



Upskilling 2025 Annual Report

September 2021



Empowering Amazon employees
with the skills they need for
the jobs of the future.



Table of Contents

Expanding our Upskilling 2025 pledge	3
The American Upskilling Study	4
Upskilling programs for Amazon employees	5–7
New upskilling programs for Amazon employees	
Original upskilling programs for Amazon employees	
Amazon employee stories	8–25
Tracey Archer – AWS Training and Certification, Project Easley	
Allia Awad – AWS Grow Our Own Talent	
Erica Bozeman – Amazon Technical Apprenticeship	
Justin Carver – Amazon Technical Academy	
Jasmine Chen – Amazon Technical Academy	
Felicia Davis – User Experience and Design Research (UXDR) Apprenticeship	
Mark Ferrer – User Experience and Design Research (UXDR) Apprenticeship	
Kelly Monroe – Mechatronics & Robotics Apprenticeship	
Sam Muraguri – Career Choice	
Melfi Perez – Amazon Technical Apprenticeship	
Amarpreet Wasan – Machine Learning University	
Dave Williams – AWS Training and Certification, Tech U	



Expanding our Upskilling 2025 pledge



As part of its Upskilling 2025 pledge, Amazon **is investing more than \$1.2 billion** to upskill 300,000 Amazon employees by 2025.



Since the launch of Upskilling 2025 in 2019, **more than 70,000 Amazon employees** have participated in one of the nine upskilling programs.



This year, Amazon is adding **three new upskilling programs** in data center maintenance and technology, IT, and user experience and research design.



Amazon will fund full college tuition, as well as high school diplomas, GEDs, and English as a Second Language (ESL) proficiency certifications for its more than 750,000 front-line U.S. employees through Career Choice.



Amazon will pay employees' tuition and fees in advance rather than offering reimbursement after coursework completion.



Amazon front-line employees will have access to annual funds for education as long as they remain at the company, with no limit to the number of years they can benefit.



All 750,000 U.S. hourly employees are eligible to participate in Career Choice 90 days after starting at Amazon.

The American Upskilling Study

A first-of-its-kind study by Gallup, commissioned by Amazon, shows how access to upskilling is becoming a sought-after employee benefit—and a powerful talent attraction tool. The study found



Most workers want to update their skills. When asked if they were interested in participating in an upskilling program, more than half (57%) of U.S. workers surveyed were “extremely” or “very” interested in doing so.



Among workers who participated in an upskilling program, the vast majority (75%) reported experiencing some type of **advancement in their careers.**



Sixty-nine percent of workers who were interested in upskilling programs were “very” or “extremely” likely **to leave their job for upskilling opportunities** provided by another employer.



U.S. workers who completed upskilling programs over the past year have seen an **average salary increase of 8.6%**—the equivalent of an additional \$8,000 on average in their annual earnings.



For young adults entering the labor market, employer-funded upskilling is **more important than paid vacation time.**

Section 1:

Upskilling programs for Amazon employees





New upskilling programs for Amazon employees



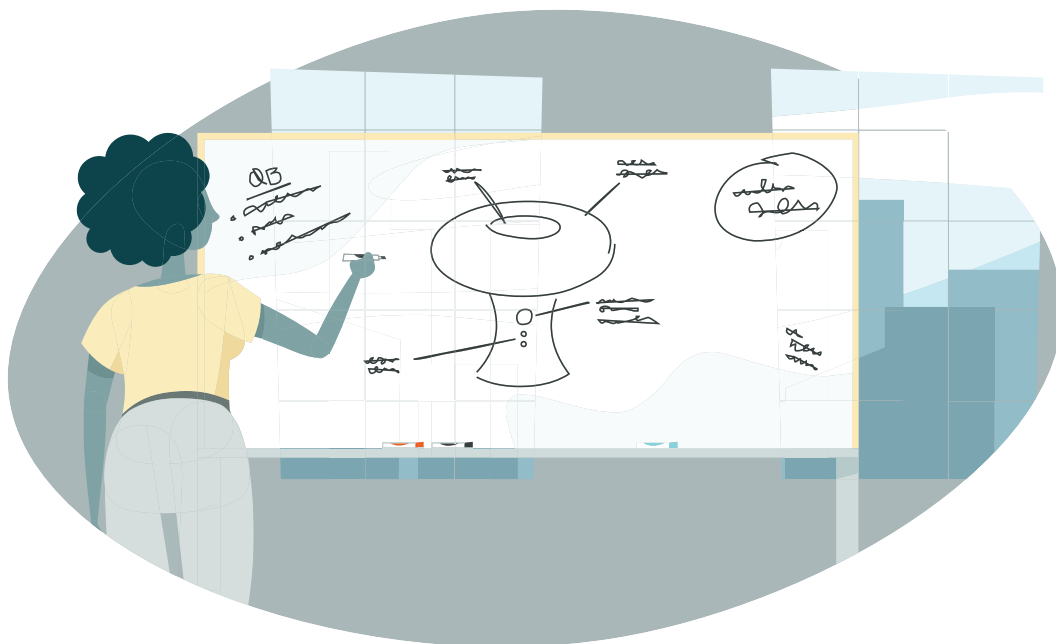
AWS Grow Our Own Talent offers on-the-job training and job placement opportunities to Amazon employees and entry-level candidates with non-traditional backgrounds. The training will help them pursue roles to innovate within Amazon Web Services (AWS) data centers and safely deliver high-quality cloud computing services to customers. Participating employees are hired into roles such as data center technicians and data center engineering operations technicians, and they complete in-person, on-the-job training for up to six months.



