



Apprenticeship Program Resource Guide:

Building the Future of Talent





“Apprenticeship requires us to rethink and redo our talent strategy — it has to be embedded in what you do, the way you recruit, the way you train — embedded in your business.”

Julie Sweet

Chair and Chief Executive
Officer, Accenture



“I have seen the program grow as the executive sponsor and the impact it’s had for our business, our apprentices, and their families. New approaches to talent and skilling benefit everyone. And it helps fuel corporate growth by enhancing innovation.”

Pallavi Verma

Senior Managing Director,
Quality & Risk, Accenture

Welcome!

If you are a business or HR leader, and want to gain access to motivated new talent, diversify your workforce, and give more people pathways to sustainable careers, this guide is for you.

We share why apprenticeship programs are needed today, why they are valuable to employers, and how they change lives.

The apprenticeship program at Accenture is a critical part of our talent strategy and it's one way that we are building an equitable workplace. In 2016, as part of our

skills development strategy to bridge the talent gap, we embarked on our journey to develop an apprenticeship program for Accenture. Together with other companies.

In 2017 we launched the first Apprentice Network in Chicago. Since then, Accenture has expanded the model across the country and has now launched 10 Apprentice Networks, convening over 200 employers. We are passionate about creating Apprentice Networks, and advising companies on starting their own apprenticeship programs.


We can help you get started.

The value of apprentices

Julie Sweet explains how apprenticeship programs are redefining the future of talent.

Courtesy of the NYC Mayor's Office



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Contents

Start your journey here

Explore topics for inspiration and guidance in developing an apprenticeship program.



The imperative for apprenticeships

Bridging the talent gap

The US Department of Labor reported that there are eleven million job openings in America, yet fewer than six million available workers to fill them.¹ The divide often comes down to skills, as most available workers don't have the skills necessary to fill the growing number of open, increasingly professional jobs.

While employers report ongoing challenges with acquiring skilled talent, they often exclude 66% of the US workforce² — those without a college degree. As a result, millions of American workers are at risk of being left out of an economy increasingly defined by technology and automation.

To bridge this gap, professional apprenticeship programs are becoming an essential part of companies' talent acquisition and development strategies. They represent a new method of sourcing talent into professional roles that can address numerous issues that companies care about such as managing talent shortages, developing skills, increasing diversity, and balancing social inequities.



What is an apprenticeship?

- **Alternate on-ramp** into roles that traditionally required a 4-year degree
- Entry-level **earn-and-learn model** typically lasting 12 months
- An intent of making the candidate **job ready for a specific role**
- A combination of **structured learning** and **on-the-job training**
- A **living wage and benefits** during and after apprenticeship
- An opportunity for a continued **career path** with full-time employment upon successful completion of the program

The issue is not availability of jobs. The issue is skills – many, if not most, available workers lack the right skills to fill open jobs.

Talent shortage in the US

Gap of 5.3 million per US Department of Labour³

Job openings

11M

Available Workers

5.7M

Percent of bachelor's degree in the US

People 25+ years old⁴

Asian

54%

White

35%

Black

21%

Hispanic

15%



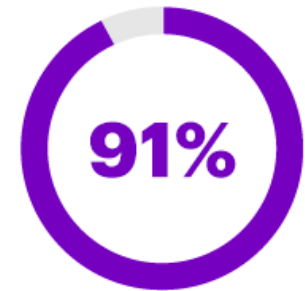
Benefits of apprenticeships

Challenged with finding skilled workers to fill key professional roles, a growing number of companies are leveraging the benefits an apprenticeship program can offer, including:

- Access to a **highly-motivated and productive talent pool** that is less likely to leave than talent from traditional sources⁵
- Flexibility to **source and develop talent on demand** rather than being solely dependent on 4-year degree graduation cycles
- Promote **inclusive opportunity, equity and economic mobility** where we work and live
- **Reskill workers** whose jobs are disrupted by technology and other factors
- Build **deeper relationships with clients and communities**

\$1.47

Employers earn \$1.47 return for every dollar invested in an apprenticeship.⁸



Nine months after apprenticeship completion, 91% of apprentices retained employment.⁷

[Research by Harvard Business School and Accenture⁶](#) indicates that reskilled workers outperform their peers on key criteria: attitude, work ethic, productivity, quality of work, engagement, attendance, and innovation.

