



Public Sector Apprenticeship

TOOLKIT

MAY 2024

**ADDRESSING CRITICAL WORKFORCE SHORTAGES
IN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

INSIDE YOU'LL FIND:

state examples, helpful tips,
step by step guides, state
apprenticeship contacts,
frequently asked
questions and more.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3	Section 4 Recruiting, Selecting and Hiring Apprentices	18
About The Council of State Governments	3	4.1 Apprentice Classification.....	18
Funder Acknowledgement	3	Classifying Apprentices in State and Local Government....	18
Section 1 Overview of Registered Apprenticeship Programs	4	Non-Classified Apprentices in State and Local Government	19
1.1 Introduction to Registered Apprenticeship Programs.....	4	Classifying Apprentices upon Completion of a RAP.....	19
What is a Registered Apprenticeship Program?.....	4	4.2 Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices.....	19
Required Components of RAPs.....	4	Designing a Recruitment Plan for Apprentices.....	19
1.2 Advantages of RAPs.....	5	Federal Requirements for Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices.....	20
Advantages of RAPs for Governments.....	5	Affirmative Action Programs for RAPs.....	22
Advantages of RAPs for Apprentices.....	6	Hiring Apprentices.....	23
1.3 The Key Roles in RAPs.....	6	Section 5 Onboarding, Protecting, Supporting and Advancing Apprentices	24
RAP Sponsors.....	6	5.1 Apprentice Onboarding.....	24
Related Instruction Providers.....	7	Federal Requirements for Onboarding Apprentices.....	24
Apprenticeship Approving Authorities.....	7	Best Practices for Apprentice Onboarding.....	24
1.4 Getting Started with a RAP.....	8	5.2 Protecting Apprentices.....	25
Apprenticeable Positions.....	8	Federal EEO Requirements for Preventing Discrimination and Harassment against Apprentices.....	25
Supports for Government Agencies.....	8	What resources are available to assist agencies in preventing harassment and discrimination in RAPs?.....	25
Section 2 Joining or Developing a RAP	9	What are the federal requirements for handling apprentice disputes?.....	26
2.1 Joining a RAP.....	9	5.3 Mentorship for Apprentices.....	26
2.2 Sponsoring a RAP.....	10	5.4 Support Services for Apprentices.....	27
2.3 Considerations for Agency Sponsors.....	10	Barriers to Program Completion.....	27
Choosing the Design of a RAP.....	10	Wraparound Supports for Apprentices.....	27
Developing a Work Process Schedule.....	11	5.5 Advancing Apprentices.....	27
Determining the Length of a RAP.....	12	Apprentice Progress in a RAP.....	27
Developing and Providing Related Instruction.....	12	Progressive Wage Requirements for Apprentices.....	27
Partnering with Education Providers.....	13	Meeting Wage Progression Requirements for State and Local Governments.....	28
Registering a RAP.....	14	Paying Apprentices during Related Instruction.....	28
Collective Bargaining Agreements and RAPs.....	14	Section 6 Evaluating and Tracking Apprentices	29
Modifying a RAP.....	14	6.1 Probationary Periods for Apprentices.....	29
Section 3 Funding Registered Apprenticeship Programs	15	Probationary Periods for RAPs.....	29
3.1 Costs Associated with RAPs.....	15	6.2 Apprentice Evaluation.....	29
Apprentice Wages and Benefits.....	15	Federal Requirements for Apprentice Evaluation.....	29
Mentor Wages.....	15	Aligning Federal Apprentice Evaluation and Employee Evaluation Requirements.....	29
Administrative Costs.....	15	6.3 Apprentice Tracking.....	30
Funding Related Instruction.....	15	Tracking Apprentice Data.....	30
3.2 Offsetting Costs of RAPs.....	16	Tracking Program Compliance with EEO Regulations.....	30
Impacts on Productivity and Output.....	16	Acknowledgements	31
Impacts on Employee Turnover.....	16	Appendix: Apprenticeship Contacts by State	31
Impacts on Liability Costs.....	16		
Calculating the Return on Investment of RAPs.....	16		
3.3 Funding Supports for RAPs.....	17		
State Funding Sources for RAPs.....	17		
Federal Funding Sources for RAPs.....	17		

Introduction

In 2022, The Council of State Governments Center of Innovation partnered with Apprenticeship Colorado, which is a part of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), to develop a Public Sector Apprenticeship Toolkit to provide guidance for expanding the number of registered apprenticeships offered by Colorado state agencies. The partnership was initiated after Governor Jared Polis signed [Executive Order D 2022-027](#), which directed the CDLE and Department of Personnel and Administration to increase public sector apprenticeship offerings by 20% by June 2023.

Like Colorado, many other states are interested in using apprenticeship as a tool to address labor shortages in state and local government. The following toolkit has been adapted from the Colorado guide to serve as a resource for state, county and city governments across the country when implementing public sector apprenticeship programs. The goal of the toolkit is to educate state leadership on the benefits and implementation of registered apprenticeship programs and support them to identify and address common barriers.

About The Council of State Governments

Founded in 1933, The Council of State Governments is the nation's largest nonpartisan organization serving all three branches of state elected and appointed officials. The mission of CSG is to champion excellence in state government. The organization executes that mission through its national office in Lexington, Kentucky, its four regional offices, the CSG Justice Center and its 11 national affiliated organizations.

Funder Acknowledgement

This project was supported by a grant from Ascendium Education Group. Ascendium Education Group is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to helping people reach the education and career goals that matter to them. Ascendium invests in initiatives designed to increase the number of students from low-income backgrounds who complete postsecondary degrees, certificates and workforce training programs, with an emphasis on first-generation students, incarcerated adults, rural community members, students of color and veterans. Ascendium's work identifies, validates and expands best practices to promote large-scale change at the institutional, system and state levels, with the intention of elevating opportunity for all. For more information, visit <https://www.ascendiumphilanthropy.org>.



SECTION 1

Overview of Registered Apprenticeship Programs

1.1 | Introduction to Registered Apprenticeship Programs

What is a Registered Apprenticeship Program?

Registered Apprenticeship Programs, or RAPs, are high-quality career pathways that are industry-vetted and approved by the U.S. Department of Labor. Registered apprenticeship programs can enable state and local governments to develop and prepare its future workforce through a combination of on-the-job training, classroom instruction and mentoring. RAPs can connect agencies to larger, more diverse candidate pools and enable them to hire employees who may not otherwise meet the minimum education or experience requirements of various positions. RAPs provide hands-on training and generally have few or no minimum qualifications. RAPs can also enable agencies to train current staff for more advanced positions.

Individuals participating in RAPs obtain paid work experience, receive progressive wage increases, earn a nationally recognized, portable credential, and can also earn college credit.

Required Components of RAPs

The U.S. Office of Apprenticeship identifies [seven required components](#) of all registered apprenticeship programs.

1. Industry led

The training components of any RAP are driven by and designed in consultation with industry leaders, to ensure that all apprentices are prepared with the skills necessary to succeed in high-demand occupations.

2. Paid Job

Apprentices are paid wages throughout their apprenticeship program following a progressive scale, a wage structure in which an apprentice's wages increase based on advancement through the program. Advancement is determined by the skills and competencies acquired, the number of hours spent in the program or a combination of the two. Upon completion of the RAP, an individual will earn the wage of a regular, fully proficient employee. For more information on progressive wage scales, see [Section 5.5 Advancing Apprentices](#).

3. Structured, On-the-Job Learning

RAPs provide structured, on-the-job learning, enabling apprentices to immediately apply what they have learned and gain skills in real-time. On-the-job learning is facilitated by experienced mentors who provide support and instruction to apprentices throughout the program.

4. Supplemental Education

On-the-job learning is supplemented by classroom instruction, often referred to as related instruction, which may be provided directly by the employer or by a third-party education provider, such as a community college or technical school. Related instruction can be provided in-person, online or in a hybrid

setting. See [Section 2.3 Considerations for Agency Sponsors](#) for more information.

5. Diversity

RAPs are designed so that the apprentice population is representative of the communities in which they operate. Equal employment opportunity practices, such as developing an affirmative action plan and providing anti-harassment training, help to ensure non-discrimination. For more information about equal employment opportunity requirements for RAPs, see [Section 4.2 Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices](#) and [Section 5.2, Protecting Apprentices](#).

6. Quality and Safety

Apprentices have the same worker protections throughout all stages of the program as any other employee. They receive the training and supervision necessary to be safe and successful.

7. Credentials

Upon completion of a RAP, an apprentice will receive a Certificate of Apprenticeship Completion from the U.S. Department of Labor, a nationally and industry-recognized credential. In some programs, apprentices can earn other industry credentials or college credits as well.

COMPONENTS OF REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS



Industry Led



Diversity



Paid Job



Quality and Safety



Structured, On-the-Job Learning



Credentials



Supplemental Education

BASIC DEFINITIONS

Adapted from the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP):

An industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce and individuals can obtain paid work experience, earn progressive wage increases, engage in classroom instruction and attain a portable, nationally recognized credential.

Apprentice: Any individual employed under a RAP. An apprentice is a regular employee beginning on the first day of the program. Apprentices may be full-time or part-time employees based on the requirements and schedule of the program.

On-the-Job Learning: Structured, hands-on training facilitated by an experienced employee-mentor who helps apprentices master the requirements of their job.

Mentor: An experienced employee who teaches skills to apprentices through on-the-job learning. The role of a mentor is to **observe, coach, support and provide encouragement** to the apprentice. Mentors instruct, guide on-the-job learning and prepare the apprentice for evaluation, but are not necessarily direct supervisors of apprentices.

Related Instruction: Supplemental classroom education that reinforces on-the-job learning and supports the acquisition of any required credentials for the occupation. Apprentices often earn college credit for completing related instruction which can be put towards an associate or bachelor's degree, but this is not a requirement of RAPs.

Work Process Schedule: An outline of the job functions and competencies that an apprentice will master during the RAP. The U.S. Department of Labor funded an [online library of apprenticeship standards](#) with sample work process schedules that are searchable by industry or occupation.

Apprenticeship Standards: An organized, written plan describing the terms and conditions of employment, training and supervision of apprentices within a RAP. These are submitted as part of the registration process. Apprenticeship standards include a work process schedule, an outline of all related instruction that an apprentice will complete and a summary of selection procedures.

Registered Apprenticeship Program Information Database System (RAPIDS): The U.S. Department of Labor federal database of all RAPs that serves as the primary platform for reporting information on apprentices and other relevant program information. Sponsors use RAPIDS or another state-specific database system to track apprentice and program data.

1.2 | Advantages of RAPs

Advantages of RAPs for Governments

Fill vacancies and address talent development goals

RAPs can assist state agencies in filling vacancies created by the aging of the workforce, in addition to other workforce trends. Aspects of apprenticeship programs such as mentorship, low- or no-cost training, a progressive wage scale and a nationally recognized credential can all help increase the appeal of public sector employment to potential employees.

Increase retention and loyalty of employees

According to the [U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship](#), 93% of apprentices go on to work in permanent roles in the organizations where they apprenticed. Apprentices are more likely to be loyal to employers since they perceive that their employer has invested in their professional development through apprenticeship, which reduces agency costs associated with turnover and increases productivity. On average, employers report as much as a [200% increase in productivity from apprenticeship programs](#). See [Section 3.2 Calculating the Return on Investment of RAPs](#) for more information on the return on investment for apprenticeship programs.

Increase the diversity of the workforce and advance equity, diversity and inclusion goals

Most apprenticeship programs do not require a bachelor's degree and instead offer training on-the-job and through related instruction. This allows state and local government agencies to engage with traditionally untapped pools of talent, especially communities facing barriers to higher education or postsecondary job training, such as people with disabilities, low-income individuals or dislocated workers.

