Debugged: Diversifying IT Through Effective Training Programs

October 6, 2020

PRESENTED BY
Vanessa Bennett, Associate Director, JFF
Sara Lambback, Associate Director, JFF
WHAT TYPE OF ORGANIZATION ARE YOU?
VANESSA BENNETT
Associate Director
JFF’s Center for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning

Vanessa works to create equitable pathways to careers and education for young people and adults through pre-apprenticeships, Registered Apprenticeships, and work-based learning programs. She supports a range of stakeholders and develops strategies and tools to expand economic mobility by bridging education and work.

SARA LAMBACK
Associate Director
JFF

Sara provides project leadership and labor market analysis to help adults, especially those from underrepresented populations, train for and succeed in jobs with career advancement potential. She has led a range of IT workforce development initiatives at JFF, including TechHire and the scaling of the Google IT Support Professional Certificate in community colleges and nonprofits.
The American labor market is broken. Our rapidly changing economy demands skilled and adaptable workers, but many people lack the education and training employers require. JFF is transforming the workforce and education systems to accelerate economic advancement for all.

**Ensuring Equity in Economic Advancement**

Despite overall growth, economic opportunity is limited for millions of Americans. Through education and dignified work, everyone can create the life they deserve.

**Meeting Employer Needs**

Employers continue to struggle to find employees with the right skills. For America to thrive in the global economy, businesses need a steady supply of highly qualified workers.

**Preparing for the Future of Work**

Automation, outsourcing, and new contract arrangements are changing the nature of work. Everyone must think differently about how to sustain the nation’s talent supply.
AGENDA

2:05 – 2:20 p.m. ET  Today’s IT Sector

2:20 – 2:55 p.m.     Diversifying IT Pathways: A Conversation With Practitioners

2:55 – 3:00 p.m.     Recommendations and Resources
TODAY’S IT SECTOR
JFF’S SUPPORT FOR IT ON-RAMPS

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
Providing technical assistance to more than 40 U.S. Department of Labor grantees, through projects such as TechHire and AEMF.

COMPANY COLLABORATION
Advancing workforce innovations through collaborations with companies including Google and Verizon.

RESEARCH
Conducting research on IT career pathways for philanthropic partners.

ACCELERATION
Promoting new ways to assess new entrants to the IT field through a JFFLabs Accelerator cohort.
TRANSFORMING IT TRAINING PROGRAMS TO SUCCESSFUL CAREER ON-RAMPS

JFF’S APPROACH

1. Qualitative interviews with more than 30 IT training programs nationwide to understand the IT training landscape and the design elements of effective models

2. Labor market analysis that included a range of occupational data points, including earnings, projections, and job posting data on high-demand skills and credentials.
KEY LABOR MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

IT SECTOR OVERVIEW

During the past 12 months, there were approximately 3.3 million postings for IT jobs. Top postings are highlighted at right.

Occupational groups, by 2018 employment:

• Programming (2.2 million)
• IT Support (1.8 million)
• Cybersecurity (805,000)

HIGH-DEMAND IT SKILLS

Job posting data from the past six months shows an increase in demand for the following specialized IT skills:

- DevOps
- Microsoft C#
- Systems Engineering
- Atlassian JIRA
- Debugging

Demand has also risen for baseline skills like these:

- Planning, writing, research, and verbal communication

INDUSTRY ENTRY POINTS

PROGRAMMING AND SOFTWARE
  ● Web developer

IT SUPPORT AND SERVICES
  ● Network support specialist
  ● Computer user support specialist

CYBERSECURITY
  ● Cybersecurity analyst
  ● Computer forensics analyst
  ● Secure software developer
LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIELD

• Rapid growth of the sector has resulted in a boom in investment in IT training

• Training providers and employers are trying to make sense of the marketplace, and jobseekers are left to navigate a field that is expansive and disconnected

• There are increased barriers to entry for workers without postsecondary degrees and for justice-involved individuals

• Diversity, equity, and inclusion must be priorities of efforts to expand access to IT careers for all jobseekers
CHALLENGES FACING THE IT FIELD TODAY

• Training often focuses on specific occupations, and there is a lack of clarity about what is needed to move beyond entry-level employment and into a range of career pathways.

