

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC AMERICA FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES \$2 MILLION IN NEW GRANTS

Focused on Access to Careers in Technology and the Trades for Youth with Disabilities

WASHINGTON, DC, April 30, 2024 — [Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation](http://www.meaf.org) (MEAF) announced today \$2 million in new grants, and \$615K in continuing projects. The funding supports MEAF's new Access to Careers in Technology and the Trades Inclusion Initiative, which is designed to empower youth with disabilities to lead productive lives through increased employment.

“Our Access to Careers in Technology and the Trades Inclusion Initiative builds off the success we have seen this past year in collaborating with our grant recipients and industry associations in replicating model disability employment programs to create a pipeline of skilled talent to access careers in high demand fields,” says Kevin R. Webb, MEAF's senior director.

Careers in Technology

In collaboration with the [Consumer Technology Association Foundation](http://www.ctafoundation.org), MEAF is helping to promote accessibility and tech careers at CES® and throughout the year, supporting projects like:

- **FIRST® Access:** To introduce inclusive programming for all students into [FIRST](#) competitions.
- **Exceptional Minds Growth Initiative:** To prepare artists on the autism spectrum at [Exceptional Minds](#) for career pathways towards entertainment and related industry jobs across digital arts, animation, visual effects, gaming, and other fields.
- **Aspiritech Remote Employment Academy:** To provide training and internships leading to careers in Accessibility, IT and Quality Assurance testing for neurodiverse individuals at [Aspiritech](#).
- **NSITE IT Program Expansion:** To help blind and visually impaired individuals access training at [NSITE](#) and go on to careers in Information Technology.

Careers in the Trades

In support of the [Association for Career and Technical Education](http://www.aacte.org) and its Inclusion, Access, Equity and Diversity Initiative, MEAF is helping to build a pipeline of Career Tech Talent in fields like:

- **Advanced Manufacturing:** [Nuts, Bolts & Thingamajigs](#), the foundation of the Fabricators and Manufacturer's Association, offers Inclusive Summer Camps to introduce students to careers in manufacturing. FedCap's [Teaching the Autism Community Trades \(TACT\)](#) trains and places students as heat pump installers, electricians, welders, carpenters, and mechanics. [The Uniquely Abled Project](#) is establishing Uniquely Abled Academies at trade schools and community colleges to train and place

autistic students in jobs as Computer Numerical Control (CNC) and Robotics Operators. [CAST](#) is introducing students with disabilities to careers in biomanufacturing.

- **Electronics and Plastics Recycling and Beyond:** [Blue Star Recyclers](#) is sharing its successful disability employment model by creating Counties of Inclusion, bringing together schools, service providers, employers, and chambers of commerce in counties to create a pipeline of capable talent.
- **Hospitality, Healthcare, Microenterprise and More:** [Butler Tech's Project LIFE™](#) program and [Celebrate EDU's](#) microenterprise training introduces students with intellectual and development disabilities to career opportunities in a variety of fields. [Cincinnati Children's Project SEARCH](#) internship program provides total workplace immersion and job-skills acquisition leading to competitive employment. MEAF's support will help more than 36,000 Project SEARCH alumni advance in their careers.

Access to Opportunity

Access to careers in technology and the trades starts from a strong foundation of quality experiential education and awareness. MEAF helps build access and awareness by supporting:

- **Documentary Films:** The Emmy® winning [“My Disability Roadmap”](#) and new feature-length film [“The Ride Ahead”](#) by Dan and Samuel Habib, as well as the film [“All You Hear is Noise”](#), helps promote inclusion and the understanding of the capabilities of people with disabilities.
- **Disability Mentoring:** [Partners for Youth with Disabilities National Disability Mentoring Coalition](#) and innovative mentoring programs like [Disability EmpowHer Network](#) helps advance disability mentoring in national MENTOR programs.
- **Quality Education:** The [DePaul School for Hearing and Speech](#) is introducing a career development curriculum, the World Institute on Disability offers [The Global Heumann Fellowship](#), and [Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support at St. Joseph's University](#) shares knowledge with other colleges.
- **Experiential Work:** Vocational training at [Spero Vineyards](#) and [Growing Together Aquaponics](#), peer empowerment models at [Vanderbilt University](#) and [Children's Hospital Los Angeles](#), and [Bridges from School to Work](#) help youth with disabilities take the next steps.
- **Inclusive Grantmaking:** MEAF works with its peers in philanthropy, such as [PEAK Grantmaking](#) and [Workforce Matters](#) to encourage grant makers to include support for people with disabilities in their grant programs.