Surge2IT is designed to help entry-level IT employees across Amazon's operations network pursue careers in higher-paying technical roles through self-paced learning resources. The course helps employees develop necessary skills to advance their career in the information technology field, including supporting the Amazon Robotics picking and stowing technology. Participants who move up at Amazon can make an additional \$10,000 a year.



UX Design and Research Apprenticeship combines instructor-led training and real-world experience in a one-year program that offers employees the opportunity to learn and develop skills in research and design on teams across Amazon, including Prime Video, Alexa, AWS, and Amazon Fashion. Graduates are ready for jobs that help improve the experience of Amazon customers, from making payments easier on Amazon sites to designing features that make devices more accessible.





Original upskilling programs for Amazon employees

- Amazon Technical Academy** trains employees from across the company to become Amazon software engineers. The nine-month-long internal training program is free and does not require a computer science background or a degree. Amazon Technical Academy has placed 98% of its graduates into software development engineer roles within Amazon, with their salary and compensation packages increasing an average of 93%. This year more than 40% of Amazon Technical Academy graduates came from Amazon's customer fulfillment network.
- Amazon Technical Apprenticeship** creates paths to technical jobs, primarily for veterans and military spouses looking to transition into technical professions. Amazon currently employs over 40,000 U.S. veterans and military spouses across multiple businesses and recently announced plans to hire 100,000 U.S. veterans and military spouses by 2024.
- AWS Training and Certifications** offers Amazon employees access to more than 500 free digital courses to build cloud computing knowledge. As part of this program, AWS Tech U offers a 48-week accelerated career-development program that blends project-based learning and on-the-job training to help technical early-career employees advance their skills.
- Career Choice** will pre-pay full college tuition at hundreds of education partners across the country. In addition to funding associate and bachelor's degrees, Amazon's Career Choice will also fund high school completion, GEDs, and ESL proficiency certifications. Since launching Career Choice in 2012, over 50,000 Amazon employees across 14 countries worldwide have received training for high-demand occupations including aircraft mechanics, computer-aided designers, commercial truck drivers, medical assistants, nurses, and more.
- Machine Learning University** is a state-of-the-art training program curated and delivered by Amazon employees. It helps employees with a background in technology and coding gain graduate-level skills in machine learning and AI to best solve customer problems.
- Mechatronics and Robotics Apprenticeship** program participants learn the skills and technical knowledge needed to pursue a technical maintenance role supporting our robotics technology. Hundreds of our apprentices have earned nearly 3,000 certifications to date. Upon completion of their apprenticeship, participants could make an additional \$16,000 each year on average in their new roles at Amazon.

Section 2:

Amazon employee stories





Tracey Archer

AWS Training and Certifications, Project Easley

Tracey Archer had worked in bid management in the commercial department of a cloud computing company when she was hired as a senior bid manager at AWS. As a condition of her employment she, like everyone in this role, needed to pass the foundational-level certification for cloud practitioners within 90 days of her arrival.

She ended up hearing from a colleague about Project Easley. "He said that it was a program focused on making sure more women pursue tech," says Tracey. "It was a guided training that would take

several months to help prep you for the foundational exam." Although Tracey had already passed her first exam, Project

"To have a program like Project Easley, which allows you to feel comfortable when you have basically no tech experience at all, is a godsend. I think it is a great thing."

Easley offered preparation assistance for the solutions architect associate-level (SAA) certification, which would be the next step in the process.

The program is named for Annie Easley, a Black woman who wrote code for NASA's

Centaur rocket stage and was denied access to NASA's educational benefits for her continuing mathematics education.

"It was designed to create a safe space so that women felt like we could learn something new, surrounded by other women," she says.

Although SAA isn't required for her job, Tracey knew it would be helpful. She takes part in the standing meetings, ongoing weekly training, and group discussions. "Project Easley has made me more comfortable to sign up for and try other things because it helps me feel like I truly belong."



Allia Awad

AWS Grow Our Own Talent

When Allia Awad joined Amazon as an employee at the fulfillment center in Sterling, Virginia, she viewed the job as temporary while she figured out her next step. She was pursuing a college degree and had been managing two locations for her family's chain of convenience stores when she decided that business management was not for her.

“I was upfront that I’m not very technical, but I’m willing to learn. The hiring manager was super encouraging and welcoming. It gave me more confidence that I would be able to do it.”

“I had taken a job at Amazon as a part-time job while I was finishing up school,” says Allia. “My manager had asked me if I wanted to learn process assistant responsibilities, which was more of a technical job, but it was still an entry-level role in the fulfillment center.”

She applied for a process assistant job and received it. That promotion sparked Allia's interest to pursue a longer-term career at Amazon.

She decided to pursue a role through the AWS Grow Our Own Talent program, which specifically helps employees and individuals with nontraditional experience and educational backgrounds move up and into roles within AWS.

Through the Internal Upskilling program, Allia completed a month of fully paid training, both online and in-person, to fulfill the requirements for her new role. She completed the program in 2020 and is now working full time at AWS.

