What's NeXT?
"Next-gen eXpertise in Technology"
From MCA

MISSISSIPPI CODING ACADEMIES · EST 2017 ·

Summer 2025
Upward Bounds-Trio
Hinds Community College, Utica

A Note from the Executive Director

Fall brings fresh energy to Mississippi Coding Academies. Across our campuses and partner sites, new cohorts are getting started, and we're seeing learners take bold steps toward new careers in technology. It's always inspiring to watch Mississippians—from recent graduates to adults changing paths—commit to building their future with us. Through our NeXT ecosystem, we continue to expand access and opportunity. Whether it's coding, cybersecurity, AI, or workforce readiness, there is a pathway for every learner. MCA Online and our growing network of community and library partners make it possible for people to learn wherever they are. Most of all, we're grateful for you—our partners, supporters, and friends—who make this mission possible. Together we're creating real opportunities, one learner and one job at a time.

Bob Buseck
Executive Director
Mississippi Coding Academies

Top News

NIST Awards More Than $3 Million to Support Cybersecurity Workforce Development Across 13 States

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI · 1910 ·

In Partnership with USM, MCA Will Deliver NeXTDefender

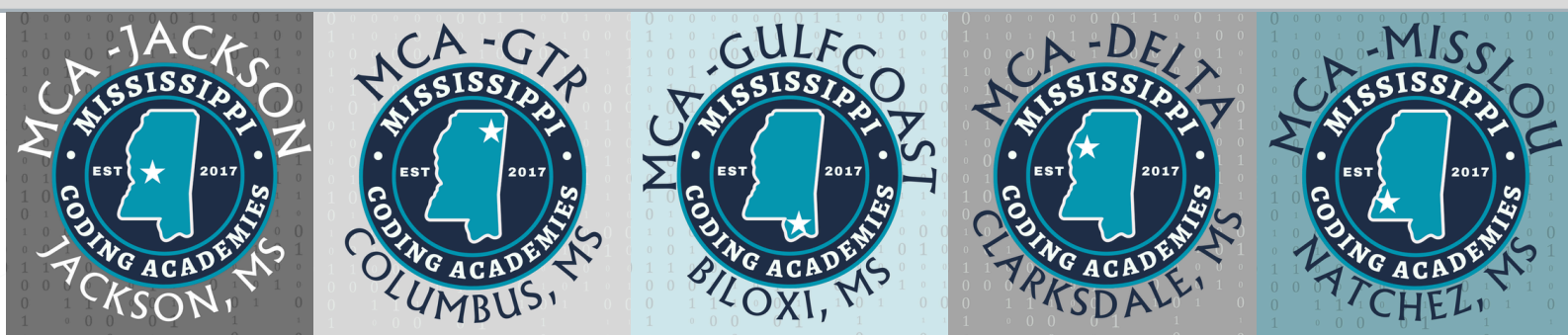## Bob Buseck
Executive Director

Why MCA – NeXT?

This year marks a major milestone: **Mississippi Coding Academies is evolving into NeXT (Next-gen eXpertise in Technology).** Why the change? Because our mission has outgrown coding alone. NeXT represents a statewide, hybrid ecosystem of digital skills, workforce readiness, and innovation—designed to meet learners at every age and stage.

With five locations—**Jackson, Biloxi, Columbus, Clarksdale, and Natchez**—plus full online delivery, NeXT ensures Mississippians can access training no matter where they live. Learners can participate in person, virtually, or through hybrid options, making the program flexible and inclusive while preparing our communities for the digital economy of tomorrow.

Foundations –The entry into MCA's NeXT Programs.

Horizons - Age-based tech skill pathways from preschoolers to senior adults.

Workforce - Job-ready training in today's most in-demand technologies.

Access - Equity tracks for vulnerable and underserved communities.

Kiln - Talent, educator, and entrepreneur development.

- Foundations
- Horizons
- Workforce
- Access
- Kiln

MCA Program Schedule

NeXT

"Next-gen eXpertise in Technology"

Fall 2025 Term

September 15 – December 15, 2025

NeXTStack Back-End (BE)
Duration: 3 months (12 weeks)
Focus: Databases, APIs,
and server-side development.

Spring 2026 Term

Starting January 5, 2026

NeXTStack Front-End (FE)
Duration: 6 months (January 5 – July 5, 2026)
Focus: Web and app interfaces (HTML, CSS, JS, frameworks).