Develop a highly skilled workforce

RAPs enable state agencies to create flexible training options that ensure workers develop the right skills necessary to succeed and thrive in their jobs. In a RAP, state and local government agencies determine the exact skills apprentices need to gain and ensure that they master these job functions. In a [national survey](#) of apprenticeship sponsors, more than 80% reported that registered apprenticeship was helpful in meeting their demand for skills. Additionally, RAPs can allow agencies to pass down specific institutional knowledge through mentorship and hands-on training.

Enhance interagency collaboration and coordination

For public sector RAPs to succeed, state and local government agencies should include their department of human resources early in the planning process. The partnerships necessary between human resources and other agencies to develop a successful RAP can increase coordination among agencies and contribute to the breaking down of silos in state and local government.

Other benefits

Some additional benefits of RAPs that have been cited by employers include avoided mistakes and errors, reductions in downtime, avoided overtime, increased coworker productivity, increased process innovations and in-house training of future management. See [Section 3.2 Offsetting Costs of RAPs](#) for more information about these benefits.

Advantages of RAPs for Apprentices

Earn wages while learning

Unlike some interns, all apprentices are considered paid employees from their first day and earn wages on a progressive scale. The average starting salary post-apprenticeship is [\\$77,000 per year](#), and apprenticeship graduates earn [as much as \\$300,000 more over their lifetime](#) compared to workers who do not complete an apprenticeship program.

Gain training at no or minimal cost

Apprentices gain an education at minimal or no cost to them through registered apprenticeship programs. Tuition, books and other classroom materials are typically covered by the employer in an apprenticeship program and state departments of labor or apprenticeship approving authorities often provide numerous funding sources to assist employers with paying for apprentice education. See [Section 3.3 Funding Supports for RAPs](#) for additional information on funding apprentice education.

Earn a nationally recognized, portable credential in an in-demand field

RAPs are certified and validated by the U.S. Department of Labor, so apprentices who complete RAPs earn a nationally recognized and portable credential recognized by employers across their industry. Many apprentices will work full-time for the agency they apprenticed under, but the portable credential they earn from a RAP will be recognized across their industry. This contributes to the number of high-skilled, high-quality employees available across a state.

1.3 | The Key Roles in RAPs

State agencies and local governments have three options for engaging in RAPs. They can:

1. Serve as the program sponsor, which lets them lead the program design and administration of a RAP.
2. Join an existing program as an employer partner.
3. Join a new RAP being created by a union, intermediary or other government entity as an employer partner.

As agencies build out their programs, they may engage related instruction and workforce partners to further enhance their programs.

Whether an agency chooses to serve as a sponsor or join a program with a different sponsor, the agency, as the employer, is responsible for recruiting, hiring, paying and providing mentorship to apprentices.

RAP Sponsors

A sponsor is any entity that operates and administers a RAP. Sponsors can be an individual employer, a group of employer partners administering a program together or a third-party organization, known as an [intermediary](#), administering the program on behalf of an employer or group of employers.

In government, a sponsor can be a state or local government agency, a group of agencies, a workforce intermediary such as an industry association, a labor organization, or an education provider, like a community college or technical school.

RAP sponsors are responsible for:

- Designing the apprenticeship program.
- Registering the apprenticeship program.
- Identifying the sources of related instruction.
- Overseeing all state and federal reporting requirements for apprentices. See [Section 4.2 Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices](#) and [Section 6.3 Apprentice Tracking](#).





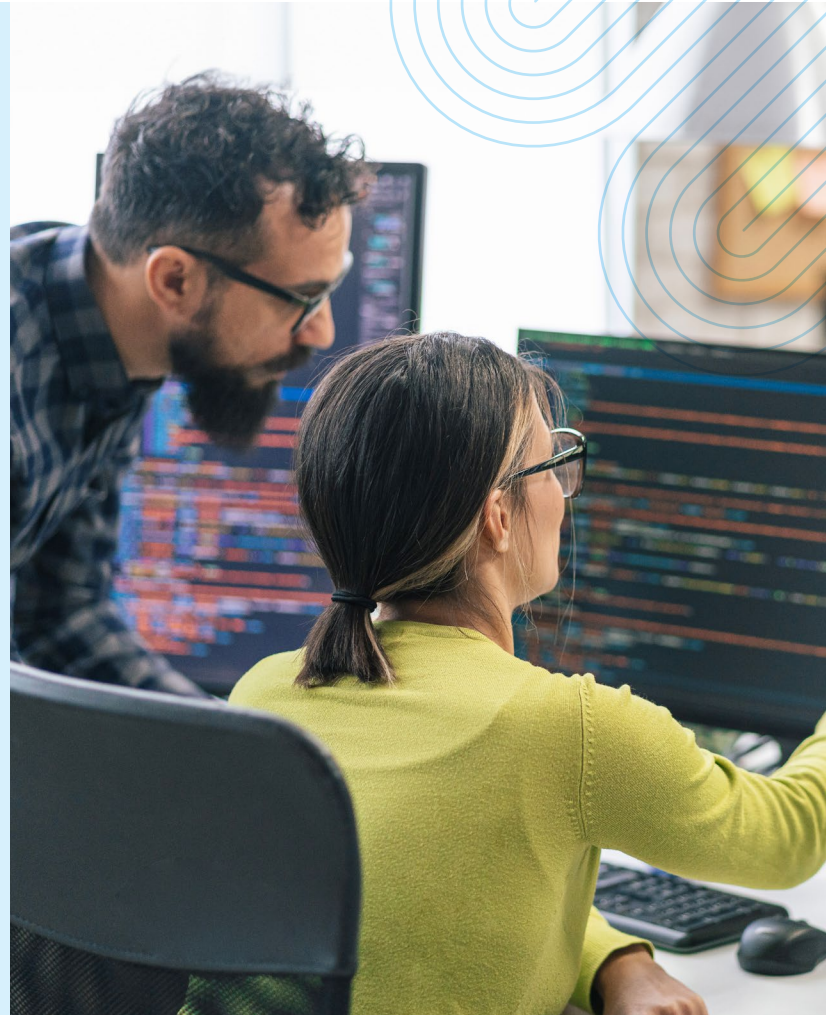
STATE EXAMPLE Become a Sponsor

Several agencies in **Kentucky**, including the [Department of Corrections](#) and the [Governor's Office of Early Childhood](#) have become sponsors of registered apprenticeship programs in state government. Apprentices in these agencies are employed using the [Apprentice I](#) and [Apprentice II](#) classifications established by the state in 2018. As the program sponsor, these agencies have full control over the design and administration of their programs.



STATE EXAMPLE Join an Existing RAP Sponsored by an Intermediary

The **Colorado** Governor's Office of Information Technology is one of several employers [partnering with Activate Work, Inc.](#), a nonprofit recruiting and employment agency offering registered apprenticeship programs in cybersecurity, information technology, software development and more. Activate Work, Inc. is the intermediary that administers the program on behalf of the Governor's office, which employs the apprentices. The apprenticeship program is helping the Office of Information Technology attract and retain tech talent and to better compete with the private sector.



Related Instruction Providers

Related instruction providers deliver the classroom learning required for all RAPs. Instruction providers can be employers, community colleges, technical colleges, trade schools or career and technical education centers. Related instruction can also be provided through e-learning platforms like Coursera. State and local government agencies can partner with an external instruction provider, or they can offer their own related instruction. See [Section 2.3 Considerations for Agency Sponsors](#) for more information about the requirements of a related instruction provider.

Apprenticeship Approving Authorities

In the U.S. apprenticeship system, there are two types of entities who are responsible for approving, registering and overseeing RAPs. [The specific entity approving an apprenticeship program varies state by state.](#)

In 21 states, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico, the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship is responsible for registering and overseeing programs. This means that there is a U.S. Department of Labor employee who has been assigned to each of these jurisdictions to register all programs. The state department of labor, or the state's community and technical college system, may have staff members or a

designated division to promote apprenticeship programs, but the U.S. Department of Labor is the entity that registers and approves the programs. These states are colloquially referred to as "OA states," representing the Office of Apprenticeship.

In the remaining 29 states, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia, these responsibilities lie within an established State Apprenticeship Agency. The State Apprenticeship Agency is often an office within a state's department of labor or workforce development, or as part of the state's community and technical college system. State Apprenticeship Agencies are recognized by the Office of Apprenticeship to act on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor to register and oversee programs in their state. Staff members are state employees. These states are colloquially referred to as "SAA states."

The process for developing and registering an apprenticeship program is similar whether an employer is in an OA or a SAA state. To avoid confusion, this document will use "your state's apprenticeship approving authority" to refer to the Office of Apprenticeship satellite or State Apprenticeship Agency.

[Check the map maintained by the Office of Apprenticeship](#) for up-to-date information on your state's status or refer to the [appendix](#) at the end of this toolkit.

1.4 | Getting Started with a RAP

Agency leaders seeking to start their own RAPs, either as a program sponsor or through a different sponsor, should first determine which positions within their agency an apprenticeship could be developed.

Apprenticeable Positions

Over 1,000 occupations have been approved for registered apprenticeship by the U.S. Department of Labor. While apprenticeship programs are typically associated with trade positions, like electricians or plumbers, they can be developed for occupations such as information technology analysts, corrections officers, nursing assistants and administrative clerks.

Government agencies have the option to:

1. Develop a RAP in a previously approved occupation.
2. Submit a [New Apprenticeship Occupation Request](#) to the apprenticeship approving authority to request consideration for a new occupation.

When deciding which positions to develop an apprenticeship program for, the U.S. Department of Labor [recommends considering the following](#)

- Which positions require skills that are customarily learned in a practical way, through on-the-job supervised learning?
- Which positions are clearly identified and recognized throughout an industry?
- Which positions involve progressive attainment of skills?
- For which positions does an agency struggle to find workers with the right skills?
- Which positions have high turnover or high levels of retirement?
- For which positions does an agency struggle to recruit from more diverse talent pools?
- In which positions do workers struggle to keep pace with developments in the field?

Supports for Government Agencies

The following tools and resources are available to help state and local governments throughout the RAP development process, including determining where RAPs may assist with meeting their internal talent development goals.

- The apprenticeship approving authority in each state can assist with determining whether an occupation is apprenticeable, if apprenticeship is a good fit for an agency's needs, and what opportunities exist for partnering with existing RAP sponsors.
- The state, county or city human resources department can assist agencies with choosing job classifications that are appropriate for apprenticeship and executing wage increases. Agencies are encouraged to involve their human resources liaisons early in the program development process to ensure compliance with all civil service system rules and regulations. For more information on aligning RAPs with the classification system, see [Section 4.1 Apprentice Classification](#).



STATE EXAMPLE Developing a RAP in a previously approved occupation

The [Maine Department of Health and Human Services](#) sponsors a psychiatric nurse apprenticeship program to train students preparing for or enrolled in their final semester of nursing school to work in one of the state's two psychiatric hospitals. There are already many psychiatric nurse apprenticeship programs across the United States, and employers can [adapt the standards from existing programs](#) to build out their own apprenticeship.



STATE EXAMPLE Developing an apprenticeship program for a new occupation

[South Dakota's StartTodaySD Apprenticeship Program](#) partnered with the office of Governor Kristi Noem to include the state's policy advisor position as an apprenticeable position. Policy advisors in South Dakota maintain, update, research and provide advice on policies, procedures, laws and comprehensive plans within their respective departments in state agencies. Previously, this occupation had not been approved for registered apprenticeship. After creating the program and consulting with CSG and the National Governor's Association, Start Today SD submitted the program proposal to the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship. Approval was given in December 2023, and the policy advisor position is now on the apprenticeable occupations list.



