



**Changing
Lives.**

**Transforming
Workforce.**

**2025
ANNUAL
REPORT**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



BACK IN 2017 AND 2018, when a few of us were just starting to imagine this wonderful organization now known as Apprenticely, we knew that our state’s employers had a great need for talented employees. We also knew that the talent—the raw talent—was out there, and that the best way to develop that talent might well be through Registered Apprenticeship programs. At that time, apprenticeships were still a relatively untapped, under-utilized avenue for employers to find the talent they need. But the more we looked at apprenticeships, the more we sensed their tremendous potential—both for helping Arkansans who are underemployed, or even unemployed, go through a process of developing a skill, and at the same time helping employers leverage those skills and really shape that apprentice into the fulltime employee that they’re looking for.

Now here we are nearly a decade later, and what’s been most surprising to us is just how efficient, and how beneficial, apprenticeships have been—for our employers, for our workforce, and for Arkansas as a whole. Today, the Registered Apprenticeship model cuts across all industry sectors, from manufacturing to data science, transportation to healthcare, finance to logistics, construction to hospitality—you name it and apprenticeships are providing Arkansas employers with the talent they need to succeed in today’s business world.

As such, they’re also having a huge impact on our state’s economy. Earlier in my business life I served as Arkansas Secretary of Commerce. From a state’s perspective, Registered Apprenticeships are a great program to be able to point to and tout when recruiting new industries and companies into our state. In every such conversation, there are going to be questions about workforce. “Do you have the people that I’m going to need if I come to Arkansas to fulfill those jobs?” And for the governor to be able to say, “Yes, emphatically yes, we have the people. Not only do we have the people, we’re going to help partner with you to train those people to make sure you have a world-class workforce that you’re not going to get anywhere else but here in Arkansas.” So it’s a huge benefit to the state as a recruiting tool—and an absolutely positive return on our investment.

In fact, at every level, apprenticeships post a positive ROI. The apprentices themselves *get paid* to learn a skill, lift themselves up, and embark on a stable, well-paying career. The employers working with Apprenticely incur zero staffing firm or headhunter fees, and no downtime in productivity while they search for the perfect candidate. Meanwhile, apprenticeships guarantee a better retention rate, reducing the costs of attrition. In fact, for each dollar employers invest in apprenticeships with Apprenticely, they get back \$1.47. And for Arkansas as a whole, we calculate that the 2025 economic impact of new apprenticeship wages was over \$215 million. *That’s* called making a difference.

-Michael Preston, Chairman of the Board



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

VISION

A vibrant, growing workforce across multiple industries is fueled by the Registered Apprenticeship model where a diverse pipeline of talent is equipped to fill the workforce needs of employers.

MISSION

Implement innovative programs, foster strategic relationships, and strengthen educational pathways to bridge the skills gap between employers and talent.

CORNERSTONE VALUES



People First



Trusted Steward



Integrity



Access



Innovation



IN LATE 2018 WHEN the nonprofit now known as Apprenticely was formed as the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences (ACDS), most people thought that apprenticeships were a quaint remnant of the Industrial Revolution, if not Europe's Middle Ages, relevant now mostly to trades and construction. Eight years later, apprenticeships are fully accepted as an accessible, affordable hiring strategy, and we're talking across the board, from information technology to healthcare, retail to manufacturing, logistics to banking, energy to office processes. And apprenticeships aren't only for new hires. Employers have discovered that the pipeline of apprenticeships can also help them with their succession planning.

Meanwhile, we at ACDS/Apprenticely have placed 2000+ apprentices in new careers with more than 200 Arkansas employers of all sizes and sectors—that's second best on a per-capita basis of any state in the entire nation, an achievement largely enabled by the State of Arkansas' forward-looking leadership in regard to apprenticeships. And now the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), focusing on the President's goal of 1,000,000 active apprentices, is awarding grants supporting apprenticeships across targeted industry sectors. The first grant is the Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund (AMAIF). It will be followed later in the second quarter by grants for shipbuilding and defense industrial base; artificial intelligence; semiconductor, and nuclear energy infrastructure; information technology; healthcare; transportation; and telecommunication. These grants are funded based on a "Paid for Performance" basis—you receive funding when you actually register an apprentice. There's also a federal Rural Transformation grant that Arkansas has received directly for in-state distribution.

