

MERIT AMERICA TRACK SYLLABUS

 IT Support

What You'll Learn

Technical skill development takes place primarily via best-in-class online training, with supplemental live virtual IT office hours, events, and peer learning sessions.

The technical portion of the IT Support track takes approximately 305 hours.

Professional skills are practiced and honed throughout the Merit America program through 1:1 coaching and squad sessions. Each squad session focuses on a specific professional skills topic, with pre-work required for each session (e.g., take a course about receiving feedback, take a course about resume writing and draft a resume, etc.) and post-work often required after the session (e.g., revise your resume, conduct mock interviews using interviewing software, etc.).

Squad sessions are supplemented with cohort-wide events, including mock interviews, for learners to receive feedback from a variety of professional volunteer mentors.

Upon completing the learning program - learners are prepared to enter IT-related roles such as Help Desk Specialist, Technical Support Agent, Technical Account Specialist, etc.

How You'll Learn

Merit America provides a blended learning environment where you will participate in live virtual meetings and complete course work independently online.

- 1 **Online courses:** Take industry recognized technical and professional courses through Coursera, Microsoft Learn, and Big Interview that fit into your busy schedule. Enhance your learning with curated resources that align with your coursework.
- 2 **Career Coaching:** Hone your professional skills and chart your career roadmap with the help of a professional career coach both in small groups, 1 on 1, and scheduled weekly squad sessions.
- 3 **Group learning:** Work with like minded peers to collaborate on tough subjects and share resources to create a learning community, with support provided by Merit America alumni who work in the IT Field.
- 4 **Leverage learning tools:** Gain fluency with widely used digital workplace platforms and software including Zoom, Slack, Google suite, and our customized Merit America Learner Portal.

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IT Support Curriculum Summary

Week 1&2 - 20 hours per week

- Technical support fundamentals
- Overview of computer basics
- Introduction to Windows and Linux systems
- Hands on lab: creating files and installing software
- Professional introductions
- Workplace communication
- Goal setting and time management

Week 7&8 - 25 hours per week

- Systems administration
- Hands on lab: Configuring DNS and DHCP
- Active directory
- Backups and recovery
- IT Infrastructure
- Job search strategy
- Interviewing skills I (behavioral interviewing)

Week 3&4 - 20 hours per week

- Computer networking
- Five layer network model
- IT addressing and subnetting
- DNS/DHCP/VPN
- Hands on lab: subnetting
- Professional networking
- LinkedIn

Week 9, 10&11 - 25 hours per week

- IT security
- Hands on lab: Intro to tcpdump
- Encryption
- Authentication
- How to create a security plan
- Technical Troubleshooting
- Interviewing skills II (technical interviewing)

Week 5&6 - 25 hours per week

- Operating systems
- Windows GUI, Windows CLI and Linux shell
- Learn to troubleshoot
- Hands on lab: partitioning a disk in Windows and Linux
- Resume and cover letter writing

Week 12&13 - 25 hours per week

- Microsoft 365 Fundamentals course
- Ticketing systems
- Windows 10 operating systems course
- Salary negotiation
- Workplace diversity and inclusion
- Onboarding to your new job
- Job application follow ups

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Program Structure

FOUNDATIONS / 4 WEEKS

After attending an online kickoff celebration with your cohort and the Merit America team, you'll begin the Foundations phase. The Foundations phase is an exploratory phase consisting of the first four weeks of the program (orientation week and weeks 1 - 4) that provide you with the opportunity to better understand the Merit America program and begin intensive training. You'll learn more about our program and begin your skill development, and we'll learn more about you and your goals. If you successfully complete this phase of the program, you will advance to the Immersion phase.

Structure:

- Mandatory kickoff event
- Access granted to learning platforms and materials
- Rigorous technical & professional learning schedule (~20 hours per week)
- Mandatory weekly cohort-wide meetings with your professional development coach
- Office hours and 1:1 meetings
- Optional technical study group/office hours
- Program Director available for support/questions
- Optional technical and social events

IMMERSION / 9 WEEKS

The Immersion phase contains the bulk of your technical and professional skill development. The focus of this phase is to ensure you are prepared for your career transition. This phase includes learning to apply and applying to IT related jobs. Therefore, you must complete all technical and professional learning requirements to move into the placement phase.

Structure:

- Rigorous technical & professional learning schedule (~25 hours per week)
- Mandatory weekly cohort-wide meetings with your coach (squads)
- Mandatory biweekly small group coaching sessions
- Mandatory career planning 1:1 sessions with your coach
- Optional technical study groups/office hours
- Focus on professional development and job searching
- Placement Audit and job search tools (HUNTR) are utilized to track progress
- Events related to your career transition

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JOB SUCCESS / 12 WEEKS

The Job Success phase focuses entirely on ensuring that you have a successful job outcome. A successful outcome is operationally defined as a new full-time career related to the track and/or a starting salary of \$40,000+ annually. For those learners who have already secured a job before this phase begins — "early alumni," our expectation is that you offer some support/capacity in service of supporting other cohort members to land in qualified jobs.

Structure:

- Mandatory squad meetings
- Mandatory coach sessions and webinars
- Dedication to securing a new career through consistent and constant job applications. Until you have found a new job, you must submit quality applications for a minimum of 10 jobs per week to receive job support services and connections to partner employers.

ALUMNI

Once you're a Merit America alum, you're an alum for life. If you ever need help changing jobs or negotiating a higher salary, we're here for you. Our goal is to build careers beyond your first job out of the program.