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Tech fellowship reflects mayor's priorities

City agencies are partnering with the Flatiron School to bring poorer young adults into the city's surging tech scene.

BY THORNTON MCENERY

City Hall's new NYC Tech Talent Pipeline initiative is finally open, and aiming to give many underprivileged young people from around the city access to Silicon Alley jobs.

The New York City Department of Small Business Services, which administers the Talent Pipeline, announced Monday that it has reimagined its NYC Web Development Fellowship program. To better align with the de Blasio administration's education-focused workforce development philosophy, the fellowship will now be open to 18- to 26-year-olds without college degrees who have never worked in Web development and earn less than \$50,000 a year.

"It's critical that we provide young New Yorkers with the tools and resources they need to build real careers in growing sectors with good wages," Small Business Services Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer said in a statement.

The program is a partnership among city agencies, the Flatiron School and the Youth Development Institute. Young people accepted as fellows will be enrolled in a five-month training program at the Flatiron School and a 12-week internship at companies such as Microsoft, AppNexus and BuzzFeed. They will also receive help in being placed in a full-time job.

"As a tech company born here in New York and now employing over 550 people at our home in Flatiron, AppNexus has a strong commitment to developing homegrown talent," AppNexus CEO Brian O'Kelley said in a statement. "We look forward to welcoming our NYC Web Development fellows to the team this summer."

While the fellowship was launched last year and reportedly placed 96% of its 56 inaugural participants in jobs at companies including Etsy and Venmo, the new focus on age and economic background is part of the new thinking in city government. The new-look fellowship is also the first major announcement for the Talent Pipeline initiative made under the direction of Kristen Titus, who took the reins in September with an assignment to apply Mayor Bill de Blasio's Jobs for New Yorkers plan to the tech sector.

"We are very excited about this program, and happy to say that it will be the first of many," said Ms. Titus. "We are committed to delivering on the mayor's vision."

The fellowship starts in January. The application deadline is Dec. 31.