- The U.S. Department of Labor database of [Approved Occupations for Registered Apprenticeship](#) can help agencies determine which occupations are good candidates for apprenticeship.
- The U.S. Department of Labor [Registered Apprenticeship Standards Library](#) includes sample apprenticeship work process schedules that can help agencies determine what apprenticeships in various occupations could look like.

For more information on financial supports for RAPs, see [Section 3.3 Funding Supports for RAPs](#).

SECTION 2

Joining or Developing a RAP

Once an agency has identified an occupation or occupations for an apprenticeship program, it has two options: (1) joining a RAP under a group sponsor or (2) sponsoring a new RAP. This section will outline the steps for each pathway and what agencies are responsible for when they join a program or sponsor their own. All RAPs are registered through the state's apprenticeship approving authority, [either the federal Office of Apprenticeship or the State Apprenticeship Agency](#). See [Section 1.3 The Key Roles in RAPs](#) for more information on how a RAP is approved and registered in each state.

2.1 | Joining a RAP

There are more than 27,000 RAPs across the United States according to [most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Agencies may choose to join a new or existing RAP sponsored by a third party, like an intermediary or a labor organization, that takes on the role of the group sponsor. Joining a RAP, whether new or existing, can be a good option for agencies that want to use apprenticeships to address hiring challenges but want to accelerate program development and lessen some administrative responsibilities.

Agencies can utilize the following checklist when joining a RAP:

- ☑ Identify which positions in your agency you will develop a RAP for and select the classification that apprentices will be hired into. See [Section 4.1 Apprentice Classification](#) for more information.
- ☑ Identify the program that your agency will join or work with your state's apprenticeship agency to find a program that fits your agency's needs.
- ☑ Work with your state's apprenticeship approving authority and your human resources department to guarantee that the program aligns with the minimum requirements and job duties of your selected job classification.
- ☑ Work with the program sponsor to determine how the new or existing apprenticeship standards must be modified to align with any collective bargaining agreements for employees, if applicable.
- ☑ Complete an [Employer Acceptance Agreement](#) to sign on to the approved standards of the program that you have selected.
- ☑ Review the progressive wage schedule in the apprenticeship standards for alignment with your personnel rules and any collective bargaining agreements for employees. Work with the group sponsor to make any necessary modifications. See [Section 5.5 Advancing Apprentices](#) for more information on how to achieve a progressive wage schedule for apprentices in a classified personnel system.
- ☑ Work with the group sponsor to determine selection procedures for your apprenticeship program, which must comply with all personnel rules and any collective bargaining agreements for employees.
- ☑ Recruit and hire apprentices based on your agency's policies and selection procedures. See [Section 4.2 Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices](#) for more information on developing selection procedures for apprentices.



2.2 | Sponsoring a RAP

Agencies that choose to sponsor their own RAP benefit from direct control over the program design, length, work process schedule and related instruction. However, agency sponsors also have some administrative responsibilities, in addition to those listed above, for agencies joining programs with a group sponsor as a participating employer. Your state's apprenticeship approving authority is available to assist agencies with these steps and responsibilities.

Agencies can utilize the following checklist when sponsoring their own RAP. These steps will be expanded on below in [Section 2.3 Considerations for Agency Sponsors](#).

- ☑ Identify which positions in your agency you will develop a RAP for and select the classification that apprentices will be hired into. See [Section 4.1 Apprentice Classification](#) for more information.
- ☑ Identify the related instruction providers. Agency sponsors may choose to utilize internal training and professional development programs, an external education provider or a combination of these options.
- ☑ Create the [work process schedule](#) for each occupation you are developing apprenticeship programs for. The work process schedule should outline the major job functions and competencies an apprentice completes in the RAP, as well as the number of hours of on-the-job learning corresponding to each job function if the program is time-based or hybrid.
- ☑ Create the [related instruction outline](#). This is a list of all courses and learning objectives that apprentices will complete to supplement on-the-job learning during the apprenticeship program. The outline should include the provider of each course.
- ☑ Set the progressive wage schedule for your apprentices. See [Section 5.5, Advancing Apprentices](#) for more information on how to achieve a progressive wage schedule for apprentices within a classified personnel system.
- ☑ Determine selection procedures for your apprenticeship program, which must comply with all personnel regulations, any collective bargaining agreements with government employees and [federal Equal Employment Opportunity requirements for RAPs](#).
- ☑ Register your program with the state's apprenticeship approving authority by submitting a U.S. Department of Labor [Employment and Training Administration Form 671 Section 1](#) and attaching the work process schedule, related instruction outline and summary of selection procedures.
- ☑ Recruit and hire apprentices based on your agency's policies and selection procedures. See [Section 4.2, Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices](#) for more information on developing selection procedures for apprentices.

2.3 | Considerations for Agency Sponsors

The following section outlines considerations for agencies developing and sponsoring their own RAPs. If joining a RAP with a group sponsor, agencies generally do not need to make these decisions because the sponsor will have already determined the program design, standards and other aspects. However, this information may still provide useful context on RAPs for agencies joining a program.

Choosing the Design of a RAP

There are three options for RAP program design: competency-based programs, time-based programs and hybrid programs. Agencies joining an existing RAP do not have to choose which program design they will use. The sponsor of the program they are joining will have already determined this. However, agencies developing their own programs must determine whether to make their RAPs competency-based, time-based or hybrid.

Competency-Based Programs

Competency-based programs require apprentices to [successfully demonstrate manual or technical skills and knowledge](#) identified by the program sponsor [as being necessary in the profession](#). While [apprentices must still participate in on-the-job learning and related instruction, they do not have to complete any specific number of hours for on-the-job learning or related instruction](#). Instead, apprentices progress through the program when they achieve certain competencies, as documented in the work process schedule.

Time-Based Programs

Time-based programs require apprentices to complete a minimum number of hours of on-the-job learning, as well as a minimum number of hours of related instruction. The U.S. Department of Labor requires apprentices to complete [at least 2,000 on-the-job training hours](#), and recommends [at least 144 hours of related technical instruction](#) for each year of an apprenticeship.

Hybrid Programs

Hybrid programs require an apprentice to [complete a minimum number of on-the-job learning and related instruction hours](#), and to demonstrate competency in specific subject areas, as defined by the sponsor.

There is no one approach that is better than another, and the program's design depends on its goals, workplace culture and the licensing requirements and norms for the given occupation. Time-based apprenticeship programs have been successful in the traditional fields of construction and building trades. However, [employers are increasingly utilizing competency-based and hybrid approaches](#) because they:

- Can sometimes be completed in less time than time-based programs.
- Allow for greater flexibility for the apprentice and employer, which can be an advantage for a range of apprentices. This includes individuals with disabilities who might benefit from more flexible schedules or self-paced work and apprentices raising families.
- Align better with the culture of some workplaces that are already accustomed to rewarding and advancing employees based on their attainment and demonstration of skills.

- Provide [clear benchmarks and clarity about employers' goals and expectations and a framework](#) for agencies to assess their apprentices' progress.
- Can provide [interim credentials](#) the state apprenticeship approving authority at the program sponsor's request, which certify that an apprentice has achieved certain competencies.

CareerOneStop's [Competency Model Clearinghouse](#) provides examples of recently approved competency-based apprenticeship programs in a range of industries, as well as a tool for building a competency-based model.

In addition, the Urban Institute has created [competency-based occupational frameworks](#) and [national occupational frameworks](#) for apprenticeships in a range of sectors. The Urban Institute has also created a [Youth Apprenticeship Roadmap](#), which details

considerations for determining program design. While the tool is focused on youth apprenticeship for learners ages 16-24, many of the considerations are relevant for any RAP sponsor.

Jobs for the Future also created a [tool](#) for planning and designing hybrid apprenticeship programs, as well as competency-based programs.

Developing a Work Process Schedule

A work process schedule is an outline of the job functions and competencies that an apprentice will master during the RAP. The work process schedule is divided into core job functions with individual competencies outlined underneath. Below is an excerpt from a sample work process schedule published by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship for the [Network Support Technician occupation](#).

WORK PROCESS SCHEDULE

Network Support Technician	
Job Description: Install, configure, and maintain an organization's local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), data communications network, operating systems, and physical and virtual servers. Perform system monitoring and verify the integrity and availability of hardware, network, and server resources and systems. Review system and application logs and verify completion of scheduled jobs, including system backups. Analyze network and server resource consumption and control user access. Install and upgrade software and maintain software licenses. May assist in network modeling, analysis, planning, and coordination between network and data communications hardware and software.	
RAPIDS Code: 1132CB	O*NET Code: 15-1244.00
Estimated Program Length: 1 Year	
Apprenticeship Type: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Competency-Based <input type="checkbox"/> Time-Based <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid	

Suggested On-the-Job Learning Outline

Maintain computer networks to enhance performance and user access.		
Competencies	Date Completed	Initial
A. Maintain and administer computer networks and related computing environments, including computer hardware, systems software, applications software, and all configurations.		
B. Perform routine network startup and shutdown procedures, and maintain control records.		
Implement security measures for computer or information systems.		
Competencies	Date Completed	Initial
A. Perform data backups and disaster recovery operations.		
B. Configure, monitor, and maintain email applications or virus protection software.		
C. Plan, coordinate, and implement network security measures to protect data, software, and hardware.		
Create electronic data backup to prevent loss of information.		
Competencies	Date Completed	Initial
A. Perform data backups and disaster recovery operations.		
Resolve computer network problems.		
Competencies	Date Completed	Initial
A. Diagnose, troubleshoot, and resolve hardware, software, or other network and system problems, and replace defective components when necessary.		

Agencies that choose to sponsor their own RAPs are responsible for developing the work process schedules for their programs, which includes outlining the competencies and job functions for each occupation in the program. Note that the work process schedule does not contain information on the coursework apprentices will complete as related instruction. This is included in a separate document, known as the related instruction outline.

Agencies can work with their state's apprenticeship approving authority to develop a work process schedule based on their own specifications for what they would like apprentices to learn through on-the-job training. Sponsors building their work process schedule can also reference [existing examples](#) to assist with the drafting process.

Determining the Length of a RAP

As part of its work process schedule, a sponsor must indicate the total length of the RAP. The duration of a RAP can be [as short as 12 months or as long as six years](#) and varies depending on the occupation and on the training needs of the agency. Even if a program is competency-based, sponsors will still need to estimate how long their RAP will take to complete.

Agencies can work with their state's apprenticeship approving authority to estimate program length by:

1. Determining the total number of hours of on-the-job learning and related instruction that will be required for the program. This information can be drawn from existing work process schedules and related instruction outlines for the selected occupations, from state licensing requirements for an occupation or from the [O*NET database](#), which contains descriptions of and job training requirements for almost 1,000 occupations.

2. Dividing the estimated number of hours of on-the-job learning and related instruction by the estimated number of hours an apprentice will work per year to determine the number of years for the program.

Depending on the program design, sponsors must also indicate how many hours apprentices will spend learning each job function.

For **time-based programs**, the hours for each job function must add up to the total duration of the RAP.

For **competency-based programs**, sponsors do not need to specify the number of hours apprentices will spend on each job function. However, they can still estimate the number of hours desired for recruitment and hiring purposes.

For **hybrid programs**, sponsors must indicate the minimum and maximum numbers of hours apprentices will spend learning each job function, which will sum to the minimum and maximum number of hours for the entire program.