Further, the research revealed that, “long-standing and widespread management practices contribute significantly to constraining the candidates that companies will consider, leading to the creation of a diverse population of aspiring workers who are screened out of consideration—or ‘hidden.’”

“**But it also affirmed that, “companies that purposely hire hidden workers realize an attractive return on investment (ROI). They report being less likely to face talent and skills shortages compared to companies that do not hire hidden workers.”**

Undeniable benefits for companies⁹

Companies that hire hidden workers were **36% less likely** to face talent and skills shortages compared to companies that do not.



Furthermore:

38%

Less likely to face challenges finding workers with the necessary experience

44%

Less likely to face challenges finding workers with the necessary skills

36%

More likely to find candidates who have the right attitude/motivation

35%

Less likely to face challenges meeting diversity quotas



Make the case for change & access

Perhaps the biggest irony of the current labor market is there is no shortage of bright people with great potential. What is needed most is access.

With the systemic shortfall of qualified skilled applicants, why do companies still overlook large pools of talent? The short answer is legacy hiring practices and corporate cultures resistant to change, limiting the candidates' opportunities.

Most companies also use automated recruiting systems that filter out candidates using specific parameters, like educational requirements and professional experience.

Further, while some companies hire and train reskilled workers, **it's often seen as a corporate responsibility instead of a business imperative.**

Apprenticeships offer a new pipeline of virtually untapped talent to build an inclusive workforce, providing access to people eager for new skills, the potential for full-time employment and a chance to change their life.

“Higher education requirements are shutting out alternatively-skilled workers and perpetuating the economic impacts of the education gap between white workers and workers of color.”¹⁰



Apprenticeships at Accenture

Accenture's apprenticeship journey

From a cohort of just five apprentices in 2016, the Accenture North America Apprenticeship Program has grown to more than 2,000 apprentices in 40 cities across the US and Canada – with roles in data engineering, cloud and platform engineering, and more. We continue to add a variety of new partnerships with community-based organizations and across the business world.

Accenture apprentices come from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, typically with a minimum of a high school diploma or the equivalent. This diversity contributes to creating a unique, highly motivated, and productive talent pool that helps to promote inclusive opportunities, equity, and economic mobility in places where we work and live.

At Accenture, we believe that skills, equity and access are essential for competitiveness.

Our apprentices come primarily from community colleges, nonprofit partners, the military and tech bootcamps. At Accenture they have the opportunity to participate in a 12-month earn-and-learn program working in one of our service groups like technology, creative, consulting, operations and HR.

As part of Accenture’s commitment to growing and scaling professional apprenticeships, we announced a goal to fill 20% of entry-level roles as apprentices in North America in fiscal year 2022. We are proud to have met that goal in fiscal years 2022 and 2023, and have extended the goal through fiscal 2024. [Click here to read the press release.](#)

“In order to address their talent needs, employers need to be creators of talent, not just consumers of it.”

Julie Sweet
Chair and Chief Executive Officer, Accenture

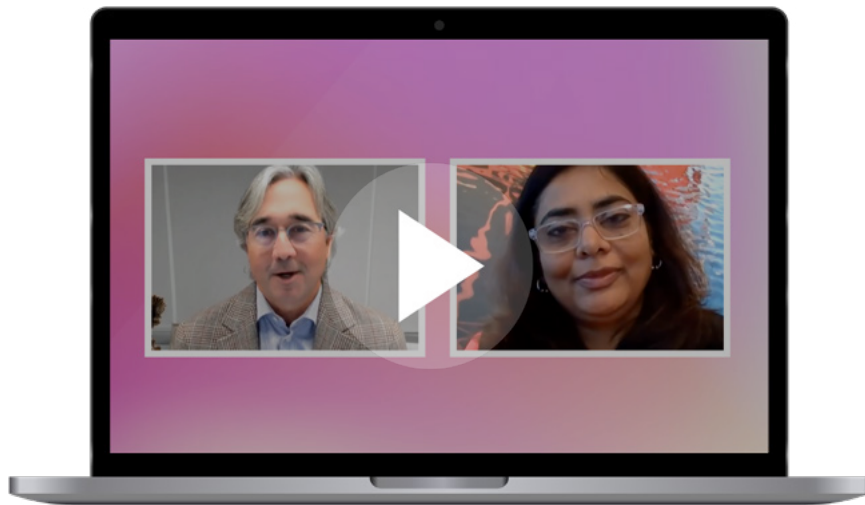
History of Accenture North America Apprenticeship

