



TIA ROSE



Software Developer Apprentice

Apprenti Oregon JATC

Portland, Oregon

After Tia got her bachelor's degree, she worked in banking for 5 years, but she always knew she was interested in technology. Tia grew up around computers, as her father was an IT Specialist, but, as a woman of color, she never felt like she was encouraged to go into the field. After she had her baby and became a stay-at-home mom, she taught herself how to program. One day when she and her daughter were at home listening to music on the radio, Tia heard about Apprenti—an apprenticeship program for the technology sector—and she applied.

“You have to know why you’re going into this program. For me, it was my daughter.”

The program itself was challenging for Tia, and it proved difficult to keep up. Classes lasted all day, and Tia regularly stayed up until midnight doing homework. Meanwhile, her husband took a job in Kansas, so she was taking care of her daughter alone on top of her coursework. At Apprenti, Tia learned JavaScript through lectures, hands-on labs, and workshops. At the end of each class, students presented as a group to members of the technology community, which

helped her improve her presenting skills. It was in one of these presentations that she met a director at Oregon State University, where she eventually wants to earn a degree in computer science.

Since finishing her courses, Tia has been working at [Five Talent](#), a technology consulting firm. She loves the problem-solving challenges in programming as well as the schedule flexibility. One of the most interesting things she has realized since being on the job is how important soft skills are in communicating and working on teams. The IT industry is heavily dominated by White men, and Tia says she is still trying to figure out how to be a woman of color in the industry. Although Tia's apprenticeship program was male-dominated, she says that her male classmates were very supportive of her and her fellow female classmate; they all continue to stay connected and network together.

“If there is any advice I can give to women and minorities, you don't have to get it right on your first try. And as long as you keep in mind where you want to be, you'll get here.”

Having paid training was critical for Tia's ability to make this pivotal step in her career. Her advice for future apprentices: find motivation. For her, it is her daughter. Now she has the freedom and flexibility she needs to spend time with her daughter, and the confidence to try new things and step out of her comfort zone.

Q: WHAT DOES A SOFTWARE DEVELOPER DO?

A: A software developer develops, creates, and modifies general computer application software or specialized utility programs. They analyze user needs and develop software solutions, and design software or customize software for client use with the aim of optimizing operational efficiency.