

WTIA Workforce Institute Officially Opens Registered Tech Apprenticeship Program, Apprenti, with First Participants in Initial Training Round

Program Receives Additional \$200K in Funding from JP Morgan Chase to Expand High-Tech Job Opportunities for Women, Minorities, and Veterans in Washington State

SEATTLE, Sept. 14, 2016 – The WTIA Workforce Institute today announced the opening of its registered apprenticeship program, Apprenti, the only tech apprenticeship accredited by the State of Washington and a first for the industry. Apprenti will recruit, train, and place at least 600 new tech workers during the pilot. The program focuses on under represented groups including women, minorities and veterans, helping bridge the skills and diversity gap and providing trained talent to the state's high-wage tech sector. Apprenti officially kicks off today and is currently accepting applications for its first round of participants this fall. The WTIA Workforce Institute also announced that Apprenti will receive an additional \$200K in funding from JP Morgan Chase to cover the costs of training its first participants.

“Apprenti reinvents the way the tech industry approaches training, hiring and recruiting new talent,” said Jennifer Carlson, Executive Director, WTIA Workforce Institute. “The support we’ve had across the public and private sectors shows the collective need for a fresh approach to hiring and addressing diversity challenges in our sector. Today’s launch is the culmination of our partnership with the state, our training and hiring partners, as well as those in the community who have worked so hard to see this program come to fruition.”

Apprenti is operated by the WTIA Workforce Institute, the 501c3 sister organization to the Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA). It is also partially funded through a grant from the American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), with support from the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) and JP Morgan Chase.

"The application of the apprenticeship model to the IT industry is exciting. Our partnership with WTIA to launch Apprenti has the potential to change the face of apprenticeships, moving from building trades to the cutting edge of technology," said Jody Robbins, program manager of apprenticeship at Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. "Diversifying our apprenticeship sponsors is as important for the expansion of the apprenticeship model as is diversifying the workforce for our new industry partners. These are exciting times for apprenticeship in Washington State."

Washington State is the top recruiter of tech talent in the country, with more than 8,000 new tech jobs per year. As demand for skilled workers grows, companies are also struggling to increase diversity among their workforce. The problem workers are facing

is access. Less than twenty percent of the tech workforce is female and less than three percent is Hispanic or African American. There are an even smaller number of veterans working in the technology field. Apprenti will assist people within these under represented communities with a path and a plan for a successful career in technology and will help the industry and Apprenti hiring partners like Microsoft and F5 Networks meet the demand for diverse and skilled tech talent.

Chuck Edward, Head of Global Talent Acquisition at Microsoft said, “Apprenti is a great win for our organization. It provides the opportunity for someone to come in and work side-by-side with our employees and learn from that experience. The program provides pre-apprenticeship training and helps us access a more diverse, qualified workforce. Our partnership with the Workforce Institute enables us to influence the curriculum and initial training provided to apprentices and lets us do the on-the-job training.”

Julian Eames, Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer at F5 Networks, said “Apprenti offers an innovative approach to an issue of increasing urgency for employers in Washington State: a skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of its partners, customers and communities. It is essential to our company’s and the technology industry’s long-term, competitive growth that we recruit and retain talent from a more diverse population.”

Apprenti is the only apprenticeship program registered with the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries and designed to meet the tech industry’s growing needs. Its primary focus is on serving candidates who are women, minorities and/or veterans. Successful applicants are highly capable, have good communication skills, are fluent in English (spoken and written), and have the drive to be successful. Once accepted to the program, each apprentice receives two to four months of certified technical training followed by one year of full-time, paid, on-the-job training with one of Apprenti’s many hiring partners. A grant from JP Morgan Chase is eliminating financial barriers for participants by helping to underwrite free training for the first round of apprentices.

“JPMorgan Chase & Co. has made funding apprenticeships a priority as an effective model to build career pathways to well-paying jobs that offer opportunities for advancement,” said Cat Martin, Northwest Philanthropy Manager, JPMorgan Chase & Co. “The WTIA Workforce Institute has the expertise to uncover the region’s hidden talent and is taking an innovative approach to bringing together employers and educators to prepare them to meet the growing demand for increased diversity in the tech workforce.”

Following the first round of Apprenti participants, the program will offer apprenticeship opportunities every three months beginning late fall 2016. The program is currently accepting applications for its first session. As a competency based program, those with a strong determination to complete the rigorous training are encouraged to apply. To be

considered for the program, you must be 18 or over, have a high school diploma or equivalent and be a U.S. citizen or have permanent legal resident. You can apply by taking the online Apprenti assessment, which you can find at www.ApprentiCareers.org.

About Apprenti:

Apprenti is a registered apprenticeship program powered by the Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA) and run by the WTIA Workforce Institute. Apprenti trains future tech workers with an emphasis on under represented groups including women, minorities, and veterans. Apprenti is an industry recognized, state accredited program. Apprentices will receive two to four months of full-time training then begin one year of paid on-the-job training with one of the program's hiring partners. The program is partially funded through a grant from the American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), with support from the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I), and JP Morgan Chase. For more information on how to apply, donate or become a hiring partner, please visit www.ApprentiCareers.org.

About Apprenti Program Requirements:

Participant selection for Apprenti is based on a competency model; prior experience and education are not factors in being accepted as an apprentice. Apprenti is looking for highly competent, driven people in our community seeking a path to a career in tech.

Requirements include:

1. Must be 18 years of age or older and have a high school diploma or equivalent.
2. Must be a U.S. Citizen or permanent legal resident of the U.S.
3. Must complete a three step application process that includes:
 - A qualifying assessment score
 - A strong interview with a hiring partner
 - Completion of certified training

Visit www.ApprentiCareers.org for more program details and take the online assessment.

About the WTIA Workforce Institute

The WTIA Workforce Institute is a 501c3 organization created to drive workforce initiatives to assist under represented communities seeking to enter the technology industry. The Institute has partnered with the Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA), Washington state's unifying voice for the technology community, and Washington State's Department of Labor and Industries to operate a technology training and registered apprenticeship program called Apprenti.

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