



Document for Employers

Expanding Opportunities for the Latino Community

This document features an in-depth interview with Zurich North America, an employer that has successfully implemented Registered Apprenticeship Programs since 2016. Through this interview, you will gain insights into how the company has engaged with Registered Apprenticeships and the benefits that have accrued for both the business and the communities involved.



Introduction

Can you introduce yourself and your role within the organization?

Phyllis Higgins, Apprenticeship Talent Navigator with Zurich. I manage the sourcing and marketing for the apprenticeship program.

Could you provide a brief overview of your organization and a description of your apprenticeship program?

Zurich North America, whose headquarters is in Schaumburg, Illinois, is part of Zurich Insurance Group, a Swiss company. We are a leading provider of commercial property-casualty insurance solutions and services in the U.S. and Canada.

The Zurich Apprenticeship Program offers pathways to earn an associate degree or a bachelor's degree while launching a rewarding career with Zurich North America. Apprenticeships are two-year pathways that provide full-time pay and benefits, including paid time off.

Zurich covers apprentices' tuition as they build a bright future with Zurich. Both degree tracks offer roles across the country in various business areas, such as underwriting, claims, human resources, crop claims, IT, communications and sales. The Zurich Apprenticeship Program covers the cost of tuition, books and fees, along with providing a salary and full benefits, which include many health and wellness options for participants.

Initiatives for Expanding Opportunities for the Latino Community

What initiatives has your organization implemented to promote diversity and inclusion, particularly within the Latino community?

“I think there is enough pie for everyone”

—Phyllis Higgins

The Zurich Apprenticeship Program is intentional about reaching out to and opening the door to talent from many underrepresented communities, although we are not a diversity program. Zurich has implemented outreach at local high schools, some of which have a Latinx population of over 70%, and we have had successful referrals. Zurich also collaborates with organizations like UnidosUS to tap into a network of service providers.

How do you approach recruiting and retaining Latino talent within your organization?

The Zurich Apprenticeship Program is designed with high levels of built-in support. Participants may come from high school or other industries, and some are entirely new to the corporate world. Apprentices are paired with a mentor, a job coach, an academic advisor and an Apprentice Alumni Advisor (AAA), a graduate of the program who has walked a mile in their shoes, to provide insight and guidance. Management conducts one-on-one meetings to ensure participants are supported.

How do you collaborate with Latino-serving organizations or community groups to enhance accessibility of your apprenticeship program?

Zurich collaborates with community-based organizations, high schools, nonprofits, religious organizations, youth development programs, shelters, unemployment offices and other agencies to cast a wide net for talent. Zurich finds that our biggest referral source comes from employees.



Impact and Success Stories

What impact have your diversity and inclusion initiatives had on the Latino community and within your organization?

By offering a robust support system, we ensure that apprentices receive the care and assistance they need to thrive. This includes regular



manager touch-points and access to well-being resources. As a result, apprentices have been able to focus on their future, enhance their skills, and develop new ones. Many have stayed within our organization after completing the program, while others have successfully secured positions with other employers in the region. Our initiatives have not only fostered skill development and career growth but also provided a pathway for personal and professional stability for our Latino participants.

Can you share any success stories or testimonials from Latino employees or apprentices who have benefited from these initiatives?

One of the best testaments to the program is when one sibling recommends the program to another. Andres Montiel and his

sister Sarai Montiel and Rafael Arroyo and his sister Iris Arroyo Gomez have all come through the program. Andres was the first person in his family to earn a college degree and now they both have one. All four of these individuals continue to build their careers at Zurich and Andres was recently promoted.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

What advice would you offer to an organization considering the establishment of its own apprenticeship program or in the early stages of launching one?

Zurich encourages organizations to be intentional in their design of their apprenticeship program. Structured, ongoing support, including mentorship, is necessary to ensure people are successful. This provides a developmental opportunity for more seasoned employees as well; many of whom say they learn a great deal from apprentices and the experience of talking regularly with them. Ensure that program requirements and expectations are clear and remind the managers that they, too, were once starting their career. Getting the buy-in at the top to help the program be successful and ensuring these elements are in place from the outset can significantly enhance the program's effectiveness and impact.

Looking ahead

What are your organization's future plans for further expanding opportunities for the Latino community?

Zurich is committed to recruiting outreach not only to universities and colleges with diverse student enrollment but also not-for-profit organizations that serve underserved communities. We aim to provide comprehensive training and support to help apprentices build successful careers, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and diverse workforce. Zurich believes our future is brighter when our voices are diverse, our behaviors are inclusive, our actions drive equity, and people feel a sense of belonging. Our goal as it relates to the Registered Apprenticeship program is to reach as many people as possible.

This product was developed as a contribution to [JFF's National Innovation Hub for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Registered Apprenticeship](#). Operated by Jobs for the Future, the Innovation Hub drives change in the Registered Apprenticeship system to increase diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility for populations that do not yet have access to the full promise of apprenticeship.

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About UnidosUS

UnidosUS is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that serves as the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Since 1968, we have challenged the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos through our unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an [Affiliate Network](#) of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico. We believe in an America where economic, political, and social progress is a reality for all Latinos, and we collaborate across communities to achieve it. For more information on UnidosUS, visit www.unidosus.org or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [X](#).

