



Apprenticeship Program Resource Guide:

Building the Future of Talent

accenture



“Apprenticeship required us to rethink 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



“As the executive sponsor, I’ve witnessed the program’s growth and its positive impact on our business, apprentices, and their families. Innovative talent development and skilling strategies benefit everyone and drive corporate growth by fostering innovation.”

Pallavi Verma

Senior Managing Director, Quality Lead, Americas, Accenture

Welcome!

If you are a business or HR leader, and want to gain access to motivated new talent, close the skills gap, and create paths 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. 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.

In 2017 we launched the first Apprentice Network in Chicago. Since then, Accenture has expanded the model across the country and has now launched 11 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.

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Start your journey here

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



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The imperative for apprenticeships

Bridging the talent gap

While employers report ongoing challenges with acquiring skilled talent, they often exclude 66% of the US workforce¹ — 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, and investing in creating and maintaining thriving communities.



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.

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 **competitive wage and benefits** during and after apprenticeship
- An opportunity for a continued **career path** with full-time employment upon successful completion of the program

Talent shortage in the US

Job openings²

7.6M

Available workers³

7.1M

Percent of bachelor's degree in the US

People 25+ years old⁴

39%



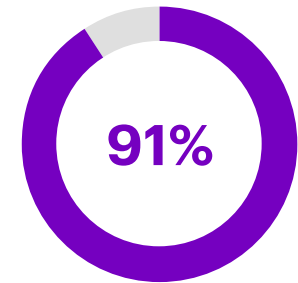
Benefits of apprenticeships

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 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.⁷



Nine months after apprenticeship completion, 91% of apprentices retained employment.⁸

[Research by Harvard Business School and Accenture](#)⁶ 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, “longstanding 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 purposefully 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



Make the case for change

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.

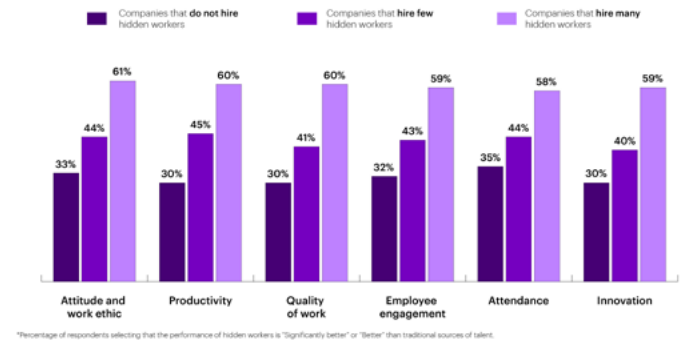
Most companies also use automated recruiting systems that filter out candidates using specific parameters, like educational requirements and professional experience.

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.”¹⁰

Employees report high performance of hidden workers¹¹





Apprenticeships at Accenture

Accenture's apprenticeship journey

From a cohort of just five apprentices in 2016, the Accenture Apprenticeship Program has grown to more than 2,500 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 different backgrounds and experiences, typically without a 4 year degree, and minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent. Apprentices bring a highly motivated and productive talent pool to our company, and advance economic mobility in our communities.

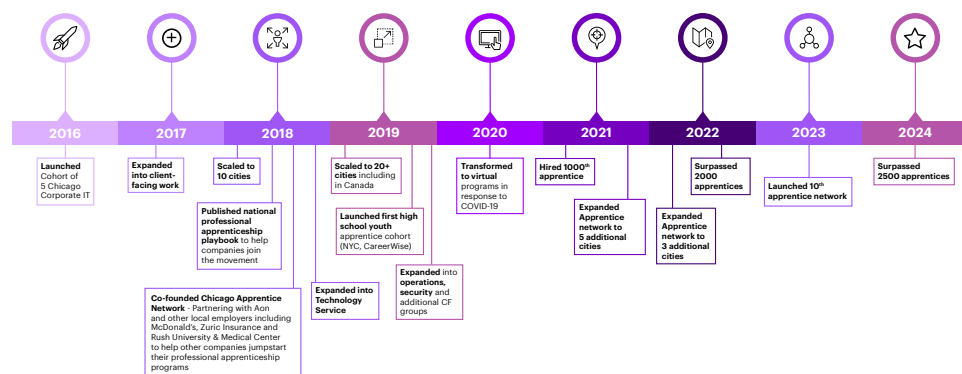
Our apprentices come primarily from community colleges, nonprofit partners, the military and tech bootcamps. At Accenture they have the opportunity to participate in a 12-month earn-and-learn program working in one of our service groups like technology, creative, consulting, operations and HR.