What does all this mean? It means that Registered Apprenticeships have shed their once-misunderstood image and are now prestigious. It means that more U.S. workers have an on-ramp to well-paying careers. It means that U.S. employers have a positive-ROI way of staffing their businesses. It means that U.S. educational systems now have a partner in producing qualified job candidates for America's workforce. It means that more money, both government and private, will be made available for apprenticeships.

To the above, we at Apprenticely would add this: Since "intermediaries" like us—the one-stop shops between the employers and the DOL that handle all of the talent acquisition, training, and Registered Apprenticeship paperwork—are the key to this hiring strategy's success and growth, this booming moment in apprenticeships should also mean that hard-earned credibility such as ours ensures continuing sustainability.

"The word *sustainable* has become trendy," then-ACDS Chairman Charles Morgan wrote in an article about apprenticeships in the initial issue of our newsletter, "but I think it's a useful word to consider here. To my mind, the stories our apprentices tell about some of their friends' initial experience in the working world—that is, of being a new employee left totally alone to find his or her way—is ultimately *unsustainable*, for employee and company alike. Skilled people are the key to our success as employers, so it behooves us to do everything we can to help them succeed. Because when they succeed, we succeed."

We couldn't agree more. Looking forward to helping all of you sustain your own success, for years to come.

-Bill Yoder, Executive Director



APPRENTICELY ACTS AS the intermediary for employers in the state of Arkansas and now more than 10 other states, having done outreach to over 1,000 companies, ranging from small business to large national corporations. At the close of 2025, we have now helped more than 200 companies implement apprenticeship programs as a strategy. Those companies now represent seven distinct sectors including manufacturing, energy and environment, healthcare, retail supply chain, transportation, and financial services. To achieve this success, Apprenticely has eliminated every barrier to entry that an employer would face when implementing a Registered Apprenticeship program.

Additionally beginning in 2026, Apprenticely will use a national pay for performance funding model, allowing for employer incentives to start new programs.

ELIMINATING EVERY BARRIER TO ENTRY FOR EMPLOYERS

Access & Equity: Apprenticely has created a pathway through its Talent Management process that allows non-traditional workforce candidates to enter their careers. These candidates include, but are not limited to, racial minorities, women, rural populations, those with disabilities, dislocated workers, reentry candidates, and youth.

Sponsorship: 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 compliance. This can appear to be a substantial amount of administrative effort. Apprenticely takes on these responsibilities for the employer.

Project Management: Apprenticely 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 operates under the premise that most companies do not have an extra resource to be the project manager, so it 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.

