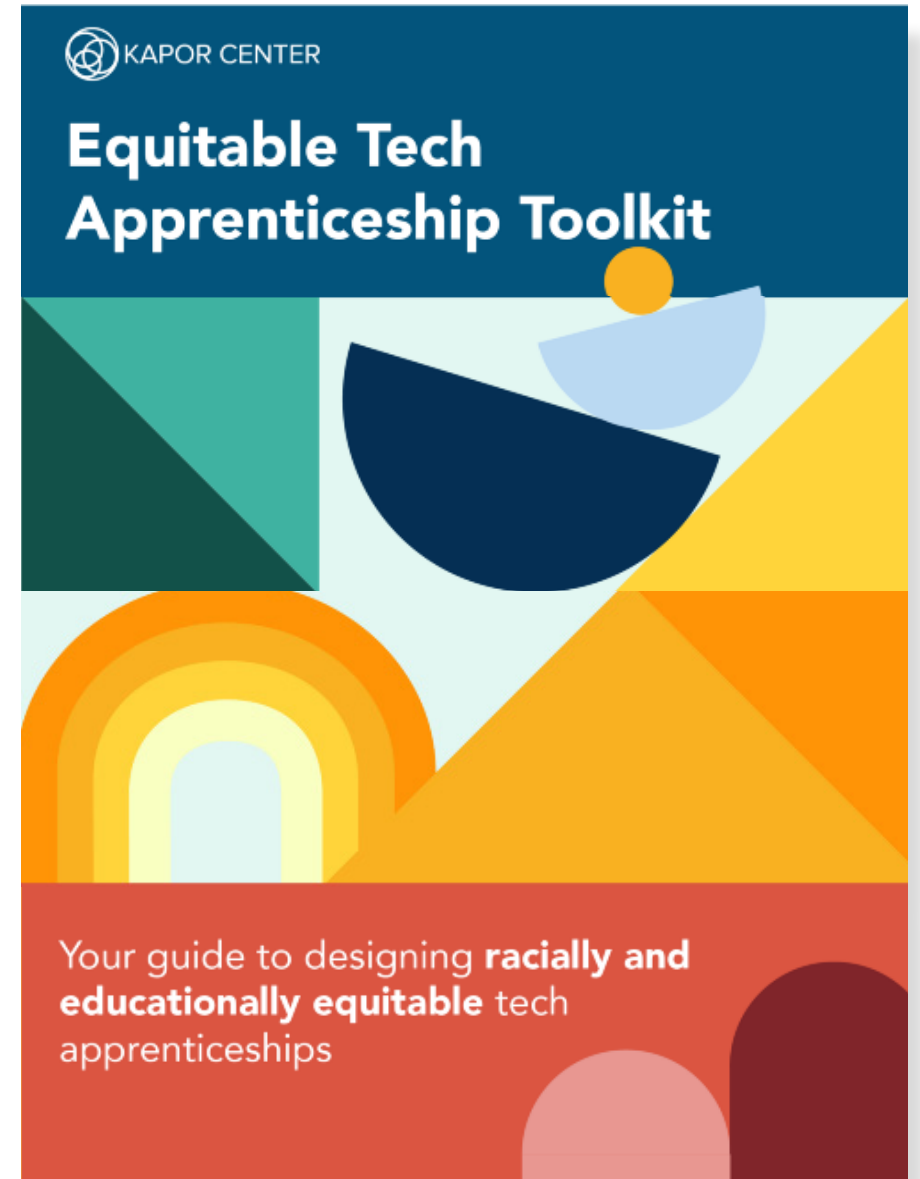# Is Your Tech Apprenticeship Inclusive?

Uncovering Common Gaps in Equity and Inclusion in Apprenticeships—Along With a Toolkit To Overcome Them

KAPOR CENTER

Equitable Tech Apprenticeship Toolkit

Your guide to designing **racially and educationally equitable** tech apprenticeships

STARs
SKILLED THROUGH
ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

Opportunity
@Work

Apprenticeships at tech companies are one tool to chip away at the industry's terrible (but improving) track record around racial inclusion.