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 across US & Canada in fiscal year 2022. We are proud to have met that goal each fiscal year since 2022 and have extended the goal through fiscal 2025. [Click here](#) to read the press release.

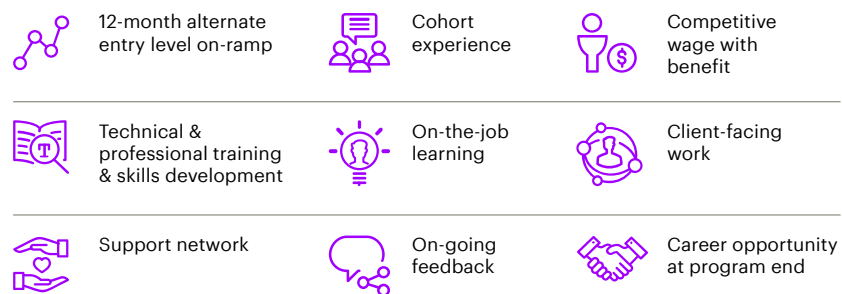
“In order to address their talent needs, employers need to be creators of talent, not just consumers of it.”

Julie Sweet
Chair and Chief Executive
Office, Accenture

History of Accenture North America Apprenticeship



Accenture's internal program structure



Apprentices working at the heart of change

Apprenticeship program graduates share their story on how the apprenticeship program has impacted their lives and careers at Accenture.



Play video





Apprentice Networks

Collaboration across the US

Apprentice Networks across the US bring together more than 200 employers committed to professional apprenticeships.

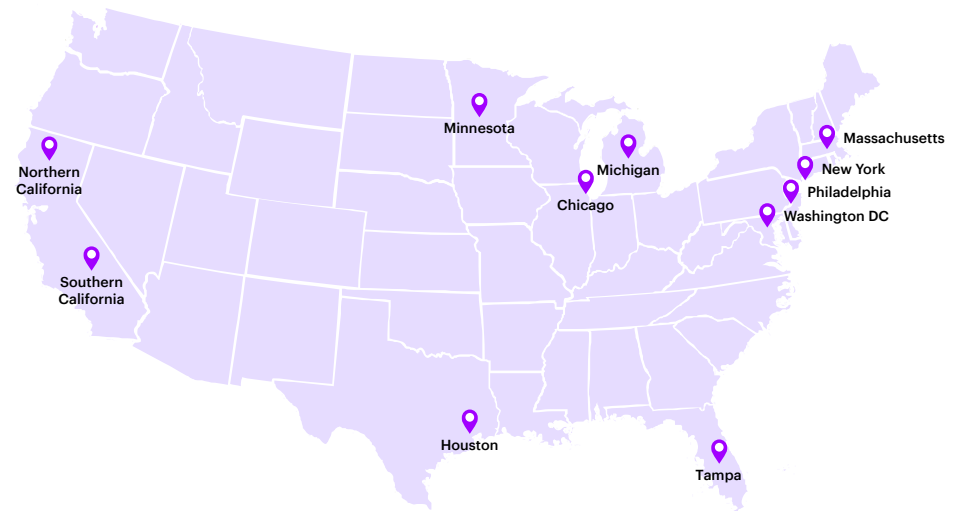
Accenture has worked with Aon, other local employers and community organizations to launch 11 Apprentice Networks in Chicago, Houston, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Northern California, Philadelphia, Southern California, Tampa Bay and Washington DC.