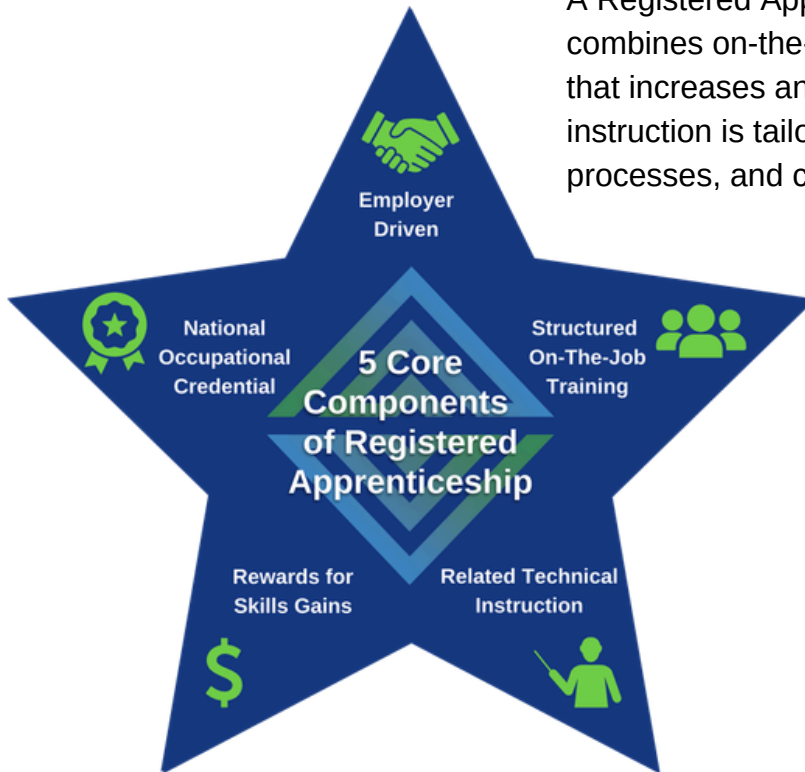
Related Technical Instruction (RTI) Funding: Apprenticely curates training from any number of reputable training providers to match the needs of the occupation and employer. Currently, Apprenticely has 80 unique training provider partners, many of which are from higher education, where several are already offering dual credit for apprentice RTI and degree credit. Apprenticely uses multiple funding streams from federal, state, and private sources to help offset employer training cost.

Reporting/Metrics: Apprenticely 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 Apprenticely 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.

-Lonnie Emard, National Apprenticeship Director

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

WORK-BASED-LEARNING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Apprenticely'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.



“I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Apprenticely for their unwavering support and guidance. This opportunity has not only advanced my professional skills but has also given me the chance to build a better life for myself. The knowledge, mentorship, and confidence I have gained through the program are invaluable, and I am truly thankful for the doors it has opened for my future.”

Debbie Williams, Apprentice, Powell CPA



“I recently completed my apprenticeship at Arkansas Children's and it has been fantastic. What I loved and enjoyed about it was the balance between what I was learning and real-world experience. I worked on meaningful projects while being supported by my managers and my team, and I felt like I really grew. I was motivated by how what I was learning clearly made an impact for our mission.”

Amina Yusuf, Cybersecurity Apprenticeship Graduate, Arkansas Children's



“I've enjoyed my time here at the Walton Arts Center and how Apprenticely has curated our learning needs for us. There hasn't been a misstep and I'm really appreciative of everything they've done for us so far.”

Julio Bonilla, Junior Backend Web Developer, Walton Arts Center



“I will forever be grateful for this apprenticeship opportunity that helped me get into a career with Walmart. It's hard to use any other words besides 'life changing', because that's what it did. Nearly every aspect of my life was impacted by this apprenticeship and my subsequent career with Walmart; I'll be forever grateful to everyone who helped me along the way.”

