



# Apprenticeship Program Resource Guide:

Building the Future of Talent

accenture



**“Apprenticeship requires 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 & 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 ensuring 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.

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.

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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

The US Department of Labor reported that there are eight million job openings in America, yet fewer than six million available workers to fill them<sup>1</sup>. 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 workforce<sup>2</sup> — 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 **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

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 3 millions per US Department of Labor<sup>3</sup>

Job openings

8M

Available workers

5M

## Percent of bachelor's degree in the US

People 25+ years old<sup>4</sup>

Asian

59%

White

42%

Black

28%

Hispanic

21%



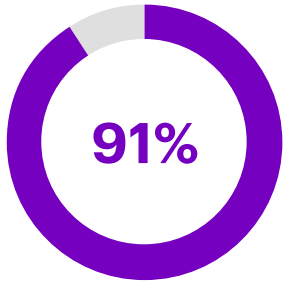
# Benefits of apprenticeships

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 sources<sup>5</sup>
- 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.<sup>7</sup>



Nine months after apprenticeship completion, 91% of apprentices retained employment.<sup>8</sup>

[Research by Harvard Business School and Accenture](#)<sup>6</sup> 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 companies<sup>9</sup>

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 goals





# 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.

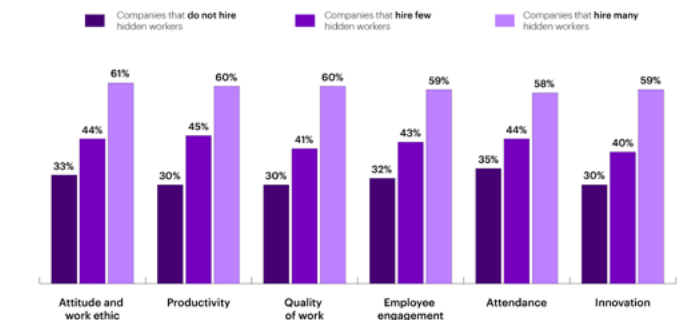
Most companies also use automated recruiting systems that filter out candidates using specific parameters, like educational requirements and professional experience.

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.”<sup>10</sup>

## Employees report high performance of hidden workers<sup>9</sup>



<sup>9</sup>Percentage of respondents selecting that the performance of hidden workers is "Significantly better" or "Better" than traditional sources of talent.



# 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 2,500 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 diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, typically with a minimum of a high school diploma or the equivalent. The diversity contributes to creating a unique, highly motivated, and productive talent pool that helps to promote inclusive opportunities and economic mobility in places where we work and live.

**At Accenture, we believe that skills 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 each fiscal year since 2022 and have extended the goal through fiscal 2025.

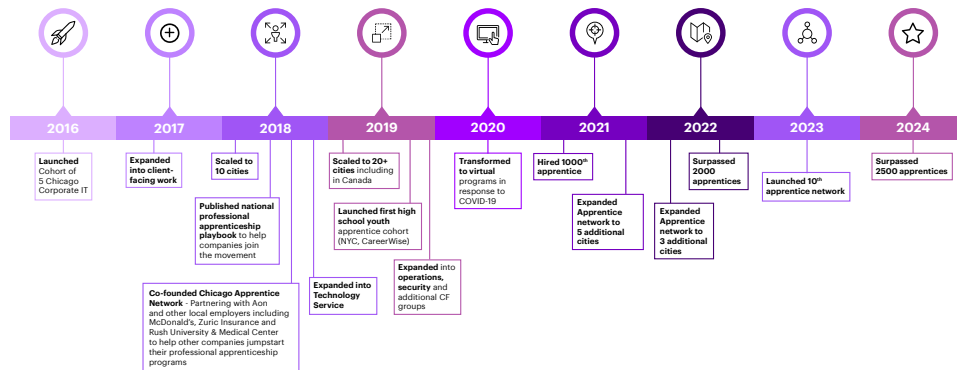
[Click here to read the press release.](#)

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

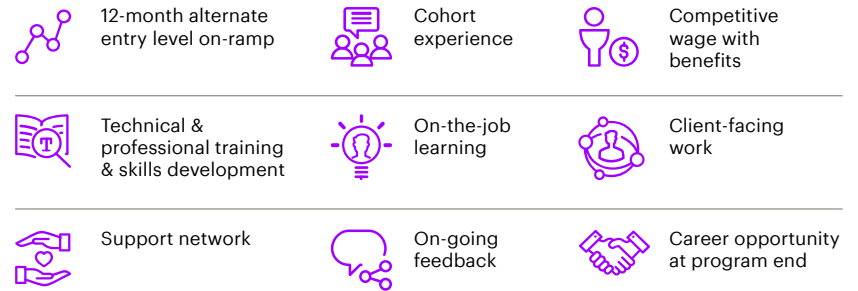
**Julie Sweet**

Chair and Chief Executive Officer,  
Accenture

## History of Accenture North America Apprenticeship



## Accenture’s internal program structure



## 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.



Play video



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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.