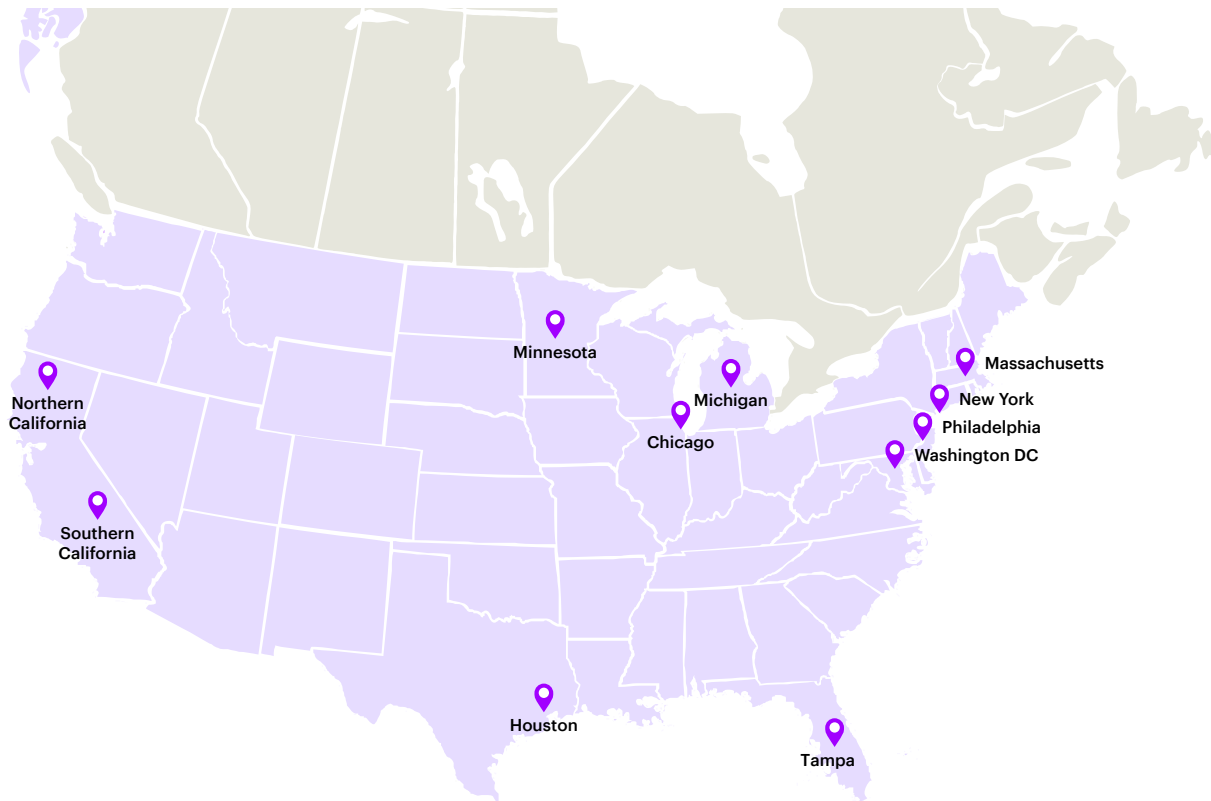
For a network to thrive, it's essential to have the participation and support of corporate and community partners. On the next page, we show the stakeholders that are essential for Apprentice Networks to thrive.



Apprentice Network locations

Below are the Apprenticeship Networks in the US as of April 2025. 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.





