

Deadline Approaching for Award Celebrating Young Women and Educators in Technology

National Center for Women & IT Award for Aspirations in Computing (AiC)

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The [National Center for Women & IT \(NCWIT\) Aspirations in Computing \(AiC\)](#) is looking for the next generation of female coders, hackers and tech whizzes to apply for the 2018 award recognizing their computing skills and interests.

The NCWIT AiC offers women a long-term community for female technologists, scholarships, computing resources and more. The program gives awards to women in grades 9 through 12, high

school educators and college students.

AiC offers awards which are delivered by more than 75 affiliates throughout the United States. The University of New Hampshire at Manchester serves as the affiliate for the New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont and hosts a ceremony in the spring of 2018 for the AiC Award. This year's ceremony is sponsored by Autodesk.

Emily Kerr, UNH's [STEM Discovery Lab](#) coordinator, helps to coordinate the AiC Award for Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

"This award is a great opportunity for young women interested in technology," said Kerr. "Many of last year's winners said the award has helped them to connect with like-minded peers and additional resources. I would highly encourage anyone even thinking about it to apply."

Meera Kurup, a junior at Bishop Guertin High School in Nashua, N.H., won the 2017 AiC Award. Kurup learned about the program when she was searching for a programming internship. She was thrilled to learn about AiC and the opportunity to network with other girls interested in STEM and programming. She said the AiC Award has had a tremendous impact on her life and future career goals.

"The award was definitely a confidence booster," said Kurup.

"Since the award last year, I have completed a three-month software internship and was elected the programming lead at my school's FIRST robotics company. I was also able to start an AspireIT Code it! Girls program with \$1,000 funding from NCWIT and support from the UNH STEM Lab."

Gunjan Choudhary, software development manager with [Autodesk](#), has been a guest panelist at the AiC Award ceremony for the past two years. Choudhary chose to participate because, in talking with young women at other events to promote STEM, she

has found that not many consider tech careers.

“When asked what their career aspirations were I heard culinary, aesthetics, dog walking, and some aspired to be vets or doctors. Anything but tech,” said Choudhary. “I want to do my part to support bringing awareness and confidence in girls that they can do equally well in computing and technology.”

Autodesk, this year’s AiC Award sponsor, understands and recognizes the challenges that women face and how some of the fundamental norms of society need reform.

“As a tech company, Autodesk is working hard in different areas to empower women and encourage them to be part of the pipeline for technical career paths,” said Choudhary.

The following are the AiC Award categories and deadlines:

9TH-12TH GRADE STUDENTS

The NCWIT [Award for Aspirations in Computing](#) builds a talent pool for the growing technical workforce and helps academic and corporate organizations celebrate diversity in computing by honoring young women at the high-school level for their computing-related achievements and interests.

Award recipients are selected based on their aptitude and aspirations in technology and computing, leadership ability, academic history and plans for post-secondary education. The deadline to apply is November 6, 2017.

9TH-12TH GRADE EDUCATORS

The NCWIT Aspirations in Computing (AiC) [Educator Award](#) publicly celebrates formal and informal educators who encourage high school women’s interest and participation in technology pursuits. The deadline for educators to apply is November 27, 2017. Prior to November 13, 2017, educators must also endorse a high school woman for the 2018 NCWIT Award for Aspirations in

Computing.

COLLEGE WOMEN

The NCWIT [Collegiate Award](#) is a college entry point into the Aspirations Community is available for technical women in college who weren't previously exposed during high school. The deadline to submit applications is October 30, 2017.

For more information about the New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont AiC program affiliate, contact Emily Kerr at Emily.Kerr@unh.edu or 603-641-4320.

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