Developing and Providing Related Instruction

Related instruction is the formal instruction that complements on-the-job learning in a RAP. Related instruction should correspond with [the practical experience and training received on-the-job as outlined in the work process schedule](#) and with any state certification or licensing requirements for the profession. It is recommended that RAPs have a minimum of [144 hours of related instruction per year](#). Sponsors may choose to provide [credit for prior learning or previous experience gained outside their supervision](#) if an apprentice provides the appropriate records and documentation to substantiate the claim.



Agency sponsors have several responsibilities related to planning, arranging and delivering related instruction to apprentices. Agency sponsors must:

- ☑ Develop a related instruction outline, including a list of anticipated courses, learning objectives and the estimated number of hours each course will last.
- ☑ Arrange for delivery of related instruction, either by partnering with external education providers, utilizing the state's existing training resources or using a combination of the two approaches.
- ☑ Ensure related instruction providers obtain any necessary licenses and certifications that may be required under state law, such as a career and technical education provider authorization.
- ☑ Secure the [instructional aids](#) and equipment necessary to provide quality instruction.
- ☑ [Inform each apprentice of the availability of college credit](#), if an agency's RAP provides it.
- ☑ [Monitor and document the apprentice's progress](#) in related instruction courses.

Agency sponsors of RAPs have considerable flexibility in delivering related instruction, including when, where, through what format and by whom it is delivered. Note that if an agency is joining an apprenticeship program, the related instruction will already be designed and developed.

Sponsors can deliver related instruction at any point during an RAP. [Common models include](#)

- **Continuous related instruction**, where related instruction is provided throughout the program concurrently with on-the-job learning.
- **Front-loaded related instruction**, where all or most of the related instruction takes place at the beginning of the program before on-the-job learning starts.
- **Segmented**, where related instruction is segmented between periods of on-the-job learning.

In addition, [related instruction can be delivered at a range of locations](#), including in-person at a job site or school, such as a community college or technical school, online or hybrid. Sponsors can utilize [a range of instructional methods to provide related instruction](#). This includes:

- Classroom instruction.
- Occupational or industry courses.
- Correspondence courses.
- Electronic media.
- Self-study.

Partnering with Education Providers

Education providers — such as four-year colleges, community colleges, occupational schools and career and technical education schools — can serve a key role in assisting government agencies when developing and providing related instruction to apprentices, as well as recruiting and supporting apprentices. Education providers can:

- Develop or deliver related instruction courses to apprentices.
- [Identify and facilitate access to other support services for apprentices](#), like tutoring or counseling.
- Provide college credit for courses successfully completed.
- [Leverage their institution's marketing and outreach channels](#) to assist with recruitment of apprentices.

The U.S. Department of Labor [Partner Finder tool](#) and your state's apprenticeship approving authority can help agency sponsors identify postsecondary education providers to partner with. Additionally, your state's division of career and technical education, department of higher education, and community college system can serve as resources in developing and delivering related instruction. Agencies can also partner with local high schools to recruit for apprenticeship programs and provide related instruction to apprentices through schools' career and technical education programs.



STATE EXAMPLE Colorado Apprenticeship K12 Contact Directory

Colorado passed [Senate Bill 20-081](#) establishing the [Colorado Apprenticeship K12 Contact Directory](#), which contains a list of apprenticeship contacts for each district or high school in Colorado. The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment implemented and maintains this directory, in addition to a directory of all apprenticeship programs in the state, in coordination with the Colorado Department of Education and Career and Technical Education at the Colorado Community College System.

Registering a RAP

Agency sponsors should plan to work with their state's apprenticeship approving authority at each step of the registration process. To register a program, sponsors must submit an [ETA Form 671 Section 1](#) to the apprenticeship approving authority and attach the program's work process schedule, related instruction outline and a summary of selection procedures, which are collectively known as the apprenticeship standards. Sponsors will receive their username and login information for RAPIDS or the state's apprenticeship program database upon registration. For more information on where to submit the registration form, see [Section 1.3 The Key Roles in RAPs](#).

A staff member at the apprenticeship approving authority will provide specialized assistance to sponsors to finalize the apprenticeship standards. If employees of the agency are covered under a collective bargaining agreement, the union representing the covered employees must be granted sufficient time to comment on and approve the apprenticeship standards, [per federal regulation](#).

If approved, the approving authority will issue a [Certificate of Registration](#) or other written indication to the agency sponsor. [According to federal regulations for RAPs](#), new programs are given provisional approval for one year. At that point, the approving authority will review an agency's RAP for quality and conformity with state and federal requirements. The approving authority will conduct subsequent program reviews at least every five years to ensure continued compliance with regulations.

Collective Bargaining Agreements and RAPs

When agency employees are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, agencies must ensure that their RAP abides by all relevant sections of the agreement. This includes any sections covering dispute resolution, corrective and disciplinary actions, education and training, and performance management.

Additionally, the apprenticeship sponsor, whether an intermediary or an agency, must coordinate with the union representing their employees as required under federal regulations on [collective bargaining provisions](#). The union may elect not to participate in the program's registration, but it must still be given the opportunity to share comments on the program's standards. If the union elects to participate in the registration process, coordination includes:

- Securing written acknowledgement of union agreement or non-objection to the registration of the program.
- Providing an opportunity for union representatives to sign the program's apprenticeship standards.
- Providing the union with a copy of the completed apprenticeship standards and all attachments.
- Providing a copy of all completed apprenticeship agreements to the union.
- Providing the union with a copy of each modification or amendment to the program adopted.
- Following the union's processes for any disputes related to the interpretation, application or enforcement of the agreement.



WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP AGREEMENT?

An [apprenticeship agreement](#) is the form signed by an apprentice and a RAP sponsor when the apprentice joins the program. It outlines the wages, job progression, related instruction and other details of the RAP. Apprentices covered by a collective bargaining agreement must have a copy of their apprenticeship agreement provided to their union.

Modifying a RAP

Agency sponsors [can amend or modify](#) their program's apprenticeship standards or apprenticeship agreements with individual apprentices by submitting changes to the state apprenticeship approving authority. Sponsors must ensure that all parties to the original standards, including any union representatives that elected to participate in the program registration, agree to the changes. Sponsors must provide a copy of each adopted amendment or modification to every apprentice to whom it applies. Amendments and modification may include notice of transfers, suspensions and cancellations of apprenticeship agreements and reasons for those changes.

SECTION 3

Funding Registered Apprenticeship Programs

3.1 | Costs Associated with RAPs

Government agencies that employ apprentices are responsible for providing apprentice wages and benefits and mentor wages. If an agency is the sponsor of its RAP, the agency is also responsible for overall administrative costs of managing the RAP and costs associated with providing related instruction to apprentices. While there are likely funding sources in your state to assist with these costs, it is recommended that agencies consult with leadership on which budget lines might be appropriate for covering these costs.

Apprentice Wages and Benefits

Wages for apprentices are set on a progressive schedule based on the acquisition of specific skills or the number of hours completed in the program. Agencies are responsible for paying wages for apprentices at all stages of the RAP, starting when the apprentice is hired. If apprentices are classified or full-time, agencies are responsible for paying all benefits entitled to all other employees. Note that apprentices are paid lower wages than a fully proficient employee, until they master all required competencies. See [Section 5.5 Advancing Apprentices](#) for more information on apprentice wage requirements and how to provide the progressive wage schedule within a classified personnel system.

Mentor Wages

Mentorship is a key component of any RAP, whether an agency chooses to sponsor a RAP or to join a program as a participating employer. Mentors are experienced employees who provide support and instruction to apprentices throughout the RAP. To compensate employees serving as mentors for the time they

spend in this leadership role, agencies can consider increasing pay for mentors. This could involve reclassifying mentors to a higher classification or increasing their hourly wage or salary within their current classification. Increased compensation for employees serving as mentors is at the discretion of agencies and not an explicit requirement for RAPs. See [Section 5.3 Mentorship for Apprentices](#) for more information on the role of mentorship in RAPs.

Administrative Costs

Agencies that choose to sponsor their own RAP take on the administrative costs of developing and running the program. Agencies that choose to join an existing program can avoid some of these costs, which are often absorbed by the sponsor. Examples include costs related to:

- Developing and registering the RAP.
- Collecting apprentice data and uploading apprentice and program data into RAPIDS or the state's apprenticeship database.
- Completing reporting for any grant funding the RAP receives.
- Evaluating apprentice progress toward required competencies or hours.
- Complying with Equal Employment Opportunity requirements for apprenticeship programs.

See [Section 4.2 Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices](#) and [Section 5.2 Protecting Apprentices](#) for more information on Equal Employment Opportunity compliance for RAPs.

Funding Related Instruction

Typically, in a RAP, the program sponsor covers the costs of tuition, books and other supplies required for related instruction. Your state's personnel system may require that employees be paid for mandatory and voluntary trainings, which would include related instruction for an apprenticeship program. In many states, there are grant funds and scholarships available to assist employers with covering related instruction expenses.



3.2 | Offsetting Costs of RAPs

While these expenses could exceed the costs of hiring, onboarding and supporting a non-apprentice employee, there are numerous benefits to RAPs that can offset these costs in the long run and multiple state and federal funding sources to assist agencies in covering these costs.

RAPs are an investment in employees from the first day of onboarding to when they complete the program and are hired as long-term employees. These investments [can yield more competent full-time hires and increase the likelihood that employees will stay with the agency in the long-term.](#)

In addition, apprentices are paid lower wages than a fully proficient employee until they master all required competencies. After an apprentice completes training and demonstrates all required competencies, the ideal outcome is for agencies to hire them as a long-term employee, funded out of an agency's permanent budget.

Impacts on Productivity and Output

One of the most frequently cited benefits of RAPs is the increase in productivity and outputs from operating an apprenticeship. In one study, [70% of apprenticeship sponsors](#) stated that the increased productivity experienced by their organization after training apprentices was a "very important" benefit. [Many employers reported](#) that the skills apprentices gain through on-the-job training contributes to their higher individual productivity post-apprenticeship compared to other similarly tenured employees. Apprentices learn necessary skills through hands-on experiences and employers train apprentices on the job to their specifications and the exact demands of the job. These factors both contribute to increased productivity.

Impacts on Employee Turnover

Employers often report [higher retention rates for apprentices](#) post-apprenticeship compared to other employees. This can be because of the greater fit of the employee for the job, based on specialized, employer-directed training and a greater sense of belonging and embeddedness from employees who have completed RAPs.

As many as [90% of apprentices](#) retain employment after their apprenticeship program has concluded because apprenticeship helps employers develop their own pipelines of skilled employees and appropriately matches employee skills with employer needs.

In addition, according to the [Society of Human Resources Management](#), the more "embedded" employees feel in their organization, the more likely they are to stay in that role long term. Apprenticeship programs embed apprentices into their organizations by empowering employers to invest directly in their own skill development and professional growth, thereby increasing retention rates over time.

Impacts on Liability Costs

Apprentices receive the same worker protections as any other employee, but [RAPs are frequently associated with lower liability costs for employers](#) because apprentices receive individualized supervision by an experienced mentor throughout their training. RAPs provide apprentices with the skills necessary to succeed on the job and the supervision to be safe and effective in the workplace.

Calculating the Return on Investment of RAPs

There are several tools that state and local government agencies can use to calculate the estimated return on investment for a potential registered apprenticeship program. These tools weigh the costs of a RAP, like related instruction or staff time for administering the program, against the benefits.

The [U.S. Department of Commerce](#) developed a return-on-investment calculator that helps employers to identify all potential costs and to put numeric values on the benefits of apprenticeship, including reduced turnover, avoided overtime and mistakes (because apprentices receive thorough training tied to the employer's specifications), and lower wages paid to apprentices at the beginning of a program. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, "every \$1 invested in apprenticeship programs leads to a public return of approximately \$28 in benefits."