Allia's new role offers a host of perks that make her glad she pursued the Internal Upskilling opportunity. “The work-life balance and everything at AWS is definitely worth it. And I have a really awesome team.”

A portrait of Erica Bozeman, a Black woman with her hair in braids, smiling warmly. She is wearing a black sleeveless top. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery.

Erica Bozeman

Amazon Technical Apprenticeship

As a single mom to four boys, Erica Bozeman needed to find better work-life balance than the unpredictable schedule she had experienced for 10 years in the United States Army. “Everything revolves around my kids,” says Erica. “If I’m going to do something, I ask myself, ‘Is it going to benefit my kids or is it going to hurt my kids?’”

As Erica considered whether to reenlist in the Army, a recruiter who visited her post each week told her about the Amazon Technical Apprenticeship program, which offered paid technical training to members of the military reentering civilian life. She’d already been taking some technical certification classes and polishing her resumé, so with only two months left in her service, she filled out the application.

Twenty-four hours later, she heard back from Amazon and within just a few weeks she began her Department of Labor-certified data center technician apprenticeship program with Amazon. The AWS-designed classroom learning was tough, but she and her cohort, which included nine additional former military members, helped each other through it. After her on-the-job training, she was ready to conduct the diagnostics and

repairs that help ensure the overall availability and reliability of our data centers.

Erica appreciates the regularity of her Monday-through-Thursday schedule, which allows her to prioritize her time with her sons. She’s also spent time helping other former military members transition from the military into Amazon’s apprenticeship program.

“I just wanted to spend more time with my kids and to be able to have home and work balance. Amazon provided that to me.”

She also believes her new data technician job has put her on the path toward growing greater generational wealth for her family and someday owning her own business. “I’ve always wanted to be a business owner, but I know it takes time to get to that point. So whenever I feel like I’m ready to break out to my business ventures, then I will.”



“Amazon Technical Academy got us up to speed with the high-level parts of the job—that continuous deployment, not just around the coding, but everything that goes into being a software development engineer at Amazon.”

Justin Carver

Amazon Technical Academy

Justin Carver has long been interested in and connected to software development—his father was a programmer, and his grandfather was a pioneering video game developer. But he was having trouble securing the type of job he really wanted.

“I’ve been working ever since I dropped out of college back in 2016,” says Justin. “I found college a bit too slow for me, and I decided to try and pursue a job in coding.” He invested in a programming course but couldn’t get much traction. “I was 19 years old, had learned just one coding language, and didn’t have any previous work experience. So when I got out into the workforce, I struggled to find a job doing what I wanted.”

After struggling to make ends meet taking on internships, a friend who’d taken a job in IT support at Amazon suggested Justin do the same. “So I wound up getting hired on as an IT support technician and worked in a fulfillment center helping to streamline issues they were having with different electronics—really just anything to do with a Wi-Fi signal.” As the issues he solved became repetitive, Justin got restless for what was next.

He knew Amazon offered career development resources; but when he found out about Amazon Technical Academy, he was stunned. “I couldn’t believe it was real for Amazon to pay me to go do what I love, teach me how to do

it, and help me secure a job at the end. It was a dream come true.”

He was accepted into the program and relocated with his wife and family to Seattle to take part in the knowledge development and on-the-job training. After graduating from the nine-month program, Justin immediately secured a software development engineer role at Amazon Web Services supporting a service that helps customers visualize and analyze their data. “It was super helpful to have Amazon Technical Academy and be able to learn without being thrown into the fire immediately. They cultivated a great learning environment.”

Jasmine Chen

Amazon Technical Academy

Jasmine Chen joined Amazon as an executive assistant in the human resources department at Amazon Web Services. She had graduated with a foreign languages and literature degree, specializing in English, from National Taiwan University in Taipei, one of the top schools in Asia.

In high school, Jasmine had been interested in software engineering. But the coding culture at the time shook her confidence. "It was a very academic environment," recalls Jasmine. "We were sent to these coding competitions where you were supposed to code offline, and I hated it. I just thought I wasn't cut out to memorize all these different algorithms and functions. I thought I was really bad at it, so then I pivoted toward literature."

Early on in school, Jasmine said her interest in coding was at odds with what people expected of her. "When people would hear that I wanted to go into software development, the response was, 'Oh, you want to do this?' This was 10 years ago, and now everybody's learning to code. But back then these doubts were put in my head, like, 'Am I good enough? Am I smart enough?'"

Jasmine moved to Seattle, where she felt she could be close to the industry. She took a job at a software consulting company as an executive assistant, figuring she could make a career pivot within the organization. Her efforts were rebuffed. "I mentioned I had coded a bit before and wanted to get into software development. But my boss and other managers, including a recruiting manager, just kind of laughed it off. I wasn't even offered the opportunity to job shadow. It was pretty defeating."



“One of the biggest learnings coming out of Amazon Technical Academy is that we will never learn everything or know everything. But we’ll be more comfortable dealing with ambiguity and knowing how to learn and troubleshoot and unblock ourselves.”

When Jasmine came over to AWS in another executive assistant role, she found the kind of encouragement she was seeking and learned about Amazon Technical Academy. “All of the people—from the VP I was supporting to the directors to fellow executive assistants—were very, very supportive when they heard I was thinking about applying for the Amazon Technical Academy program, even though I was only on the team for a little bit. And I really appreciated that.”

