

## David Valarezo

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July 10, 2024

Yasin Ehsan  
Founder  
Headstarter AI

Dear Selection Committee,

As a Computer Science major at Cornell University, I have focused on developing high-quality software and self-learning to achieve this goal. The efforts of Headstarter AI to promote project-based learning resonate with me, as I believe that hands-on experience is crucial for mastering software engineering. I am excited to apply for the Headstarter Software Engineering Fellow position, as it offers a unique opportunity to refine my skills, build connections, and gain practical experience in coding and AI development.

During my first year at Cornell, I engaged in various projects that honed my software engineering skills. As a full-stack web developer for Cornell's Hack4Impac project team, I contributed to a web app for organizing volunteers for a food bank in Nigeria, using modern technologies such as Next.js, React, Node.js, Express.js, and Firebase. This experience not only strengthened my technical skills but also taught me the importance of teamwork, communication, and adaptability in a real-world setting. I came in not knowing much about web development but was able to adapt to the fast-paced environment and learn more than I could have imagined. I am confident that experiences like this will help me contribute effectively to the Headstarter AI team.

This summer, I continued my learning by building a chore tracker web app using the MERN tech stack. I am also working on the initial development of an accountability web app, *Obligoat*, where users can invite a partner to help them achieve their goals daily and launch it online to serve real users. These projects align with Headstarter AI's goals—providing project-based learning opportunities to help bridge the gap between theory and real-world application. My work on these projects has strengthened my technical skills and deepened my understanding of the software development lifecycle.

In conclusion, I am enthusiastic about joining Headstarter AI as a Software Engineering Fellow. My background in software engineering, combined with my experience in project-based learning and my commitment to personal and professional growth, make me a strong fit for this position. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to further discuss how my skills and experiences align with the goals of the HeadstarterAI fellowship program.

Best Regards,

*David Valarezo*

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## Education

**Cornell University, College of Engineering**  
B.S in Computer Science, Minor in Business  
GPA: 3.74

**Ithaca, NY**  
Expected May 2027

**Related Courses:** Object Oriented Programming and Data Structures, Introduction To Backend Web Development, Linear Algebra, Multivariable Calculus, Harvard's CS50x (edx), AP Computer Science A

## Project Experience

### Research at Cornell University's College of Human Ecology

**Remote**

*Full Stack Developer*

*June 2024 - Present*

- **EmBody App** : Collaborating with researchers and peers to develop an app tailored for individuals with Parkinson's disease to articulate and differentiate bodily sensations associated with their condition using bodily sensation maps (BSMs). Implementing backend with Node.js, Express.js, Javascript, and MongoDB
- **Pain Web App**: Working with researchers and peers to create a web app that objectively measures patient pain levels using a deep learning model trained on heart activity. Developing features to display real-time pain metrics to doctors with technologies such as Python, Javascript, Node.js, Express.js, MongoDB, and React

### Chore Tracker Web App

**Remote**

*Full Stack Developer*

*June 2024 - Present*

- Developing a web app for users to form families and hold each other accountable in completing their chores
- Designed the frontend using Next.js, React, and MUI components for a responsive and user friendly interface
- Created a RESTful API using Node.js and Express.js for CRUD operations on MongoDB database
- Integrated user authentication using JWT tokens and created global state management for efficient data display

### Lagos Food Bank, Cornell Hack4Impact

**Ithaca, NY**

*Full Stack Web Developer*

*Mar 2024 - May 2024*

- Collaborated with peers to develop a website to organize **19,000** active volunteers for a food bank in Nigeria
- Utilized Node.js and Express.js to create endpoints for seamless interaction with Prisma and Firebase databases
- Developed interactive components in React and TypeScript for efficient sorting and displaying user data

### Lost and Found App

**Ithaca, NY**

*Backend Developer*

*Apr 2024 - May 2024*

- Implemented various RESTful endpoints to facilitate communication between the Swift frontend and backend
- Designed the backend using Python and Flask, and implemented the database model using SQLAlchemy
- Deployed the Dockerized backend onto Google Cloud VM instances, enabling online hosting and accessibility

### Hackademics

**Remote**

*Lead Backend Developer*

*Dec 2022 - Feb 2023*

- Created a website dedicated to teaching local students humanities and STEM with 2 peers
- Developed the backend in Python with Flask as the framework and sqlite3 to store user information
- Coded features such as login/signup, email verification with JSON web tokens, and password hashing

## Leadership Experience

### Cornell Bowers CIS ASCEND Program

**Ithaca, NY**

*Intern*

*Sep 2023 - Present*

- Highly selective two-year exploratory program designed to support the successful transition of incoming freshmen into academia and their pursuit of a future career in tech
- Spent the first two semesters gaining insight on achieving academic success and initial team collaboration work
- Summer and following semesters will involve collaborating with a small team to create a startup with guidance from mentors in the industry

## Skills & Interests

- **Languages:** Java, Python, SQL, TypeScript, JavaScript, HTML/CSS,
- **Frameworks/Developer Tools:** React, Node.js, Express.js, Flask, JUnit, Git, Docker, VS Code, IntelliJ