[Oregon Apprenticeship](#) developed a similar tool that enables employers to choose which costs and benefits they want to measure against each other to calculate return on investment. Employers can measure the costs of wages, benefits, taxes, tuition, mentor time, and recruitment with and without an apprenticeship program against benefits like reduced mistakes, increased productivity, an enhanced skilled worker pipeline, grants for training costs and improved workplace culture.

Michigan's state apprenticeship program, MI Apprenticeship, developed a [calculator for return on investment broken down by more than fifty occupations](#) in the trades, hospitality, business administration, information technology and other industries. The calculator estimates return on investment over four years based on average wage data for each occupation.

ROI Calculator

CONSTRUCTION LABORERS

For Construction Laborers, the ROI in Michigan for employers is -0.3545, indicating that for every \$1 that an employer invests in a Construction Laborer, they will receive approximately \$0.35 back. In the first year of education, costs outweigh benefits, but the benefits begin to outweigh the costs midway through year two. Ultimately, the net benefit of a Construction Laborers apprentice is \$873.04.

[Load Average Wage Data](#)

Apprenticeship			Settings	Total ROI	
	Wages (Per Hour)	Salary (Per Year)	Training (Per Year)		
Year 1	\$16.91	\$33,820.00	\$3000	= \$3,873.04	4-Year Benefit
Year 2	\$22	\$44,000.00	\$3000	-\$14,322.96	Year 1 Benefit
TOTALS		\$77,820.00	\$6,000.00	\$18,196.00	Year 2 Benefit
		ROI -0.3545	\$83,820.00	\$3,873.04	
			4-Year Cost	4-Year ROI	

3.3 | Funding Supports for RAPs

There is likely funding available in your state to support agencies in covering the costs associated with RAPs. To create a sustainable talent pipeline, agencies should consider how to fund positions for apprentices in the long-term, but state and federal funding can supplement some costs when developing a new RAP or hiring new apprentices.

State Funding Sources for RAPs

Most state departments of labor or workforce development offer funding to employers to assist with the costs of registering and administering a RAP. Sometimes, this funding is provided directly to employers, while other states may offer scholarships to apprentices to use on their related technical instruction. Often, funding is granted on a per-apprentice basis, up to a maximum number of apprentices, and could increase if the employer is a first-time sponsor of an apprenticeship program. Agencies are encouraged to contact their state's apprenticeship approving authority to learn more about available funding sources and the terms and conditions of any funding.

Federal Funding Sources for RAPs

Federal workforce and education funding can help agencies make investments into registered apprenticeship by assisting with the costs of on-the-job training and related technical instruction and by funding other supportive services for apprentices. The U.S. Department of Labor has published [The Federal Resources Playbook for Registered Apprenticeship](#) to assist employers in identifying appropriate federal funding streams.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Funding for Registered Apprenticeship

Under the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#), several different funds may be utilized by sponsors to pay for training for apprentices, including:

- Incumbent Worker Training to fund the instruction and training for currently employed apprentices.
- Customized Training to fund eligible instruction costs (all RAPs are automatically eligible).
- On-the-Job Training contracts to fund extraordinary costs of instruction.
- Individual Training Accounts to fund the instruction and training of new apprentices.
- Additional incentive funding to sponsors who hire [dislocated workers](#) as apprentices.

All apprenticeship programs must apply to be on the state's [Eligible Training Provider List](#) under WIOA. Programs apply through their local workforce development board and all registered apprenticeship programs are automatically eligible to be accepted onto the list.

U.S. Department of Transportation Funding for Apprenticeship

Multiple grant programs established under the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) can be utilized for workforce development opportunities, including registered apprenticeship programs.

- [National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program](#) funds and other electric vehicle funding sources can be used for workforce development activities directly related to the charging of electric vehicles.

- Awardees of the Federal Transit Authority [Low or No Emission Competitive Grant Program](#) can use up to 0.5% of a grant award for workforce development activities, including registered apprenticeship.
- Awardees of the FTA [Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program](#) must use 5% of the award for workforce development to retrain the existing workforce and develop the workforce of the future, including through registered apprenticeship, unless the recipient certifies that less funding is needed.

Additionally, grant and highway workforce funding is available through the [Federal Highway Administration](#) to promote the participation of women, minorities and other disadvantaged groups in highway construction apprenticeships and to provide supportive services for these apprentices. Individual On-the-Job Training programs operated by state transportation agencies can be reimbursed for 100% of supportive services provided to apprentices, including recruitment, counseling, transportation assistance, basic education and ongoing training during seasonal work stoppages.

Vocational Rehabilitation Funding

[Vocational rehabilitation](#) is a U.S. Department of Education-funded program that provides services to individuals with disabilities facing barriers to employment. Employers of apprentices receiving vocational rehabilitation services may qualify for funding to hire, train and pay job seekers from the vocational rehabilitation candidate pool. Agencies can contact their state's division of vocational rehabilitation for more information.

GI Bill Funding

Under the GI Bill, veterans in [approved registered apprenticeship programs](#) can receive funding for books and supplies for related instruction. Payment rates vary for books and supplies based on which GI Bill program a veteran is using. Additionally, veterans covered under the [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) can receive a monthly housing allowance for each year of the apprenticeship program. These benefits also apply to spouses and children getting benefits through either the Fry Scholarship program or the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program, and children getting transferred benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.



SECTION 4

Recruiting, Selecting and Hiring Apprentices

4.1 | Apprentice Classification

Agencies should consult with their respective department of human resources or internal human resources staff to determine which classifications are appropriate for their RAP and if and how apprentices will be reclassified at the end of their program. Ideally, apprentices should be brought in at positions with few or no minimum qualifications since they will learn required skills and gain required education on the job.

Classifying Apprentices in State and Local Government

There are a variety of strategies that human resources professionals can use to classify apprentices in their personnel system, including utilizing existing trainee titles for apprentices, creating new apprenticeship classifications and classifying positions at a lower grade to become apprenticeships.

Utilizing existing trainee titles for apprentices

Some states have elected to use existing trainee titles in their classification systems for apprenticeship programs, which are not exclusive to apprentices and are already utilized by other student trainees in their systems.



The **Alabama** State Professional Trainee program utilizes a State Professional Trainee classification for employees to serve an apprenticeship under the supervision of state employees.



In **California**, the Department of General Services uses Training and Development assignments when an employee is selected to participate in one of the department's apprenticeship programs.



Colorado uses its five existing trainee class series for apprentices, in addition to several other entry level non-trainee classifications. Trainee classifications are already temporary and designed for individuals to be moved into a new classification upon successful completion of a training program, such as a RAP.

Creating new apprenticeship classifications

Several states developed classifications specific to apprentices in their personnel systems.



Kentucky launched several public sector apprenticeship programs by establishing **Apprentice I** and **Apprentice II** classifications in its personnel system. To date, Kentucky has established apprenticeship programs in family services, **early childhood education**, information technology, transportation and administration.



Maryland requires its Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning and the Department of Budget and Management to develop certain position classifications, which would include incremental salary



adjustments, for employees selected to participate in registered apprenticeship programs in state government.



Maine developed the **Government Apprentice** classification for paraprofessional work in a wide variety of professional or technical fields where a formal apprenticeship program has been established. The classification is flexible, allowing each employing state agency to determine their own minimum qualifications based on the nature of the work and the apprenticeship program associated with the position.

Classifying positions at a lower grade to become apprenticeship programs


The **District of Columbia** allows host agencies to convert existing positions into apprenticeships or create new, lower-grade positions for the purpose of establishing apprenticeships. It further requires the administrators of its Government Apprenticeship Initiative to identify apprenticeable occupations based on (among other criteria) positions that could become apprenticeships if classified at a lower grade.


When considering how to classify apprentices, agencies may choose to consider the following:


- What prerequisites, such as a high school diploma or GED, are required for the RAP and how they align with the minimum qualifications for a specific class series.
- Typical starting wages for the occupation being apprenticed, compared to other employers in the same field, and how they align with the wage ranges for a specific class series.
- If apprentices will be enrolled in a degree program or earning college credit through related instruction during the RAP, which may make them eligible for a student or trainee class series.


Non-Classified Apprentices in State and Local Government

Not all states, counties or cities have elected to make apprentices classified employees in their civil service systems. Some state and local governments may determine that apprentices must not be classified in their systems to accommodate requirements of an apprenticeship, such as a progressive wage schedule, or to facilitate the hiring of apprentices at the end of the apprenticeship program.

 **California** exempts apprentices under the jurisdiction of school districts and community college districts from classified service.

 **Illinois** exempts apprentices in sanitary district apprenticeship programs from classified civil service.

 **Iowa** allows the state's public universities to advertise positions for a classification designated for trainees or apprentices, which exempts applicants from meeting the minimum qualifications for the classification for permanent appointment

 **Massachusetts** exempts some apprentice linemen in select municipalities from Civil Service Law.

Classifying Apprentices upon Completion of a RAP

Agencies benefit most from RAPs when programs are designed to address long-term workforce needs and when apprentices are retained upon completion of the program. Since the purpose of RAPs is for employers to train their own workforces to their exact specifications, agencies should consider how to retain apprentices as long-term employees after the end of the program. Therefore, when agencies recruit and hire apprentices as classified employees, they should also plan for how those apprentices will be classified once they finish their apprenticeship program.

In general, there are three main approaches agencies can take to classify apprentices after the end of the RAP. Please note that these are general approaches, and the implementation and viability of each strategy will vary by jurisdiction.

1. **Re-classifying the apprentice to a different class series.** If an apprentice is originally classified in a student or trainee role, they would move to a more permanent classification after the apprenticeship program.
2. **Re-classifying the apprentice to a higher level within the same class series.** If someone serves as an apprentice at level I of a class series, they can be moved into the next level upon completion of their apprenticeship program.
3. **Retaining the apprentice in their current classification.** If someone serves as an apprentice at level I of a class series, they could remain in their current classification as a permanent employee once they complete their apprenticeship program, if the position they were hired into is not term limited. They could continue to progress in their career by receiving additional wage increases within the classification's allowable salary range, before eventually moving into a higher-level classification.

4.2 | Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices

Once an agency's RAP has been approved by and registered with the apprenticeship approving authority, it can begin recruiting and hiring apprentices. Sponsors must document what a program's selection procedures will be as part of the registration process. If an agency joins an existing program, these procedures will have already been determined.

All agencies will be responsible for recruiting and hiring apprentices whether they are the program sponsor or not, as they will serve as the employer of the apprentice in either scenario. Agencies will follow all typical procedures for hiring new employees, as well as state law and federal apprenticeship regulations around equitable recruitment and hiring.

Designing a Recruitment Plan for Apprentices

If your state, county or city requires a recruitment plan for new hires, hiring managers should plan to use this process for new apprentices. The recruitment plan for a new apprentice should comply with any requirements for the state, county or city's personnel system and any collective bargaining agreements that may apply. Also, as part of the registration process, RAP sponsors must submit the selection procedures for their program.

Each apprenticeship posting must provide qualified applicants an equal opportunity for entry into the personnel system through fair and open competition. Selection and appointment to positions are made according to an applicant's merit and fitness, keeping in mind that apprenticeship positions will have few to no minimum qualifications.

The recruitment plan includes:

- Class series and classification titles.
- Pay range to list on announcement.
- Any targeted recruitment that will occur.
- Whether applicants will be evaluated through structured application review or testing.
- Funding sources for the position (including any apprenticeship grant funding; see [Section 3.3 Funding Supports for RAPs](#) for more information).
- Minimum qualifications for the position.
- Required competencies.
- Preferred qualifications.
- Conditions of employment defined for a position, including passing a criminal background check or meeting travel demands.
- Interview questions that will evaluate specific competencies.