Jasmine joined Amazon Technical Academy in July 2020. “Due to the pandemic, the team put in a lot of effort to shift the

entire program into a fully online experience,” explains Jasmine. “Because of how successful the remote experience has been, the program actually changed its entire curriculum to fully online, even post-pandemic, so that Amazon can expand participation to employees from across the entire United States.”

Despite the lack of in-person contact, she enjoyed the camaraderie of her fellow participants, who ranged from fulfillment center employees to customer service representatives to program managers. She also appreciated the program’s spirit of inclusiveness. “The program is definitely very diverse, from the participants to the instructors. And I really think that they highlight the importance of making sure that everybody feels included and nobody felt left out.”

After nine months of training, Jasmine began her 12-week internship with AWS’s Builder Tools team, where she focused on security patching. “We owned an internal tool that keeps our internal service secure.”

She is now a full-time software development engineer on the Amazon Halo team, a role that aligns with her personal health and wellness passion. “I am getting paid to keep learning, which is just amazing.”



A portrait of Felicia Davis, a woman with dark curly hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue floral patterned top. She is smiling and looking towards the camera, with her hand resting on her glasses.

Felicia Davis

UXDR Apprenticeship

Felicia E. Davis holds a bachelor's degree in marketing and previously worked as a graphic designer while also working in a customer support role at Amazon, fielding customer calls and troubleshooting their issues. Her favorite thing about working in customer service support was digging in on the most challenging customer issues. "Anytime I was helping a customer, I would go so in-depth to help them," says Felicia. "If I still could not help them with their issue or I had a persistent problem with my customers that day, I would ask why-how-what type of questions to uncover how best to solve the problem—I always wanted to help more."

Felicia shared her curiosity with a marketing mentor. "I was encouraged to look into becoming a researcher because I knew I was pretty good at it. So that's when

I started Googling types of researchers, and 'user experience or UX' was listed as a qualification." She enrolled in a nine-month boot camp to learn more about UX research, UX design, information architecture, and more.

She then learned of Amazon's newly formed User Design and Research Apprenticeship Program, which provides the opportunity to learn and develop research, design, and leadership skills outside of a four-year college program. She reached out to her network of

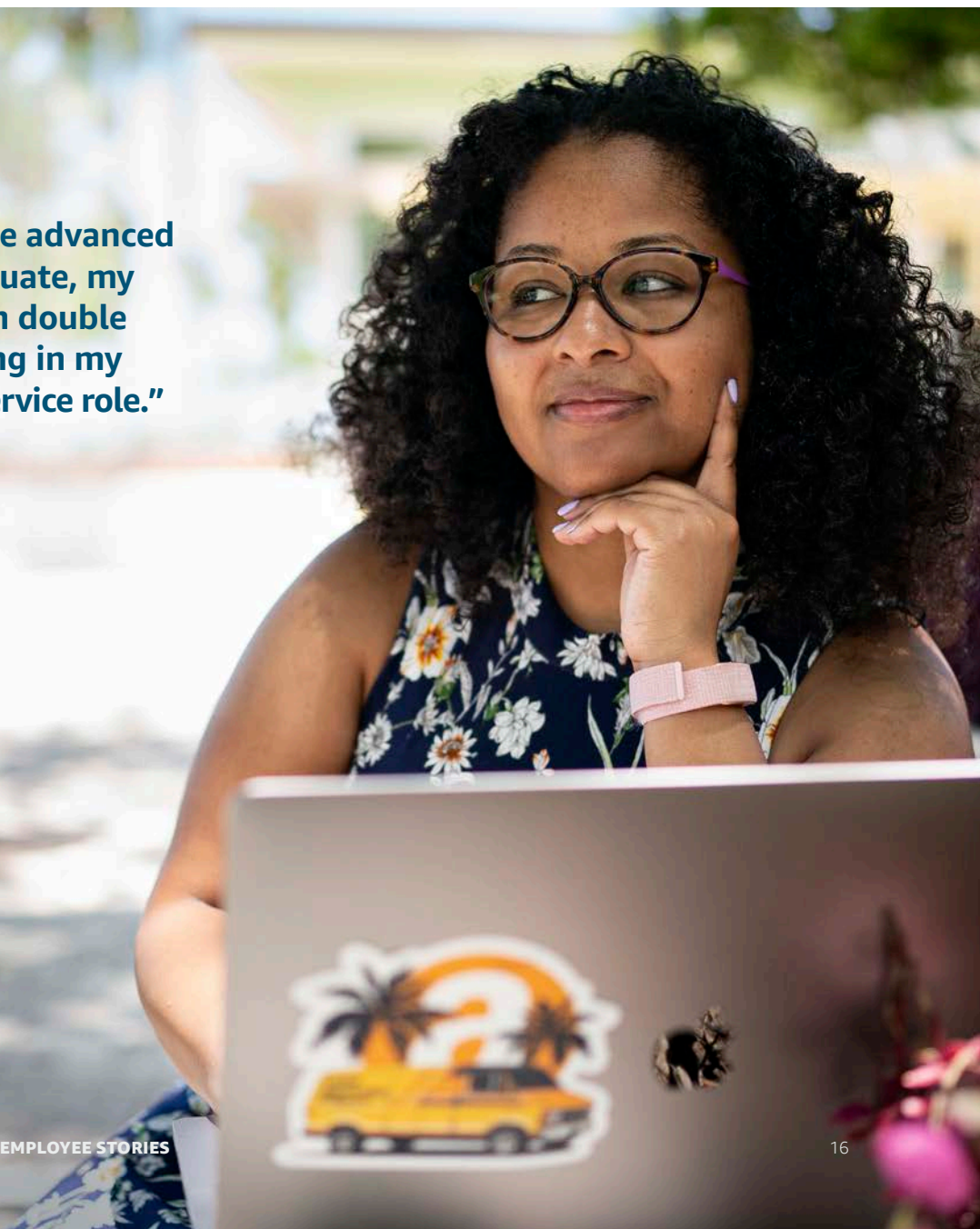
mentors to support her through the application process, which involved a project presentation and a four-hour interview. In April 2021, Felicia completed her boot camp program and was accepted into the inaugural apprenticeship cohort, where thousands of people had applied.