• IT employers are less engaged in the design and facilitation of training than employers in other industries.

• There is a need for greater provision of wraparound services and supports for jobseekers.

• There are barriers to entry for jobseekers without previous work experience or a postsecondary degree.
DIVERSIFYING IT PATHWAYS: A CONVERSATION WITH PRACTITIONERS
Jeffrey focuses on aligning career and technical education programs with the needs of industry, while offering job training for minorities, women, veterans, and dislocated workers. He also oversees a number of business units dedicated to providing companies with training resources for growing their business. In August 2017, Jeffrey co-founded the Strong Workforce Apprenticeship Group (SWAG).
The College of the Canyons Google IT Support Professional Certificate program is structured as a pre-apprenticeship. Activities include a lunch-and-learn session with IT industry experts. Students receive career and job placement support services.

- 88 students enrolled in the program, and 53 were able to complete all five modules.
- Recruitment efforts targeted veterans, minorities, and dislocated workers.
- More than 60 percent of the participants from the first cohort identify as minorities, veterans, or both.
CLAIRE CUNO

*Senior Director, Student Experience, Per Scholas*

With a passion for helping young people reach their goals, Claire has more than nine years of experience working with young adults. Before joining Per Scholas, she was the youth advisor at Project Semicolon, a nonprofit organization that was created to let people know that suicide is preventable.

AMANDA GARCHITORENA

*Senior Manager, Student Experience, Per Scholas*

Amanda serves as coordinator of the Per Scholas TechBridge program. In that role, she has led wellness workshops, worked closely with students managing challenging situations, and encouraged her students to excel in their dreams of working in the IT field.
What We Do

Per Scholas is a national organization that has been advancing economic mobility for 25 years.

Through rigorous training, professional development, and robust employer connections, we prepare individuals traditionally underrepresented in technology for high-growth careers in the industry.

We partner with leading employers to build more diverse talent pools, directly connecting our graduates to new career opportunities with leading employers, from Fortune 500 companies to innovative startups.

With campuses in 14 cities, Per Scholas has trained more than 12,000 individuals in tech skills, building bridges to careers in technology.
Per Scholas brings more than 25 years of experience recruiting and training individuals from overlooked communities.

Students receive wraparound support services during training and throughout advanced training and education for two years.
TechBridge Model

Recruitment and Assessment → TechBridge kickoff and intros → Contextualized math and literacy skills with The Door instructors & Five weeks of technical and professional development with Per Scholas staff → Learners matriculate into 15 weeks of Network Support course at Per Scholas → Career Advancement Opportunities

Students receive five weeks of technical and professional development training as they embark on TechBridge and then matriculate into 15 weeks of Network Support.
CLAIRE CUNO
Senior Director, Student Experience, Per Scholas

AMANDA GARCHITORENA
Senior Manager, Student Experience, Per Scholas

JEFFREY FORREST
Vice President, Economic and Workforce Development, College of the Canyons

VANESSA BENNETT
Associate Director, JFF

SARA LAMBACK
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING PROVIDERS

- Focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion at the start, and make this a core component of training and employer engagement.

- Emphasize career exploration to help participants understand the full range of opportunities available in IT and what is needed to access them.

- Work with tech companies and other organizations that employ IT professionals and bring them in early to support program design and facilitation.

- Build partnerships with fellow training providers to increase entry points into training.

- Expand pathways for jobseekers by connecting to the apprenticeship system.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

• Understand that nontraditional workers are an asset to your company

• Honestly assess existing diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in partnership with human resources professionals, hiring managers, and senior leaders

• Prioritize equity and access across all occupational levels

• Improve hiring practices by eliminating the use of hiring proxies and utilizing competency-based assessments

• Remove hiring restrictions based on criminal history
THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

DEBUGGED: DIVERSIFYING IT THROUGH EFFECTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Today’s recording and resources will be sent to your email later this week.