# Apprentice Networks

## Apprentice Networks in the US

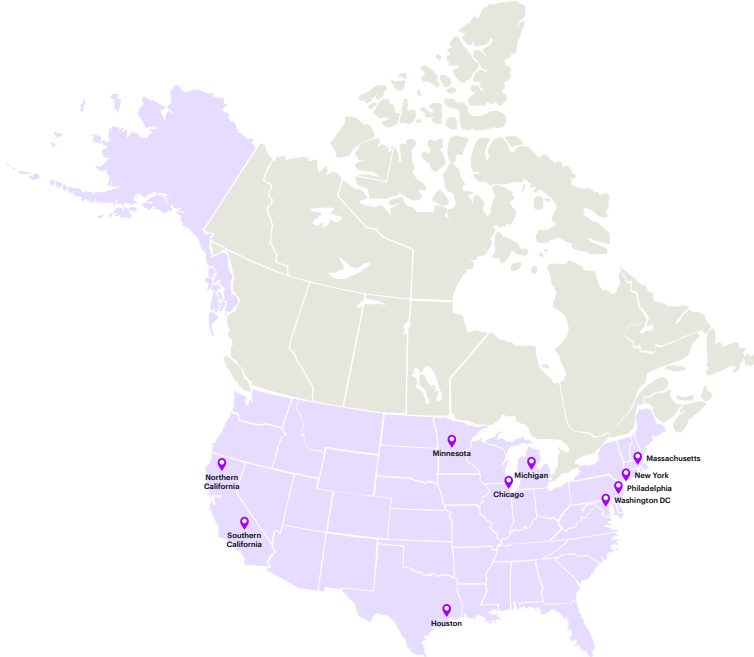
In 2017, Accenture and Aon co-founded the Chicago Apprentice Network, partnering with local employers including McDonald's, Zurich Insurance and Walgreens. Currently, there are more than 200 network members committed to creating 10,000 apprenticeships by 2030.

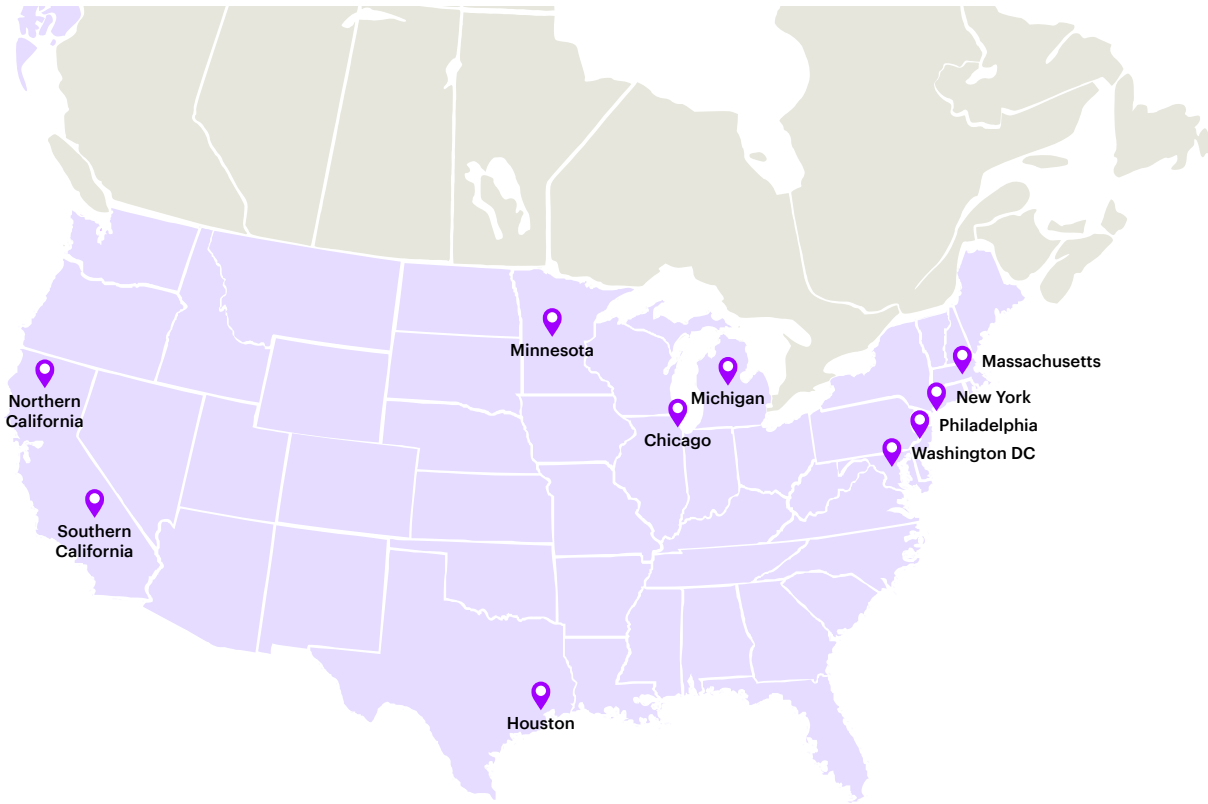
Accenture is leading similar collaborations with other companies and local partners in Houston, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Northern California, Philadelphia, Southern California and Washington, DC.