Upon completing the instructor-led portion of the apprenticeship, which for now is being conducted in a virtual classroom setting, Felicia and her fellow students will have the option to apply their learnings alongside their teams for

the remainder of their training year.

Felicia has been assigned to the Alexa Discovery and Productivity team, which helps customers discover the many things they can do with their Alexa devices. She believes this team is an excellent fit for her goals. "As an apprentice, I can gain hands-on design and research experience as I continue to grow as a designer. My years in customer experience, marketing, and graphic and UX design, without a doubt, all propelled me to work alongside Alexa's design team."

"Depending on the more advanced role I take when I graduate, my salary could more than double from what I was making in my entry-level customer service role."





“I’m just happy to be getting back into the creative design environment and working with the creative design team. That’s what really excites me the most.”

Mark Ferrer

UXDR Apprenticeship

Mark Ferrer was intrigued by Amazon’s culture from the time he joined a Bay Area Amazon Go store as lead associate at the end of 2018. “As I was learning how to be successful in Amazon, I found that its leadership principles matched well with me,” says Mark. “They provided the tools to get the job done, which empowered me to finish the task.”

The Amazon Go job was not Mark’s first role in retail, but he had graduated with a degree in graphic and web design and was looking for a way to advance within the organization. The new Design and Research Apprenticeship program provided that catalyst. “I was looking at a couple of outside programs, like boot camps for user experience and visual design, prior to this apprenticeship. But I was really unable to afford going back to school full time because of the impact of COVID-19 on my finances. So I was happy Amazon launched this program. It was a great opportunity to learn at a company I was already working for.”

Although Mark is in the early stages of this new program, he is excited. “What’s super cool about this experience is that Amazon designers who are already in the field—design managers and senior UX designers—are part of our classes, serving as teaching assistants.” In addition, his salary nearly doubled in his more specialized role as a design apprentice.

Mark appreciates he can continue to learn how to be successful at Amazon while learning about UX design. “The fact that you’re getting real insights from designers that are actually working for the company that you are in helps you get adjusted to the culture right away instead of graduating from a program and then having to figure out how a culture works.”

Kelly Monroe

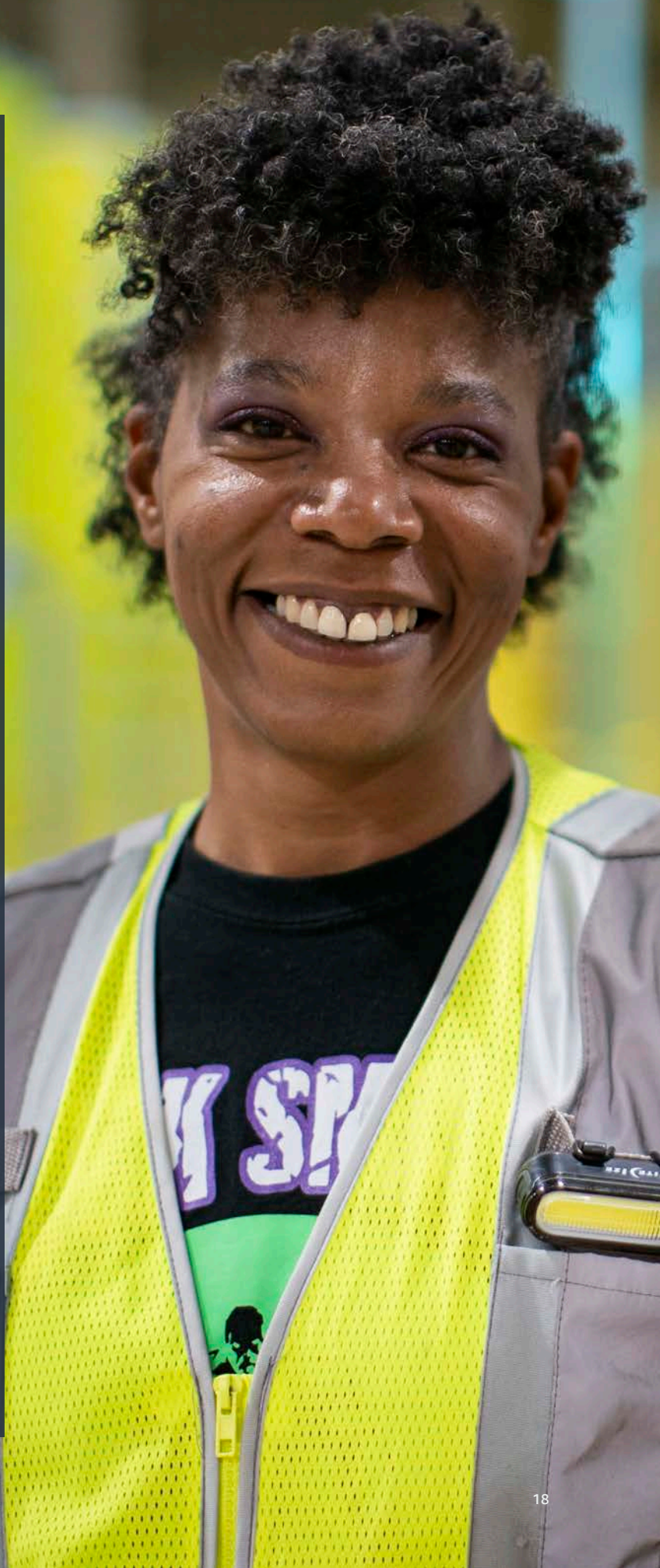
Mechatronics and Robotics Apprenticeship

