



# University of Phoenix collaborates with IAA to create apprenticeship to degree career pathway model for employers

By Sharla Hooper

*Model offers employers a unique talent retention and career enhancement solution*

University of Phoenix announces an agreement with Institute for American Apprenticeships (IAA), the non-profit organization with a mission to educate, train, and employ workers in its home state of Vermont, and now, nationwide. The agreement, supported by the University's Workforce Solutions team, establishes a new option for employers seeking to increase retention and upskilling opportunities by providing a framework for a clear pathway from registered apprenticeship programs to associate and bachelor degrees.

“Our agreement with IAA provides a unique approach to workforce opportunities, retention and the cultivation of talent,” states Raghu Krishnaiah, chief operating officer at University of Phoenix. “Workers face barriers of time and expense when it comes to upskilling and advancing in their career – this type of program offers individuals an option that addresses those barriers. We have worked with IAA to create a method for employers to be intentional, inclusive, and purposeful and offer an ‘earn while you learn’ program in the apprentice model career pathway to a degree.”

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, apprenticeships offer a proven track record of retention and lifetime earning advantage with access to hundreds of occupations in high growth as well as emerging industries. This includes average starting salary of \$72,000 upon completion of an apprenticeship program, and an employment retention of 92% of apprentices after apprenticeship completion. The career pathway of apprenticeship to college credit and degrees provides a unique solution for companies to attract and retain diverse talent.

“We’ve seen firsthand the difference a Registered Apprenticeship opportunity can make for individuals,” said Matthew McKenney, President and Chief Executive Officer of IAA. “People with the aptitude and determination to complete a Registered Apprenticeship program have an opportunity for stable, high-quality employment without the burden of educational debt. The added benefit of cost-free college credits as a part of a Registered Apprenticeship program sets the gold standard for Registered Apprenticeship programs.”

The agreement between IAA and University of Phoenix to offer the apprenticeship-to-degree pathway was formed as a natural progression of the organizations’ shared missions to educate and train working adults of diverse backgrounds in preparation for and achievement of professional goals.

Hypertherm, a 100% Associate-owned company developing plasma, waterjet systems, software, motion controls, and consumables, has adopted the program. Hypertherm has a history of graduating over 800 apprentices in the past 12 years. “We value working with IAA and with the University of Phoenix,” said Jenny Levy, Hypertherm’s Executive Vice President for People, Community, and Environment. “This new

degreed Apprentice program helps to fulfill our mission of developing our Associate Owners to the maximum of their potential. The ability to earn an associate degree and an Apprentice Credential at no cost to the Associate and while working, we feel, differentiates Hypertherm as a premier employer.”

The University of Phoenix Workforce Solutions team offers companies across diverse industries as well as community colleges tailored learning and career pathways to recruit, upskill, reskill, and retain their workforce in an affordable and timely manner. Their flexible solutions are aligned to workplace needs and feature live support, career guidance and support tools, education programs, learning pathways, and credit options, including certificates, workshops, single courses, degree programs, or any combination of these tools.

[Learn more here about University of Phoenix Workforce Solutions.](#)

### ***About IAA***

*Vermont HITEC, doing business as Institute for American Apprenticeships (IAA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission to educate, train and employ Vermonters in a variety of fields. Since 2000, IAA has partnered with over 30 Vermont and New Hampshire businesses to employ over 1,800 individuals in the health care, information technology and advanced manufacturing fields. IAA also consults with employers and other organizations around the country to assist with the development of apprenticeship programs. [Learn more at https://iaahitec.org/.](https://iaahitec.org/)*

### ***About University of Phoenix***

*University of Phoenix is continually innovating to help working adults enhance their careers in a rapidly changing world. Flexible schedules, relevant courses, interactive learning, and Career Services for Life® help students more effectively pursue career and personal aspirations while balancing their busy lives. [For more information, visit phoenix.edu.](https://phoenix.edu)*