



The North American Indian Center of Boston

**PRESS RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Bridging the Digital Divide at the North American Indian Center of Boston



North American Indian Center of Boston Board of Directors, staff, and community members had a sneak peek of Boston Makers' new makerspace at the July 2018 Board meeting.

Jamaica Plain, MA – North American Indian Center of Boston announces several events this week to kick off an initiative of lifelong learning opportunities aimed at bridging the digital divide for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Urban Indian community.

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“Rooted in traditional and ancestral knowledge, we provide cultural and social services to empower our Intertribal and Indigenous community members,” said Jean-Luc Pierite (Tunica-Biloxi), President of the NAICOB Board of Directors, “it’s important that we further foster a culture of equity and accessibility through digital tools and processes.”

LEGO Robotics, sponsored by Comcast and the Timothy Smith Network, is facilitated by NAICOB’s Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. Youth ages 10-14 will participate in activities that will introduce them to electronics and 3D design. The students will work collaboratively on a project to be entered into a competition at the end of the program. The first class will be Wednesday, September 19, 6:00 - 7:30pm.

Indigenous Peoples Code Camp, developed by Amber Hampton (Tsalagi), will provide NAICOB community members with the opportunity to learn computer programming and web development in Spring 2019. Information sessions will be held through Fall 2018 to recruit students for the initial cohort. Community members can join these sessions on Saturday, September 22, 10:30am - 12:00pm; Tuesday, September 25, 6:30 - 8:00pm; and Friday, September 28, 6:30 - 8:00pm. Additional dates available in October and November 2018.

Boston Makers, now hosted at NAICOB (105 S. Huntington Ave., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130), is a makerspace stocked with digital fabrication and hand/craft oriented tools including laser cutters, 3D printers, computer, workstations, sewing machines and small woodworking hand tools. As part of an agreement with NAICOB, Boston Makers sets aside a number of full memberships for the Boston Urban Indian community. As part of JP Open Studios, Boston Makers will have an open house on Sunday, September 23, 1:00 - 4:00pm.

According to the Federal Communications Commission’s 2015 Broadband Progress Report, “Approximately 63 percent of Tribal land residents lack access to fixed broadband speeds of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload, as compared to only 17 percent of the U.S. population as a whole. The disparity is even higher for residents of Tribal lands in rural areas, with approximately 85 percent lacking access.”

Earlier this year, NAICOB participated in the first-ever national survey focusing on how the digital divide affects Native Americans living in urban areas, which was facilitated by National Urban Indian Family Coalition (NUIFC). In a 2008 study by NUIFC, more than 70 percent of Indigenous school age youth live in urban areas.

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