Accenture’s internal program structure

 12-month alternate entry level on-ramp	 Cohort experience	 Competitive wage with benefits
 Technical & professional training & skills development	 On-the-job learning	 Client-facing work
 Support network	 On-going feedback	 Career opportunity at program end

Creating valuable careers and an inclusive workforce

Jimmy Etheredge, and **Pallavi Verma**, the executive sponsor of the Accenture Apprenticeship Program, talk about how the program has been a priority, impacting communities and partners.



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A new path

Pursuing a new path often means facing challenges, reinvention and sharing lessons. Apprenticeship program graduate **Nadera Harris** shares her experience with **Rah Thomas**, Accenture Managing Director Cloud Advisory, and how she envisions her future.



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My story

Apprenticeship program graduate, Lalani Rentie, shares her story on how the apprenticeship program brought her the experience and knowledge to work in her dream career.



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Insight into the Accenture apprenticeship journey

In this episode of the CIO 24/7 Podcast Series, **Jason Warnke** talks with **Danica Lohja**, a participant in Accenture's Apprenticeship Program through the City Colleges of Chicago, and **Matt Lagodzinski** who supported Accenture's presence in the Chicago area. Hear about Accenture's Apprenticeship Program and Danica's journey from Accenture apprentice to Accenture employee working in our internal IT organization.



Play Podcast





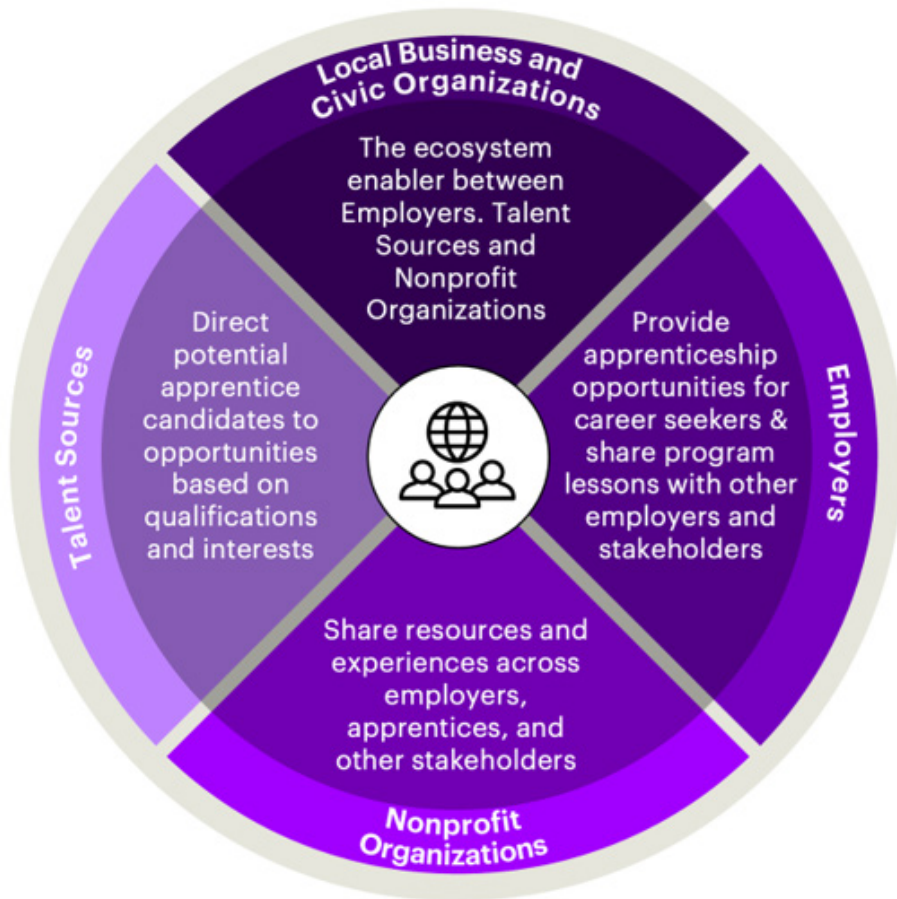
Apprentice Networks

Apprentice Networks in the US

In 2017, Accenture and Aon co-founded the Chicago Apprentice Network, partnering with local employers including McDonald's, Zurich Insurance and Walgreens. Currently, there are more than 200 network members committed to creating 10,000 apprenticeships by 2030.

