn the fundamentals that are consistent across all programming languages. They are taught the skills needed to gain confidence and learn additional programming languages beyond what they’re taught at the boot camp.

Resilient Coders is a key partner with the Lewis Family Foundation’s Jobs Action Tank initiative. The Jobs Action initiative is a strategy to achieve this vision, with a goal of supporting key partnerships to place 700 young people from Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan into full-time jobs earning at least \$38,000 in annual income.

Anne Demosthene is a 25-year-old from Dorchester who graduated from Resilient Coders in December 2018 and now works for Wayfair, the online retailer. “The best part about Resilient Coders is the community atmosphere,” Demosthene said. “Exploring the tech industry and learning a new skill is challenging and can be intimidating. But at Resilient Coders, there’s a supportive community of people with similar backgrounds who have an interest and willingness to invest in our futures. It’s one of the best experiences I’ve had in the tech space.”

Wayfair has hired graduates of Resilient Coders. In December, Wayfair expanded its relationship with Resilient Coders to have two weeks of additional training, specific to the technical-skill requirements and programming languages needed for a job at the company.

“Wayfair is in a very high-growth mode, and we’re hiring a lot of technical talent,” said Deborah Poole, head of global talent acquisition for Wayfair. “We’re talking to the broadest possible pool and finding talent in the broadest number of places. We’re continually looking to diversify our talent across the organization. A great way to make sure our organization remains diverse is to partner with programs like Resilient Coders that are made up entirely of people of color.”

“Boston has a long history of racial income disparity,” said Demosthene. “As programs like Resilient Coders and companies like Wayfair find a way to bridge this gap, that is how you make an impact on the future of this city.”

Wayfair taps into its multiple resources to hire one to three dozen new software developers every month. At the conclusion of the first bootcamp of the partnership, Wayfair hired five of Resilient Coders graduates, putting them in a career path earning a six-figure salary. “We have demand all-year long, so one of the other benefits of a partnership with an organization like Resilient Coders is they’re providing talent to us throughout the year, not just two months of the year right after graduation,” said Poole.

Resilient Coders’ partnership with Wayfair is life changing and unique for its graduates. “There is a wealth of untapped talent in Boston,” said Delmar. “Most of our students couldn’t afford to be out of the workforce for the two or four years it takes to earn a college degree. But they have ability and desire and, in 16 weeks [14 weeks of Resilient Bootcamp and 2 extra weeks for Wayfair], we’re teaching them the coding skills to put them on a path to securing a high-paying position with an extremely competitive, high net worth tech company like Wayfair.”

Resilient Coders graduates are spread throughout the entire Wayfair organization. Some work on front-end, or customer-facing, code. This includes working on the website, the mobile app and any of the site’s customers encounter. Others work on back-end technologies. This includes making sure the end-to-end supply chain, the process of delivering large amounts of large and awkwardly shaped goods into people’s homes, works properly.

Based on the success of the program with Wayfair, Resilient Coders is in discussions with several other companies to form a similar partnership model. “One of the reasons we feel very positive about our relationship with Resilient Coders is that we have a very open dialogue between their leadership and ours,” said Poole. “On a weekly basis, we’re talking about skills that are important to us that could be incorporated into their curriculum. In Resilient Coders, we’re finding an extremely high desire to shape and mold the program to produce graduates who are most likely to be successful in companies like ours. We want to make sure that every successive group we hire is getting the best possible preparation.”

“We produce great talent,” said Delmar. “For companies, it makes a lot of sense to have people who are custom trained with their particular tech stack, their exact combination of programming languages.”

“These kind of relationships should be celebrated and expanded,” said Demosthene. “It’s beneficial, not just for Wayfair and Resilient Coders, but for the lifeblood of the city as well.”

*Interested in getting involved, or have a successful partnership story to share that focuses on hiring young people from Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan into full-time jobs? Visit the Lewis Family Foundation’s job page for more information.*

*The vision of the Lewis Family Foundation is that young people from Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan live in and reinvest their service, capital, and intellect to ensure that their neighborhoods continue to*

*thrive and are places of opportunity and access.*