If you have piloted or launched a tech apprenticeship, you likely know that successful programs can advance historically excluded groups by helping companies fill in-demand roles and preparing workers for high-wage careers—but that's easier said than done.

Who is advocating for these programs? It turns out it's people like you: grassroots tech employees who may have less power than company executives but who care deeply about diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

This research insight came out of a collaboration between Kapor Center, Opportunity@Work, and IDEO. In 2021 and 2022, we used a human-centered design process to understand how to make tech apprenticeships more racially and educationally equitable. This included input from the groups most impacted: apprenticeship founders and leads, pioneers in tech apprenticeship design, experts in tech-specific inclusivity, and current Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous apprentices. The resulting product is Kapor's Equitable Tech Apprenticeship Toolkit, which addresses all aspects of a successful program, such as gaining buy-in, assessing talent, and building a mentorship culture, all to ensure a holistic focus on equity.

1 **DRAFT YOUR PITCH**

CHALLENGE:
"I'd like to introduce equitable apprenticeships at my organization, but am not sure how to go about it."

BEST PRACTICE:
- Rapidly brainstorm your pitch
- Determine what you want others to agree to
- Figure out the "why" behind your idea
- Clarify the value of your idea
- Assess alignment with company goals
- List your non-negotiables

TOOL:
Creating a pitch for a new equitable apprenticeship idea

Kapor's toolkit, pictured in part above, makes it easier to design more inclusive apprenticeship programs.

Findings

At Opportunity@Work, uplifting STARs—workers who are Skilled Through Alternative Routes rather than a bachelor's degree. These workers have a combination of experience from community college, workforce training, bootcamps, certificate programs, military service, and/or on-the-job learning.

Apprenticeships are one of the few, but growing, paths into tech for STARs. Still, after surveying 30 tech companies with existing apprenticeship programs, our project found that STARs are underrepresented in such programs, as are Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous candidates, who constitute the majority of STARs. Other findings included:

1 Apprenticeship programs often recruit from bootcamps, where participants are predominantly white and Asian American Pacific Islander

2 White-dominant culture and a lack of culturally competent mentors can alienate apprentices of color and hinder their ability to complete the program

3 Equitable approaches in one area can be undermined by inequity in another. Some companies were good at hiring candidates but saw low rates of program completion. Others had high completion rates, but struggled to convert apprentices to employees.

The participants in the program were eager to share what they learned.

This means that the Toolkit provides the information people designing apprenticeship programs—or already running them—needed for a leg up in developing more inclusive programs.

Whether you're an equity champion at a large company or new startup, in a technical business unit or an employee resource group, you'll find useful templates guides that complement existing apprenticeships with equity-focused goals. These will help you maintain a holistic focus on STARs as a whole, as well Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous talent who have bachelor's degrees.

Of course, these ideas all require action—we encourage you to download Kapor's toolkit and put it into practice, and we want to hear how it helps you refocus your apprenticeship programs. Let us know at innovation@opportunityatwork.org.

Want to learn more about STARs, Opportunity@Work, and the STARs Innovation process?

Visit us at opportunityatwork.org today.

About Opportunity@Work

Opportunity@Work is a nonprofit social enterprise with a mission to increase career opportunities for the more than 70 million adults in the U.S. who do not have a bachelor's degree but are Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs). For STARs, the American Dream has been fading due in part to an "opportunity gap," in which access to the good jobs required for upward mobility often depends less on people's skills and more on whether and where they went to college, who they know professionally and socially, or even how they look. We envision a future in which employers hire people based on skills rather than their pedigree. We are uniting companies, workforce development organizations, and philanthropists in a movement to restore the American Dream so that every STAR can work, learn, and earn to their full potential..