The NCWIT Counselors for Computing (C4C) program equips school counselors with up-to-date information and resources they can use to advise students, especially girls, about computing education and careers.

Counselors are influencers and gatekeepers. They counsel and encourage students in their education and career aspirations, advise them on course selections, and expose them to occupations through career fairs, job shadows, and internships. If girls are to get the exposure and encouragement they need to pursue computing, it is essential that counselors have the knowledge and resources they need to guide effectively.

OUR APPROACH
We partner with and build the capacity of groups that are intent on closing the gap between preparedness for careers (low) and opportunities for participation (high). We work with colleges and universities, businesses, youth-serving organizations, computer science educators, professional counselor associations, and others to bring C4C to counselors in communities where reform is underway and has implications for guidance.

With our partners we offer counselors professional development programs lasting from one hour to one day. In each, we localize the content of the program so it is immediately relevant to counselors. We share local data about CS education and careers, invite technical people to speak about their career paths and work, and ask young women to share their accomplishments in computing. We include interactive experiences, such as “Sorting Networks,” for counselors to try their hand at computing. We also give counselors C4C kits and have them explore scenarios in which they will share information with students, parents, school staff, and counselor colleagues.

RESULTS
To date, NCWIT has trained counselors in 11 states. In addition, we have provided over 30,000 individual resources to people in 43 states and distributed over 1,400 C4C kits to counselors and other educators in 2014 alone.
WHAT COUNSELORS SAY
Counselors we work with report having a better understanding of computing, a broader sense of who is right for computing, and greater confidence to guide students toward computing classes and careers. Most importantly, in a reengagement survey, we found most of them take direct action. They say:

• “I have partnered with our AP Comp Sci teacher to advertise/market/inform more about CS. We’re including information about CS (and STEM in general) in our career and college readiness curriculum lesson to all students.”

• “Our district plans to add computer science in four high schools next year. This year, we started an after school app and programming club for girls to build awareness and readiness for those classes.”

• “I realize now that a specific effort targeting girls must be made to get more girls into classes.”

GET INVOLVED
NCWIT C4C is an important adjunct to computer science education reform nationwide.

• Companies can fund the expansion of C4C into a national program so counselors around the country gain the knowledge and skills they need to guide students, especially girls, toward education and careers in computing.

• Universities and non-profits can address local outreach and computer science education reform goals by partnering with NCWIT to host C4C events and programs for counselors.

Find out more at www.ncwit.org/c4c.

ABOUT NCWIT
The National Center for Women & Information Technology is a non-profit community of more than 575 prominent corporations, academic institutions, government agencies, and non-profits working to increase women’s participation in technology and computing. NCWIT helps organizations recruit, retain, and advance women from K-12 and higher education through industry and entrepreneurial careers by providing community, evidence, and action.