

Mayor Adams Takes Steps to Transform New York City Into Global hub for Digital Games Industry

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Announces CUNY's First-Ever Game Design Bachelor's Degree With \$2 Million Investment

Introduces NYC's First-Ever Game Development Industry Council

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today took steps to transform the city into a global hub for the digital games industry by announcing that the City University of New York (CUNY) is creating and funding a Bachelor's Degree program in Digital Game Design at City College of New York (CCNY). The creation of the gaming design degree is expected to drive inclusive growth by providing college students a public and affordable option for careers in the rapidly growing digital games industry and related fields. The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) has partnered with City College to offer the first-ever degree. Making New York City a leading hub for digital game development was a vital piece of Mayor Adams's "[Rebuild, Renew, Reinvent: A Blueprint for New York City's Economic Recovery](#)," announced in March.

Mayor Adams — joined by Deputy Mayor for Economic and Workforce Development Maria Torres-Springer, MOME, and members of New York City's digital games community — also today introduced the first-ever Game Development Industry Council, created to advise the city's policies and programs in the games development sector.

"New York City has always been the center of innovation, but it is time that New York City level up and finally become a leader in the digital gaming space," said **Mayor Adams**. "It's time to take advantage of all the talent we have here in New York by investing in the future of gaming. This \$2 million investment will help us reach more than

1,000 students over the next three years and diversify the gaming field. This is how we get stuff done for our young people and for New York City!"

"With these announcements today, this administration affirms its commitment to New York City's digital games industry, a sector that plays a major role in our city's economy, supporting 7,600 jobs, \$762 million in wages, and \$2 billion in economic output," said **Deputy Mayor of Economic and Workforce Development Maria Torres-Springer**. "Our new industry council will inform future economic development and inclusion efforts, while our partnership with CUNY will provide New York City students a strategic pathway to careers in these fields. This is a milestone moment in this city's mission to drive inclusive growth and write the next chapter for New York City's tech sector."

"The creation of the city's first-ever Bachelor's Degree program in game design, coupled with a pipeline to career and workforce development, is a holistic approach to equip New Yorkers with the necessary tools to join and transform the gaming industry," said **Deputy Mayor of Strategic Initiatives Sheena Wright**. "I am thrilled for today's announcement and for the cross-sector partnership that taps into New York City's innovators, entrepreneurs, and creative minds by providing a space for them to succeed."

"We are proud to announce the CUNY Game Design Bachelor Program at City College and the city's first-ever digital games industry council as part of the 'Blueprint for New York City's Economic Recovery,'" said **MOME Commissioner Anne del Castillo**. "By cultivating local talent at City College and working with industry leaders to identify growth opportunities in this sector, we are making strides to establish New York City as a hub for digital games development that builds on the strength of our city's creativity, education, and technology."

"We're grateful that the Mayor's Office for Media and Entertainment is supporting the development of a digital games program at CCNY," said **City College President Vincent Boudreau**. "Young people in our communities, growing up in an environment where gaming and digital consumer skills are ubiquitous, are exquisitely prepared to make gaming a pathway to solid careers for themselves and supporting economic development for the city. Moving from gaming competition to technology-driven aspects of design and game development, this program should introduce whole communities of young people to one of our most dynamic economic sectors. We're grateful, too, to have

built this program in collaboration with partners like Urban Arts, Hostos Community College, and the Harlem Gallery of Science."

Mayor Adams was joined at CUNY's City College campus by NYXL's NY Excelsior Team, winners of two season conference titles in the Overwatch League. The team named Mayor Adams an honorary member in celebration of NYXL's recent announcement of their Young Creator's Program. The Young Creator's Program provides 10 \$50,000 fellowships to the next generation of integrated content developers. [Applications for the NYXL Project can be found online.](#)

Today's two announcements come as the digital games industry was projected to reach upwards of [\\$180 billion](#) in global sales in 2021. The first-ever [New York City Digital Games Industry Economic Impact Report](#), released in 2021, underscored the digital game industry's significance and contribution, specifically to New York City's economy — supporting 7,600 jobs, \$762 million in wages, and \$2 billion in economic output.

In total, MOME will be making a \$2 million investment in CUNY's Career Pathways program, which includes funding towards the digital game design Bachelor's Degree, designed to reach over 1,000 students over the next three years and aimed at increasing diversity and equity in the digital gaming field. This holistic program creates a pathway from high school to the digital gaming industry through a collaboration with Urban Arts — using their rigorous curricula and evidence-based pedagogical approach — as well as the Harlem Gallery of Science. This new funding will expand outreach to new high school youth from Title I schools for post-secondary programs and careers in game design and other tech fields.

Additionally, the program's industry partnerships will cultivate young talent among CCNY students and develop the skills and experiences sought by the industry — through internships, mentorships, college events, and eSports sponsorships. CUNY's Career Pathways program will also guide transitions for students in the Hostos Community College Associates Degree Digital Games Program to a four-year Bachelor's Degree program in digital game design and creative arts at CCNY by 2024.