Vincent Strange, Senior Design Researcher, Walmart



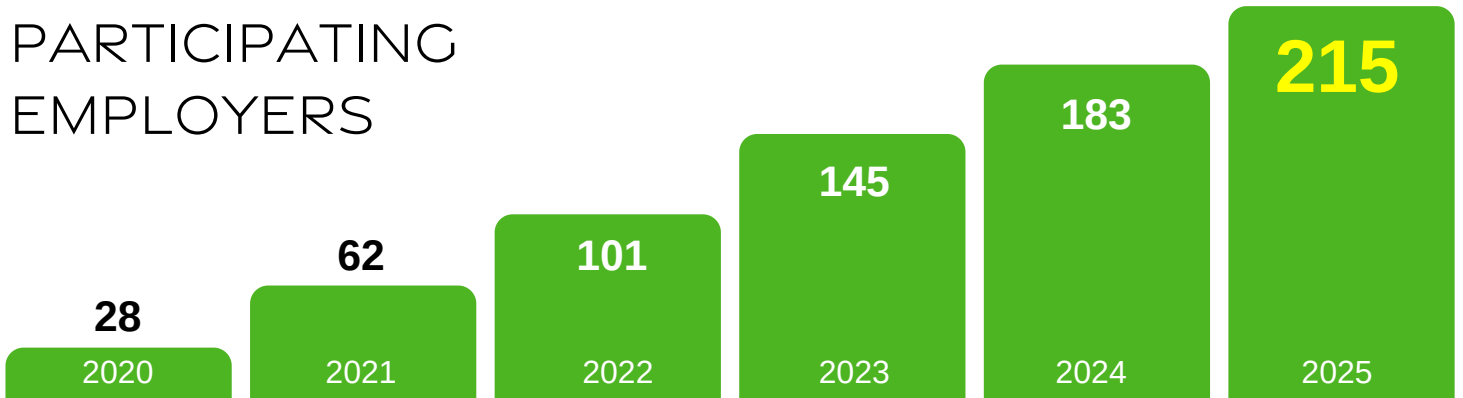
“Apprenticely gave me the opportunity that was starting to feel impossible to accomplish. It not only gave me the tools to build a future and a career, but also helped me believe more in myself and what I can succeed in.”

Shelby Wright, Medical Assistant, Best Start Pediatrics



“My experience with the team at Apprenticely has been wonderful. I have met some wonderful people over the last couple of months. I've got a lot of training with some really good coworkers. It's been a really nice experience. I recommend this apprenticeship to anybody. I've already recommended about three or four people. I think this is a wonderful opportunity.”

