



Changing Lives.

Transforming Workforce.



ACDS

ARKANSAS CENTER FOR DATA SCIENCES

**2023
Annual
Report**

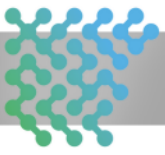
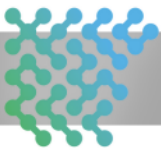


Table of Contents

Message from the Chairman	1
About ACDS	2
Executive Director's Report	3
Apprenticeship Director's Report	4
Programs	6
Success Stories	7
Economic Impact	8
Customized Training Solutions	9
New Sector Expansion	10
Employer Partners	11
Marketing & Outreach	13
Events	14
Funding	15
The Future	16
Leadership & Team	17



EVERY STARTUP GOES through a similar narrative, from concept, to proof of concept, to stabilization, to taking it to the next level—scaling up to reach the masses. That last step is the hardest, if it's taken at all.

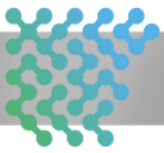
The Arkansas Center for Data Sciences (ACDS) launched in late 2018 with Executive Director Bill Yoder as its lone staff member, and Apprenticeship Director Lonnie Emard providing guidance as a consultant. By December 2019, ACDS—now with a handful of employees—began training its first 8-person cohort of Registered Apprentices in various IT occupations.

By the end of 2023, we had processed 861 apprentices in jobs as varied as Data Analyst, Cybersecurity Specialist, Software Developer, and IT Project Manager. At the same time, we had proven to some 140 Arkansas employers that Registered Apprenticeships were an invaluable supplemental hiring strategy for their business.

Also in 2023, ACDS took the first steps to expand our services into non-IT-specific territory, partnering with the Arkansas Advanced Energy Association to create apprenticeships and internships in Energy and the Environment; we're also now operating in the manufacturing sector. This new partnership is called the Arkansas Apprenticeship Alliance, and it is the platform from which ACDS is poised to scale to multiple sectors throughout our state, taking the message and effectiveness of Registered Apprenticeships to fields that have not previously been associated with such a strategy. Not only that, but before 2024 is over, ACDS will go national, facilitating apprenticeships for some of the biggest companies in the country.

As one who knows firsthand the many challenges of the startup process, I'm proud to be associated with such a hardworking, innovative team. ACDS is changing people's futures, one Registered Apprenticeship at a time.

--Charles Morgan, Chairman
Arkansas Center for Data Sciences



The Arkansas Center for Data Sciences (ACDS) is a non-profit dedicated to building and retaining top information technology talent in the state of Arkansas. We help companies large and small across all industries attract, train, and retain top technology talent - through registered apprenticeship programs, work-based-learning internships, and pre-apprenticeship training.

Vision

Arkansas is a recognized leader in the application of data science and cutting edge IT, equipping talent pipelines with relevant workforce skills.

Mission

Implement innovative programs and strengthen educational pathways to bridge the Information Technology skills gap between employers and talent in Arkansas.

Cornerstone Values



People First



Trusted Steward



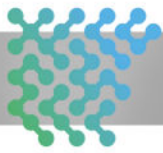
Integrity



Diversity and Inclusion



Innovation



AS WE ENTER 2024, ACDS is on target to hit the 1,000-milestone in the number of apprenticeships we've processed. Formed in late 2018 as a non-profit, we began training our first IT apprenticeship cohort in December 2019.

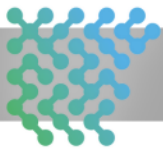
Four years later—last month—we had notched 861 apprentices. If we remain on the schedule that we're seeing now, we'll reach and surpass the millennium number in February.

For a long time, it seemed all about the numbers. From day one, our mandate was to close the gap between the vast number of IT jobs that Arkansas employers needed to fill and the insufficient number of IT grads all sources were turning out, so numbers were our way of keeping score—of showing that we were doing the job we'd been handed.

The longer we do this, however, the more we're able to appreciate the human effects reflected in those numbers. As our process has evolved from "recruiting" talent to "developing" talent, we've come to really know the people whose lives—and those of their families—have been changed through our efforts. As we work with them to achieve their career goals, we frequently find ourselves a party to their most cherished dreams.

This was confirmed at a special Tech 'N' Talk in Northwest Arkansas last November. There we had an opportunity to thank, recognize, and congratulate about a dozen employers who've been adding Work-Based-Learning Internships and Registered Apprenticeships to their workforce staffing strategy. Then we heard testimonials from the people who serve as those interns and apprentices. They thanked their employers for giving them an opportunity that most didn't think they would ever qualify for, and they thanked ACDS and the specific talent representatives who'd worked with them. Clint Hankinson, our marketing director, was at that event and had the foresight to record some of those testimonials; they're being made available on our website.