Nathan Giguee

Accenture Network Lead - Tampa

[Email Nathan](#)
[Tampa Network website](#)



Caroline Boland

Accenture Network Lead - Massachusetts

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[Massachusetts Network website](#)



Jennifer Malach

Accenture Network Lead - New York

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Haniyyah Sharpe-Brown

Accenture Network Lead - Philadelphia

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Charlie Terrell

Accenture Network Lead - Greater Washington DC

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[Greater Washington DC Network website](#)



Kendra Quinlan

Accenture Network Lead - Michigan

[Email Kendra](#)



Michael Chiappetta

Accenture Network Lead - Chicago

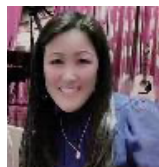
[Email Michael](#)
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Tina Donovan

Accenture Network Lead - Northern California

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Aimee Kuan

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Scott Cummings

Accenture Network Lead - Minnesota

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Lindsay Hyman

Accenture Network Lead - Houston

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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 our 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 and 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 fulltime 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, closing skills gap or improving retention. Confirm the vision with leadership and key stakeholders and use research on existing, established models to inform your program.

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.

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.

04

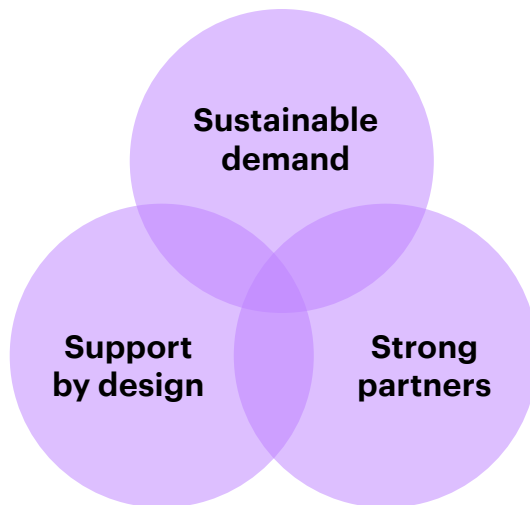
Evolve and scale

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, join 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 of 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 the US & Canada. Accenture is helping to lead that future by sharing lessons and insights from our own journey of building the most successful and rapidly expanding professional services apprenticeship program 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 U.S. and Canada Apprenticeship Program has been – and continues to be – a wonderful and fulfilling journey.

Pallavi Verma

Senior Managing Director, Quality Lead and U.S. and Canada Apprenticeship Program Executive Sponsor, Accenture

Contact



Diana Eckhardt Alger U.S. and Canada Apprenticeship Program Executive Sponsor, HR Managing Director, Accenture

Contact



Beca Driscoll

U.S. and Canada 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.



Resources | Learn more

Thought leadership



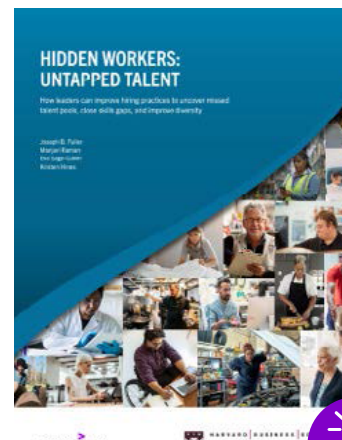
Thought leadership

Bridging the gap between talent and opportunity.



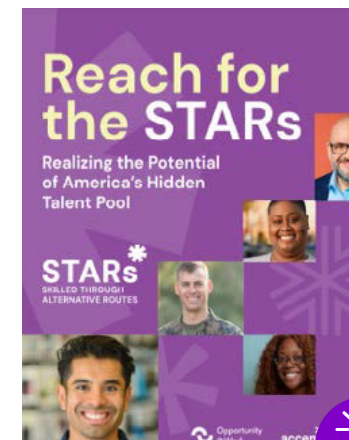
Apprenticeships

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

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.



Notes

^{1, 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>

^{2, 3} US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, **“To Reflect The Employment Situation”** <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf>;
US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, **“Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary”** <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm>

^{4, 10} National Center for Education Statistics, **“Digest of Education Statistics”** https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_104.10.asp

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

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