

NCWIT Aspirations in Computing Arizona Affiliate Award

What is NCWIT?

NCWIT is the National Center for Women & Information Technology, a 501(c)(3)* coalition that works to increase diversity in IT and computing. NCWIT believes that greater diversity will create a larger and more competitive workforce, and promote the design of technology that is as broad and innovative as the population it serves. NCWIT focuses on improving diversity across the entire spectrum: K-12 through college education, and on to academic, corporate and entrepreneurial careers. (source: <http://www.ncwit.org/about.factsheet.html>)

Why does it matter?

- Nationally, girls comprise 46% of Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus test-takers, but only 19% of AP Computer Science test-takers. In Arizona last year, only 8 girls took the AP Computer Science exam.
- In 2009, just 18% of undergraduate Computing and Information Sciences degrees were awarded to women; in 1985, women earned 37% of these degrees.
- Tech companies with more women on their management teams have a 34% higher return on investment; the presence of women on technical teams increases teams' collective intelligence (problem-solving ability and creativity).
- According to CNBC, all of the top ten highest starting salaries for 2010 college graduates with a bachelors degree were engineering or technology fields. Computer Science was the fourth highest with an average starting salary of \$61,205**

** http://www.cnbc.com/id/29408064/Highest_Paid_Bachelor_s_Degrees_2010?slide=8

What is the Award?

The NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing honors young women at the high-school level for their computing-related achievements and interests. The award offers both a national and local "affiliate" competitions to generate support and visibility for young women's participation in communities nationwide. This is the first year for the Arizona Affiliate, which is supported by the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering at ASU. The national award is sponsored by Bank of America, and local "affiliate" competitions are sponsored by Microsoft, the Motorola Solutions Foundation, and Google, and receive additional support from more than 300 local organizations.

Why is this Award important?

By providing recognition for technical young women, the NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing encourages their continued interest in computing; motivates the support of educational and corporate institutions for women's increased participation; and

provides a community of ongoing encouragement for young women so that they will persist in technology careers. More than 88% of winners in college report majoring in a male-dominated STEM field.

How are award-winners selected?

The National award and the Arizona Affiliate award are judged independently, so it is possible for a student to win one and not the other, or to win both. Award recipients are selected for their computing and IT aptitude in a blind judging by multiple evaluators. The application includes two essays and requires an endorsement by a faculty member or counselor.