We at ACDS have always looked forward to getting up every day and working hard to improve the lot of our Arkansas employers and workforce. But now we fully recognize that ours isn't just a job of posting numbers; we're in the very rewarding business of changing lives.



ACDS ACTS AS the intermediary for all IT employers in the state of Arkansas having done outreach to over 500 companies, ranging from small to large and created some initial awareness of IT Registered Apprenticeships. At the close of 2023, over 300 companies are seriously considering RAP programs and 145 companies have now implemented apprenticeship as a strategy. In 2023, ACDS expanded into new industry sectors, including manufacturing, energy and environment, and healthcare. To achieve this success, ACDS has eliminated every barrier to entry that an employer would face when implementing a Registered Apprenticeship Program.

ELIMINATING EVERY BARRIER TO ENTRY FOR EMPLOYERS



Diversity

Talent Management to help IT employers find diverse non-traditional candidates.

ACDS has created a pathway through its Talent Management process that allows non-traditional workforce candidates to enter the IT industry. These candidates include, but are not limited to, racial minorities, women, rural populations, rehab service providers, dislocated workers, reentry programs, and youth.



*Latin***XNA**



Sponsorship

Statewide sponsor for all employers using RAP and managing standards and RAPIDS

Many companies look at the responsibilities required by the DOL, including registering, tracking, and reporting a number of employee data points, as well as submitting to periodic audits and reviews for EEO and Affirmative Action Plans, and decide that it is too much additional effort that offsets the value of the program. ACDS takes on these responsibilities for the employer.



Apprentices

1,118
Total to date
621
Currently active



Employers

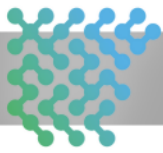
158
Total to date
204
Pipeline



Total Programs Registered
35



Sectors Represented
6



Project Mgmt

Project managing employer process for RAP including project planning and paperwork

ACDS in our complete end-to-end process has project managers to shepherd every employer through the implementation process. We offer this service at no cost to the employer. It is connected to our role as the sponsor and makes for a very scalable and efficient method of delivery and eliminates yet another barrier to entry for an employer no matter what the size of the company.



Registration



Tracking



Mentoring



Reporting



RTI Funding

Managing an inventory of training providers per occupation and covering the RTI cost

ACDS curates training from any number of reputable training providers to match the needs of the occupation and employer. Currently, ACDS has 45 unique training provider partners, 5 of which are from higher education, while several are already offering dual credit for apprentice RTI and degree credit. ACDS uses multiple funding streams from federal, state, and private sources.

Offsetting Training Costs - Three Strands

1. Federal Funding
2. State Funding
3. Private Funding

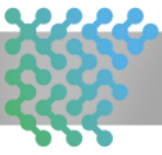


Reporting/Metrics

Managing all reporting and data analysis for continuous improvement for employer partners

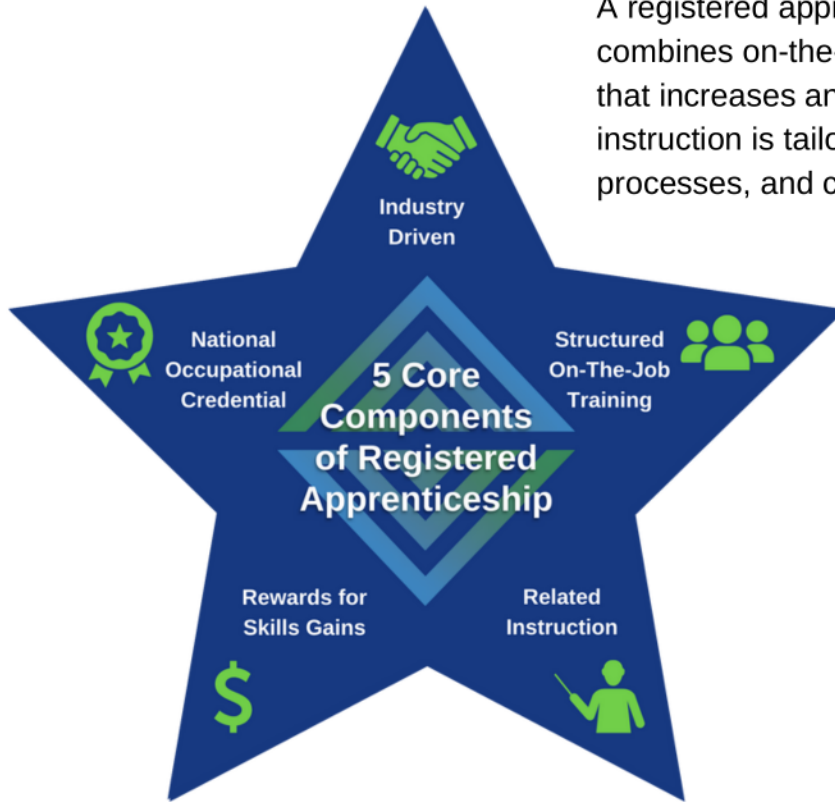
ACDS utilizes a system called ApprentiScope to track grant outcomes and goals, as well as maintain the record of truth for all participants and apprentices. The overall ACDS process and supporting technologies have proven to be successful at tracking the financial and programmatic data for all occupation, apprentice and employer data in addition to various other grant requirements.