NeXTStack Back-End (BE) – New Cohort
Duration: 3 months (January 5 – April 5, 2026)
Focus: Server-side programming and systems integration.

NeXT360
Duration: 8 weeks (January 5 – March 1, 2026)
Focus: Workforce readiness, digital literacy, one-day tech overviews.

NeXTDefender
Duration: 12 weeks (January 5 – March 30, 2026)
Focus: Cybersecurity training aligned to CompTIA A+, N+, S+.

NeXTHorizons (Ongoing)
Youth track (ages 3–18) spanning NeXTSprout, NeXTExplorer, NeXTLaunch, and LaunchPad.

NeXTIntellect
Duration: 12 weeks (January 5 – March 30, 2026)F ocus: Artificial Intelligence, PromptOps, and applied AI tools.

NeXTReality
Duration: 4 months (January 5 – May 5, 2026) Focus: XR/AR/MR design, development, and immersive tech labs.

NeXTChance
Duration: 40 hours (delivered flexibly within the term) Focus: Tech training + reentry support for justice-involved individuals.

NeXLegacy
Duration: 12 weeks (January 5 – March 30, 2026) Focus: Legacy Languages

NeXTBravo (Ongoing)
Veteran & military family overlay available across all pathways.

Congrats!

Chris (CJ) Jenkins
Class of 2024
IT Network Support
Sumaria SystemII LLC
Keeler Air Force Base

Michael Bain
Class of 2024
IT Specialist
Pafford EMS

Kayla Nosser
Summer Jr Instructor
Class of 2025, MCA-Misslou

Bryan Ha
Class of 2024
IT Support Specialist
CBIZ for Edward Jones
Branches

Macey Nowell
Summer Jr Instructor
Class of 2025, MCA-Misslou

Everett Sones
Class of 2025
IT Service Desk Agent
Warriors Solutions Group

Nicole Torres Mendez
Class of 2024
Jr. Developer
Ingalls

Favor Smith
Summer Jr Instructor
Class of 2025, MCA-Jackson

Asia Brown-Haller
Summer Jr Instructor
Class of 2025, MCA-Biloxi

Will Bridges
Summer Jr Instructor
Class of 2025, MCA-Jackson

Clint Jackson
Summer Jr Instructor
Class of 2025, MCA-Jackson

Ezekiel Cary
Summer Jr Instructor
Class of 2025, MCA-Jackson

DestineyZoe Jones
Summer Jr Instructor
MCA-Jackson

At Mississippi Coding Academies (MCA), learners consistently show grit and determination as they balance work, life, and education. Many take on overnight jobs, long shifts, or family responsibilities while pursuing their training with us.

From working full-time in restaurants and shipyards, to managing security posts, to volunteering skills for their classmates, MCA learners prove that dedication pays off. Each story reflects the same truth: MCA provides the opportunity, and our learners put in the hard work to transform their futures.

MCA-Biloxi
Summer 2025 Highlights

MCA was overjoyed in our partnership with Building Behaviors Learning Center in Biloxi. It posed as a unique opportunity for MCA staff and students to inform the next generation about the benefits of technology, potential careers, and the importance of tech safety online. This opportunity allowed our staff to better understand technological concepts as we were presented with the challenge of explaining it to groups of children with special needs between the ages of 3 and 12.

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UP ROUND

In partnership with the
Gulf Coast Community Foundation

NeXTSprout
"Planting the seeds of innovation."

NeXTHorizons
"Where the Future Begins, Grow, Discover, Soar."

NeXTExplorer
"Discover. Build. Dream."

NeXTHorizons is the youth learning pathway within the NeXT by MCA ecosystem, designed to introduce students ages 3 to 18 to technology through engaging, age-appropriate tracks. It includes three main levels—NeXTSprout (ages 3–6), NeXTExplorer (ages 7–12), and NeXTLaunch (ages 13–18)—each offering hands-on experiences in coding, robotics, AI, cybersecurity, and more. NeXTHorizons sparks curiosity early and builds confidence as students grow, creating a seamless tech journey from preschool through high school.

The students of the Building Behavior summer camp were amazing. They were curious, engaged, endlessly creative, and Building Behavior's staff helped every step along the way. During our time there we focused on teaching the students how to do basic programming with scratch code. Through this they managed to create fun cartoons in Scratch for iPad, Scratch for laptops, as well as Code.org Dance Party. These tools teach young minds how to code using puzzles instead of words. These features allowed us to communicate difficult concepts but in a digestible way while having fun.