Accenture is leading similar collaborations with other companies and local partners in Houston, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Northern California, Philadelphia, Southern California and Washington, DC.

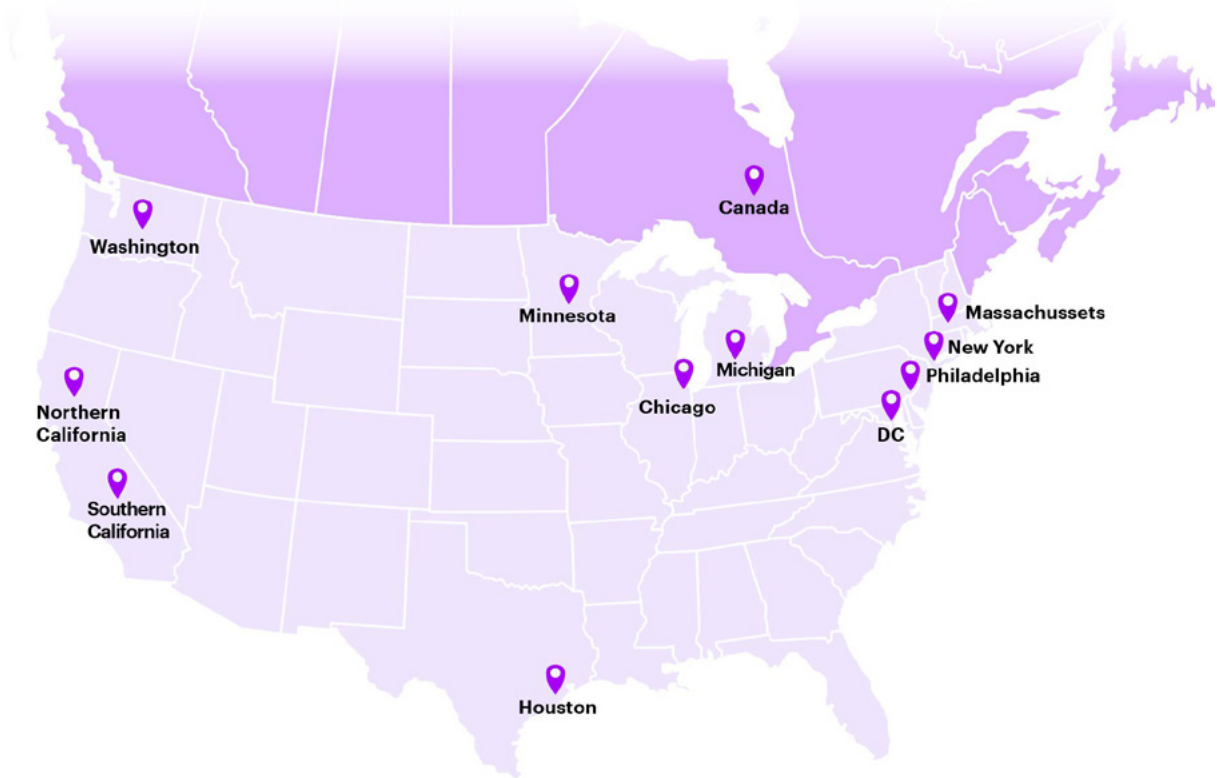
For a network to thrive, it's essential to have the participation and support of corporate and community partners. On the next page, we show the stakeholders that are essential for Apprentice Networks to thrive.



Apprentice Network locations

Below are the Apprentices Networks in the US as of November 2023. Together with corporate, community and nonprofit partners, we continue to scale networks across the country. Contact us for more information on how to join these networks.





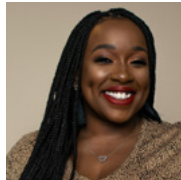
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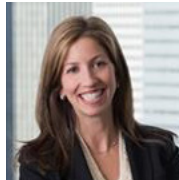
Aimee Kuan

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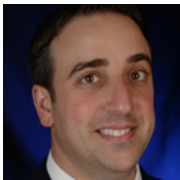
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Get started with apprenticeships

A solid foundation

If there's one thing every apprenticeship program must have to be successful and have real impact, it's a clearly defined and consistent vision for why it exists. That takes buy-in and active participation from stakeholders and leadership at the highest levels. A clear vision is essential in order to make important foundational decisions about roles and locations, and engage critical community partners.