The U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship offers [several resources](#) to assist sponsors in the development of a recruitment plan, including the Universal Outreach Tool and a recorded training, "Implementing Effective Outreach and Selection in RAPs."

SKILLS-BASED HIRING

To address hiring challenges, more states and local governments are moving toward skills-based hiring practices, or considering candidates based on skills, talent and qualifications rather than strictly educational attainment or work history. Hiring candidates into apprenticeship programs, where they develop skills through mentorship and on-the-job training, is just one example of skills-based hiring. As of June 2023, at least [ten states](#) have announced new strategies to implement skills based hiring practices.

Both candidates and employers benefit from the transition to inclusive practices by:

- Newfound access to a larger, more diverse candidate pool.
- Increased opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Reduced discrimination and bias in hiring practices and workforce environments.
- Establishing an “employer of choice” environment.
- Reducing hiring / selection barriers among qualified applicants.

In 2022, **Colorado** Governor Jared Polis, released an [executive order](#) moving the state to skills-based hiring practices to meet workforce needs and attract diverse talent. The Governor’s budget also allocated [\\$700,000](#) in funding to aid in updating hiring regulations, training employers and developing a toolkit on utilizing skills-based practices.

On his first day in office, **Pennsylvania** Governor Josh Shapiro, announced the [removal of four-year degree requirements](#) from an anticipated 92% of state government jobs — requiring hiring managers to focus on applicant skills in hiring. Additionally, the Commonwealth has launched a new [Pennsylvania Employment website](#), which centralizes all open state jobs, employment benefits, internships and apprenticeships.

North Carolina has placed justice-involved individuals, individuals with disabilities, and veterans and their families at the forefront of its hiring transition by designating each [population a priority](#) in training and hiring. To expedite the process of screening applicants, the state developed an [Education and Experience Equivalency Guide](#) to compare stated education requirements with equivalent skills and training required to qualify.

Federal Requirements for Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices

RAPs must follow all U.S. Department of Labor [Equal Employment Opportunity](#) (EEO) requirements for recruiting and hiring apprentices, including:

1. Following all anti-discrimination regulations.
2. Collecting and maintaining records related to hiring and selection.
3. Engaging in universal outreach for apprentice recruitment.

RAPs with five or more apprentices must also develop and document an Affirmative Action Program.

These obligations are the responsibility of the RAP sponsor. If an agency is participating in a RAP sponsored by a different entity, like an intermediary or labor organization, the sponsor is responsible for ensuring compliance with these regulations. However, the agency will be asked to provide some demographic data about apprentices to the sponsor to ensure compliance.

This section will address the provisions of federal apprenticeship EEO laws applicable to recruiting and hiring apprentices. Other elements of federal EEO requirements are addressed in [Section 5.2 Protecting Apprentices](#) and [Section 6.3 Apprentice Tracking](#).



STATE EXAMPLE Using apprenticeship to build public service career pathways for underserved communities

The [Ohio Vocational Apprentice Program](#) enables students and adults with disabilities receiving vocational rehabilitation services to access state government employment through paid apprenticeships within state agencies. The average starting wage for apprentices is \$20 per hour in a variety of positions, including capital finance analysts, information technologists, graphic designers, food service workers and office professionals.

1. Following all anti-discrimination regulations

Federal EEO requirements applicable to all sponsors prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age or genetic information in:

- Recruitment, outreach and selection procedures.
- Hiring or placement.
- Rates of pay or any other form of compensation and changes in compensation.
- Conditions of work.
- Hours of work and hours of training provided.
- Job assignments.

2. Collecting and maintaining all records required by EEO regulations related to hiring and selection

To demonstrate compliance with RAP EEO regulations, sponsors must [collect and maintain records](#) on:

- Selection activities, including applications, interview notes, and bases for selection or rejection of applicants.
- Universal recruitment activities.
- The written Affirmative Action Plan and documentation of its components, for required sponsors.
- Any other records related to compliance in hiring and recruitment.

3. Engaging in universal outreach

RAP sponsors are required to engage in outreach and recruitment activities designed to reach all demographic groups represented within their relevant recruitment area. Agency sponsors are encouraged to use the Office of Apprenticeship [Universal Outreach Tool](#) to assist with outreach to diverse candidates. Sponsors are also encouraged to work with their internal human resources team to identify how existing recruitment practices can be aligned with universal outreach requirements.

Some [examples of universal outreach](#) include:

- Disseminating information to organizations serving individuals from groups underrepresented in apprenticeships regarding the nature and opportunities of apprenticeship.
- Advertising openings for apprenticeship opportunities in appropriate media.
- Cooperating with local school boards and vocational education systems to develop or establish relationships with pre-apprenticeship programs.
- Establishing linkage agreements or partnerships with pre-apprenticeship programs, community-based organizations, advocacy organizations or other appropriate organizations.



Affirmative Action Programs for RAPs

The goal of a **RAP Affirmative Action Program** is to help sponsors better understand the demographics of their apprenticeship program, help ensure their programs are free from unlawful discrimination, and ensure all qualified applicants and apprentices receive equal opportunity to be selected for, and succeed in, RAPs. Increasing diversity and equity in RAPs **ensures that a wide range of experiences, perspectives and skills are included in the workplace**, therefore increasing innovation and creativity within agencies.

Sponsors are exempt from having an Affirmative Action Program if they have fewer than five apprentices or can demonstrate that they have an existing compliant Affirmative Action Program covering apprentices, including the use of hiring goals for underrepresented groups. Agencies can consult with their state's apprenticeship approving authority to determine if their existing equity, diversity and inclusion plans already meet the requirements of an Affirmative Action Program. Sponsors with fewer than five apprentices still have a responsibility to **generally engage in affirmative action**, but are not required to have a formal plan in place.

Affirmative Action Programs must be put in place **within two years after a program's federal registration date or two years from the date the program registers its fifth apprentice, whichever is later**.



DID YOU KNOW?

An agency's recruitment or diversity, equity and inclusion plans may already be federally compliant.

An agency's equity plan could already meet the federal requirements for the RAP Affirmative Action Program. Programs already compliant with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and state laws on discrimination that engage in **all of the following activities** will be considered in compliance with EEO requirements for Affirmative Action by:

- Clearly stating that discrimination is prohibited in recruiting, hiring, training, assigning, evaluating, promoting, disciplining, rewarding or terminating apprenticeship applicants or apprentices.
- Posting the agency's equal opportunity pledges on bulletin boards, including through electronic media, such that is accessible to all apprentices and applicants for apprenticeship.
- Assigning an individual on the agency's human resources team to coordinate EEOs.
- Maintaining an outreach and recruitment list.
- Providing anti-harassment training to all individuals associated with the apprenticeship program, including apprentices and mentors working with apprentices.

Affirmative Action Plans are uploaded to the federal RAPIDS database, or to the state's apprenticeship database, and are only accessible by the state's apprenticeship director. Plans must be made available to the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship upon request. Agency sponsors are encouraged to refer to templates and resources published by the U.S. Department of Labor when preparing their own plans.

Affirmative Action Plans for RAPs have five elements:

1. Demographic analyses for race, sex and ethnicity, where sponsors compare data on their apprentice workforce to the characteristics of the qualified workforce in their recruitment area.
2. Invitations to apprentices and applicants for apprenticeship to voluntarily self-identify as an individual with a disability, using the Voluntary Disability Disclosure Form.
3. Examination of the proportion of individuals with disabilities in their program, compared to the Office of Apprenticeship's goal that 7% of apprentices are qualified individuals with disabilities.
4. Setting goals to increase underrepresented groups and conducting targeted outreach and recruitment, if the comparisons of demographic characteristics of apprentices and the qualified workforce in the recruitment area show that inclusion of women, ethnic or racial minorities, or people with disabilities is lower than would be expected.
5. Annual review of personnel practices, including employment practices, policies and decisions for the impact they have on employing minorities, women and individuals with disabilities in the program, and revision of any policies that create barriers to equal opportunity.

Note that RAP sponsors are not permitted to engage in preferential hiring based on race, sex or any other protected category. In addition, nothing in the federal EEO regulations for apprenticeships requires sponsors to hire unqualified applicants or a less qualified applicant in preference to a more qualified one.

WHAT IF MY STATE BANS THE USE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT?

Nine states currently ban the use of discrimination or preferential treatment based on race, gender or another protected identity in public education and employment. Colloquially, these laws are often referred to as “affirmative action bans.” However, affirmative action, as used by institutions of higher education before the practice was forbidden by the U.S. Supreme Court, is different from affirmative action in employment or in registered apprenticeship programs.

Affirmative action in employment originates with [Executive Order 11246](#) of 1965, which requires all federal government contractors to “take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed. . .without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin.” Any

employer contracting with the federal government must take positive steps to ensure that equal employment opportunity is offered in all stages of recruitment, hiring and throughout employment. The executive order does not permit preference to be given based on any protected identity. Similarly, [CFR 29, Part 30](#) states that affirmative action programs for apprenticeship sponsors “may not provide a sponsor with a justification to extend a preference” and “do not create set-asides for specific groups.” There likely is not a conflict between federal apprenticeship regulations for affirmative action and these nine state laws, but public employers should contact their state’s apprenticeship approving authority to ensure compliance with all state and federal laws.



Hiring Apprentices

Once apprentices are selected, but before they begin on-the-job learning or enroll in related instruction, they must complete an apprenticeship agreement. An [apprenticeship agreement](#) is a written agreement between an apprentice and the apprentice’s program sponsor which contains the terms and conditions of the employment and training of the apprentice.

Apprenticeship agreements include information about the program sponsor, the occupation, the design and length of the program, the length of the probationary period, the starting and expected completion dates of the program, whether credit will be provided for previous on-the-job learning and related instruction experience, how related instruction will be provided, and the wage scale. See [Section 5.5 Advancing Apprentices](#) for more information on the wage scale. It also provides apprentices the opportunity to self-disclose their race, ethnicity, veteran status and educational level.

Prior to signing the apprenticeship agreement, each selected apprentice must be given an opportunity to read and review the sponsor’s approved apprenticeship standards, written rules and policies, the apprenticeship agreement and any collective bargaining agreements, if relevant.

Sponsors must submit apprenticeship agreements for each apprentice to the state apprenticeship approving authority within 45 calendar days of the execution of each new agreement. This can be done electronically through RAPIDS, using the Apprentice Electronic Registration process, or by submitting [Employment and Training Administration Form 671 Section II](#). Sponsors must provide a copy of the completed apprenticeship agreement to the apprentice and to the employer, and to the employee union if the apprentice is covered under a collective bargaining agreement.

SECTION 5

Onboarding, Protecting, Supporting and Advancing Apprentices

5.1 | Apprentice Onboarding

Onboarding is the process of ensuring that new employees feel welcomed, informed and valued as they join an organization. Onboarding is a critical component of employee hiring and retention. According to [Glassdoor](#), organizations with a strong onboarding process improve new hire retention by 82% and productivity by more than 70%.

As part of the onboarding process, apprentices must complete federally mandated trainings for RAPs and all mandated trainings for new employees. If an agency joins a RAP as an employer partner, coordination of federally mandated trainings will be handled by the program sponsor.