Registered Apprenticeship Program

A registered apprenticeship is an employer-driven model that combines on-the-job learning with related classroom instruction that increases an apprentice's skill level and wages. Classroom instruction is tailored to a company's specific technologies, processes, and culture.



The 5 Core Components of Registered Apprenticeship

1. Industry Driven
2. Structured On-the-Job Training
3. Related Instruction
4. Rewards for Skills Gains
5. National Occupational Credential

Work-Based-Learning Internship Program

ACDS's Work-Based-Learning (WBL) Internship Program provides candidates with authentic work experiences where they apply professional development and technical skills that support success in IT professional careers. Internships provide both a valuable experience to candidates just beginning their IT careers and low-cost work to employers needing additional IT talent on their team.

ReSkill Arkansas - Pre-Apprenticeship Training

ReSkill Arkansas is a statewide program dedicated to assisting participants in acquiring valuable skills through free online training programs. In addition to technical expertise, our comprehensive program emphasizes the development of essential career development skills, including resume building, interview practice, and networking strategies to support participants' job searches. With our convenient online training platforms, participants can enhance their skills and gain the knowledge needed to excel in today's competitive job market.



“The support I've received from ACDS, through mock interviews, resume reviews, and assistance with job interview arrangements, has been invaluable in successfully navigating a major career shift. Their apprenticeship program not only led me to a great job but also helped me obtain new certifications, propelling me even further along my new path. I'm truly grateful for the opportunities they've afforded me.” Shelby Borel

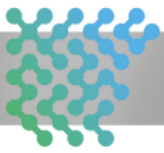
“My experience with ACDS was absolutely phenomenal. From the first Tech 'N' Talk event I came to, I have connected and networked with a lot of amazing people that work in Cybersecurity, Data Analysis, etc. I appreciate the communication ACDS has with me. I am extremely thankful for ACDS and trust that others will be in good hands with them.” Malcolm Miles



“I would absolutely recommend ACDS for people looking to change fields like myself. The one on one sessions I had were fantastic in getting me ready for an industry specific interview, and the training does prepare you with job specific skills, including soft skills. The continued training with the apprenticeship program really helps accelerate the skills growth while on the job.” Matthew Adams

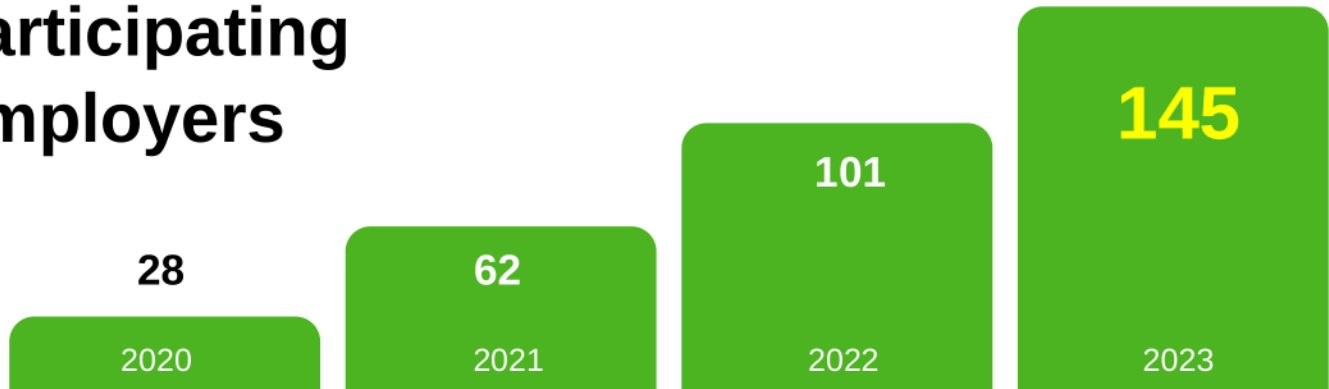
“I was looking for a job and applying everywhere. I came across an opportunity through ACDS. I did not have experience, but I did have knowledge. With ACDS's help, I was getting experience and getting paid for it. If you want to get into IT, this is the best place because you'll get an idea of what it's like to work in a company. And if you like it, you'll get learning and support. It's everything.” Manisha Gupta