Creating or joining an Apprentice Network alongside other local or regional employers is a valuable strategic advantage, versus trying to go it alone. Learning from the successes and failures of partners and sharing lessons and best practices helps expedite the development of a customized program outline for your organization.

With a successful, sustainable apprenticeship program, you can vastly expand the aperture of your talent pipeline and cultivate skills customized to your specific needs. It's important to start small and focus on a shared vision and goals.

Getting started Q&A

1. How do I set my organization up for success?

Success starts with strong executive sponsorship, alignment with your leadership on priorities, clarity on the challenges you are facing and knowledge of who else in your community is invested in solving these challenges.

2. How do I make the case for apprentices?

What sets apprenticeship programs apart from other talent initiatives is they are flexible to be unique to your business, your community, and your employees. They are inherently about bringing **shared value** to you, the worker, and your community.

3. What Jobs are appropriate for apprenticeships?

Apprenticeship models are developed for the specific priorities of your organization, the talent and skills needed, and the unique (barriers/characteristics) of the community. Apprenticeships can be created in tracks to meet the diverse functional needs within your business

4. How do I attract the candidates I need?

Candidates are available; an apprenticeship program is the plan to find and prepare them with the skills and abilities you need in your business. With the right training, incentives, and overall experience the candidates become **the talent you need**.

5. What is the difference between an apprentice and an intern?

Apprentices are not interns and, depending on your model, could be a part-time or full-time employee. An apprentice is seeking the opportunity to learn and share their skills with your company.

6. How do I ensure a quality experience for apprentices?

Create an apprentice-centered journey with a clear timeline, job description, incentive package and support network that will connect the apprentice to the near- and longterm future with your organization.

For more detailed steps and considerations on setting up your own professional apprenticeship program, take a look at the [national playbook](#) published in collaboration with the Chicago Apprentice Network and Business Roundtable.



Developing an apprenticeship program

The following steps provide a framework for developing a robust apprenticeship program.

01

Define vision

Identify the priorities your company wants to achieve using apprenticeships, such as expanded talent sources or community development. Confirm the vision with leadership and key stakeholders and use research on existing, established models to inform your program.

02

Identify opportunities

Consider what roles and locations are best suited to the program's goals. Apprenticeship roles should fill actual talent demands and present the opportunity to successfully equip an apprentice to fill that demand through skills-based, on-the-job learning and training. Consider strategic locations with local leadership support.

03

Determine and execute model

Identify candidate sources, develop interview processes, and define compensation models. Determine the type and length of training needed as well as necessary support for each role. Develop onboarding processes and performance reviews. Define potential career paths apprentices will enter upon completing the program.

04

Evolve and scale

Throughout the program, seek feedback from apprentices, their teams and external partners. Look to actively evolve, improve and scale the program. Leverage lessons learned to enhance the speed, cost and effectiveness of future programs. With an established apprenticeship program, work to build an apprenticeship network to share and accelerate best practices with other companies.





Location. Location. Location.

Given the importance of strategic partners to build a strong apprenticeship program, it's critical to consider the viability of your location and its relative proximity to the pool of potential corporate participants. While those in larger "innovation hub" markets may find it relatively easy to attract and recruit willing partners, those in smaller or medium-sized markets may face unexpected challenges.

Sustainable Demand

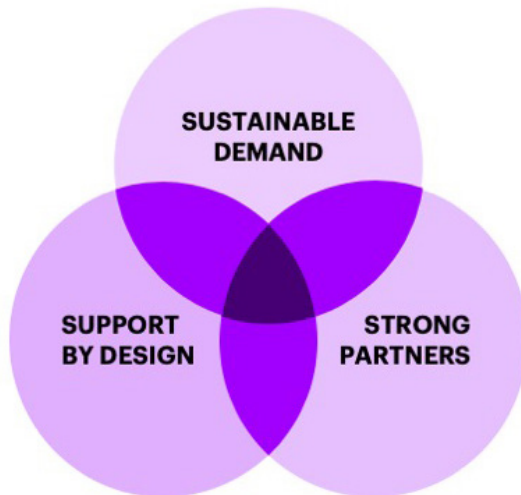
To be sustainable over time, roles should align with employers' current and future talent needs and provide apprentices with jobs and ongoing career opportunities.