- Dayna Piper - Support Specialist and MCA graduate

MCA-Jackson/Misslou Summer 2025 Highlights

Mississippi Coding Academies (MCA) piloted the NeXTLaunch program in Summer 2025, reaching 332 students across Hinds County, Jackson, Warren County (Vicksburg), and Copiah County. Sessions were delivered to 10 Upward Bound cohorts at Hinds CC – Utica, 2 at Jackson State University, and through the Jackson Medical Mall Summer Program. MCA graduates served as paid Jr. Instructors via MS CodeWorks, working under MCA's lead site instructors.

NeXTHorizons
"Where the Future Begins, Grow, Discover, Soar."

NeXTLaunch
"Skills that launch futures."

NeXTLaunch is a youth technology program created by Mississippi Coding Academies (MCA) as part of its statewide NeXT by MCA ecosystem. Designed for students ages 13–18, NeXTLaunch bridges the gap between early exposure to tech and real-world readiness. It equips students with essential digital skills through hands-on modules in areas like coding, cybersecurity, AI, and virtual reality—helping them build confidence and envision futures in tech careers, higher education, or entrepreneurship.

Each session delivers engaging, age-appropriate content in five core focus areas: web development, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, extended reality (XR), and emerging technologies like drones and GitHub. Programs are offered in flexible formats—such as 12-day workshops or summer boot camps—and are led by trained instructors supported by paid MCA graduate Jr. Instructors through Mississippi CodeWorks. Students leave with a certificate, a project portfolio, and a deeper understanding of modern tech careers.

Partnerships in Action

On August 21st, we had the honor of presenting NeXT pathways at the Mississippi Library Commission Directors Meeting. Every library director in the state heard about our evolving programs, sparking strong interest in how technology and training can expand access for communities statewide.

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HARRISON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

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Sunflower County LIBRARY SYSTEM

LEADERSHIP ADVOCACY SERVICE

MISSISSIPPI LIBRARY COMMISSION

Mississippi Coding Academies' NeXT initiative is partnering with libraries across the state to bring digital skills training closer to home. By connecting through trusted local libraries, we can reach Mississippians who may not otherwise have access to technology, training, or career-aligned opportunities.

We've already had strong interest and are actively working with the City of Jackson Library, Sunflower County, Harrison County, Jones/Laurel, and more to add MCA campuses where learners can meet in person. These hubs extend the reach of libraries while anchoring new pathways for education, workforce readiness, and community connection.

"Libraries are already anchors in their communities. By partnering with them, NeXT can meet Mississippians where they are, providing pathways to digital skills and opportunity statewide."

MISSISSIPPI CODING ACADEMIES
EST 2017

Partnerships in Action

The Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) and Mississippi Coding Academies (MCA) have partnered to provide incarcerated individuals with essential digital literacy, workforce readiness, and technology training through the NeXTChance program. This initiative empowers participants with skills for reentry, employment, and further educational opportunities upon release.

NeXTChance
"Opportunity Never Ends."

The Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) and Mississippi Coding Academies (MCA) are proud to partner in delivering the NeXTChance digital skills training and workforce readiness program to incarcerated individuals across the state. This collaboration provides participants with essential 21st-century skills—including digital literacy, job readiness, and exposure to tech careers —while still inside correctional facilities. Upon release, graduates are eligible to continue their training through MCA's NeXT programs statewide, with access to reentry support, certifications, and employment pathways. Together, MDOC and MCA are investing in second chances and building brighter futures through technology education.

Reentry programs support individuals transitioning from incarceration by offering job training, digital skills, housing support, and counseling. These services help reduce recidivism and promote successful reintegration into society by building confidence, stability, and pathways to employment, education, and independence. They are a vital step toward second chances and long-term success.

> "Reentry isn't about returning to where someone was—it's about opening doors to where they can go. With support, skills, and opportunity, second chances become new beginnings."

NeXT Instructors

At Mississippi Coding Academies, the NeXT ecosystem offers pathways that meet learners at every age and stage. Programs include justice and access opportunities for second chances, immersive extended reality (XR) training, artificial intelligence and prompt engineering, cybersecurity and digital defense, and full-stack and legacy development. Learners also explore cloud, data, and analytics; digital marketing, design, and entrepreneurship; youth-focused STEM tracks; and lifelong learning opportunities for older adults and educators—all delivered through flexible in-person, online, and hybrid models.