Kelly Monroe joined Amazon with a plan. The Mechatronics and Robotics Apprenticeship helped put it in action.

Kelly had spent 18 years caring for her two children, able to take on only occasional part-time customer service jobs because of the medical needs of her daughter. Still, she'd managed to earn a computer networking degree she planned to use in a career that would utilize her love of learning, especially about technology, as soon as her home responsibilities lightened. When she read that Amazon was opening its first fulfillment center in central Ohio in 2016, she recognized it as the turning point she'd been waiting for.

Kelly took a part-time, entry-level job in the fulfillment center loading up trailers—not exactly using her interest in technology, but she was happy to be at Amazon. “I was like, ‘I know about Amazon. I want to be at Amazon,’ I knew they were pushing technology forward and there was going to be an opportunity for me to grow when I got in there.” Within three years Kelly was working as a full-time process assistant in the fulfillment center, making recommendations for more efficient practices for her team and keeping an eye on the career development opportunities Amazon makes available to its employees. “I knew I was not going to stay an associate level forever,” says Kelly. “That wasn’t my mindset. When I came here, my whole goal was to come in and utilize what I already knew and then add to that what Amazon was going to teach me.”

An email about the Mechatronics and Robotics Apprenticeship prompted a meeting with a recruiter who told her about the program. The 12-week



classroom session was comprehensive, and Kelly would be paid throughout, allowing her to cover her learning expenses while she gained an education, training, and valuable certifications, furthering her goal to pursue an in-demand, specialized technical maintenance role at Amazon.

Kelly succeeded by augmenting her classroom learning with strong study skills. “I studied a lot on my own and spent 40 hours a week in the classroom. But this was new stuff for me, and I learned as much as I could about what my hands-on experiences

“When I came here, my whole goal was to come in and utilize what I already knew, and then add in what Amazon was going to teach me.”

were going to be.” She completed four industry-recognized certifications along with a post-educational assessment.

The Mechatronics and Robotics Apprenticeship launched in May 2020, and graduates see a substantial increase in their compensation upon completion. The apprenticeship program has partnered with five higher education institutions to deliver

the 12-week training. These schools are located in Indiana, Pennsylvania, Texas, North Carolina, and Georgia. Upon successful completion of the 12-week training, associates return to Amazon facilities for additional on-the-job learning.

For Kelly, turning her passion for technology into a career has been transformative. Within a week of completing her classroom education, Kelly was able to accomplish a real-world repair within an Amazon fulfillment center in Dallas, Texas, where she’s now doing on-the-job learning. When one of the robots that moved pods around the facility stalled, Kelly identified the problem as a missing sensor in the drive. Her supervisor encouraged her to dive in and own the troubleshooting and to make repairs. “That was my first time opening up the robot, but they were like, ‘Kelly, you found it, you fix it.’ So I replaced the photo sensor.” That first repair filled Kelly with confidence. “Ever since and they’ve been telling me, ‘Kelly, you’re doing a good job keeping our floor at 100%.’”

After Kelly completes her 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning—which she’s on track to complete by the end of Spring 2022—she will be a mechatronics junior technician. But she does not plan to stop there. “I’m hoping for something a little bit bigger than that. I love to learn. I’m not afraid of it. At a minimum, I want to complete the next phase of this program. I just don’t want to be stagnant—I’m shooting for the stars.”





Samuel Muraguri

Career Choice

The first time 38-year-old Samuel Muraguri left his native Kenya, it was to come to the United States to join his mother, who had immigrated to America more than a decade earlier. Samuel had been an entrepreneur in Kenya. In the U.S., he found work as a packer in one of Amazon's warehouses near Seattle.

Despite no longer being his own boss, Samuel found his new surroundings interesting. "I got to meet people from different cultures," says Samuel. In working

at Amazon, Samuel learned a lot about the innovative technology embedded within a fulfillment center. He was equally intrigued by the Amazon-sponsored career development options he heard about soon after his 2016 hire. "I remember they would show videos of these people who had gone through Career Choice, and I found out they were offering a commercial driving license class."

The class was offered through Amazon's Career Choice, a program that pays full

tuition and fees for college tuition, high school diplomas, GED's, and English as a Second Language (ESL) proficiency certifications.