Verdiana Mays, Control Room Operator, Highland Pellets

PARTICIPATING
EMPLOYERS

CANDIDATE APPLICATIONS



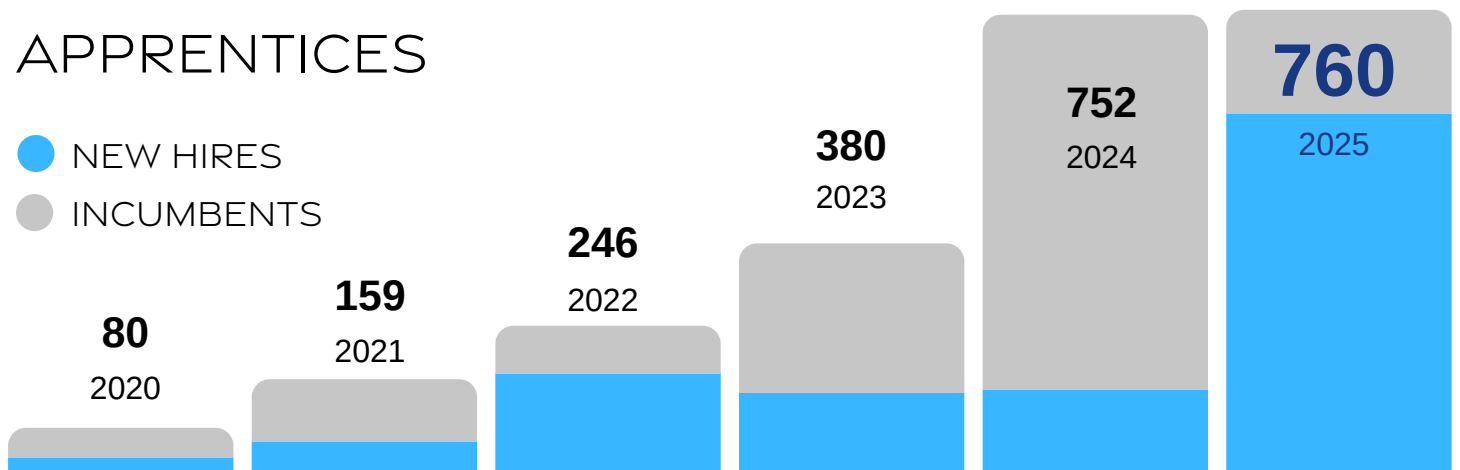
INTERNS

88% of interns are offered
full-time employment



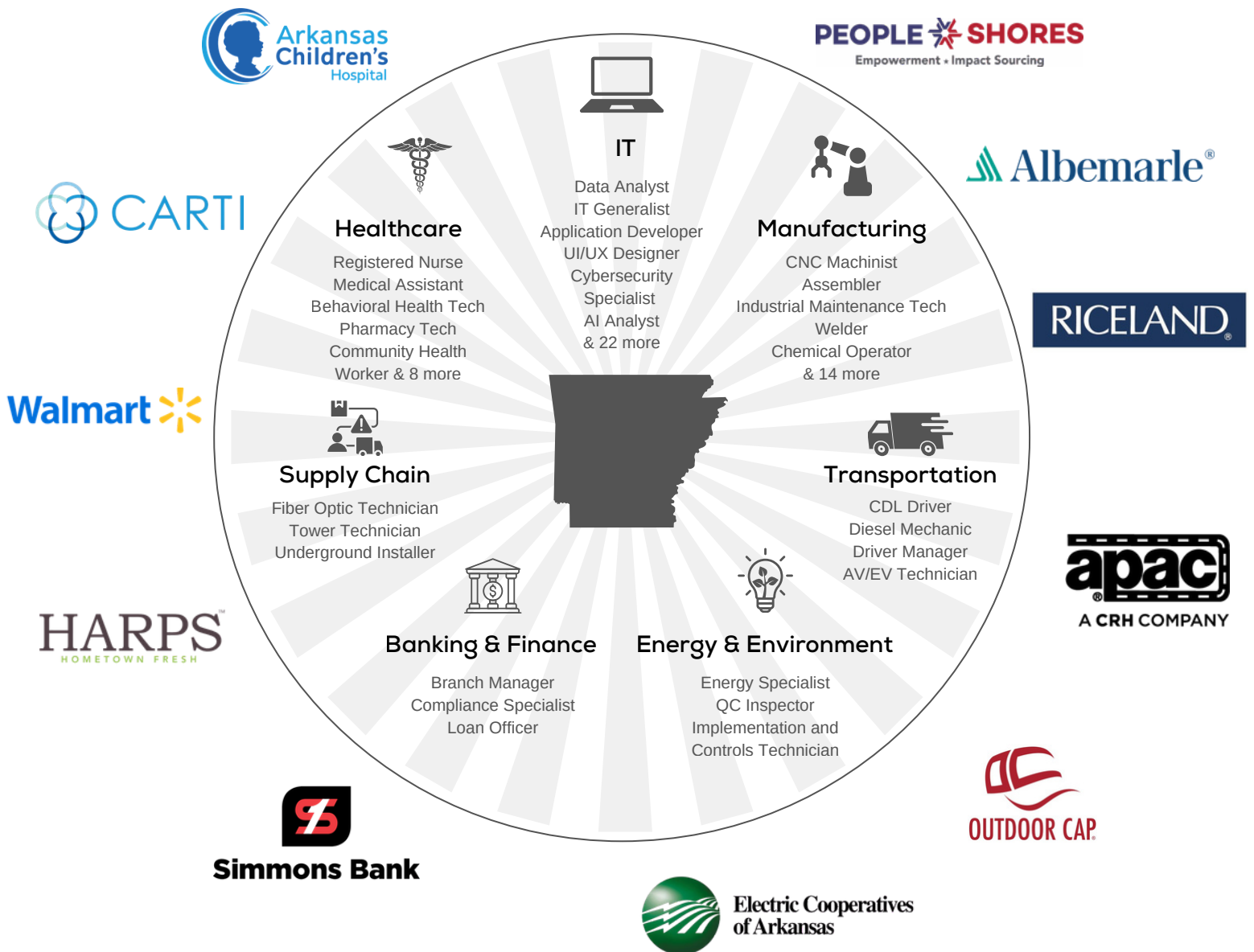
APPRENTICES

- NEW HIRES
- INCUMBENTS





85 OCCUPATIONS ACROSS 7 SECTORS



Once an organization is ready to proceed with building and launching their new Registered Apprenticeship program, the Apprenticely team walks them through the steps below to ensure a successful start.

