

## IBM Announces New Collar Apprenticeship Accelerator for IBM Z

### M&T Bank Joins as Inaugural Ecosystem Employer

ARMONK, N.Y., Nov. 19, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) today announced an expansion of the company's [IBM Z skills initiatives](#) to include a new nationwide IT Infrastructure apprenticeship accelerator program – establishing an onramp for [IBM Z Ecosystem](#) clients looking to hire new collar talent across system administrators, system programmers and application developer roles.

In keeping with IBM's commitment to make the digital era an inclusive one by expanding opportunity for people from all backgrounds and communities to build skills for in-demand careers, this new collar IBM Z skills training program will recruit and develop candidates from across the United States with no previous technology experience required.

Delivered in collaboration with [Franklin Apprenticeships](#) and the [Urban Institute](#), the program provides participating IBM Z clients with a no-charge apprenticeship accelerator. Coupled with IBM's apprenticeship model serving to establish foundational knowledge, clients and new apprentices can gain the benefit of Franklin Apprenticeships experience as an intermediary. Throughout the program, apprentices receive learning paths based on joint client-defined competency standards, more than 300 hours of virtual training, access to subject matter expertise and mentorship from IBM, and dedicated success managers.

IBM also is announcing today that [M&T Bank](#) has signed on as the inaugural employer partner for this program. As part of the program – which M&T has branded as its Z Development Program (ZDP) Mainframe Apprenticeship – M&T Bank plans grow their skilled, diverse talent pool in the Buffalo, New York area and will accelerate the bank's digital transformation with the hire of 10 apprentices anticipated to start in January 2021.

"In Buffalo, our regional tech ecosystem has continued to gain momentum, even as we've navigated the challenges of the pandemic. Working collaboratively, business, government and nonprofit leaders are focused on developing, retaining and attracting tech talent to buildout our city's innovation corridor and strengthen our regional economy," said Mike Wisler, Chief Information Officer at M&T Bank. "Our goal for the ZDP initiative is to ensure M&T Bank has the depth of talent necessary to efficiently operate our IBM Z systems, which are essential to banking functions our customers rely on, and it can contribute to the wider, regional efforts underway in Western New York to build an inclusive workforce equipped with the skills necessary to compete in the global economy. In a historically blue-collar city, IBM's new-collar apprenticeship program serves as another mechanism to help build a resilient, skilled workforce and foster a more inclusive economic recovery."

"As companies accelerate their journey to hybrid cloud, unlocking the full value of digital transformation including resiliency, security, and application modernization will require cultivating a vibrant, skilled and inclusive workforce," said Meredith Stowell, Vice President, IBM Z Ecosystem. "IBM created this accelerator program to help our ecosystem grow these skills, not only with the inaugural employers but as a scalable model to help simplify apprenticeship adoption for clients and provide another path to a sustainable, diverse workforce."

IBM has stepped forward with multiple initiatives to promote an inclusive workforce with a focus on skills aligned

with new collar jobs: well-paying roles that require specific, in-demand skills but not necessarily a traditional bachelor's degree. These programs range from 21<sup>st</sup> century apprenticeships, innovative approaches to high-school career and technical education, coding camps, community college partnerships, returnships and more.

As part of the pre-apprenticeship program that IBM will provide in support of each client's IBM Z apprenticeship initiative, each candidate will receive an introduction to computer science, complete [Master the Mainframe](#) levels one and two, and complete a curriculum of z/OS practitioner training – all remotely. Following the pre-apprenticeship, candidates will be presented to employers for hiring into a one year earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship with additional technical and on-the-job training. Upon successful completion, all apprentices will earn a credential recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor.

"Franklin's employers find tech and new collar apprenticeships to be a valuable and cost effective tool in bringing talent and diversity to their organization, but in the U.S., IT apprenticeships are largely a well-kept secret" said Kim Nichols, Chief Executive Officer at Franklin Apprenticeships. "IBM, who has been a pioneer and innovator in the apprenticeship space is now leading the way with their customer base. It's exciting to work with this group of IBM Z pre-apprentices as they take the first steps towards a tech career."

"This is an important collaboration that will expand the IT workforce through apprenticeships in high-demand occupations," said Diana Elliott, Principal Research Associate at Urban Institute. "In hiring apprentices for their potential, rather than their credentials, this program will help open up opportunities to countless candidates who otherwise might not have had the chance to pursue such careers."

IBM's new collar apprenticeship program, launched in 2017, provides learn-while-you-earn skills training and career development opportunities for both students and working professionals. The program grew twice as fast as anticipated in its first year and has expanded from three career tracks at launch to more than twenty today. The apprenticeship accelerator builds on these successful programs and partnerships to expand IBM's model to additional employers and create more opportunities for Americans to build in demand skills.

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