Herbert Brown
NeXTStack – Front-End

Justin Buseck, MCA Grad
NeXTChance-Corrections Workforce Development

Jessika Hayes, MCA Grad
NeXTStack – Back-End

Jordan Roland, MCA Grad
NeXTReality-Virtual Reality

Margarito Valencia, MCA Grad
NeXTDefender – Cybersecurity

Dayna Piper, MCA Grad
NeXTHorzions-Age Based Learning

Blake Wyatt, MCA Grad
NeXTLegacy – Legacy Languages

NeXT*Intellect* – *AI Course*

Matthew Harris, MCA Grad
NeXT 360 - Career Success

NeXTBravo-Veteran's Workforce

IHL Partnerships

Mississippi Coding Academies (MCA) partners with Alcorn State, Jackson State, USM, Copiah-Lincoln, Coahoma, Hinds Utica, and the Natchez Workforce Center to expand digital skills statewide. These collaborations align NeXT programs with university STEM and cybersecurity strengths while extending workforce training into rural and underserved communities. From AI and coding in Jackson and Biloxi to community-based programs in the Delta and Natchez, MCA and its partners create unified pathways that prepare Mississippians of all ages for the digital economy.

The partnership between the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) and Mississippi Coding Academies (MCA) is important because it creates a complementary pathway that neither system can provide alone. Universities excel in research, theory, and degree attainment, while MCA specializes in hands-on, industry-driven training that quickly equips learners with certifications and workforce-ready skills. By working together, MCA can fill critical gaps in applied tech training—offering rapid, practical skill development that reinforces and enhances the academic foundation IHL provides. This partnership ensures Mississippi students gain both the deep knowledge of higher education and the job-ready expertise of MCA, creating a stronger, more competitive workforce for the state.

Save the Date

NeXT
"Next-gen eXpertise in Technology"

LAUNCH
January 2026

MCA NEWSLETTER

SCHEDULE

Quarterly

MCA GRADUATION

Details coming soon!

Looking Ahead

At Mississippi Coding Academies, the future is always in sight. As technology evolves, so do the opportunities for Mississippians to build lasting careers in the digital economy. MCA is expanding its NeXT ecosystem across the state, adding new tracks in cybersecurity, extended reality, data analytics, and AI to meet the demands of tomorrow's workforce. With instructors who bring industry experience and a network of community partners, we're ensuring that learners not only gain technical skills but also the confidence to thrive in any career pathway.

Looking ahead, MCA will continue to break down barriers and open doors for people from every background—youth exploring tech for the first time, adults re-skilling for new opportunities, veterans transitioning into civilian careers, and justice-involved individuals finding a second chance. The goal is simple but powerful: to build Mississippi's future one learner at a time, creating a stronger, more inclusive economy for generations to come.

MCA's NeXT ecosystem is transforming how Mississippians access technology training across all ages and stages. From NeXTHorizons programs for young learners, to NeXTStack, NeXTDefender, and NeXTReality for workforce skills, to NeXTChance and NeXTBravo supporting justice-involved individuals and veterans, NeXT is both comprehensive and inclusive. Learners gain hands-on experience in fields like software development, cybersecurity, AI, and extended reality while also developing resilience, creativity, and problem-solving. With strong community partnerships, including libraries and workforce centers statewide, MCA is preparing thousands for the digital economy. NeXT is more than training—it's building Mississippi's future workforce and opening doors to lasting opportunity.

On behalf of our students, staff, trustees, and alumni...

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Mississippi Coding Academies is proud to welcome back alumna Sara Dedeaux as our new Statewide Program Coordinator. Sara's journey from MCA graduate to statewide leader reflects the power of perseverance, hard work, and the opportunities created through our programs. In this role, she will oversee daily operations, support instructors and learners, and expand MCA's reach across Mississippi. Her leadership ensures that future cohorts benefit from the same dedication and excellence that shaped her own MCA experience.

We are equally excited to welcome alumna Windie Speed as our new Marketing and Partnerships Coordinator. Windie brings both professional expertise and personal passion to the role. With a degree in Business from Mississippi State University, she has years of marketing experience in the private sector and a strong interest in UI/UX design. After time devoted to family, Windie chose MCA to reenter the workforce because of her enthusiasm for web design. Her skills and creativity will help MCA grow its visibility and partnerships across the state.

Questions? Contact Us!

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