

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Memphis, Tenn.**

[**www.bgcm.org/programs**](http://www.bgcm.org/programs)

In 2006, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Memphis, Tenn. established a technical training center to help meet the workforce readiness needs of young people and employers in this city on the shores of the Mississippi River, a major transportation and distribution hub in the nation.

The Juice+ Technical Training Center recruits young people ages 16 to 24 from the community and the organization’s other Club sites. The center targets “opportunity youth,” those who are unemployed and not in school, as well as those who are in school, through partnerships with county public and charter schools, postsecondary institutions, and city and county government agencies.

The center enrolls some 300 young people in its self-paced programs year-round. When young people enroll (paying only $10 per year), they can choose a career track in logistics, automotive, culinary arts, welding or IT. Most of the tracks offer industry-specific training and the opportunity to earn basic or entry-level certifications. In addition, all participants learn job hunting and employability skills, such as customer service, money management, basic computer skills and personal goal setting. The center holds monthly Career Days, featuring local professionals in the fields trainees are studying as guest speakers. The center also sponsors college and job fairs and takes trainees on tours of work sites. This gives trainees a chance to network with representatives of local employers and find mentors in their chosen fields. The training center has a staff of three full-time program directors, a full-time program coordinator, and eight part-time instructors, who also help deliver college preparation, financial literacy and work-readiness programming in the organization’s other Club sites.

The organization cultivates partners or sponsors in the sectors related to its career tracks – UPS and FedEx for the logistics track, ProTech for the IT track, AutoZone for the automotive track, nexAir for welding, Juice Plus+ for the culinary arts program and overall sponsorship of the technical training center. [Watch this video](https://youtu.be/E7mUpULlQzo) about the center’s Garden to Groceries entrepreneurial program. When young people complete their training, center staff help place them in jobs with local employers. A grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is also making it possible to provide paid internships for some program participants.

The organization keeps a clothes closet for participants who are hunting for or have secured a job. Public transportation is limited in the city, so sometimes the organization offers bus passes for young people to get to and from the training center or jobs. In addition, the center’s automotive track is designed to prepare youth to apply for a driver’s license, purchase and maintain their own car.