“This is the first year MEAF's annual grant making has exceeded \$2 million. We are excited to see the growth of disability employment to support a more inclusive society,” concludes Webb.

empowering youth with disabilities to lead productive lives

MEAF's \$2.6 million in grant commitments to 24 organizations will be distributed over the next two years. MEAF will also match up to \$320,000 in donations made by employees in 2024 to help build inclusive and sustainable communities in the United States.

The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, based in the Washington, D.C. area, was established in 1991 by Mitsubishi Electric Corporation and the Mitsubishi Electric U.S. group companies, which produce, sell, and distribute a wide range of consumer, industrial, commercial, and professional electronics products. The Foundation has contributed more than \$26 million to organizations that are empowering young people with disabilities to lead more inclusive and productive lives. To learn more, visit www.MEAF.org.

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Media Representative Contact:

Jessica Newman, 858/382-5157, JNeuman@westboundcommunications.com

Foundation Contact:

Kevin R. Webb, Sr. Director, 703/276-8245, Kevin.Webb@meus.com

MEAF's FY24 Grant Projects

Recently Approved Grants:

- [Association for Career and Technical Education-Inclusion, Access, Equity and Diversity Initiative](#), \$10,000
- [CAST-Building a Better Bioeconomy: Including Students with Disabilities in Biomanufacturing](#), \$150,000 over two years
- [Celebrate EDU-Replicable Microenterprise Job Training](#), \$175,000 over two years
- [Cincinnati Childrens Hospital Medical Center-Project SEARCH Alumni Association](#), \$200,000 over two years
- [Children's Hospital Los Angeles-Peer Navigator Employment Training Program for Young People with Disabilities](#), \$200,000 over two years
- [Consumer Technology Association Foundation-Disability Employment Roundtable](#), \$10,000
- [Disability EmpowHer Network-EmpowHer Camp Mentoring Program](#), \$112,200 over two years
- [Exceptional Minds-Job Training and Employment Growth Initiative](#), \$200,000 over two years
- [Friends of Butler Tech Foundation-Project LIFE™: Building a Talent Pipeline to Employment](#), \$202,500 over two years
- [Inclusive Communities at the Westchester Institute for Human Development- My Disability Roadmap and The Ride Ahead Documentary Film Outreach](#), \$50,000
- [Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support at St. Joseph's University-Program CLASS: Colleges Learn about Autistic Students](#), \$202,500 over two years
- [NSITE-IT Program Expansion](#), \$150,000 over two years
- [Partners for Youth with Disabilities-National Disability Mentoring Coalition](#), \$10,000
- [The Uniquely Abled Project-Expanding the Opportunity: UAA Replications](#), \$200,000 over two years
- [Vanderbilt University, Peer Empowerment Network](#), \$195,155 over two years
- [World Institute on Disability-The Global Heumann Fellowship](#), \$10,000

Continuing Projects

- [**Aspiritech Nfp-Aspiritech Remote Employment Academy Expansion**](#), \$50,000 (second year of a \$100,000/two-year grant)
- [**Blue Star Recyclers-Counties of Inclusion**](#), \$100,000 (second year of a \$200,000/two-year grant)
- [**For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology \(FIRST®\)-FIRST Access**](#), \$100,000 (second year of a \$200,000/two-year grant)
- [**DePaul School for Hearing and Speech-Career Development Program**](#), \$75,000 (second year of a \$150,000/two-year grant)
- [**Growing Together Aquaponics-Replicable Community Partnership Job Training**](#), \$100,000 (second year of a \$200,000/two-year grant)
- [**Nuts, Bolts & Thingamajigs-Inclusive Manufacturing Camps**](#), \$50,000 (second year of a \$150,000/two-year grant)
- [**Spero Vineyards-Creating Employment Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities**](#), \$40,000 (second year of an \$80,000/two-year grant)
- [**TACT-Career Track Trades Program for Youth with Autism**](#), \$100,000 (second year of a \$200,000/two year grant)

Work also continues with the following MEAF-funded grant projects:

- [**Bridges from School to Work-NextGen of Enhanced Employment Strategies Project**](#)
- [**Vermont Folklife Center-All You Hear Is Noise Documentary Film**](#)