1

Employer receives one-time documentation (Employer Agreement, Photo Publicity Release and Commitment Letter for the first apprenticeship cohort). These are signed and returned.

2

We work together to align the DOL Occupational Standard to the training plan for the apprentice to ensure the training meets the skills and competencies you require.

3

Funding sources for the training reimbursement are finalized and communicated. If requested, an introduction to the state of Arkansas Office of Skills Development is provided.

4

Once signed paperwork is received, an Apprenticely Project Manager is assigned and sets up a kickoff meeting. The PM will shepherd the employer through the entire implementation.

5

If the apprenticeship is to be filled with a new hire, the Apprenticely Talent Development Team is a potential supplement for the candidate recruiting process.

6

If the apprentice(s) are incumbent employees, the names and email addresses are supplied to the PM for registration into RAPIDS for tracking the progress of the apprentice. This is the same step for new hires, once they have been onboarded.

7

The rigorous process of classroom training, on the job training, and mentoring is monitored by Apprenticely with check-ins, however employer support has a major impact on the success of the apprenticeship.

8

After successful completion of all requirements, the apprentice receives a national credential from the Department of Labor.

9

Either upon completion or sometime during the first year of the apprenticeship, the employer is obligated to provide a "Reward for Skills Gained" which is essentially a wage increase. The amount is completely at the discretion of the employer.

EMPLOYER PARTNERS



“Thank you to the entire team at Apprenticely. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes. They help us from taking the assessments, to setting up profiles, to the monthly check-ins. There’s a lot of work that goes into making these interns and apprentices successful. Thank you for helping us change lives and we can’t wait to grow our partnership on a national level.”

Olandera Dunn, Pine Bluff Center Director, PeopleShores



“I started working with Apprenticely because I wasn't necessarily wanting to bring in employees, but I wanted to provide growth and development for employees that were already working with me that had shown loyalty and had been by me the whole time. I'm just really proud of my team and I thank you, Apprenticely, and hope we can do many more great things.”

Susan Averitt, CEO, Best Start Pediatrics



“It's been a pleasure for us to meet with Tammy and Lonnie and several others to start this journey. So we're just past our first year with Apprenticely. We've been really pleased. We're excited about continuing on this journey and I encourage everyone to at least think about it.”

Faye Keller, Director of Engagement, Quadrivium



“I was tasked to hire 30 interns and apprentices for our Next Gen Academy. They're going through a six-month program where we'll teach them a bunch of different tech stacks. Once they've completed that, they'll be invited to stay on with the company. We have 30 roles allocated for these young professionals. So we're not just talking the talk.”

Josh Craig, Senior Talent Acquisition Partner, Rocket Software



“Apprenticely has been great partners to us in the development of our program. One of the benefits of being a large company like Walmart is that there are a lot of opportunities. And we've had dev techs come through that are now in management positions. We wouldn't have been able to do a lot of these things without Apprenticely's support to guide us through it.”