Economic Impact

Participating Employers



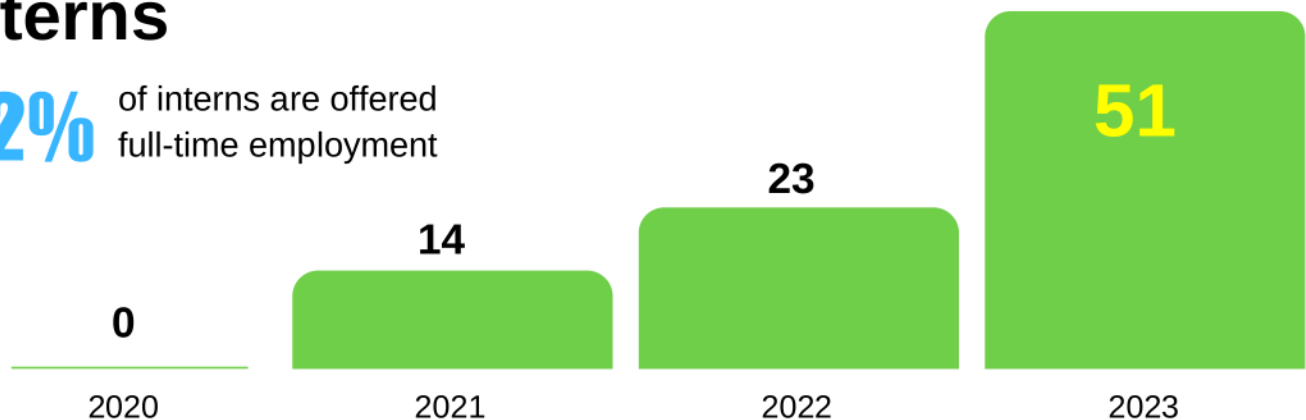
Candidate Applications

2020 - 2023



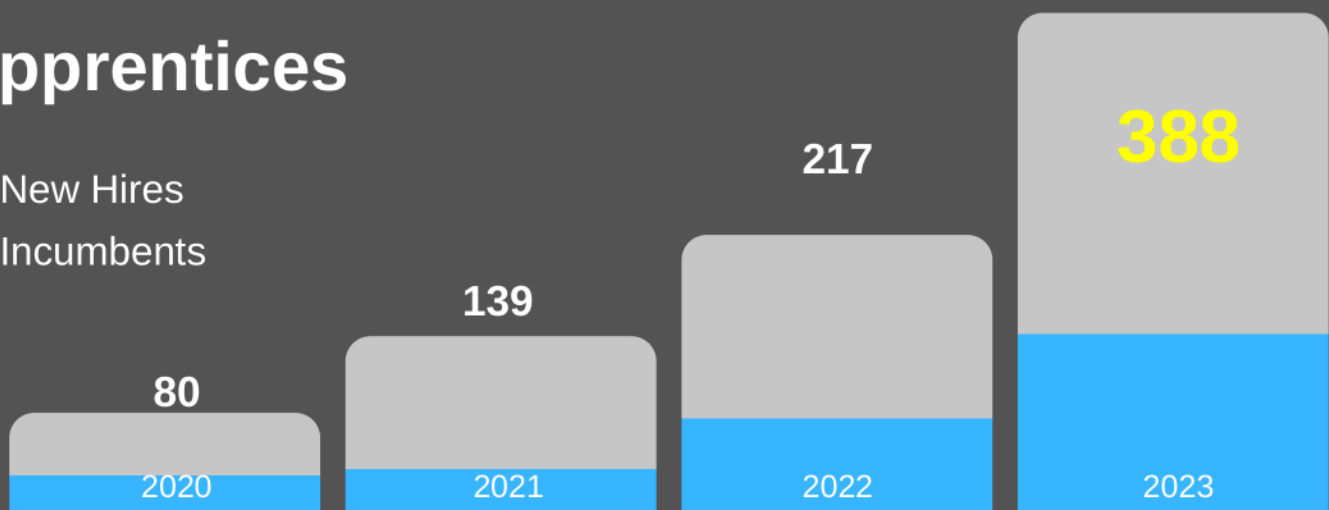
Interns

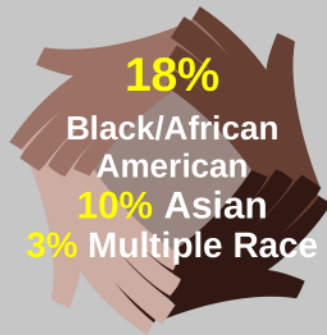
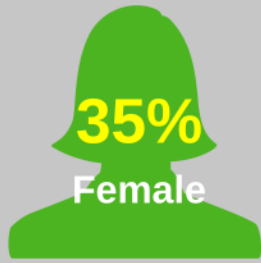
82% of interns are offered full-time employment



Apprentices

● New Hires
● Incumbents

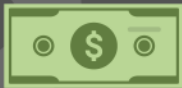




Economic Impact of New Wages

\$67,620,000

\$3,075,000



2020

\$13,905,000



2021

\$36,120,000



2022



2023

Customized Training Solutions



ACDS works with the employer and the apprentice to determine the primary factors that shape the training path: 1) the specific tools they've implemented, and 2) the apprentices prior education, experience and training. The pacing of the training must also be determined - either front-loaded with training as the focus, or more spread out in a "learn a little, do a little" approach. Then we recommend the appropriate employer-focused curriculum.

ACDS works with dozens of training providers to provision curriculum that meets those requirements and results in a program that fits the employer's needs and the apprentice's learning style. Whether the best solution includes a single, lengthy course (i.e. a certification), an "a la carte" approach from a broad catalog of courses, or training directly from a vendor, we can blend all of these approaches to develop the most effective training plan.

A major factor in the apprentice's success is the role of the mentor, an experienced company employee that helps the apprentice optimize the training and work experience provided. A mentor guides the apprentice through the recommended learning path, providing encouragement, clarification, and employer-specific context.



Determine the Primary Factors Impacting the Training Path



Implement the Preferred Pacing to Develop the Curriculum



Develop the Most Effective Training Plan Based on the "Ingredients" Given.



Include a Mentor Guide the Apprentice in Successfully Completing the Apprenticeship



New Sector Expansion

Recognizing the success of the ACDS end-to-end model for Registered Apprenticeship Programs in IT, Governor Sanders and her team asked if the model could be applied to other sectors including **manufacturing, energy, transportation, healthcare, and supply chain**. Acknowledging that it could be effectively applied to other industries, ACDS leadership developed a strategy, with additional funding, to enter these sectors. With the Office of Skills Development, we created the Arkansas Apprenticeship Alliance and added two new employer engagement directors - David Mason to lead our advanced manufacturing outreach and April Ambrose to lead our expansion into energy and environment.



We are grateful to our ACDS partners! With their support we will help grow careers, change lives and create future "Champions for Children!" Crystal Kohanke, Arkansas Children's

ACDS has been instrumental in our ability to quickly develop and implement the first and currently only machinist apprenticeship program in the state of Arkansas. In an era when support for the machinist trade is often localized to the larger population areas, David Mason with the backing of Lonnie Emard and the rest of the ACDS staff have provided the critical support we needed to get this program started in our area." Jason Duke, Highland Machine Works



"Powers knew we wanted to invest in the right training for our most valuable resources but finding the perfect program to train our existing staff and new hires was easier said than done. April Ambrose and the whole team from Arkansas Apprenticeship Alliance helped navigate all the nuances of developing an apprenticeship and finding the right resources so we could create a program that meets our needs and provides skills and advancement opportunities for our employees." Beth Williams, Powers of Arkansas



With a detailed understanding of our client employers' particular tech talent demands, ACDS has, over the past four years, helped more than 150 Arkansas employers—small, medium, and large—transition to an additional staffing strategy, a supplemental way of finding talent to fill the key positions that they've been struggling to fill.

ACDS removes the barriers preventing employers from implementing registered apprenticeship programs by providing these services to employers:

 Talent Recruitment

 Customized Training

 Project Management / USDOL Sponsorship



Employer Partners



"ACDS has a wonderful team. I feel like they are an extension of my team. They have brought candidate after candidate that is highly qualified and have come in and produced from day one. I hope every company in Northwest Arkansas works with ACDS because it only improves the entire ecosystem." Cory Scott, DataScout

"The investment in the apprenticeship is the gift that keeps on giving for LATROBE LLC. Since completing the data analytics curriculum through the Arkansas Center for Data Science, our five apprentices have applied the knowledge and skills in our daily operation. The result has had a positive impact on the company's bottom line profitability, and most importantly, their individual annual earning potential." Latanyua Robinson, LATROBE LLC

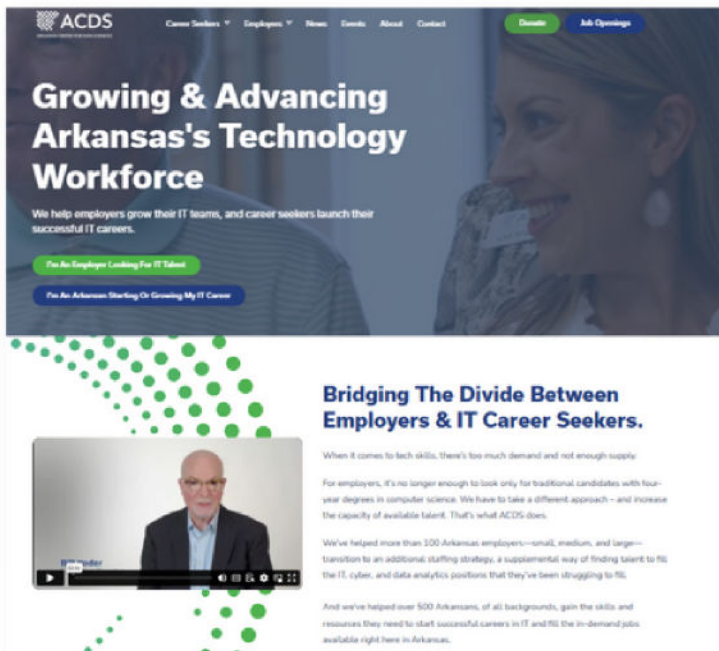
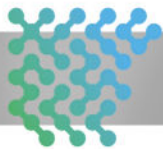


"The apprenticeship program is beneficial in filling those IT roles whether recruiting externally or looking at the internal mobility of existing employees. There is true value in forging a partnership with ACDS to supplement your IT talent strategy, not to mention they do all the heavy lifting for you." Joe Ehrhardt, Tesla Software

"Our strategic work with the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences over the last several years has enabled our engineering & technology organization to deliver greater value for our customers. The training, opportunities and resources ACDS provides have helped J.B. Hunt attract and develop industry-leading talent, which is essential to achieving our vision of creating the most efficient transportation network in North America." Barrett Robinson, J.B. Hunt



"We're thrilled to endorse ACDS for their exceptional support in connecting employers with top talent and facilitating continuous education opportunities. Their commitment to handling administrative tasks for apprentices, alongside tailored training and curriculum suggestions, ensures our employees can focus on skill development without distraction. Partnering with ACDS, we're confident in retaining and upskilling our workforce, fostering a culture of growth and innovation." Mary Ellen Shriver, AFCU



In 2023, ACDS elevated its marketing strategy by launching a redesigned website and creating videos to tell the story of changed lives and transformed companies.

Marketing's objective is to position ACDS as the recognized solution in the state of Arkansas for bridging the talent gap between employers and IT career seekers. Priorities achieved in 2023:

- New website
- New video catalog
- Donor campaign
- 2022 Annual Report
- Social media engagement
- NWA Tech 'N' Talk

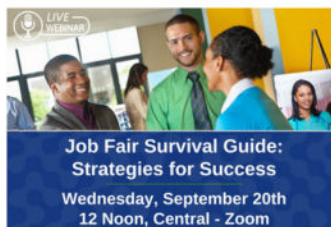
ACDS reached **over 12,000 Arkansans through online and community events** hosted and/or attended by the ACDS team. ACDS.co experienced an audience increase of **over 10%**, with a **nearly 20% increase** in organic search traffic.



Tech 'N' Talk - Little Rock and Northwest Arkansas



Office Hours for Career Seekers



Talent Webinars



Employer Accelerators



National Apprenticeship Week



NWA Tech Summit



5,800+ Followers



8,800+ Subscribers



**Job Fair Survival Guide:
Strategies for Success**
Wednesday, September 20th
12 Noon, Central - Zoom



OFFICE HOURS
for Career Seekers
Tuesday, August 1st
12 Noon - Central
Online - Zoom



NORTHWEST ARKANSAS TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT
THE YEAR OF THE MACHINES
OCT. 29 - NOV. 1 | WWW.NWATECHSUMMIT.COM
ROGERS CONVENTION CENTER & DOWNTOWN BENTONVILLE




ACDS

Employer Forums

Talent Webinars

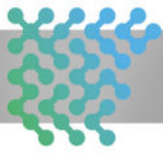
Office Hours for Career Seekers

Tech 'N' Talk

Employer & Apprentice Recognition

National Apprenticeship Week

Industry Events



ACDS Financials January - December 2023

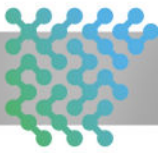
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Total
Income					
Federal Grants	\$ 140,624	\$ 369,226	\$ 216,646	\$ 222,485	\$ 948,981
State MOU	\$ 320,182	\$ 342,581	\$ 325,595	\$ 326,923	\$1,315,281
Private	\$ 5,541	\$ 49,806	\$ 14,528	\$ 489,064	\$ 558,939
Event Sponsor	\$ 500	\$ 0	\$ 500	\$ 300	\$ 1,300
Interest	\$ 520	\$ 484	\$ 382	\$ 485	\$ 1,870
Total Income	\$ 467,367	\$ 762,097	\$ 557,650	\$1,039,257	\$2,826,371
Expense					
Professional Fees	\$ 2,004	\$ 2,063	\$ 2,182	\$ 16,538	\$ 22,787
Insurance	\$ 894	\$ 904	\$ 1,679	\$ 2,865	\$ 6,342
Rent/Storage/Phone	\$ 5,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 10,000
Salaries	\$ 299,309	\$ 354,582	\$ 276,111	\$ 397,147	\$1,327,148
Benefits	\$ 17,382	\$ 25,238	\$ 18,716	\$ 20,821	\$ 82,157
Intern Wages	\$ 78,332	\$ 52,530	\$ 92,509	\$ 122,943	\$ 346,315
Payroll Taxes	\$ 34,120	\$ 30,403	\$ 23,527	\$ 32,589	\$ 120,639
Contractor Fees	\$ 17,250	\$ 17,250	\$ 17,250	\$ 17,250	\$ 69,000
Pre-app Training	\$ 4,140	\$ 7,015	\$ 3,387	\$ 2,420	\$ 16,962
Apprenticeship RTI	\$ 95,641	\$ 236,192	\$ 82,575	\$ 254,908	\$ 669,315
ACDS Reimburse	\$ 18,074	\$ 10,843	\$ 8,661	\$ 22,412	\$ 59,990
Marketing	\$ 10,506	\$ 6,566	\$ 10,782	\$ 7,225	\$ 35,079
Software/Technology	\$ 14,525	\$ 8,664	\$ 21,939	\$ 1,227	\$ 46,354
Total Expense	\$ 597,676	\$ 753,749	\$ 560,817	\$ 890,844	\$2,812,087



As ACDS grows, the need for funding grows, primarily in communication and awareness, where traditional funding sources limit. In the fourth quarter of 2023, ACDS launched its first initiative to build a foundation of private donations to enable us to awareness and pre-apprenticeship training opportunities to a broader audience across the state.

Campaigns for private giving will increase in 2024, building upon the initial response ACDS experienced at the closing of 2023. For more information, visit <https://acds.co/giving/>.

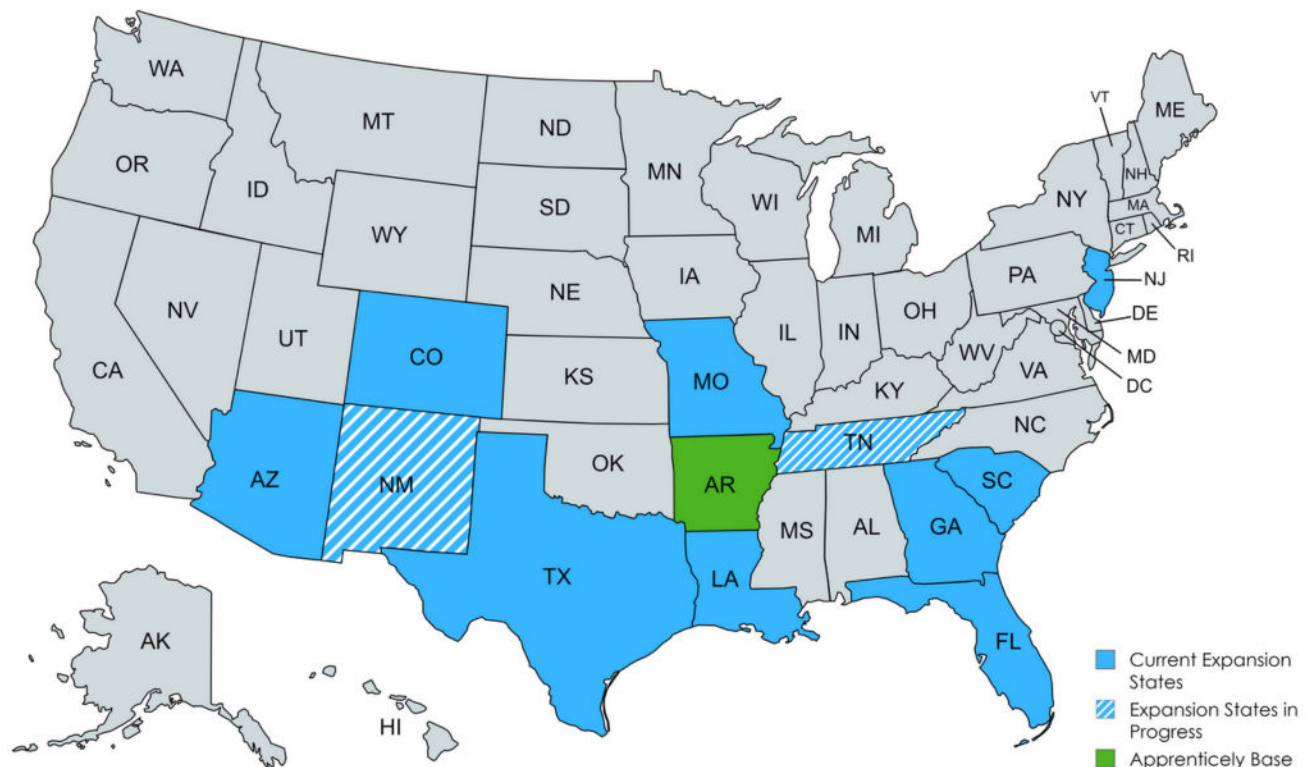





APPRENTICELY

Since working with ACDS as an employer partner, Walmart has discovered the Registered Apprenticeship model to be a very successful staffing strategy that they are expanding beyond the state of Arkansas. This expansion, coupled with ACDS's growth into multiple industry sectors (beyond data science and IT), has fueled the need for a change of brand for ACDS.

In 2024, The Arkansas Center for Data Sciences will become Apprenticely and serve multiple sectors in Arkansas and support registered apprentices for Walmart, starting in the states: Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, Georgia, South Carolina, Texas, Missouri, Florida, and New Jersey - with New Mexico and Tennessee in progress.





ACDS grew to a team of 20 in 2023. Talent recruiting, project management, and client management were added to help ACDS expand into new sectors and scale to achieve its growth projections.



Bill Yoder
Executive Director



Lonnie Emard
Apprenticeship Director



Ashley French
Director of Talent
Management & Recruiting



Don Walker
Director of Training



April Ambrose
Director, Energy &
Environment



David Mason
Director,
Manufacturing



Lisa Wiggins
Director of Client
Relations



Tammy Horton
Client Development
Manager, NWA



Alex Richardson
Client Development
Manager, NEA



Clint Hankinson
Director of Marketing



Logan Hunt
Grants Manager



Dawn Smith
Project Manager



Gwen Pirkle
Project Manager



Nichole Parsons
Sr. Career Coach



Amanda Champlin
Career Coach



Elise Long
Career Coach



Jenny Sales
Sr. Career Coach



Catie Raines
Career Coach



Christa Hindman
Grants Analyst



Jim Morgan
Senior Consulting
Editor

Board of Directors

Charles Morgan, CEO, First Orion
Michael Preston, Managing Director, Stephens, Inc.

Warren Stephens, CEO, Stephens Inc.
Scott Spradley, Former CIO & CTO, Tyson Foods
Thomas Reilley, CHM, Highland Pellets



WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION

Through your support of ACDS, you're changing the state's technology ecosystem, and positively impacting individuals and their communities.

You're making Arkansas better.

We're grateful for our key partners, including the many private donors who are investing in our state's present and future.

Cliff Lonnie Bill Ashley Don
Nichole Elise Lisa Jim Logan
Dawn Amanda Christa Catie
Amy Jenny Gwen Dr. Alex
Tammy



ACDS

ARKANSAS CENTER FOR DATA SCIENCES

acds.co

(501) 500-0811

P.O. Box 7959 | Little Rock, Arkansas | 72217