Interested students may begin the process towards a degree in digital games by [applying to the Hostos Digital Game Design Program online.](#)

Members of the Game Development Industry Council will advise the city's production policies and programs in the digital games sector and is made up of various leaders of New York City's digital games sector:

- Omar Shakir, game director, [Avalanche Studios](#)
- Juno Morrow, assistant professor game design, [CUNY Hostos Community College](#)
- Rudy Blanco, director of gaming and entrepreneurship, [Dreamyard](#); and founder, [Bronx Gaming Network](#)
- Kyra Wills-Umdenstock, CEO, [EGD Collective](#)
- Brian Carr, designer; co-organizer, [Game Developers of Color Expo](#)
- Cat Small, co-organizer, [Game Developers of Color Expo](#)
- Susanna Pollack, president, [Games for Change](#)
- Mitu Khandaker, assistant professor, New York University (NYU); and co-founder, [Glow Up Games](#)
- Stan Altman, president, [Harlem Gallery of Science Founder & CCNY Professor](#)
- Gabo Arora, founder and CEO, [Lightshed](#)
- Tammy Levine, head of gaming ecosystem engagement at Xbox, [Microsoft](#)
- Josh Reynolds, director, modern workplace, U.S. education east, [Microsoft](#)
- Harold Goldberg, president, [New York Video Game Critics Circle](#)
- Naomi Clark, department chair, [NYU Game Center](#)
- Mitchell Smith, chief content officer, [NYXL](#)
- David Grijns, studio head, [People Can Fly/Liquid Swords](#)
- Gary Conti, director, education and industry outreach, [Rockstar Games](#)
- Alan Lewis, vice president, corporate communications and public affairs, [Take-Two Interactive](#)
- Sam Kennedy, CEO, [Tigertron](#)
- Asi Burak, chairman, Games for Change; chief business officer, [Tilting Point](#)
- Philip Courtney, CEO, [Urban Arts](#)

- Sarah Denby, senior account executive, [Zynga](#)

"I'm very excited about the creation of the bachelor's degree program in game design — and especially at City College. This is a great effort to prepare New Yorkers for more opportunities in tech," said **New York City Councilmember Jennifer Gutiérrez, chair, Committee on Technology**. "Mayor Adams is making important strides through his recognition that creating a pipeline for tech jobs in traditionally excluded communities must start in our public educational institutions."

"This program will prime New Yorkers to take advantage of the next generation of gaming development jobs," said **New York City Councilmember Shaun Abreu**.

"Innovation, art, and design have always been at the center of New York City's cultural and economic identity. By investing in education, we're setting our city and our students up for long-term success."

"I am excited about this initiative, as it will equip our young people with the proper tools and knowledge to be successful in the field of game design. The implementation of this bachelor's degree program will provide the platform for our city to adapt and create a visionary perspective in a progressively adaptive field such as game design," said **New York City Councilmember Althea Stevens**. "As game design is a mixture of creative writing, graphic design, and computer science and programming, I'm sure there will be an amazing outcome from individuals and the program overall."

"As both an NYU Game Center faculty member and CEO of Glow Up Games, a game development studio centering diverse stories, I am thrilled to hear about the CUNY Game Design Bachelor Program at City College, as it represents a bright future for the ecosystem of diverse talent emerging in the games industry and moves towards establishing New York City as a real leader in this regard," said **Dr. Mitu Khandaker, CEO and co-founder, Glow Up Games**.

"Gaming can spur the next generation of economic revitalization," said **Dr. Stephon Alexander, executive director, Harlem Gallery of Science**. "The Digital Gaming Pathways Project opens up the industry to an untapped resource of talented students in underrepresented communities, providing an entry way into the \$180 billion global market and contributing to New York City becoming a principal hub for digital gaming development."

"I am very proud that Hostos is playing a part in the creation of CUNY's first-ever game design bachelor program at City College and the city's first-ever Digital Games Industry Council, side-by-side with such important partners," said **Daisy Cocco De Filippis, president, Hostos Community College**. "Given our long history of collaborating with City College, and as the only community college in CUNY that offers an associate in game design, we welcome one more impactful opportunity for our students to attend such an effective institution. Together we will impact New York City's economic recovery, educate talent, and empower lives."

"NYU is excited to welcome our colleagues at City College to the community of educators teaching game design and development in New York," said **Naomi Clark, chair, NYU Game Center at Tisch School of the Arts**. "Every year, our city has more young people with the creative potential and drive to shape the next generation of playful experiences — and a public bachelor's degree program will provide a vital pathway for them to do that."

"As a global entertainment brand born in New York, NYXL is dedicated to creating both opportunities and access for young creators in the city, and we are honored to work with the mayor, Commissioner del Castillo, and their teams to elevate our growing gaming industry," said **Mitchell Smith, chief content officer, NYXL**. "We are searching for the most compelling, diverse, young cultural creators to help us bring a New York state of mind to the planet's most popular form of entertainment. There is so much talent, especially in New York, and along with our stellar advisory board, our NYXL Project is committed to discovering and nurturing the next generation of digital content creators."

"The city's investment in CUNY's Career Pathways Program is an important step in making New York City a new mecca for the digital games industry, as education and professional development are key stepping stones to ensuring long-term careers within this thriving, multibillion-dollar sector," said **Asi Burak, chief business officer, Tilting Point; chairman, Games for Change; and member, Digital Games Industry Council**. "It is also great to see the formation of the Digital Games Industry Council, which I enthusiastically agreed to join, as we continue to support and grow the games industry in New York City!"

"We are thrilled to be a founding partner on this groundbreaking initiative," said **Philip Courtney, CEO, Urban Arts**. "At Urban Arts, we are committed to helping New York City public school students explore their creativity and harness technology to defy the

odds and define their futures. With this game-changing initiative, we have an unprecedented opportunity to create pathways for our talented students to contribute to New York's, and their own, economic success."

"Gaming pathways provides New York City students with a first-rate opportunity to access high-paying careers, while expressing their creativity in the city they love and call home," said **Kevin Wright, chief growth officer, Urban Arts.**