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 Apprentice Networks in the US as of September 2024. 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.





**Caroline Boland**

Accenture Network Lead - Massachusetts

[Email Caroline](#)  
[Massachusetts Network website](#)



**Jennifer Malach**

Accenture Network Lead - New York

[Email Jennifer](#)



**Haniyyah Sharpe-Brown**

Accenture Network Lead - Philadelphia

[Email Haniyyah](#)  
[Philadelphia Network website](#)



**Charlie Terrell**

Accenture Network Lead - Greater Washington DC

[Email Charlie](#)  
[Greater Washington DC Network website](#)



**Kendra Quinlan**

Accenture Network Lead - Michigan

[Email Kendra](#)



**Michael Chiappetta**

Accenture Network Lead - Chicago

[Email Michael](#)  
[Chicago Network website](#)



**Tina Donovan**

Accenture Network Lead - Northern California

[Email Tina](#)  
[Northern California Network website](#)



**Scott Cummings**

Accenture Network Lead - Minnesota

[Email Scott](#)  
[Minnesota Network website](#)



**Aimee Kuan**

Accenture Network Lead - Southern California

[Email Aimee](#)  
[Southern California Network website](#)



**Lindsay Hyman**

Accenture Network Lead - Houston

[Email Lindsay](#)  
[Houston Network website](#)





# 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/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 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

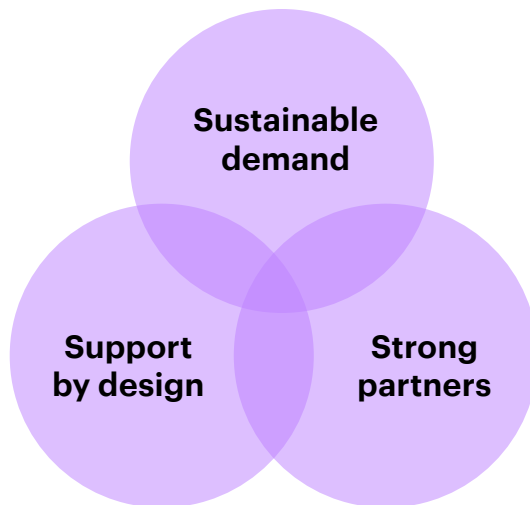
## Evolve and scale

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](#)

#### **Diana Eckhardt Alger**

NA Apprenticeship Program Executive Sponsor, HR Managing Director, Accenture

[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

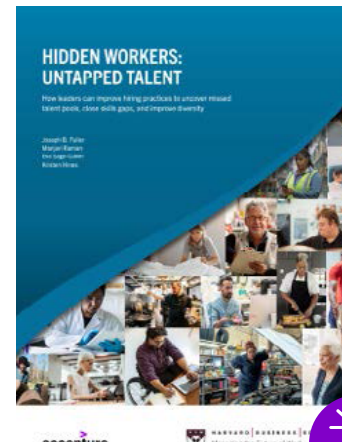
## Thought leadership



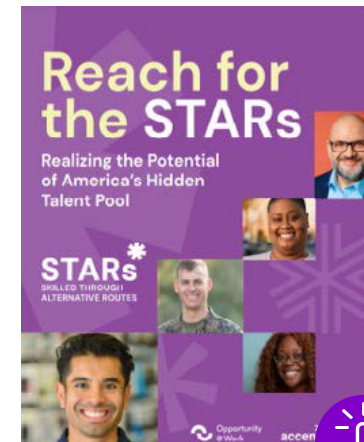
**Thought leadership**  
Bridging the gap between talent and opportunity.



**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

<sup>1,3</sup> 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>

<sup>2, 5, 6, 9, 11</sup> 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>

<sup>4</sup> Peter 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>

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

<sup>10</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, **“Digest of Education Statistics”** [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21\\_104.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_104.10.asp)

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 750,000 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](http://www.accenture.com).

The Accenture logo features the word "accenture" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. A small, white, right-pointing chevron symbol is positioned above the letter "t".



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