Federal Requirements for Onboarding Apprentices

In addition to any requirements your state's personnel system may have for onboarding new employees, RAP employers [are required by federal apprenticeship regulations to provide two trainings to apprentices:](#)

- **Safety and health training.** All apprentices must receive instruction in safe and healthy work practices. Both on-the-job learning and related instruction must comply with federal and state standards for occupational safety. While there is no specified timeframe for when this occurs, agencies may choose to incorporate it into apprentice onboarding. Existing statewide, occupation-specific and agency-specific health and safety trainings may satisfy this requirement.
- **EEO training.** Sponsors are required to conduct Equal Employment Opportunity orientation and periodic information sessions for individuals administering and operating the RAP, including all apprentices and mentors. This includes informing and reminding individuals of the sponsor's EEO policies and providing anti-harassment training. This training can be delivered in-person or via an interactive online platform. Note that your state's existing EEO training may satisfy this requirement. See [Section 4.2 Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices](#) and [Section 5.2 Protecting Apprentices](#) for additional information on federal EEO requirements for RAPs.

Best Practices for Apprentice Onboarding

Beyond the legal requirements for onboarding apprentices, there are several best practices in orienting apprentices to their new role and workplace and fostering a feeling of belonging in the agency.

[Pre-boarding begins](#) before the apprentice's first day at the agency. It is focused on welcoming the new apprentice to the agency and providing instructions for their first day. Pre-boarding can include:



- Sending a welcome letter or package to the new apprentice.
- Announcing the new apprentice to their team and educating other employees on registered apprenticeship.
- Assigning a buddy for the new apprentice, beyond their formal mentor.
- Scheduling one-on-one introductory meetings with relevant management and staff, including mentors.
- Informing relevant management staff and mentors of expectations for the apprentice's first 90 days of the program.

Once the apprentice has begun working at their agency, onboarding should include introducing the apprentice to their mentor and providing an overview of the major components of the RAP, including the work process schedule and related instruction. In addition, [agencies can](#)

- Create an agenda for the apprentice's first day, to help them know what to expect.
- Write an onboarding plan detailing communication within the organization, available supports and a training schedule with goals and progression check points.
- Make apprentices aware of networking opportunities within the agency.
- Emphasize the availability of any mental health and wellness supports, along with other benefits.
- Provide training for apprentices on the process for requesting reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.



5.2 | Protecting Apprentices

Federal and state law requires all employers to prevent discrimination against all employees, including apprentices, and to maintain an environment free of harassment in the workplace. These requirements are in addition to all EEO requirements related to recruitment and hiring of apprentices. For more information, see [Section 4.2 Recruiting and Hiring Apprentices](#).

Additionally, agencies must facilitate processes for apprentices to file disputes, including disputes related to EEO violations, and follow all federal and state procedures for handling disputes.

Federal EEO Requirements for Preventing Discrimination and Harassment against Apprentices

Federal EEO requirements for RAPs require sponsors to [develop and implement procedures](#) to ensure that apprentices are not discriminated against or harassed because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information or disability. This includes following all anti-discrimination regulations, maintaining an environment free of harassment, and participating in anti-harassment and other EEO-related trainings.

1. Following all anti-discrimination regulations

Government agencies sponsoring or joining RAPs must follow all federal EEO requirements related to discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age or genetic information in:

- Rotating among work processes (i.e., rotation among different job competencies in the program).
- Upgrading, periodic advancement, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, right of return from layoff and rehiring.
- Rates of pay or any other form of compensation and changes in compensation.
- Conditions of work.
- Hours of work and hours of training provided.
- Job assignments.

2. Maintaining an environment free of harassment

Federal law also requires sponsors to maintain a work environment free of harassment for all employees. [To achieve this, RAP sponsors must](#) provide anti-harassment training to all individuals connected with operation of the program; ensure that all facilities and apprenticeship activities are accessible and available regardless of an apprentice's protected identities; provide separate or single-user restrooms to assure privacy between the sexes; and establish and implement procedures for handling and resolving complaints about harassment, intimidation or retaliation.

3. Participating in Anti-Harassment Training and other EEO-related trainings

As noted, sponsors must require [all apprentices, mentors and individuals connected with the administration and operation of the apprenticeship program](#) to complete anti-harassment training. The anti-harassment training, whether delivered in-person or virtually, should be [interactive](#) and [offered periodically](#) to ensure that all new apprentices, mentors and administrative personnel receive training. Sponsors will need to [generally maintain records](#) showing that all required individuals completed the training and that the training covered all elements required by EEO regulations.

If an agency joins a RAP and does not serve as the program sponsor, they will still be expected to have apprentices participate in all related trainings and share records related to EEO compliance with the sponsor as requested.

What resources are available to assist agencies in preventing harassment and discrimination in RAPs?

There are statewide and national resources available to assist agencies in meeting all federal and state requirements related to preventing harassment and discrimination in RAPs.

Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Training Resources

Agency sponsors of RAPs are encouraged to make use of existing anti-discrimination and anti-harassment training resources for their state, county or city in the apprenticeship program. Since apprentices are considered employees from the first day of the RAP, these existing resources should be easily transferrable to an apprenticeship program.

Additionally, the Office of Apprenticeship offers [an online library of resources](#) to assist sponsors in fulfilling their EEO obligation to provide anti-harassment training. The Office of Apprenticeship offers a presentation for in-person training, videos and quizzes for online self-directed training, and tip sheets for sponsors. Your state's apprenticeship approving authority can also assist agencies with implementing all regulations related to RAPs, including state and federal EEO requirements.

Technical Assistance from The Council of State Governments

[The Council of State Governments](#) is the nation's largest nonpartisan organization serving all three branches of state government, including state agencies sponsoring apprenticeship programs. [The CSG Education and Workforce](#) policy team provides hands-on technical assistance to assist states with apprenticeship expansion, especially in the public sector.

What are the federal requirements for handling apprentice disputes?

According to [federal apprenticeship regulations](#), there are four types of complaints that may be filed by an apprentice:

1. Complaints covered by a collective bargaining agreement.
2. Complaints not covered by a collective bargaining agreement.
3. Complaints to the appropriate Office of Apprenticeship (i.e., your state's apprenticeship approving authority).
4. Complaints alleging discrimination.

If employees are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, any complaints covered by the agreement will still be handled by the terms of that agreement. However, according to federal rules, the state's apprenticeship approving authority is responsible for resolving complaints that allege discrimination or could not be resolved by the sponsor.

While the state's apprenticeship approving authority is required to investigate all instances of discrimination, agencies with RAPs will still follow the dispute resolution process for their state, county or city, or as outlined by any collective bargaining agreements.

5.3 | Mentorship for Apprentices

Mentorship is a key element of any RAP. By working under experienced mentors, apprentices build deeper engagement with their work and employer while receiving one-on-one support and guidance.

At a minimum, mentors for apprentices should be experienced employees with knowledge of their field and a willingness and ability to pass that knowledge on to mentees. In a RAP, [a mentor should be a worker](#) recognized as having mastered the skills and competencies for the occupation. Mentors do not need to be an apprentice's direct supervisor, though they can be.

[Apprenticeship Minnesota](#) has developed a comprehensive list of the types of support that strong mentors should be able to provide, including:

- Clear communication.
- Positive and constructive feedback.
- An explanation of what to expect when on the job site, including safety considerations.

- Instruction about professionalism and its importance.
- Patience and trust.
- Guidance on time management.
- Empathy, understanding and respect for all cultures.
- Assistance with stress management.
- Encouragement to mentees to empower them to express opinions and make decisions.
- Support, guidance and respect.
- Leadership by example.

Agencies may use these characteristics to consider which employees are best suited to serving as mentors. Agencies may review existing training courses offered for employees related to mentorship and leadership and consider providing them as professional development for employees serving as apprentice mentors.

Additionally, agencies should consider the need to compensate mentors for their responsibilities, and the potential decreased productivity from employees while mentoring or instructing apprentices. Still, a [2022 study on benefits of apprenticeship programs to employers](#) found that mentor productivity can often improve over time, leading to fewer supply and wastage costs. See [Section 3.1 Costs Associated with RAPs](#) for more information on paying mentor wages. for more information on paying mentor wages.



5.4 | Support Services for Apprentices

Apprenticeship sponsors can increase the likelihood that individuals will enter and complete apprenticeships by providing wraparound supports. Wraparound supports consider apprentices' holistic needs by providing assistance off-the-job and flexibility on-the-job, so that individuals can be fully present and engaged while completing their apprenticeship program.

Barriers to Program Completion

While high-quality apprenticeship programs provide competitive wages and benefits, apprentices can still face numerous barriers to completing their programs. The average completion rate for apprentices is 35%, and this percentage is even lower in historically underserved populations. Barriers facing apprentices include:

- Availability of transportation to and from job sites and instruction providers.
- Availability of affordable housing and utilities.
- Broadband availability and access to technology for remote training programs.
- The cost and availability of child care.
- The cost of any required supplies for work or training not covered by the employer or sponsor.

In addition to providing competitive wages on a progressive scale, agencies can provide supportive services to apprentices to supplement wages and promote apprentice retention and program completion. Sponsors and agencies can also partner with related instruction providers to provide and fund wraparound supports for apprentices.

Wraparound Supports for Apprentices

Agencies are encouraged to connect with their department of human resources to explore all benefits offered to support employees, including apprentices in an agency's RAP. Agencies can also work with their state's apprenticeship approving authority or department of labor to identify what funding sources for apprentices, if any, can be used to provide wraparound supports.

Agencies can also contact the local American Job Center in their area to identify supportive services for apprentices, including information about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, financial assistance, child care, emergency funds and other benefits. There are nearly 2,300 American Job Centers nationwide, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration.

5.5 | Advancing Apprentices

Apprentice Progress in a RAP

An apprentice's progression through a RAP depends on whether the program is time-based, competency-based or hybrid. All apprentices earn wage increases throughout their programs, but what triggers wage progression depends on the design of the program.

Competency-based Programs

In competency-based programs, apprentices progress through the on-the-job learning portion of their apprenticeship based only on their attainment of the required competencies, as verified by the employer. Apprentices in competency-based programs experience wage increases when they achieve a specific number of competencies.

Sponsors verify an apprentice's competency in various skill and knowledge areas by using an appropriate written or hands-on proficiency measurement. These competencies are defined in a program's work process schedule, which also establishes proficiency levels for each competency. For more information on evaluating apprentices' competencies, see Section 6.2 Apprentice Evaluation.

Time-based Programs

In time-based programs, apprentices progress through the on-the-job learning portion and experience wage increases based on the number of hours of on-the-job learning they have completed.

Hybrid Programs

In hybrid programs, apprentices progress through the on-the-job learning portion of their apprenticeship based on both their level of skills gained and the number of hours they have spent in on-the-job learning to attain those skills. Apprentices in hybrid programs experience wage increases based on either the number of on-the-job learning hours completed or the number of competencies achieved.

Progressive Wage Requirements for Apprentices

RAPs pay apprentices a progressively increasing scale of wages based on the acquisition of increased skills and competencies through on-the-job training and related instruction. Apprentice wages must be an increasing amount of the wage rate for a fully proficient employee, which serves as the terminal wage once an apprentice has completed the program. Typically, entry-level wages for apprentices are 40-50% of the fully proficient employee wage. Intermediate wages range between 50-80% of that wage. RAPs must have at least one wage increase.

The wage scale for a program must be specified when a program is registered by the sponsor. For agencies joining an existing program, the wage scale will have already been determined by the sponsor but may need to be adapted to the class series used for the position.