Along with commercial trucking, popular education paths include information technology, healthcare, and mechanical and skilled trades. The education and training may be in-person, online, or in classrooms located within Amazon's fulfillment centers. More than 50,000 workers in 14 countries have participated

in Career Choice since its launch in 2012.

"It was hard to believe there was a company that was going to pay you to go to school and get another job outside their company," says Samuel.

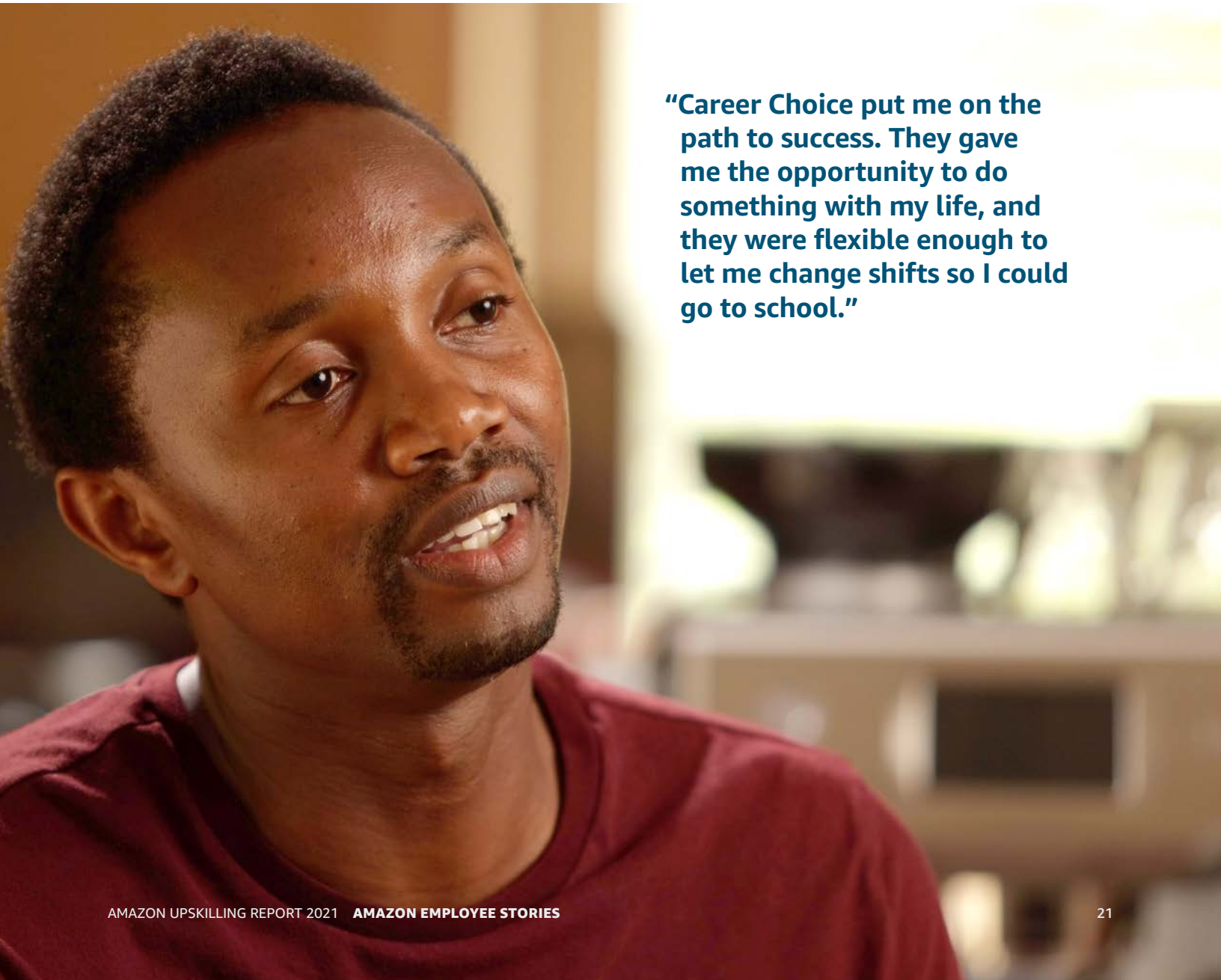
After Samuel received his commercial trucking license, he left Amazon for a car-hauling business. "I was able to make more money, which allowed me to buy a house in 2018, just two years after I arrived in the U.S. This is something I didn't think was possible with me being new to the country."

Samuel's connection to Amazon didn't end there, however. Still an entrepreneur at heart, he had observed the obsession with coffee throughout the Pacific Northwest, and he considered how he could use his connections back home to meet this demand. "We wanted a business that was going to create a solution, and the solution we got was to connect the farmers directly with the consumers."

Samuel started a coffee business, Upendo Coffee, and now sells his products on Amazon. "I'm really happy to sell on Amazon because it's the very

same place I was working. Knowing my coffee is going through the same place I was packing boxes gives me a feeling of achievement."

Samuel considers his accomplishments to be the result of his own hard work and the opportunities made possible by his first U.S. employer. "If you don't make any excuses and you work toward your goals, anything is possible. You just have to be set on the right path and have the right guidance, which is what Career Choice did for me. They put me on a path to success."



"Career Choice put me on the path to success. They gave me the opportunity to do something with my life, and they were flexible enough to let me change shifts so I could go to school."