Support by Design

Day-to-day leadership support and team mentorship are both critical for delivering high-touch shadowing and professional development. A robust apprentice cohort structure is important for enhancing community building.

Strong Partners

Strong partnerships with educational institutions, nonprofits and other community organizations provide access to high potential candidates from untapped talent pools and additional support for training and wraparound services where needed.



It's an investment

There are development costs for an apprenticeship program, including putting the right leadership, curriculum and processes in place. Ongoing run-costs include investments in training, recruiting and candidate sourcing. Also, consider that adjustments may be needed as apprentices ramp up and productivity levels improve.

Building on success

“Perfection is the enemy of progress,” Winston Churchill once said. In that same spirit, launching a new apprenticeship program is just the beginning of the journey, one likely full of unexpected curves, bumps and valuable lessons. Understanding this from the start will ultimately help your team persevere to deliver on the specific vision and mission for your program.

As your program matures and expands, naturally, so too will the locations, business areas you serve and types of roles you fill. And as these needs change, it’s important to refine and grow your partnerships. Every growing pain provides an opportunity to sharpen your focus and drive toward your target.

- 1 ITERATE ON PROGRAM MODEL**
Build on the lessons learned and improve the apprenticeship model.
- 2 IDENTIFY NEW LOCATIONS OR BUSINESS AREAS AND ADDITIONAL ROLES**
Discover new locations, business areas and roles apprentices could join.
- 3 REFINE AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS**
Work on strengthening and expanding sourcing partnerships as the program grows.
- 4 JOIN OR BUILD A NETWORK OF COMPANIES COMMITTED TO APPRENTICESHIP AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
Partner with other companies and organizations to jointly commit to launching or expanding apprentice programs in local communities.





How we can help

A solid foundation

Apprenticeships are reshaping the way companies hire in North America. Accenture is helping to lead that future by sharing lessons and insights from our own journey of building the most successful and rapidly expanding apprenticeship program in the country.

Want to know more about our program?

Our Apprenticeship Program leadership team is happy to speak with you to share more about the history of our program and how it works.

Want help getting your own apprenticeship program off the ground?

Our consulting organization can work with you to develop an apprenticeship program for your organization, based on our learning and best practices.



“New approaches to talent and skilling benefit everyone: communities, their people, and our people. And it helps fuel corporate growth by enhancing diversity of thought and innovation.”

Pallavi Verma

Sharing our journey

The Accenture North America Apprenticeship Program has been – and continues to be – a wonderful and fulfilling journey. If you would like to hear more about it, contact:

Pallavi Verma

Senior Managing Director Quality & Risk and Apprenticeship Program Executive Sponsor, Accenture

Contact



Amy Southworth

NA Apprenticeship Program Executive Sponsor, HR Managing Director

Contact



Beca Driscoll

NA Apprenticeship Program Lead, HR Future Talent Strategy, Accenture

Contact



Working with you to develop your program

There are multiple ways in which Accenture can support you along your apprenticeship journey, from helping you design your program through to apprentices transitioning to full-time employment. For example, we can provide expertise to help you define your program for activating apprenticeships, connect you with partners for sourcing and developing apprentice talent, and support on-the-job training. Throughout, we share best practices and guidance to help you achieve your objectives.

If you would like to know more about how we can help you develop your program, contact:

Mary Kate Morley Ryan

Managing Director Talent & Organization, Accenture

Contact



Resources | Learn more

This screenshot shows the job search interface for 'Entry Level Apprenticeship - NAELFY24'. It includes a search bar, filters for 'MULTIPLE LOCATIONS', 'NEW ALL', 'JOB NO. REQUESTS', and 'APPRENTICESHIP'. There are buttons for 'APPLY NOW', 'SAVE JOB', 'REGISTER FOR JOB ALERTS', and 'SHARE'. A 'Job Description' section follows, detailing the program's structure and benefits. Below that, 'Qualifications' are listed. A 'RELATED JOBS NEAR YOU' section features two job listings: 'Application Developer' and 'VA01 - Application Developer', both in Software Engineering roles.