Sarah Kunkes, Senior Licensing Manager, Walmart

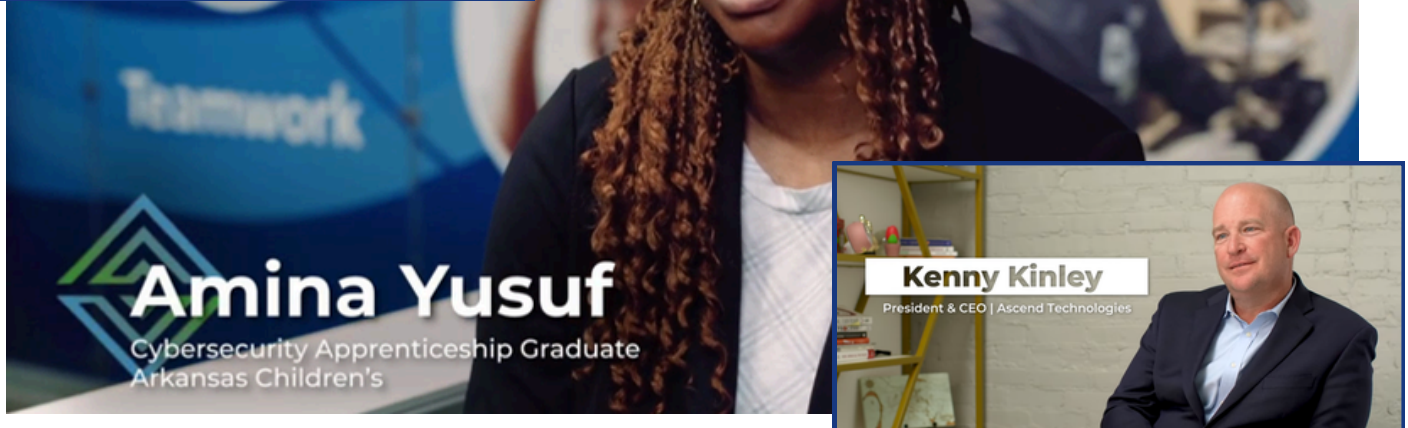


“Apprenticely has assisted me in getting the program and curriculum more structured and putting specifics on what needs to be done. For others in a position that I'm in where you have a critical position to fill and there's just no pipeline to get people in there, the apprenticeship program really is a good way to go.”

Jim Beaty, Director of Engineering, CARTI



Stahle Smith
Training & Development Manager



Amina Yusuf
Cybersecurity Apprenticeship Graduate
Arkansas Children's



Kenny Kinley
President & CEO | Ascend Technologies

As Apprenticely grows and expands its services to other regions and sectors, it's critical that we tell the stories of those employers and talent who have been impacted through Registered Apprenticeship. In 2025, we captured these through video, web, and print and shared them throughout the year. These demonstrations of success are drawing more employers and career seekers to Apprenticely.

Priorities achieved in 2025:

- New educational and testimonial videos
- Sector-specific visibility
- 2024 Annual Report
- Social media engagement
- NWA and Central Arkansas Apprenticeship Recognition Events



**Apprenticeship
Recognition Nights**



**Office Hours for
Career Seekers**



**Talent
Webinars**



Employer Accelerators



National Apprenticeship Day



8,000+
Followers



11,800+
Subscribers



CAREER EXPO

Employer Forums

Talent Webinars

Office Hours for Career Seekers

Employer & Apprentice Recognition

National Apprenticeship Day

Industry Events



Workforce Solutions Employer Luncheon

Thursday, March 6th
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Pine Bluff Public Library



BIZ BUZZ TECH 'N' TALK MASHUP

February 27th, 4-6 PM
2nd FLOOR OF THE LITTLE ROCK TECHNOLOGY PARK

- How to Create an Unforgettable Elevator Pitch!
- 5 Powerful Ways to Use AI... (the right way) to Help You Land Your New Job!
- HOW DO YOU DO WORKFORCE?
- LINKEDIN CRASH COURSE
- ACE THAT INTERVIEW
- APPRENTICESHIP: CRAFTING WINNING RESUME & COVER LETTER



How to Create an Unforgettable Elevator Pitch!