Melfi Perez

Amazon Technical Apprenticeship

Soon after Melfi Perez separated from the U.S. Air Force in 2014, she was certain of two things: She wanted to complete her undergraduate degree, and she had a passion for technology.

Melfi used the GI Bill to earn a degree in information technology from Montclair State University in New Jersey while interning in a utility company's IT department. During her job search, she researched Amazon's culture and values. "I really like the core values of Amazon, and a lot of the leadership principles resonate with me. So I uploaded my resumé and completed a profile. A few months later, I had a recruiter reach out about the Amazon Technical Apprenticeship program, which is certified by the

Department of Labor.” The program specifically catered to veterans and military spouses.

Melfi liked what she learned from the recruiter. “This was one of the really amazing parts of Amazon, where their customer obsession kind of shined through. There were other companies that were doing similar apprenticeships, but Amazon was the only one I came across that was also paying their apprentices during the learning portion.”


In May 2019, Melfi traveled to Seattle to begin attending the technical boot

camp, followed by the classroom learning portion of her program. “The boot camp did a good job teaching us that it’s OK if we don’t know something and showing us tools to learn what you don’t know. That’s very important as a software engineer, because dealing with ambiguity is something that we have to learn how to handle on a daily basis.”

Successful completion of those two components led to her heading down to Santa Barbara, California, to begin her on-the-job training at a recently acquired startup supporting Alexa’s question and

answer service. After completing her apprenticeship, Melfi was converted to a full-time software development engineer in October 2019. As part of the Graphiq team, Melfi is paired with knowledge engineers to code the responses Alexa provides when customers ask her a question.

“This program opens the door for people to get paid to learn and figure out if they enjoy a field. And if they do really well, they’ll have a job.”



“There are very few companies out there that are willing to invest in new people in this manner.”



Amarpreet Wasan

Machine Learning
University

When Amarpreet Wasan joined Amazon as a business intelligence engineer, he was eager to put his degree in data science and analytics to use and to work in a discipline he found particularly intriguing. “I came across machine learning at Carnegie Mellon,” says Amarpreet. “I’d really wanted to build machine learning products and services since I’d graduated, but I never got an opportunity.”

From posters around Amazon buildings, Amarpreet became aware of Machine Learning University, an initiative that helps technology- and coding-focused Amazon employees develop their machine learning skills.

Machine Learning University’s expert-led classes and online learning modules gave him the opportunity to strengthen his machine learning knowledge to such a degree that he was able to take on much bigger challenges to support his particular supply chain organization. Amarpreet successfully built products for customers as a result of his participation in Machine Learning University. Currently, these products are used by a wide range of customers and are part of daily key decision making.

Amarpreet was promoted to data science manager and now leads a team of seven people—all working on launching machine learning products that help Amazon operations teams improve the physical movement of items and containers within fulfillment centers, saving millions of dollars in cost. “These

products actually help supply chain organization better serve our many customers. My team is currently working on five new products set to launch in 2021.”

“The mentorship I got from Machine Learning University set the foundation for my success at Amazon. A key thing for me was making strong relationships with people who helped me deliver my products.”

The program continues to be a resource and community for Amarpreet. “I am grateful to Amazon’s unique offering of Machine Learning University to build and grow internal talent. This is an exciting platform for someone who wants to learn machine learning to solve business problems and make an impact. I still take courses with Machine Learning University to continue expanding the breadth and the depth of my knowledge and come up with novel ways to address customer problems, enabling us to deliver the end-to-end machine learning products and services.”

Dave Williams

AWS Training and Certification, Tech U



Dave Williams was looking for a job that could combine his experience in the technical side of financial services, his advanced degree in cyber security, and his interest in cloud computing. He found it through an Amazon Web Services program called Tech U, an accelerated, 12-month career-development program with full-time pay and benefits that blends project-based learning and on-the-job training to help new employees starting technical roles at AWS.

“I hadn’t done any cloud-based work previously, so I saw it as an opportunity to get that technical skill set and be able to use it at an industry leader like Amazon.”

As part of the program, Dave participated in training, breakout collaborative sessions, and independent study with other Amazon employees who were also looking to improve their career outlook.

Since its inception in 2017, AWS Tech U has provided early-career Amazon employees the time and space to develop soft skills and technical expertise through a combination of

specialized training, mentorship, and projects designed to accelerate their technical career paths. AWS Tech U graduates are prepared to serve as solutions architects, technical trainers, and professional services consultant roles within AWS.

For Dave, the program also fostered enduring connections with members of his cohort. “The group work generated some cross-pollination of thoughts and ideas,” says Dave. “We developed some pretty close relationships through that program. I still work with or will ping some of my cohort on occasion, just to ask a question. I appreciate getting to build both lifelong friendships and professional relationships.”

Today, Dave works as a senior data science consultant at AWS, working directly with customers to meet their technical needs, with an emphasis on artificial intelligence and machine learning services.

Without AWS Tech U, Dave would not have had the flexibility and dedicated time to expand his knowledge of cloud computing in a format that encouraged proactive career development within Amazon. “I think the program really taught us to take it upon ourselves to go learn what’s needed for whatever the customer problem is. My experience in Tech U strengthened my technical depth and ability to provide effective thought leadership, which were essential in moving my career forward.”

To learn more about Amazon's upskilling commitment and its programs, visit
www.aboutamazon.com/upskilling2025