Entry-level Accenture apprenticeship positions



This screenshot features a purple header with the text 'The future of work is bright because of apprenticeships'. Below the header, there are navigation links: 'Leading a National Apprenticeship Movement', 'Apply to Be an Accenture Apprentice', 'Meet Our Apprentices', and 'Apprenticeship in the News'. A central section titled 'APPRENTICE PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE' includes the subtext 'Building the future of talent' and a 'LEARN MORE' link. The main content area is titled 'Leading a national apprenticeship movement' and contains text about the program's history and goals, accompanied by a photo of a group of people in a meeting.

Accenture North America Apprenticeship Webpage

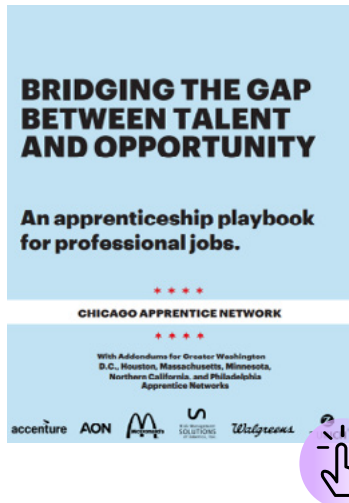


This screenshot is a candidate one-pager for the North America Apprenticeship Program. It features the Accenture logo and the title 'Apprenticeship Program'. A quote from a candidate, 'Meredith Pines, Software Engineering Intern', is included: 'In my current project I'm learning how to build queries in SQL Developer... This options are there, the paths are wonderful and I've never been more excited about my new career path.' The page lists 'About Accenture', 'Who You Are' (with bullet points on collaboration, learning, and experience), and 'What You're Looking For' (with bullet points on support, pathways, and benefits).

Candidate one-pager



Thought leadership



Thought leadership
Bridging the gap between talent and opportunity.



Apprenticeships
From Community College to promising tech career.



Hidden Workers: Untapped Talent
Bridging the gap between talent and opportunity.



Reach for the STARS
Realizing the potential of America's hidden talent pool.

Accenture Apprenticeship Program recognitions



Human Capital Management Excellence Awards
Awarded the highest distinction, Accenture received a GOLD award in the Best Unique or Innovative Learning and Development Program category in 2022.



Center for an Urban Future
Accenture was recognized for the impact we are making in New York City by creating new talent pipelines through our apprentice program.



Was this helpful?

Help us improve! Click on the button below to answer one question and let us know your experience using this resource kit.

Share your feedback



Notes

^{1,3}US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, **“To Reflect The Employment Situation”** <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf>; US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, **“Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary,”** <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm>

^{2,5,6,9,11}Joseph B. Fuller, Manjari Raman, Eva Sage-Gavin, and Kristen Hines, **“Hidden Workers: Untapped Talent,”** Harvard Business School and Accenture, <https://www.hbs.edu/managing-the-future-of-work/Documents/research/hiddenworkers09032021.pdf>

^{7,8}National Apprenticeship, **“Business Benefits,”** <https://nationalapprenticeship.org/business-benefits>; National Apprenticeship, **“Return on Investment (ROI),”** <https://nationalapprenticeship.org/roi>

¹⁰National Center for Education Statistics, **“Digest of Education Statistics,”** https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_104.10.asp

⁴Peter Q. Blair and Shad Ahmed, **“The Disparate Racial Impact of Requiring a College Degree,”** Wall Street Journal, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/thedisparate-racial-impact-of-requiring-a-collegedegree-11593375171>

Accenture is a leading global professional services company that helps the world's leading businesses, governments and other organizations build their digital core, optimize their operations, accelerate revenue growth and enhance citizen services—creating tangible value at speed and scale. We are a talent- and innovation-led company with approximately 742,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Technology is at the core of change today, and we are one of the world's leaders in helping drive that change, with strong ecosystem relationships. We combine our strength in technology and leadership in cloud, data and AI with unmatched industry experience, functional expertise and global delivery capability. We are uniquely able to deliver tangible outcomes because of our broad range of services, solutions and assets across Strategy & Consulting, Technology, Operations, Industry X and Song. These capabilities, together with our culture of shared success and commitment to creating 360° value, enable us to help our clients reinvent and build trusted, lasting relationships. We measure our success by the 360° value we create for our clients, each other, our shareholders, partners and communities. Visit us at www.accenture.com.

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