

M&T Bank Launches Local Tech Apprenticeship Program to Expand Computer Science and Engineering Skills in Underrepresented Communities

A collaboration with IBM, Franklin Apprenticeships and the Urban Institute, 'Z Development Program' brings national program to Buffalo to build diverse workforce in enterprise computing

BUFFALO, N.Y., Nov. 16, 2020—M&T Bank today announced the launch of its Z Development Program (ZDP) Mainframe Apprenticeship, an initiative that will create technical positions for candidates who come from non-traditional backgrounds and underserved communities. Named for the IBM Z enterprise platform, the ZDP initiative will develop entry-level technologists who will support mission critical, core banking platforms that run on IBM Z and connect community members with in-demand skills to start careers in technology.

“The ZDP initiative will eliminate barriers to accessing the skills necessary for rewarding careers in technology,” said Mike Wisler, Chief Information Officer at M&T Bank. “In launching this local apprenticeship program, we will help solve a challenge facing our industry by expanding opportunities for people within our Buffalo community. Working alongside other components of our Tech Academy program, it will contribute to our region’s collective efforts to build a diverse technology workforce that drives innovation and inclusive growth.”

Launched in collaboration with IBM, Franklin Apprenticeships and the Urban Institute, M&T’s ZDP initiative is a part of a first-of-its-kind IT infrastructure apprenticeship program for employers across the country. Created by IBM, this “New Collar” workforce program aims to recruit and develop a cohort of IBM Z talent in communities across the United States, with no previous technology experience required.

“In the era of hybrid cloud, investment in IBM Z skills in key areas like resiliency, security, flexibility and application modernization are a critical piece of digital transformation,” said Meredith Stowell, VP, IBM Z Ecosystem. “The program creates a scalable model that simplifies apprenticeship adoption for large and small employers across the country ready to hire and provides more accessible opportunities for Americans of all backgrounds to build the IT skills businesses need.”

Recognizing the program’s potential to make a difference in Buffalo and advance its ongoing work to expand inclusion and diversity within the region’s tech sector, M&T became the first employer in the nation to collaborate with the IBM-led partnership to launch a local activation of the national program.

Franklin Apprenticeships administers the program for IBM and its employer partners like M&T, providing proven experience in talent recruitment within Black and Latinx communities as well as among women and veterans. For M&T’s ZDP initiative, Franklin Apprenticeships will seek candidates – who have no or little prior technology experience or education – from within these underrepresented groups in Buffalo.

M&T plans to hire 10 ZDP apprentices for its 2021 program. Before candidates are hired, applicants will complete a pre-apprenticeship program that provides an introduction to computer science and IBM Z operations, a skillset that will benefit even those who are not hired for an apprenticeship. All qualified applicants will be invited to participate in the pre-apprenticeship program, and those who complete the pre-apprenticeship will become eligible to be hired as one of 10 ZDP apprentices.

The two-year ZDP curriculum and apprenticeship will include:

- **Foundational Pre-Apprenticeship Training**: Three months of pre-apprenticeship training will occur before candidates are hired to provide a foundation in technology and digital skills and introductions to mainframe development and other specialized tech fields.
- **Formal Apprenticeship**: A formal 12-month DOL-registered apprenticeship program will provide over 1,000 hours of on-the-job training and over 300 hours of virtual classroom instruction.
- **Continuous Learning and Professional Development**: For the final 12 months of the program, ZDP participants will take courses through M&T’s Center for Learning and Development and the Tech Academy and receive more on-the-job training.

Upon completion of the program, 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.

“In a historically blue-collar city like Buffalo, creating accessible pathways to new-collar jobs can drive greater inclusion and diversity in Western New York’s technology ecosystem,” said Glenn Jackson, M&T Bank Chief Diversity Officer. “Many of these jobs don’t require formal education or traditional career experience. Instead,

candidates can learn the skills they need through on-the-job training, technical training or apprenticeship programs. Our ZDP initiative, for example, will equip apprentices with enterprise computing skills that are incredibly important to the bank yet remarkably scarce nationwide. It will help open doors to tech careers for people who may have previously been left out.”

The ZDP initiative is a component of the non-traditional talent pipeline overseen by M&T’s Tech Academy. Slated to launch in full during the first half of 2021, the Tech Academy will advance a continuous learning model that upskills and reskills aspiring and long-tenured technologists through digital classes, bootcamps, workshops and more. It will offer training programs to Tech Hub tenants, regional businesses and community members. The ZDP will be among the Tech Academy’s programs intended to help people without formal tech education or experience enter into technology careers.

Recruiting for pre-apprenticeship training is now underway. Applicants interested in becoming a ZDP apprentice can learn more and apply at: franklinapprenticeships.com/ibm-apprenticeship-program/

About M&T

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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