

PRESS RELEASE



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NEW SCHOOL PREPARING STUDENTS FOR HIGH-PAYING TECH CAREERS TO FILL HUGE DEMAND FOR JOBS IN ST. LOUIS

St. Louis, MO – There is a huge demand for people to do tech jobs in St. Louis and very few people to fill the demand. A new school in St. Louis, Claim Academy, is addressing that demand and preparing students very quickly (in just 12 weeks) to learn how to code – even if they have no prior experience – and connecting them with high-paying careers as software developers at a much lower cost than a four-year degree. The next classes begin June 14. Many scholarships are available.

Among the first group of graduates, nearly all the students received full scholarships and had jobs waiting for them upon graduation. Some of the students have scored higher than the majority of test-takers, including students around the world with four-year computer science degrees and field experience, in a national standardized exam for software developers.

“If you like programming and you want to do this as your career, and you don’t have four years to spend going to classes, I would definitely recommend Claim Academy!”

- Florita Rodriguez, graduating Claim student

Claim Filling a Dire Need. Claim Academy is the brainchild of **Ola Ayeni**, who came to St. Louis from Chicago after winning an Arch Grant to start his company **eateria**, a digital loyalty marketing tool for restaurateurs. “I came to St. Louis to start my company and had trouble finding software developers,” said Ayeni. “After struggling for so long, I decided to fix the problem, and that’s how Claim Academy started.”

In 2014, there were more than 23,000 ads for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) jobs in the St. Louis region; yet only about 2,000 job-seekers responded, according to [2014 State of St. Louis STEM Workforce Report](#).

“If St. Louis wants to be the next tech hub, how can that happen without enough software developers?” said Ayeni. “We want to change things. We want to help St. Louis become one of the leading places for technology and help St. Louis take the lead into the digital age.”

About Claim Academy Training and Students

“I started my journey into software development through Claim Academy. Great instructors and staff, mixed with a great curriculum. I would recommend it to anyone.”

- Tyler Sadler, graduating Claim student

- Claim training costs only \$8,000 and gets students ready in just 12 weeks (A Computer Science degree can take up to four years and tens of thousands of dollars to complete. Even then, students may lack the real-world programming experience companies are looking for.)
- On average, junior software developers can make anywhere from \$45,000-60,000 a year. The average salary for tech jobs in St. Louis is \$95,800 – a more than 23% jump from the year before, according to [Forbes](#).
- Claim began their first classes in February 2015. The first group of students graduated on May 27.
- Among the first group of graduates:
 - Claim has been working with Advanced Resources, a leading national consulting firm headquartered in St. Louis, to get jobs for graduates. Eleven of the 12 Java and .NET students were hired upon graduation.
 - Two of the students scored higher than the majority of test-takers, including those with four-year computer science degrees, in a national standardized exam for software developers (the Proxor Software Developer Exam).
 - Learn more about individual Claim graduates at www.claimacademystl.com.
- Claim can take a novice and turn them into a junior developer in just 12 weeks. Students are from all ends of the spectrum – some have no experience in programming, while others used to program and wanted to update their skills.
- Claim students get individualized attention in small classes with 25 or fewer students in each class. Students work with world-class instructors and learn programming languages that businesses need, including Java and .NET. Classes are held in downtown St. Louis. The next classes at Claim begin next month in June. The Academy has begun filling those classes and is accepting applications.

Claim has partnered with the following businesses to provide scholarships, content, instructors and job opportunities for students:

- Advanced Resources
- Microsoft
- Ferguson 1000
- LaunchCode
- Coder Girl
- St. Louis League of Independent Workspaces
- eateria

About Founder Ola Ayeni. Ola Ayeni is an Arch Grant winner, and founder and owner of two successful St. Louis start-ups, Claim Academy, a new school that quickly teaches students how to code, and eateria, a digital loyalty marketing tool for restaurateurs. Ola is a TEDx speaker and on the board of the St. Louis Mosaic Project, which promotes regional prosperity through immigration and innovation.

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