M&T Bank Newsroom

M&T Bank Hires First Z Development Program Tech Apprentices

Apprenticeship designed to create a more diverse, inclusive workforce in IT and engineering

BUFFALO, N.Y., April 15, 2021—M&T Bank has announced the hiring of its first cohort of tech apprentices for the Z Development Program (ZDP), a mainframe apprenticeship initiative that creates a pathway to technology careers for people with little to no tech experience. The 10 tech apprentices join the bank as entry-level technologists who will support mission-critical, core banking functions that run on the IBM Z platform.

Launched late last year, the ZDP is a collaborative effort that brings together M&T Bank, IBM, Franklin Apprenticeships and the Urban Institute to connect community members with in-demand technology careers. It complements another initiative designed to expand community access, the WNY Tech Skills Initiative, which M&T's Tech Academy is guiding alongside a regional coalition.

"Two of the biggest challenges facing the tech industry right now are the demand for more technologists and the need for a more diverse, inclusive workforce," said Sonny Sonnenstein, M&T Bank Chief Information Officer for Retail, Business and Digital Banking. "Through our ZDP apprenticeship and our intentionally inclusive recruitment practices, we want to help create a tech ecosystem where everyone feels they belong – an ecosystem that does more to encourage women, people of color and veterans to pursue careers in technology. This program and the hiring of our first cohort are important next steps."

The ZDP apprentices all reside in Western New York, but they bring different backgrounds and levels of experience to their new positions.

M&T became the first employer in the nation to collaborate with IBM and its partners to create a local activation of their national program. After its launch, M&T directed Franklin Apprenticeships to focus on recruiting candidates from the Black and Latinx communities as well as among women and veterans. All qualified applicants then had the opportunity to participate in a pre-apprenticeship program that provided an introduction to computer science and IBM Z operations. About 70 people enrolled in the pre-apprenticeship, and the 10 ZDP apprentices were selected from a pool of about 20 candidates who completed this first phase of the program.

The cohort will now begin a two-year ZDP apprenticeship that includes two more phases:

- **Formal Apprenticeship:** A 12-month DOL-registered apprenticeship program, over 1,000 hours of on-the-job training and over 300 hours of virtual classroom instruction.
- **Continuous Learning and Professional Development:** Additional on-the-job training and courses provided through M&T's Center for Learning and Development and the Tech Academy.

Apprentices will be placed into two roles:

- **Mainframe Application Developer**: After being trained to design and build programs that use the power of the mainframe to deliver for customers, these technologists will develop applications and solutions for core banking functions like depositing money, making loans and moving money through credit and debit card transactions.
- **Mainframe Systems Administrator**: Following training into mainframe hardware and platforms, these technologists will ensure a stable, secure base for applications to be built and hosted, performing critical maintenance functions and implementing solutions to make the mainframe available 24x7.

"IBM Z has the processing power our core systems need to make banking transactions in real time. From debit card swipes and direct deposit to Zelle payments and loan payments, these transactions require a reliable technology and a team of professionals who can maintain it and maximize its capabilities to deliver for customers," said Derek Powe, Z Platform Manager for M&T Bank. "I'm excited to help our new apprentices learn what they need to know to succeed as Z technologists."

Upon program completion, apprentices will receive a DOL credential and be offered full-time employment with the bank. Apprentices will earn a salary throughout the program, and tuition and training costs are covered by federal grants secured by IBM. M&T expects to recruit and hire more ZDP apprentices in the future.

About M&T Bank

M&T Bank Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Buffalo, New York. M&T's principal banking subsidiary, M&T Bank, operates banking offices in New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Connecticut, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. Trust-related services are provided by M&T's Wilmington Trust-affiliated companies and by M&T Bank.

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