

BIZ SPOTLIGHT

IN DALLAS

FEATURED

TECHNOLOGY | PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

AI Needs Infrastructure. Infrastructure Needs People.

At Aligned, workforce development isn't a talking point — it's a business strategy. Here's how putting people first is powering the future of data centers

Data centers are powering the AI revolution, so it's no surprise that everyone is focused on the technology, capital and energy needed to meet demand.

What often gets overlooked, however, is the most essential resource: people. Their expertise and commitment will ultimately deliver on the promise of AI.

For those looking to enter the industry, this moment presents an incredible opportunity — a chance to build a career in a revolutionary field.

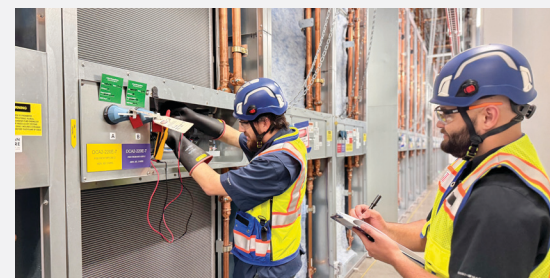
Putting people first is a cornerstone of our strategy. Of course, many companies claim people are their priority. At Aligned Data Centers, we really mean it. Workforce development is critical for us because our industry is growing rapidly and new talent is urgently needed.

By the end of the decade, the US could face a shortfall of 140,000 skilled tradespeople. Critical facilities technicians (CFTs) — the experts who keep data center equipment running — are in high demand as well.

Aligned in particular is expanding quickly. Since 2017, we've scaled our capacity by 67x, becoming one of the fastest-growing data center providers. Our team has scaled by more than 1,500%, and we've grown from three to 50 campuses across the Americas.

Recently, the Artificial Intelligence Infrastructure Partnership (AIP), MGX and BlackRock's Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP) acquired 100% of the equity in Aligned. This deal, which values the company at \$40 billion, will enable us to grow even faster. Next year alone, we plan to boost our headcount by 30%.

As our employees in DFW and elsewhere in Texas know, Aligned is more than megawatts — much more. Here's what we're doing to attract the right people and build a talent pipeline for tomorrow.



Andrew Schaap
CEO
Aligned Adaptive
Data Centers

Finding great talent in unexpected places

Being an employer of choice starts with having the right culture and values. That means letting team members do purposeful work. We also know that people want to join a company that cares about the environment and is a good neighbor — both priorities at Aligned.

When it comes to recruitment, one of our superpowers is reskilling: hiring capable people from outside the industry who are willing to learn.

The military is a key talent source. At Aligned, approximately 30% of our team are veterans whose technical skills lend themselves to the mission-critical tasks that keep data centers running smoothly. Our head of operations, a Navy nuclear vet, has built a customized program that retrains them to be CFTs.

We've also started working with DoD SkillBridge, which gives current service members the chance to gain civilian work experience. After we recently brought in our first SkillBridge CFT intern, they converted to a hire.

We recruit many trade-school grads with transferable skills, too, training them for operations roles like equipment maintenance, customer support and alarm response. But operations team members come from all walks of life. We hired a barista and an auto mechanic who both rose to management positions.

The mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) workers who construct data centers are another focus. Whenever possible, we source construction vendors and personnel locally. This approach creates well-paying jobs, boosts local businesses and keeps economic growth within the community. It also directly benefits our projects. Working with local teams provides us with a workforce that has a deep understanding of the regional environment, local regulations and the area's talent pool. The result: a more efficient and higher-quality build, plus a strong, long-term community partnership.

Creating a workplace where people want to stay and grow

Securing the right talent is just the start. We also ensure that

people stick around. Our philosophy: grow people and grow the business. That includes developing employees who know how to lead. We offer leadership training for three cohorts. Besides training for first-time leaders and mid-level managers, there's a Leadership Excellence program for high-potential employees.

The folks on our operations team have plenty of growth opportunities, too. Thanks to continuous training, they can rise from maintenance tech to facility manager. Then there's Aligned Women, an in-house program that aims to uplift and upskill female team members.

Promoting from within is key. For people who take the initiative, elevate others and don't need micromanaging, there's opportunity to grow.

We also empower team members to make a difference outside the office. Aligned employees attend many philanthropic events in DFW, including Night at the Museum, the Cattle Baron's Ball, the Folds of Honor North Texas Gala and the Crystal Charity Ball. They also support the National Breast Cancer Foundation by packing HOPE Kits filled with care items and handwritten messages for women undergoing treatment.

The reviews from our people are overwhelmingly positive. We're certified by Great Place to Work, a prestigious honor based entirely on what current employees say. This year, 91% of team members called Aligned a great place to work, 34 points higher than the average.

Building the next generation of talent in DFW and beyond

Fostering the talent that will keep our facilities running tomorrow is equally vital. That begins with awareness: telling young folks that the data center industry offers a fulfilling, high-paying career. In DFW, we offer students tours of our facilities that have resulted in job applications.

Collaborating with trade schools, colleges and universities is another way we're building a talent pipeline. For instance, I sit on the advisory board for Southern Methodist University's Master's in Datacenter Systems Engineering program. I was honored to play a role in developing this interdisciplinary degree, the first graduate program of its kind in the country.

Growing the next generation of data center pros also means helping people break into the industry. For students, recent grads and career changers, we offer a formal internship program that gives them hands-on work experience in operations.

And of course, we're doing our part to help revitalize the skilled trades. We recently donated \$100,000 to the mikeroweWORKS Foundation. The foundation aims to close the skills gap with its Work Ethic Scholarship program. So far, it's granted \$16 million in scholarships to 2,600 recipients. Founder Mike Rowe recently stopped by our HQ here in DFW, his first visit to a data center.

At Aligned, putting people first is our greatest strength. We're setting ourselves up for success by growing and developing our team. As we take the business to the next level, the right people will make all the difference.