

# Obama wants \$4B to help students learn computer science

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President Barack Obama speaks in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House complex in Washington, Friday, Jan. 29, 2016, during a ceremony marking the 7th anniversary of the signing of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

President Barack Obama said Saturday he will ask Congress for billions of dollars to help students learn computer science skills and prepare for jobs in a changing economy.

"In the new economy, computer science isn't an optional skill. It's a basic skill, right along with the three R's," Obama said in his weekly radio and Internet address.

Obama said only about one-quarter of K-12 schools offer computer science instruction, but that most parents want their children to develop analytical and coding skills.

"Today's auto mechanics aren't just sliding under cars to change the oil. They're working on machines that run on as many as 100 million lines of code," Obama said. "That's 100 times more than the Space Shuttle. Nurses are analyzing data and managing [electronic health records](#). Machinists are writing computer programs."

The federal budget proposal for 2017 that Obama plans to send Congress on Feb. 9 will seek \$4 billion for grants to states and \$100 million for competitive grants for school districts over the next three years to teach computer science in elementary, middle and high schools, administration officials said.

Separately, the National Science Foundation and the Corporation for National and Community Service this year will start spending \$135 million to train teachers over five years.

Obama said also wants governors, mayors, business leaders and tech entrepreneurs to become advocates for more widespread computer science education.

Brad Smith, president of Microsoft, said [computer science](#) education is an "economic and social imperative for the next generation of American students."

Smith, who spoke on a media call arranged by the White House, said

that up to a million U.S. technology jobs could be left unfilled by the end of the decade. Meanwhile, countries as large as China and as small as Estonia are expanding computer [science education](#), Smith said, but in the U.S. "we're moving, frankly, just more slowly than we need."

**More information:** Obama's address: [tinyurl.com/js9ssod](http://tinyurl.com/js9ssod)

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