Competency-Based Apprenticeship Wage Progression: 50 Competencies		
Level	Competencies Attained	Wage
Entry	0	\$15.75
Intermediate	25	\$23.63 (50% increase)
Exit	50	\$31.50 (or full employee rate)

Time-Based Apprenticeship Wage Progression: 2,000 Hours		
Level	Hours Completed	Wage
Entry	0	\$15.75
Intermediate	1,000	\$23.63 (50% increase)
Exit	2,000	\$31.50 (or full employee rate)



According to [federal apprenticeship regulations](#), RAPs must pay apprentices on a progressive scale and follow federal minimum wage and overtime requirements. Beyond these basic requirements, agencies must follow all personnel rules for employee pay for apprentices. Apprentices who work as classified employees should be eligible for the same benefits as any other classified employee with a similar-length tenure or full-time/part-time status.

Meeting Wage Progression Requirements for State and Local Governments

Strategies for implementing wage increases for apprentices will vary depending on the rules of each state or local government's personnel system and the mechanisms available to increase employee salaries.

Annual performance evaluations

For apprenticeship programs lasting more than one year, agencies may be able to provide a progressive wage increase for apprentices during their typical annual performance evaluations. If employees can earn pay increases through annual evaluations, agencies can utilize these evaluations to review apprentices' completion of required hours or competencies and implement a wage increase. However, if a RAP is designed to last one year or less, this strategy would not be effective because the apprentice would not be employed long enough to complete an annual performance evaluation.

Providing a salary increase at the end of a new-hire probationary period

Some states' personnel systems may allow for one-time salary increases for new employees after their completion of a

probationary period. An apprentice could enter a program at a starting wage, receive a salary increase at the end of a probationary period, and then complete the program at a journey worker salary rate. This strategy would work for RAPs that only require one wage increase for apprentices.

Reclassifying an apprentice mid-program

Agencies could also execute a wage increase by reclassifying an apprentice during the RAP. For example, an apprentice could be hired at a I-level, such as Apprentice I. After completing a predetermined number of hours or competencies, the apprentice could be reclassified as an Apprentice II and earn a subsequent salary increase as part of the new classification.

This is not a comprehensive list of strategies for wage increases. If employees are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, there are likely additional considerations for how to implement wage increases. Agencies are encouraged to work with their department of human resources to identify what options are feasible in their state's personnel system. [The Council of State Governments](#) can also provide technical assistance to assist your state or agency in identifying strategies for implementing wage increases for government apprentices.

Paying Apprentices during Related Instruction

Related instruction is required, but it [may or may not be paid](#) depending on the terms of the program's apprenticeship agreements. To promote apprentice retention and program completion, it is recommended that apprentices are paid for time spent on related instruction. Apprentices should pay little to nothing for related instruction.

SECTION 6

Evaluating and Tracking Apprentices

6.1 | Probationary Periods for Apprentices

Federal law requires all apprentices in RAPs to undergo a probationary period after hiring. This probationary period is separate from the probationary period that may be required of new employees in your state and may have different conditions and impacts on apprentices.

Probationary Periods for RAPs

RAPs must have a [reasonable probationary period](#) of up to one year or 25% of the length of the program, whichever is shorter, during which sponsors and apprentices can explore the apprenticeship agreement and terminate the agreement without cause. During the probationary period, [either the apprentice or the sponsor may terminate the agreement](#) by notifying the other party in writing. After the probationary period, the agreement may be cancelled at the request of the apprentice or may be suspended or cancelled by the sponsor for reasonable cause after documented due notice to the apprentice and a reasonable opportunity for corrective action.

If an agency finds an apprentice's performance in related instruction or on-the-job learning progress to be unsatisfactory, the agency [will determine whether the apprentice should continue in a probationary status](#) for the apprenticeship and may require the apprentice to repeat items before advancing in the program. This probationary status is only related to progress toward competencies for the RAP and is not related to any probationary period that may already be required under your classified personnel system.

6.2 | Apprentice Evaluation

All agencies are responsible for evaluating apprentices' mastery of competencies outlined in the RAP's work process schedule and the coursework detailed in the related instruction outline. For more information on the work process schedule and related instruction outline, see [Section 2.3 Considerations for Agency Sponsors](#). These evaluations are separate from any annual evaluations that are required for state or local government employees, but they can be built into your agency's existing evaluation process.

Federal Requirements for Apprentice Evaluation

According to [federal apprenticeship regulations](#), all agencies employing apprentices must conduct periodic review and evaluation of apprentices' performance on the job and in related instruction. The work process schedule and related instruction outline submitted by sponsors [must identify an appropriate means of testing and evaluation for all required competencies](#).

Additionally, [RAP sponsors are responsible for maintaining all records](#) related to apprentice progress. All apprentice records must be maintained in RAPIDS or the state's apprenticeship database for five years after they are created and must be made available to the state apprenticeship approving authority upon request.

Records related to apprentice progress include, at a minimum, records of each apprentice's:

- On-the-job learning.
- Related instruction reviews and evaluations.
- Hours of training provided.
- Completion of competencies and coursework at each stage of the apprenticeship.
- Progress evaluations, the frequency of which is determined by the employer.
- Job assignments, if the apprenticeship program uses rotations.
- Conditions of work, including completion of health and safety training.
- Promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff or termination.
- Rates of pay and other forms of compensation.

Aligning Federal Apprentice Evaluation and Employee Evaluation Requirements

Existing evaluation processes for agency employees can count toward required apprentice evaluations, so long as they align with evaluation process outlined in each apprentice's apprenticeship agreement.

Agencies can ensure that the job functions, competencies, and frequency of apprentice testing and evaluation outlined in the work process schedule and related instruction outline match the skills that the apprentice will be evaluated for in their employee evaluations. Agencies should refer to their existing evaluation forms when developing their program standards and consider amending existing forms to better align with the apprenticeship standards. All performance reports and apprentice milestones must be documented in RAPIDS or the state's apprenticeship database system.



6.3 | Apprentice Tracking

While all agencies, as employers of apprentices, must complete all required evaluations of apprentices at the state and federal level, tracking apprentices' progress is the responsibility of RAP sponsors. Agencies that join a RAP as an employer partner will be expected to share information on apprentices' progress toward required competencies or hours, so that their program sponsor can fulfill its tracking duties. Ultimately, the program sponsor is the entity responsible for reporting.

Tracking Apprentice Data

RAP sponsors use a specialized apprenticeship database system to track apprentice and program data. Depending on your state, sponsors may be required to use the federal [Registered Apprenticeship Program Information Database System](#), or RAPIDS, or a state's apprenticeship database system. RAPIDS and other state databases enable sponsors to manage apprentices, occupations, job openings and other relevant program information. Sponsors will obtain their database login information after registering their program.

Using these databases, sponsors track an apprentice's:

- Name and contact information.
- Demographic data.
- Occupation details (including if the apprentice is in a competency-based, time-based or hybrid program).
- Credit awarded for prior experience or education (if relevant).
- Related instruction provider(s).
- Wage progression.

To appropriately document apprentices' wages, sponsors must also track apprentices' performance on evaluations to determine progress toward wage increases.

RAPIDS and other databases are also where sponsors store signed apprenticeship agreements and records related to compliance with [federal EEO regulations](#).

Tracking Program Compliance with EEO Regulations

[Federal EEO requirements](#) for RAPs require sponsors to designate one or more individuals to oversee the program's EEO compliance. This individual is responsible for collecting and maintaining all records required by EEO regulations. In state and local government agencies, this would likely be a human resources staff member at the agency sponsoring the RAP or within county or city government. These records are to be kept by sponsors and made available to your state's apprenticeship approving authority upon request. Programs can request technical assistance from the apprenticeship approving authority for guidance on the record-keeping process.

Additionally, to demonstrate compliance with RAP EEO regulations, sponsors must [collect and maintain the following records](#):

- Invitations to [voluntarily self-identify](#) as an individual with a disability for those sponsors required to develop an Affirmative Action Program.
- Information pertinent to the operation of the apprenticeship program, including job assignments, promotion, transfer, termination, compensation and any other personnel records.
- Evidence that the sponsor's equal opportunity policy has been disseminated in the workplace.
- Evidence that participatory anti-harassment training has been provided, and to whom.
- The written Affirmative Action Plan and documentation of its components, for required sponsors.
- Requests for [reasonable accommodations](#).
- Any other records related to EEO compliance.



Acknowledgements

The Council of State Governments acknowledges Ascendium Education Group, Urban Institute, the National Association of State Personnel Executives, Apprenticeship Colorado and the Colorado Department of Personnel and Administration for their support and collaboration in developing this toolkit. CSG also acknowledges Mary Wurtz, Paola Andujar, Elise Gurney, Dina Klimkina, Joe Paul and Krystal Tanner for their contributions to the toolkit.



Appendix: Apprenticeship Contacts by State

State, county and city agencies interested in developing registered apprenticeship programs should meet with the appropriate human resources staff members early in the program development process. Agencies are also encouraged to include representatives from the state’s apprenticeship approving authority to answer questions about registered apprenticeship and ensure all stakeholders understand how to build a successful program.

The Council of State Governments also provides no-cost technical assistance to state and local government employers developing registered apprenticeship programs. For more information, contact Mary Wurtz via email at mwurtz@csg.org.

The following table provides a contact list of the apprenticeship approving authority in each state for additional state-specific information.

State	Apprenticeship Approving Authority	Contact Information
Alabama	Alabama Office of Apprenticeship, Alabama Department of Commerce	Contact the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship staff member assigned to their region .
Alaska	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Email apprenticeship@alaska.gov or call (907) 269-3729.
Arizona	Arizona Apprenticeship Program, Department of Economic Security	Email AZApprenticeship@azdes.gov
Arkansas	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Contact the Arkansas Office of Skills Development .
California	Division of Apprenticeship Standards, California Department of Industrial Relations	Contact the DAS staff member assigned to your region or industry.
Colorado	Apprenticeship Colorado, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment	Fill out the Apprenticeship Interest Form to be connected with a program development specialist.
Connecticut	Office of Apprenticeship Training, Connecticut Department of Labor	Submit an application to the Office of Apprenticeship Training to become a sponsor or email dol.apprenticeship@ct.gov
Delaware	Division of Employment and Training, Delaware Department of Labor	Submit an application to become a sponsor or email apprenticeship@delaware.gov
District of Columbia	Office of Apprenticeship, Information and Training, Department of Employment Services	Email apprenticeship@dc.gov
Florida	Career and Adult Education, Florida Department of Education	Contact the Apprenticeship Training Representative assigned to your region.
Georgia	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Contact the apprenticeship staff member at your region’s technical college .

State	Apprenticeship Approving Authority	Contact Information
Hawaii	Workforce Development Division, Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations	Email dliir.workforce.develop@hawaii.gov or call (808) 586-8877.
Idaho	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Contact your regional apprenticeship coordinator at the Idaho Department of Labor.
Illinois	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Contact an Apprenticeship Navigator at Apprenticeship Illinois.
Indiana	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Contact the Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship at the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.
Iowa	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Fill out the Employer Contact Form to connect with an IowaWORKS business service team member or representative from the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship.
Kansas	Kansas Office of Apprenticeship, Kansas Department of Commerce	Fill out the contact form for the Office of Apprenticeship.
Kentucky	Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services, Kentucky Career Center	Email apprenticeship@ky.gov .
Louisiana	Apprenticeship Louisiana, Louisiana Workforce Commission	Fill out a pre-application and contact an Apprenticeship Training Representative at apprenticeshipla@lwc.la.gov .
Maine	Maine Apprenticeship Program, Maine Department of Labor	Email maineapprenticeship@maine.gov .
Maryland	Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program, Maryland Department of Labor	Email info@mdapprenticeship.com or call (410) 767-2246.
Massachusetts	Division of Apprentice Standards, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development	Submit an application through the state's ePLACE portal or email apprenticeship@mass.gov .
Michigan	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Contact a Michigan Works! