

Living Our Values: Activating Potential

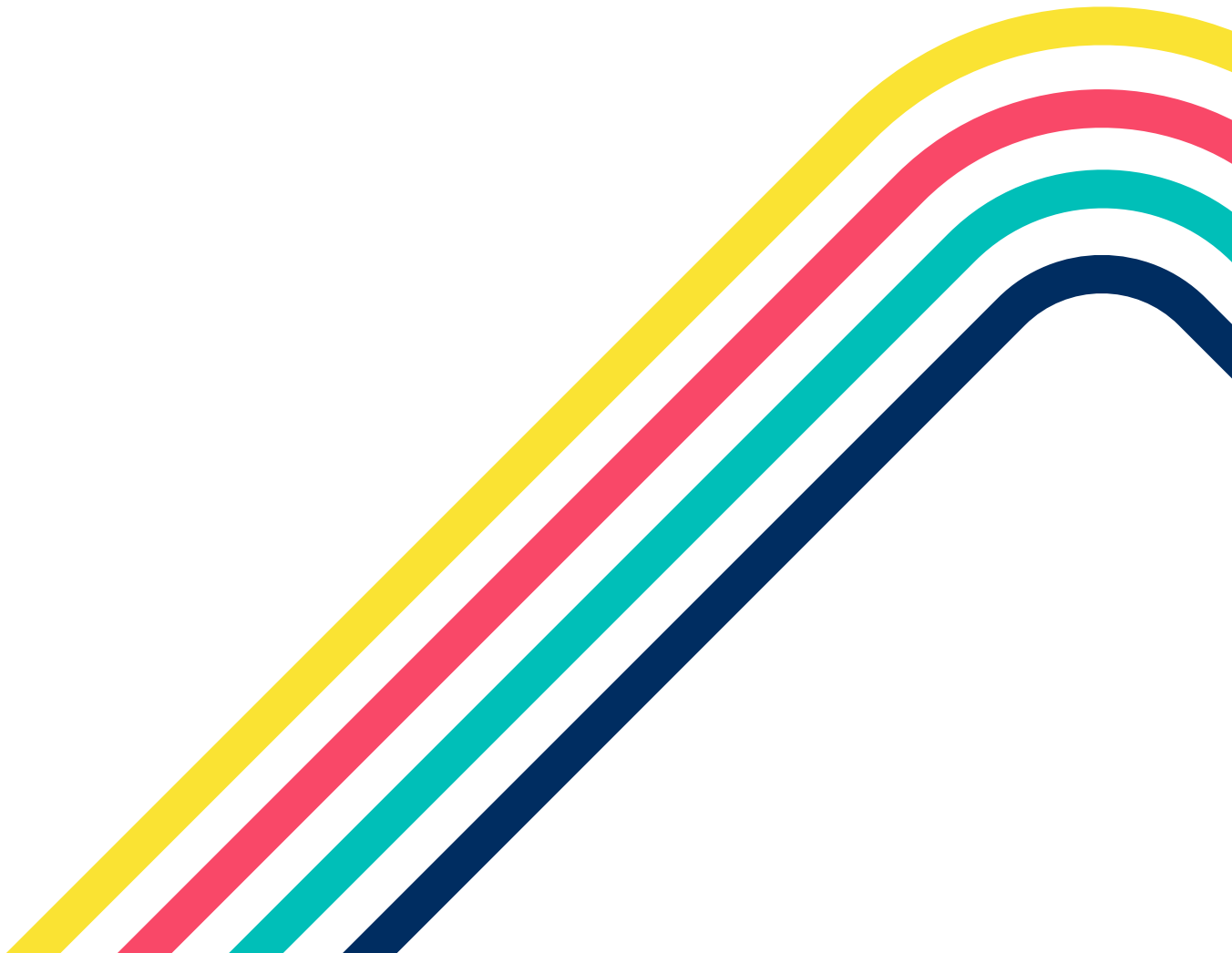


ACT[®]

December 2022

Contents

ACT's North Star	3
A letter from ACT CEO Janet Godwin	4
Journeys	6
Equity	9
People	12
Moving forward	14





ACT's North Star

We exist to fight for fairness in education and create a world where everyone can discover and fulfill their potential.

Education has power - a power that changes lives forever. It creates opportunities that lift up individuals and their families and sparks societal change that echoes through generations to come. From our grassroots, we have fought the good fight for equity in education, and we remain devoted to helping anyone that struggles to access that power. This is what matters to us and we must do better - we've never been more sure of our purpose.

Today, too many students, families and educators are battling to overcome systemic inequalities, such as discrimination and a lack of access to knowledge and resources. Coupled with increasing socio-economic uncertainty, those most in need continue to be held back by the widening of opportunity and equity gaps. Our true strength comes from sharing our expertise in research and analytics, and then partnering to learn, adapt and do what needs to be done.

Our mission is to help people be successful in their education and careers. We believe, more than ever before, education can deliver success on an unlimited scale. We care deeply about every learner's journey, and we strive to ensure everyone is given the opportunity to fulfill their potential and become the heroes they know they can be. For budding minds, the thinkers and the doers, we reveal the answers they can't find and widen their understanding of where learning can take them. By playing our part, everyone can discover and fulfill their potential.

As we develop integrated solutions, we empower educators and support learners at all stages of their journey. We help to create life changing opportunities and remove barriers that hold back too many people. These innovations in how we enable education will be the catalysts that transform generations to come. We are all in to create a world that values and encourages each individual's abilities and potential, and a society that is more fair and equitable.

A letter from ACT CEO Janet Godwin

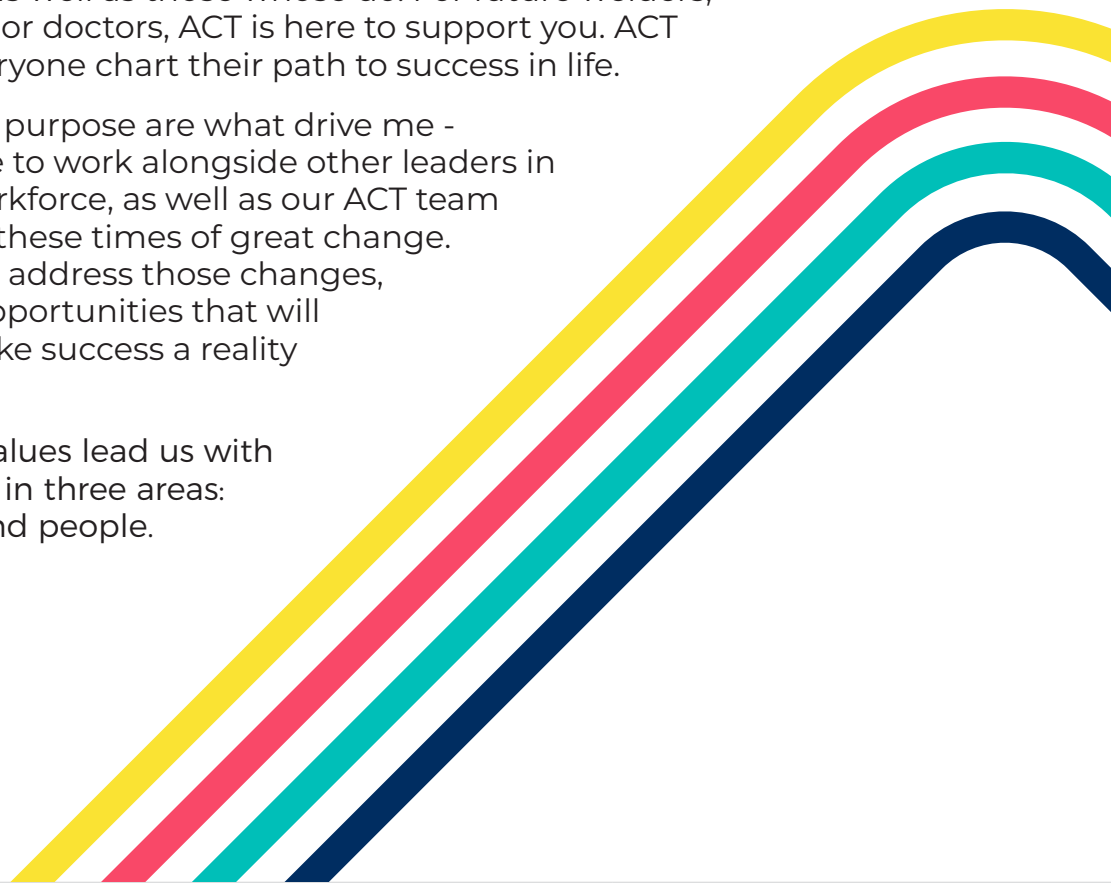
When ACT was founded in 1959, we had the bold goal of providing access to higher education for all students, including many who may not have had the opportunity or even considered earning a college degree.

As ACT navigates the evolving needs and expectations of learners alongside the continuing effects of the global pandemic, we are dedicated to making a positive impact for everyone in the education and workforce ecosystem.

Today, we are steadfast in our mission of helping people achieve education and workplace success. That means that as the world around us has changed, we must evolve. We need to work alongside other leaders, organizations, and stakeholders in education and workforce so that we truly can create a world where everyone can discover and fulfill their full potential. We need to help learners and workers whose journeys don't include a college degree, as well as those whose do. For future welders, architects, coders, or doctors, ACT is here to support you. ACT is here to help everyone chart their path to success in life.

ACT's mission and purpose are what drive me - and it is a privilege to work alongside other leaders in education and workforce, as well as our ACT team members, during these times of great change. It is how we rise to address those changes, challenges, and opportunities that will create ways to make success a reality for all people.

Our mission and values lead us with a directional focus in three areas: journeys, equity, and people.



In our work, engaging across the education and workforce sectors, with colleagues, collaborators, and learners, we know that education and training are critical to the fulfillment of our mission.

We are activating learner journeys by building on our more than six decades of success in serving across the ecosystem. By combining the strengths of ACT and our colleagues at Encoura, we can go beyond test results to widen our reach and support.

Looking ahead, we will address critical education equity needs through our commitment to Equity by Design, an approach puts the learner at the center and includes diverse populations throughout our design process. We will leverage the incredible strength of ACT's team members by creating a workforce and culture that is more representative of those we serve.

As CEO, I have had the unique opportunity to connect with learners and leaders in states, districts, schools, higher education institutions, advocacy organizations, and across the workforce sector to gain input, feedback, and direction. Your insights have informed how we are bringing this vision to life. By working in alignment – with you, our stakeholders – we will stay true to our mission and vision to help prepare more people to be successful in their education, careers, or wherever their journeys may take them.

Janet Godwin
CEO, ACT

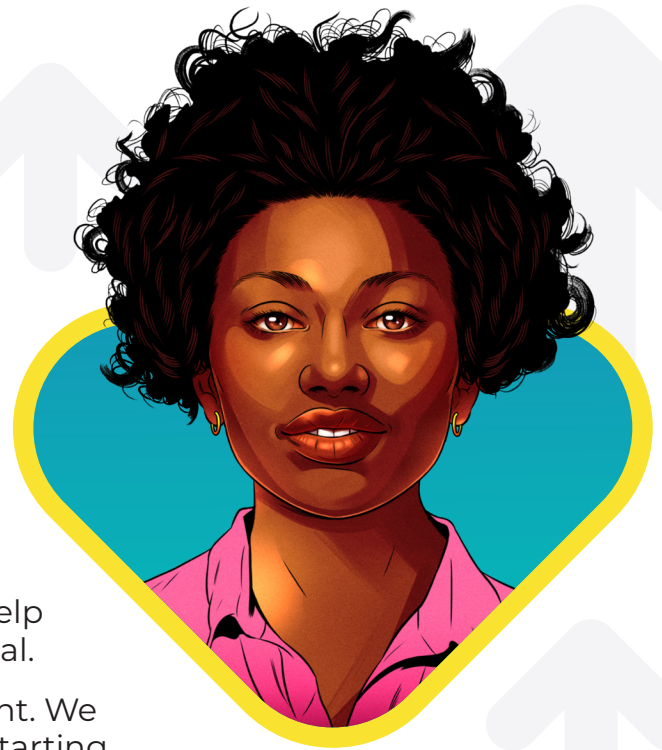


Journeys

At ACT, we believe that every learner – whether they are a middle school student, graduating senior, working learner, or lifelong learner – is on a journey striving for success in college, career, and life. As our mission and vision affirm, we will continue to work alongside learners, and those who serve them, to help everyone discover and fulfill their potential.

ACT understands that everyone is different. We all have different abilities, interests, and starting points in life. The many choices that learners make determine their future and their likelihood of success.

This diversity of journeys, choices, and destinations drives ACT's evolution to improve how we serve all our stakeholders. We are working to help all learners discover the options that are available to them and provide access to the supports they will need in order to take advantage of those opportunities.



ACT understands that everyone is different. We all have different abilities, interests, and starting points in life. The many choices that learners make determine their future and their likelihood of success.

You know us primarily for the ACT test. But we have always been, and will continue to be, so much more than that. As we work to understand each individual learner's desired future, we are also working to make connections that will help them navigate through the college-going process, into the workforce, and beyond.

Learners need continuous support from their champions – teachers, counselors, mentors, and families, as well as their communities. They also need a way to make inferences about, and connections to, their many choices.

Our goal is to create a set of solutions and services that do just that. We want to make things easier and more accessible by offering the best resources and tools available and adding the support and guidance students need.

Learners who are still unclear about their future can benefit from this holistic focus. As we aim to help students understand their strengths and opportunities, we can help them discover what their future could look like and gain the confidence to pursue their goals.

As we aim to help students understand their strengths and opportunities, we can help them discover what their future could look like and gain the confidence to pursue their goals.

This evolution of our services and products builds on the foundations and expertise in assessment and the strong relationships we have with educators; K12 and higher education leaders; and those in workforce development. The ACT, PreACT, WorkKeys, and other learning and assessment tools are being refined, connected, and made more accessible to those who use them through improved data management and insights.

One way that we are doing this is through [Encourage](#), our innovative engagement platform and mobile app that gives students the tools to design their journey after high school. As we continue to develop and expand Encourage, it will become a place for learners to discover their options and access the supports and guidance they will need to be successful.

Future versions of Encourage will include resources and tools to support other key champions for students, including educators and school counselors.

ACT's more than six decades of data, research, and learning insights inform everything we do. We use them to inform our assessment and learning philosophy which informs our product development and the services we develop and provide.



We are also committing to comprehensively embedding Equity by Design in all our processes to ensure that we lead with the principle and practices of equity at the center of all that we do. We are listening to key communities and constituencies to be intentional and transparent about gathering their feedback and input early in the design and development process. We are working to incorporate those insights to ensure communities of color, those with disabilities, students who would be the first in their family to attend college, as well as many others, are represented and supported.

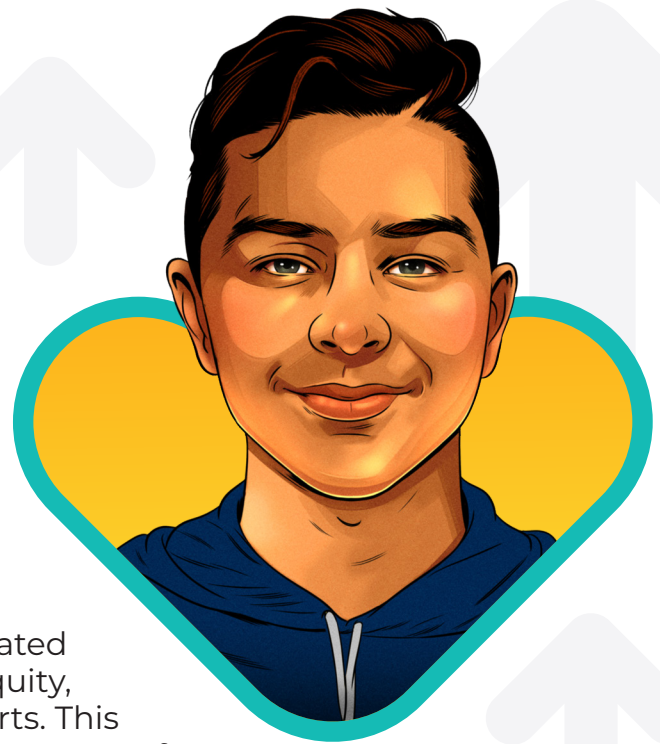
ACT's more than six decades of data, research, and learning insights inform everything we do. We use them to inform our product development and the services we develop and provide.

None of this happens without you. We want to learn from you, hear your ideas, and get your feedback throughout our design and development processes. We need to understand what your needs and challenges are and how we can help you solve them. We're on this journey together and are committed to working more effectively with you to ensure that the pursuit of success in education, workplace, and life activates every learner's potential.



Equity

ACT's commitment to equity, which comes to life every day through our mission and the work of [ACT's Center for Equity in Learning](#), is finding new focus through an intentional commitment to Equity by Design. This emphasis will connect ACT's more than 60 years of success as a trusted assessment organization with an accelerated commitment to highlight and amplify equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice in our efforts. This strategic focus is essential for ACT's next 60 years of success – and the success of the students we serve.



Given the significant demographic shifts in the U.S., as well as recent local and global disruptions in learning, ACT is working alongside our stakeholders to ensure that gaps in access and opportunity continue to be identified and addressed. The effects of the digital divide, emergence of artificial intelligence and virtual reality, as well as ongoing systemic barriers to success for so many, require that education and work beyond high school are meaningfully transformed in this watershed moment.

Equitable design acknowledges that equity doesn't happen by chance, but with meaning and focus.

Students, families, and educators are battling to overcome systemic inequities, while the historical barriers that have affected learning outcomes for many communities are unfortunately growing more acute. Education and workforce leaders are being asked to work harder, listen more, and adapt rapidly to meet the needs of students, educators, and employees. Business as usual is no longer able to meet the present and future needs of the education and workforce ecosystem.

ACT is committed to Equity by Design, which is critical as we work to address these systemic barriers to success for so many. This intentional focus includes:

- a way of approaching education reform that puts the learner at the center of the policies and practices contributing to disparities in education achievement and abstains from blaming students and educators for those accumulated disparities;
- a commitment to design solutions that honors the input from diverse stakeholders, meets the needs of all learners, and is achieved through collaboration where influence is distributed and shared; and
- the practice of purposefully involving those being served as key players throughout a design process ensuring that diverse voices directly affect how the solution will address inequities and achieve the prescribed goal.

Equitable design acknowledges that equity doesn't happen by chance, but with meaning and focus.

By embracing a comprehensive focus on Equity by Design, ACT is redoubling our efforts to be consistent, deliberate, and transparent in our commitment to serving all students well and making significant progress toward advancing opportunity and outcomes for all.

At ACT, our focus on equity requires the deliberate, consistent, and transparent integration of information, perspectives, and resources from, for, and about diverse communities to achieve positive outcomes for those served – this is Equity by Design. As a result, our work is committed to valuing results and reach over intention, and it focuses on the assets, capabilities, and strengths that individuals and communities bring to the table as key to achieving equitable outcomes.

Our focus on equity is anchored to the vision of ACT's founder, E.F. Lindquist, who charged ACT to be an organization committed to serving a "broad and inclusive population." What's more, it advances his message by ensuring that disaggregated data is used to better understand how all are well served – with special attention on students of color, students who would be the first in their family to attend college, students from low-income families, and students with disabilities.

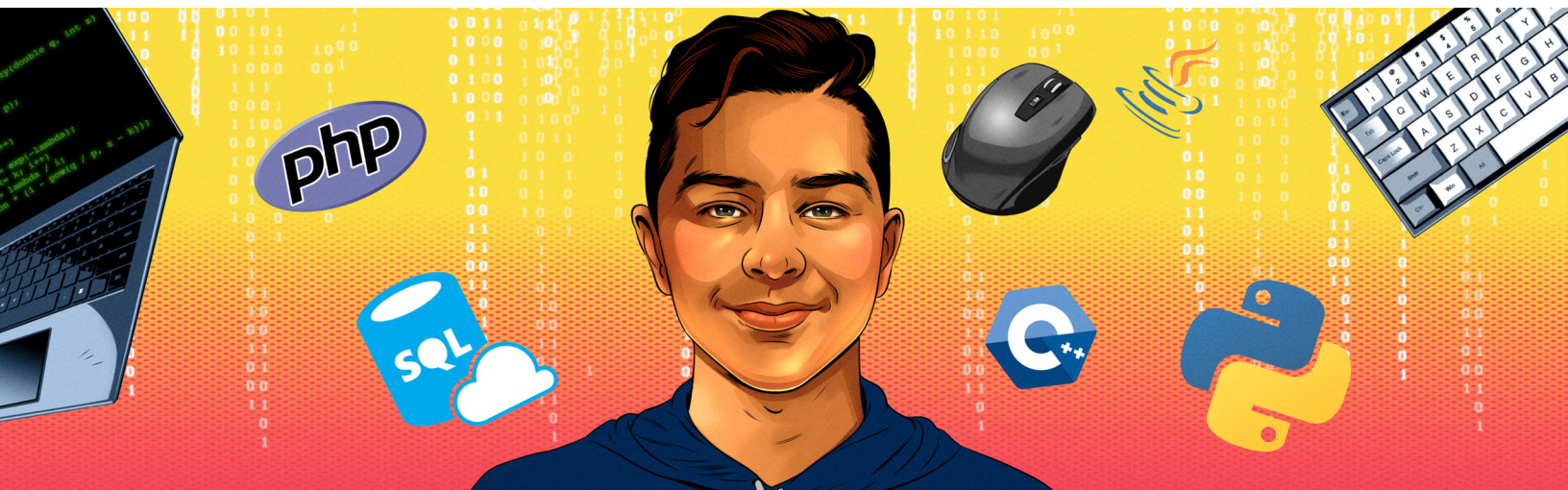
Through our focus on Equity by Design, ACT will strengthen and accelerate our ability to build inclusive tools and solutions that support all learners along their academic and career readiness journeys.

ACT is working alongside our stakeholders to ensure that gaps in access and opportunity continue to be identified and addressed. The effects of the digital divide, emergence of artificial intelligence and virtual reality, as well as ongoing systemic barriers to success for so many, require that education and work beyond high school are meaningfully transformed in this watershed moment.

Equity by Design is aligned with [ACT's Holistic Framework](#) and embraces five steps:

- **empathize** - immersing yourself with the users and their experiences to get to the core of their desires and pain points;
- **define** - synthesizing lessons learned during the empathy phase to define a problem statement that is narrow enough so that it is answerable but broad enough, so it leaves room for new solutions to emerge;
- **ideate** - coming up with many different ideas without judgment;
- **prototype** - picking a few ideas and creating physical prototypes users can interact with to test a solution; and
- **test** - putting the prototype in front of users and testing the prototype and its design.

By embracing a comprehensive focus on Equity by Design, ACT is redoubling our efforts to be consistent, deliberate, and transparent in our commitment to serving all students well and making significant progress toward advancing opportunity and outcomes for all.



People

ACT's purpose is meaningful and far-reaching. It speaks to our mission to help all people achieve education and workplace success. It's also critical to our team members: the people who carry out the research; who design our products; and who deliver the services that help activate learners' journeys.

To successfully deliver on our vision, our team members need to be empowered to do their best work. They are dedicated to bringing our mission to life and the effect we can have on the lives of students, educators, and the workforce.

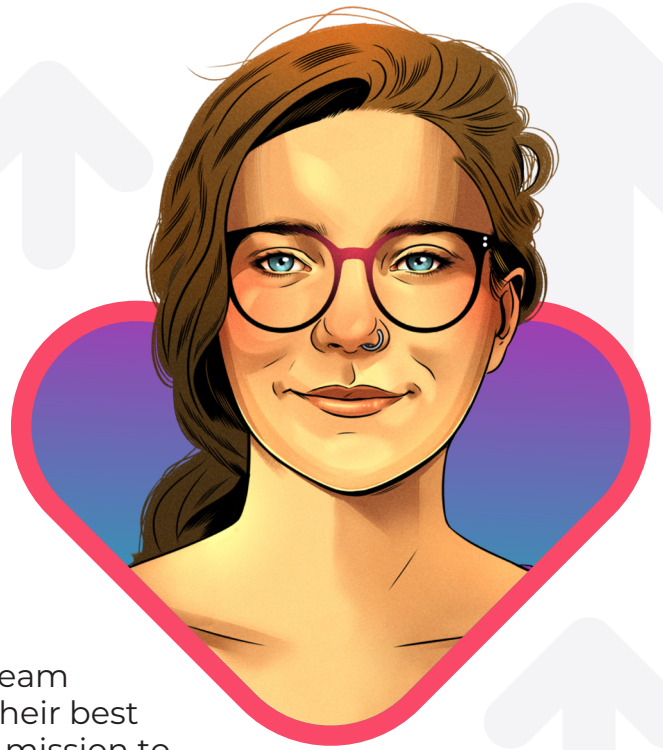
ACT's mission is a key reason that our team members choose to work – and stay – at ACT. Our deliberate efforts to embed Equity by Design practices ensure that we go beyond just communicating our mission. Team members are actively fighting for fairness in education every day through the work that they do at ACT.

To best represent students, educators, institutions, employers, and the workforce, our team member demographics must reflect our society.

We are working to continuously increase the diversity of our workforce and ensure that more voices have a say in the depth and breadth of our work.

ACT's mission is a key reason that our team members choose to work – and stay – at ACT. Our deliberate efforts to embed Equity by Design practices ensure that we go beyond just communicating our mission.

At ACT, we help our team members achieve workplace success by ensuring that their work is meaningful and is visibly tied to our mission; providing clear and regular feedback so that they have confidence in their work; and articulating that there is not just one path to career development and progression.



We recognize that our team members' efforts best deliver on our mission and purpose when we engage with our stakeholders across the education and workforce ecosystem.

We recognize that our team members' efforts best deliver on our mission and purpose when we engage with our stakeholders across the education and workforce ecosystem.

Our team members work tirelessly alongside the communities we serve, across the U.S. and around the world:

- with local, state, and national leaders in education who are as passionate as we are about reinventing education and workforce development;
- alongside equity stakeholders with whom we collaborate to make a difference for the diverse populations who are most in need;
- together with policymakers who are making decisions about what changes need to be made to address persistent and systemic barriers to equity, access, and opportunity;
- in communities across the country where we live and work, to align our resources and solutions with education and workforce needs;
- with and for individual learners; and
- in the community in Iowa City, the home of our headquarters for more than 60 years.

As we encourage our team members in these meaningful ways, ACT ensures that our people are ready to serve learners and workers and those who support them. By doing so, we are activating potential.



Moving forward

ACT is evolving to meet the changing needs of the learners we serve, as well as educators, workers, employers, and other critical stakeholders across the education and workforce ecosystem. Now, more than ever, we must live our values and hone our focus on the journeys, equity, and people at the heart of all we do.

It is through this work, and by engaging with strong collaborators, that ACT will be more effective in serving students, educators, workers, employers, and the many leaders in education and workforce. We know that we cannot do this work alone. Join us as we work toward education and workplace success for all.





ACT is a mission-driven, nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people achieve education and workplace success. Grounded in more than 60 years of research, ACT is a trusted leader in college and career readiness solutions. Each year, ACT serves millions of students, job seekers, schools, government agencies, and employers in the U.S. and around the world with learning resources, assessments, research and credentials designed to help them succeed from elementary school through career.

www.act.org

© ACT 2022