

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 18, 2024

CONTACT

Kaylee Reed, Oklahoma Department of Libraries
Kaylee.Reed@libraries.ok.gov

Christa Helfrey, Office of Management Enterprise Services
Christa.Helfrey@omes.ok.gov

Oklahoma Department of Libraries Partners with OMES and Google to Offer Google Career Certificates at No Cost Through Public Libraries

Oklahoma City, OK — The [Oklahoma Department of Libraries](#) (ODL), in collaboration with the [Office of Management and Enterprise Services](#) (OMES) and Google, is proud to announce a new initiative providing access to Google Career Certificates and the Google AI Essentials Course to every Oklahoman at no cost.

So far, thousands of Oklahomans have taken the training from their homes or offices. By offering this program at local libraries, the collective team is removing barriers, such as internet access.

Librarians are available to help support patrons in their learning journey. This partnership underscores the vital role of libraries as community hubs, crucial in workforce development and lifelong learning.

The Google Career Certificates program equips people with job-ready skills in the fields of cybersecurity, data analytics, digital marketing and e-commerce, IT Support, project management, and user experience (UX) design. The program includes an [employer consortium](#) of over 150 companies – including Google – that consider graduates for roles in the certificate fields. Since 2022, 85% of Google Career Certificate graduates in Oklahoma report that they've secured gainful employment through the initiative.

“Our state is positioned to be a leader in implementing AI technology, and this partnership with Google furthers that momentum by educating

thousands of Oklahomans in foundational skills for tomorrow's economy," Oklahoma Gov. J. Kevin Stitt said. "For years, Google has partnered with organizations throughout Oklahoma to help residents expand their career opportunities through digital skills training. As more companies move to Oklahoma, we'll be ready to meet them with a skilled workforce."

Quotes from members of the Lawton Delegation

"Launching this in the Lawton Public Library first shows our commitment to rural Oklahoma and surrounding towns," said Sen. Chris Kidd (R) District 31.

"This partnership represents a giant step in modernizing our community and investing in the people of southwest Oklahoma," said Rep. Trey Caldwell (R) District 63.

"This is an example of how government can serve its people in a meaningful way and partner with private companies to accomplish more together," said Rep. Rande Worthen (R) District 64.

"Continued education is crucial for the people of our state, and libraries play a major role in providing awareness and access to services," said Rep. Toni Hasenbeck (R) District 65.

"As someone who has worked in municipal government and witnessed firsthand the evolving demands of the modern economy, I know how crucial it is to provide our citizens with the tools to succeed," said Rep. Daniel Pae (R) District 26.

Central to this initiative is the Google AI Essentials course. The online course is product agnostic, does not require a degree or experience, and will teach workers foundational AI skills, AI best practices and how to use AI responsibly. In under 10 hours, people will get practical, hands-on experience using AI to help with work tasks through videos, readings, and interactive exercises. The skills learned can be applied to a variety of roles across industries. After completing the course, people will earn a certificate from Google to share with their network.

"OMES is thrilled to partner with Google and the Oklahoma Department of Libraries on what is sure to be a transformative experience for Oklahomans,"

said Joe McIntosh, state chief information officer. “It’s our hope that by making these resources and trainings available at home and through public libraries, we can help equip every Oklahoman with the skills needed to succeed in a technology-driven world.”

Late last year, Gov. Kevin Stitt established a task force to explore the potential of leveraging AI to enhance the state's economy. The Governor’s Task Force on Emerging Technologies has since published [a report](#) outlining strategies and recommendations for implementing AI initiatives across state agencies.

“When the governor’s task force shared their vision last year for an Oklahoma powered by AI, we knew that libraries would be integral in bringing responsible, safe and secure AI use to Oklahomans,” said Natalie Currie, director of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. “The Google AI Essentials course – and the Grow with Google initiative as a whole – is the perfect opportunity to highlight the vital role libraries play in strengthening the workforce pipeline.”

In addition to digital skills programs through Google, Oklahomans also have access to Brainfuse, an invaluable online platform supporting students and job seekers. Brainfuse is accessible to anyone with a public library card in Oklahoma. The platform features three key components: HelpNow, homework help and tutoring for students of all ages; JobNow, live coaching for job seekers that includes resume assistance, cover letter guidance and interview preparation; and VetNow, a support resource for veterans and their families in understanding and applying for benefits.

Libraries are no longer just places to borrow books – they are community institutions dedicated to fostering lifelong learning and workforce development. By offering access to innovative programs like Google and Brainfuse, libraries are empowering individuals with the skills and resources needed to thrive in today’s economy. This initiative underscores the critical role libraries play in supporting community growth, providing valuable educational opportunities, and supplying all Oklahomans with the tools they need to succeed.

The Grow with Google initiative will officially launch with an event at the Lawton Public Library on Sept. 27 at 10 a.m. The event will feature speakers who will discuss the goals of the partnership and highlight its impact on

workforce development in the community. Members of the public, media, and local and state government officials are invited to attend as Oklahoma embarks on this new chapter in digital skills training and career advancement.

To learn more about the Grow with Google Career Certificate Program and AI Essentials, visit oklahoma.gov/libraries/grow-google.

#

About the Oklahoma Department of Libraries

The Oklahoma Department of Libraries is the official State Library of Oklahoma. It serves the information and records management needs of state government, assists with public library development, coordinates library and information technology projects for the state, and serves the general public through its specialized collections. oklahoma.gov/libraries

About the Office of Management and Enterprise Services

The Office of Management and Enterprise Services provides essential services to state agencies and local communities, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in government operations. This program is offered through the OMES Information Services division, which provides technology services, cybersecurity, and technology planning and investment to state employees.

About Grow with Google

[Grow with Google](https://growwithgoogle.com) was started in 2017 to help Americans grow their skills, careers and businesses. It provides training, tools and expertise to help small business owners, veterans and military families, jobseekers, students, educators, startups, and developers. Since Grow with Google's inception, it has helped more than 11 million Americans develop new skills. Grow with Google has a network of more than 9,500 partner organizations like libraries, schools, small business development centers, chambers of commerce and nonprofits to help people coast to coast.

Image: Heat map of places where people have completed the Google AI Essentials course.

Natalie Currie
Director



J. Kevin Stitt
Governor

