



Women in Tech:

Navigating the Technician Profession



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Introduction

Do you like working with your hands instead of sitting behind a desk? When your aunt pulls up in her classic VW Bug, are you beyond excited when she lets you look under the hood? If so, a career as an auto tech may be right for you.

Although the automotive world is made up of mostly men, the number of women in the field is growing every day. Opportunity abounds in repair shops, dealerships, and at car companies. There is a place for you to build an exciting career and maybe even launch your own business.

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Photo courtesy of Universal Technical Institute.

Current Stats on Women as Professional Technicians

Women in the transportation workforce have seen a 1% decrease in their numbers since 2019. However, the field is wide open for tremendous growth.

From the shop floor up to the C-suite, the opportunities are there and waiting. Increasing the number of female technicians can also help attract more women into the industry as a whole, leading to a more balanced workforce across all sectors. To achieve this, it is crucial to provide equal opportunities for women regarding education, training, and career advancement. We must also challenge existing stigmas and stereotypes that discourage women from pursuing careers in traditionally male-dominated fields. By advocating for change and promoting diversity and inclusion, we can ensure the transportation industry thrives with the full participation of female technicians.

The good news? There is plenty of room for women to make a significant impact at the highest levels of this industry. Yes, the current numbers are low, but that opens the door for you to participate in, and help create a more inclusive future. [Source data BLS.gov](https://www.bls.gov)

2022

22.6%

workforce in transportation

6.8%

machinists

5.1%

welding

4.6%

aviation technicians

2.9%

automotive technicians

1.2%

diesel technicians

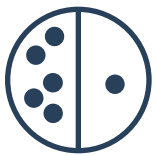
C-suite

29.2%

chief executives
across all U.S. industries

Challenges Women Face in the Technician Industry

While there are great rewards for women in an auto tech career—working with your hands, building something from scratch, the opportunity to be an entrepreneur—there are also challenges.



Feelings of isolation

One of the biggest struggles is not having the comradery created when working with other women. Social media can help, but that's no substitute for having fellow women in the room. Many women techs are the only ones in their shop, with no other peers to bounce around ideas with or simply vent their frustrations to.



Skeptical male colleagues

There's no one kind of male auto technician, and so they will have a wide range of reactions to a female tech on their team. Yes, some will be unsure whether you can do the job, but many will be very supportive. Most won't really care either way as long as you pull your weight.



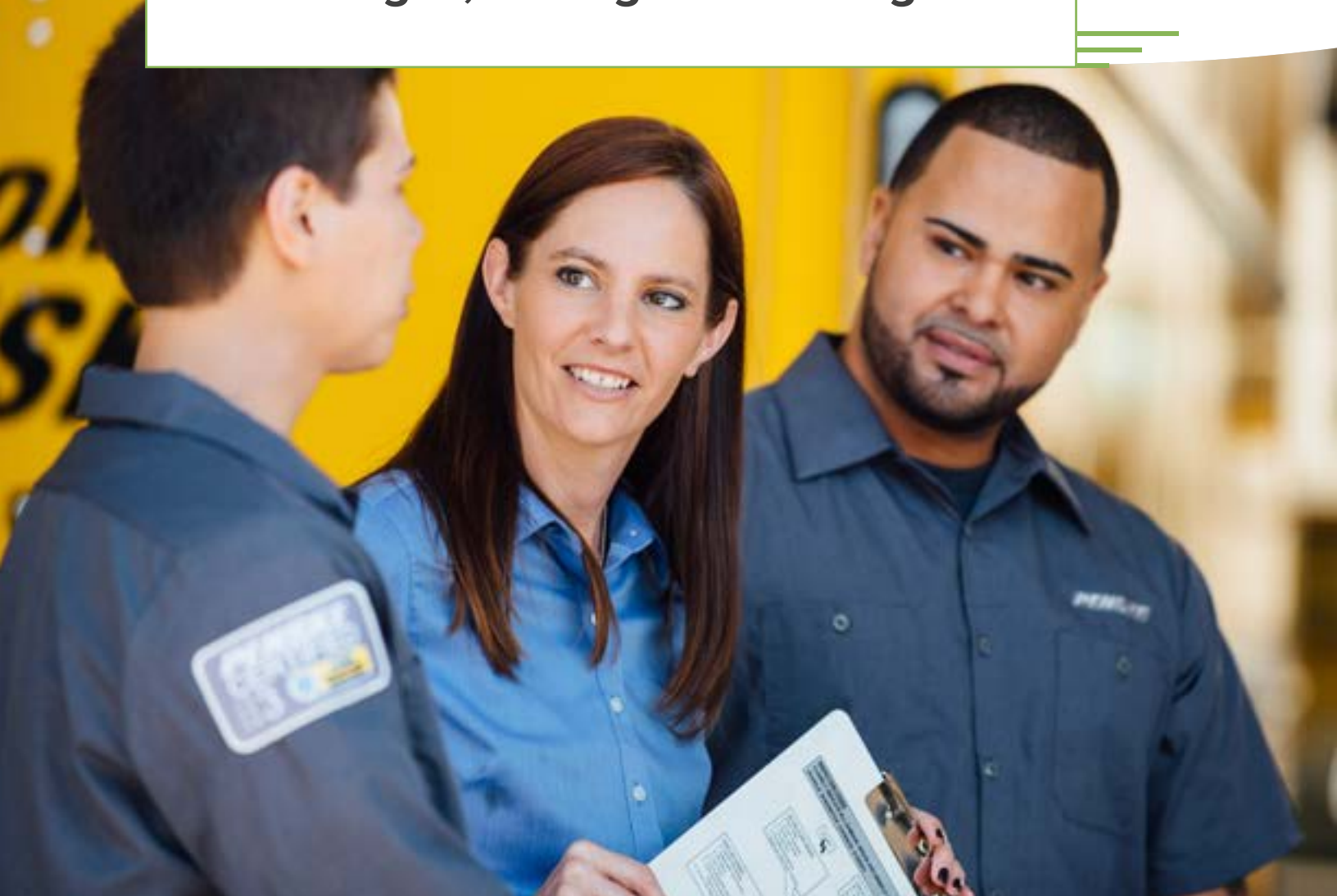
Negative work environment

When times get tough, see if you can find support from at least one person in the shop. Embrace their positive energy and ignore the rest. That negativity is really not about you, it's the insecurity of your male colleagues bubbling to the surface. If it's too much, find a shop with a more positive and reinforcing culture. There are great working environments out there, looking for workers like you. Know your limits and respect them.

And remember ...

Not *everything* bad that comes your way is because of sexism. If your first weeks or months are spent sweeping floors, taking out garbage, and doing simple work like oil changes, don't get discouraged. *Everyone* needs to pay their dues, regardless of their gender.

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Tips for Success

You don't have to navigate this new working world all on your own. Here are some tips from women techs on how to succeed as a professional technician in the industry:



Stay positive

There will be days when it's easy to lose faith in the business, particularly when you're one of the few pioneering women in the field. Take those moments to remind yourself why you got into auto tech and stay focused on your goals.

Keep a journal outlining your goals and motivations to revisit frequently. Let writing down your thoughts allow you to work through some of the struggles you face.



Find friends

Yes, there will be troublemakers out there, but many of your coworkers and supervisors want you to succeed. They're easy to spot, so reach out to them and form your squad. They'll be there for you in good times and bad.



Don't forget, it's supposed to be hard

Auto tech is a challenging business, no matter your age or gender. You don't get to call the shots in your own shop without first making mistakes, overcoming adversity, and working your way up the ladder.

Personal Skills Mean Professional Growth

So what skills do you need to make it in the field, aside from technical know-how?



Curiosity

Become your shop's resident tinkerer: bring old parts and components home, take them apart, and learn how they work. Then pick your supervisor's brain with all of your questions.



Humility

Veterans in a shop are ready to help you, but only if you approach them with humility. Show them that you're willing to learn, that you respect their knowledge & skills, and often, they'll happily share what they know.



Perseverance

Cars and trucks grow more complicated every year, as does the level of knowledge techs need in order to repair them. Don't fear these challenges—embrace them. You'll fail at times in the beginning, but that means opportunities to learn every day.