Wednesday, October 29th
12 Noon, Zoom

2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

January - December 2025

Income

Federal Grants	\$ 180,052	\$ 273,419	\$ 314,217	\$ 269,550	\$ 1,037,238
State MOU	\$ 219,515	\$ 271,744	\$ 176,699	\$ 404,899	\$ 1,072,857
Private	\$ 52,514	\$ 787,352	\$ 11,988	\$ 10,000	\$ 861,854
Event Sponsor	\$ 865	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,365
Interest	\$ 170	\$ 307	\$ 1,254	\$ 480	\$ 2,211
ERC Income	\$ 38,880	\$ 119,516	\$ 110,032	\$ -	\$ 268,427
Total Income	\$ 491,995	\$ 1,452,339	\$ 614,191	\$ 686,428	\$ 3,244,952

\$ -

Expenses

Professional Fees	\$ 3,564	\$ 16,025	\$ 28,384	\$ 5,125	\$ 53,097
Insurance	\$ 931	\$ 1,006	\$ 1,009	\$ 1,009	\$ 3,955
Rent/Storage/Phone	\$ 3,880	\$ -	\$ 420	\$ 488	\$ 4,788
Salaries	\$ 297,087	\$ 339,636	\$ 286,965	\$ 330,493	\$ 1,254,181
Benefits	\$ 21,804	\$ 27,454	\$ 23,622	\$ 26,835	\$ 99,715
Intern Wages	\$ 45,969	\$ 92,766	\$ 99,545	\$ 224,173	\$ 462,452
Payroll Taxes	\$ 26,720	\$ 30,934	\$ 25,724	\$ 24,938	\$ 108,316
Contractor Fees	\$ 32,127	\$ 27,672	\$ 21,461	\$ 20,432	\$ 101,692
Pre-app Training	\$ -	\$ 13,670	\$ 34,330	\$ -	\$ 48,000
Apprenticeship RTI	\$ 33,431	\$ 55,122	\$ 81,597	\$ 202,256	\$ 372,405
Apprenticely Reimbursement	\$ 5,889	\$ 15,226	\$ 11,263	\$ 14,750	\$ 47,129
Marketing	\$ 6,124	\$ 4,873	\$ 4,738	\$ 4,070	\$ 19,804
Software/Technology	\$ 9,650	\$ 10,403	\$ 31,304	\$ 9,050	\$ 60,407
Total Expenses	\$ 487,175	\$ 634,786	\$ 650,361	\$ 863,619	\$ 2,635,942

PRIVATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

In 2025, Apprenticely continued its initiative to build a foundation of private donations to enable us to bring awareness and pre-apprenticeship training opportunities to a broader audience across the state. For more information, visit <https://apprenticely.org/giving> or use the QR code.



LEADERSHIP & TEAM



Bill Yoder
Executive Director



Lonnie Emard
National Apprenticeship
Director



Ashley French
Director of Talent
Management & Recruiting



Nichole Parsons
Program Manager,
WBL Program



Logan Hunt
Director of Grant
Admin & PMO



Jenny Sales
Client Development
Manager, Manufacturing



Tammy Horton
Client Development
Manager, Healthcare



Dawn Smith
Sr. Project Manager



Gwen Pirkle
Project Manager



Christa Hindman
Grants Analyst



Katie Vereen
Career Coach



Catie Raines
Career Coach



Clint Hankinson
Director of Marketing



Jim Morgan
Senior Consulting Editor

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Michael Preston,
CEO,
CDI Contractors



Charles Morgan,
Chairman,
First Orion



Thomas Reilley,
CEO, Highland
Pellets



Crystal Kohanke,
HR Executive,
Arkansas Children's
Hospital



Warren Stephens,
Chairman,
Stephens Inc.



Tim McKenna,
HR Executive,
Simmons Bank



Kenny Kinley,
Technology
Executive





Thank you for helping Arkansas...and beyond.

Through your support, you're changing workforce ecosystems, and positively impacting individuals and their communities. Schools do workforce educationally, companies do it professionally, and vendors do it technically. We do it Apprenticely.

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



Apprenticely.org
(501) 500-0811
P.O. Box 7959
Little Rock, Arkansas 72217

