# Transcript

Auriana Robin sets up apprenticeships for Apprenti – an intermediary organization in the tech industry.

Veterans, especially veterans with disabilities who served this country at home and abroad, often find that transitioning into the civilian workforce after they leave the military can be challenging.

High-quality registered apprenticeship programs can provide a powerful boost to such a transition.

Apprenticeships accelerate the career transition for veterans by combining experience in the workplace with technical training in the classroom on parallel tracks.

The Veteran Readiness and Employment Program (VR&E) helps Veterans and Service members with a service-connected disability map out next steps in their career and helps them find apprenticeship positions.

They also work with intermediary organization, that help develop and sometimes host apprenticeship programs.

Auriana Robin sets up apprenticeships for Apprenti – an intermediary organization in the tech industry.

She recruits employers and helps veterans get placed into apprenticeships and eventually be hired permanently.

It’s a win-win for everyone…

Through our program, employers get access to a talent pipeline that they traditionally haven't had before and our program emerged as a response to the traditional way that talent was sought out in the tech sector.

We are able to place our apprentices into on-the-job training after they've completed their technical training and the whole end goal of our program is not only that our apprentices successfully graduate, but that they're retained by the employer partner. So that potential of long-term employment with this employer, who's already invested 12 months into mentoring you and providing you with kind of step-by-step training to grow in your technical skill set you know, that's essentially endless.

What does an intermediary do to help an employer set up an apprenticeship program?

Apprenti, as the sponsoring registered apprenticeship program, we partner with training providers who provide the first 2-5 months of technical training as part of the registered apprenticeship, making sure that they are providing quality and relevant technical training to the apprentices, and then we also partner with our employer partners who are sponsoring apprentices once they move into their on-the-job training. So as kind of the subject matter expert when it comes to registered technical apprenticeship, we're able to offer a lot of guidance and support to both our training provider partners and employer partners.

I work very closely with the apprentices when they're placed into a cohort. I act, essentially, as their cohort manager on the Apprenti side.

That seems like a really clear benefit to an employer. How can a veteran benefit?

Veterans have a lot of those really essential professional and behavioral skills that will set them up for success- to be successful in a rigorous learning environment through their technical training and also in their on-the-job training.

They can be very successful in the apprenticeship model because a lot of their military experience does mirror an on-the-job training environment, where you’re earning as you learn, you're progressing in a skill and you have really close mentorship, but are also in a very rigorous learning environment and so being able to use their skills and being adaptable and being resilient has definitely been to their benefit in our program and can be a great way to leverage themselves into the tech sector.

So how do you work with veterans?

Apprenti operates nationally- we're in over 16 markets at this point, I believe, and so we do our best to partner with those local military bases and their Transition Assistance Centers to do kind of like brown bag sessions where we are doing a quick program pitch and answering questions.

We'll also participate in career fairs that are geared specifically towards Veterans or transitioning military service members.

And then we also just educate about our program when we're doing our regular recruiting sessions that are open to the general public.

We'll make sure to emphasize that we do place a high volume of Veterans into our program. We do want to see more Veteran representation in the tech sector.

What are the biggest misconceptions that you hear from veterans?

A lot of Veterans who are maybe skeptical about our program are just unsure about if it's the best pathway for them. A lot of them think that they have to have prior technical experience in order to emerge into our program or they just don't think that they personally have what it takes to be successful and that is absolutely not the case.

We have folks every day who come from absolutely no technical background, enter into our program and be successful- and then get placed into these high paying technical jobs that are in, you know, the entry to mid-level tier.

I think a lot of that self-doubt can definitely impact their decision to take the first step. And then also, you know, when it comes to any financial barriers, I think a lot of them also don't realize that we do work very closely with our VA and VR&E partners to provide vocational rehab benefits or GI Bill benefits while they're in their on-the-job training and sometimes their technical training, as well.

So that can also be just another kind of means of support so that they can focus all of their time and energy on being successful as part of our program.

And what about employers?

A lot of employers are a bit hesitant about the apprenticeship model at first because it's something new.

You know, they've done the talent recruiting pipeline that they've done for so long now and so adopting this new model that is new and scary and has risk associated with it can be a bit frightening, maybe, for a company.

But I think what we are trying to prove and demonstrate, through our program, to these employers is that you don't need prior technical experience to be qualified to do these roles.

That's what our program can help train those folks in, and so being open-minded when it comes to: ”What does talent development look like?” “Can I, as an employer, aid in that process?” to then foster a new generation of tech workers that are diverse and who are qualified to do the job.

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For more information, please visit Apprenticeship.gov or contact your Veteran Readiness and Employment Office or your State Director of Veterans Employment and Training.

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Editing by: Aleixo Goncalves.

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