Above all else, become your own biggest fan. If you have a bad day, shake it off. Don't create negative energy by trash-talking yourself. Always focus on the positive, and put that energy into your work. The more you believe in yourself, the more others will, too.

What's it actually like to be a successful woman in the auto tech field?

Here's Bogi's inspiring story.



Bogi Lateiner

Bogi's journey in automotive didn't begin as a child. Her car knowledge was not a right of passage or anything beyond a means of getting from point A to point B. Her technician industry story began with a love of VW Beetles. Her drive to own one led her to enroll in a high school shop class. This experience would impress upon her so profoundly that it altered her life trajectory and propelled her to become a nationally lauded fixture in the auto industry—from a high school shop class to fully restoring a VW of her own, she ultimately abandoned her law school pursuits and enrolled in Universal Technical Institute (UTI). Her journey, although unique, manifested an intimate awareness, perspective, and purpose regarding the limited opportunities and treatment of women as customers and laborers within the automotive industry.

This ignited a fire that culminated in a committed career as an automotive industry advocate, dealer-trained BMW and ASE master-certified technician, and a fierce proponent for inspiring women to pursue opportunities within the automotive and skilled trade industries. Her passion led her to start her first shop, 180 Degrees Automotive, which she successfully ran for over 10 years. Her current shop, Girl Gang Garage, provides women from all over the country with a unique environment for practical learning opportunities.

FOR SOME, SUCCESS STARTS IN HIGH SCHOOL

While many high schools offer basic auto shop, others take it a step further, like Myers Park High in Charlotte, NC. This school actively [encourages girls to pursue auto tech careers](#). Students perform state inspections on campus and are encouraged to do them at local shops as well.

But it's not all work and no play. In April of 2018, they rebuilt a 1977 Chevy pickup engine and entered it in the "24 Hours of Lemons" contest in Kershaw, SC. Not only did one of them get to drive it during the race, the rest were on hand as cheering squad and pit crew. Although they didn't come close to winning (they finished 56th out of 62 cars), they did get the prize for "Most Heroic Fix."



Photo courtesy of
Universal Technical Institute.

Scholarships and Resources for Women in Tech

If an auto tech training program seems financially out of reach, there are scholarships that can help.

- TechForce Foundation manages the [Brienne Davis Scholarship Fund](#) in partnership with NASCAR. Founded in honor and memory of former NASCAR official Brienne Davis, it provides opportunities for women considering a career in motorsports.
- The Automotive Women's Alliance Foundation (AWAF) gives four scholarships a year to women committed to the auto industry.
- [Women in Auto Care](#) provides several scholarships a year for female students in high school and post-secondary programs.
- The Kris Paper Legacy Scholarship for Women in Technology awards a minimum of \$1,500 every year to one graduating female high school senior or returning female college student from the Kansas City area who plans to pursue a degree and then enter a tech field.
- There are other [TechForce scholarships and grants](#) you can apply for through their website.

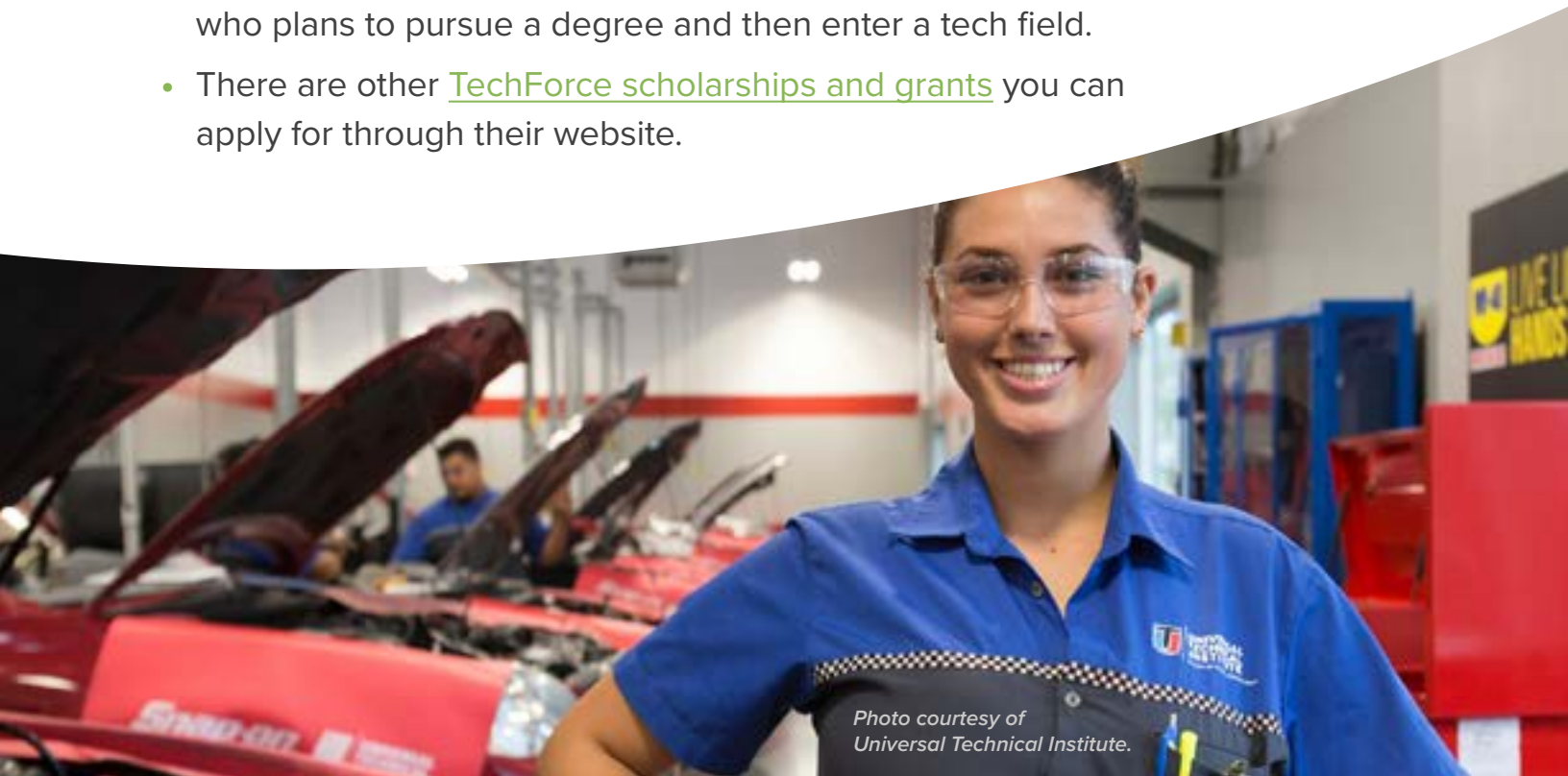


Photo courtesy of
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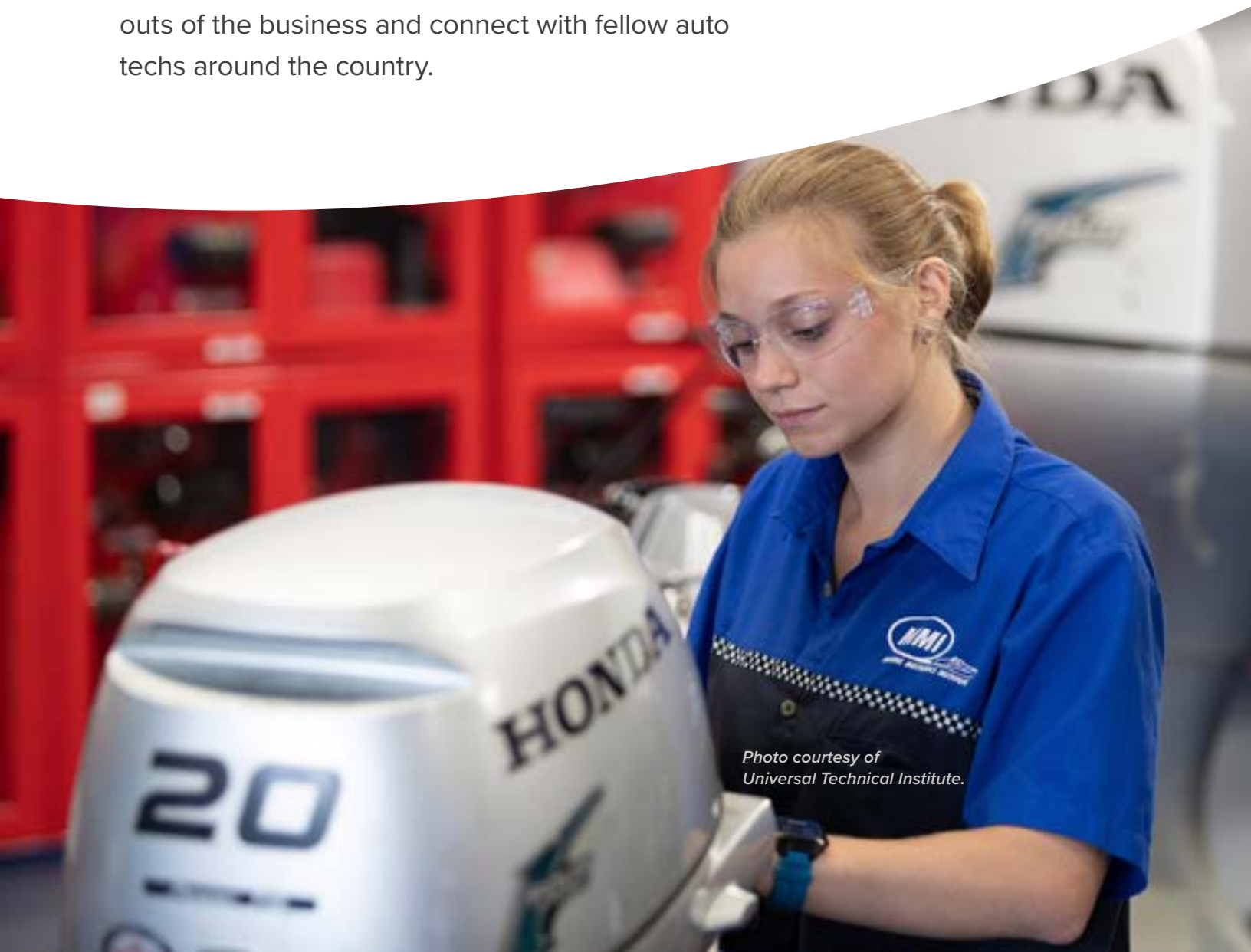
After graduating from a professional training program, you will find that many transportation companies are proactively recruiting women using testimonials of women who already work for them.

- Lone Star Transportation actively encourages its female employees to share their experiences working at the Fort Worth flatbed fleet location with a “women in trucking” page on its website.
- [Peterbilt Motors Company](#) hosts an advocacy group called the Peterbilt Women Initiative (PBWIN), in order to “... change women’s perception of the technician industry to be more attractive to female candidates,” says assistant plant manager Tina Albert.
- XPO Logistics has seen the number of women recruits in its logistics division increase by double digits, including roles as forklift drivers, one of the highest-paid jobs in the warehouse. It encourages this trend through its Women’s Inclusion Series (WISE), a networking program for women at the company.

It's Time to Get Started

A career as an auto tech comes with great rewards. There are a growing number of resources out there to help make your education affordable and support you once you enter the workforce.

Want to learn more? [Sign up for our monthly eNews](#) and join [TechForce™](#). You'll learn about the ins-and-outs of the business and connect with fellow auto techs around the country.



*Photo courtesy of
Universal Technical Institute.*

TechForce Can Help

Keep your professional skills up to date with the latest tech and trends, stay positive and focused, and, most importantly, never give up the search for a career that excites and challenges you every day.

TechForce can help. We are the single largest resource for future techs looking to find scholarships and grant funding. Our [FutureTech Roadmap](#) in the Resource Hub has some great insights. Inside TechForce are training [video resources](#) that will further your knowledge. Create your complimentary profile today.

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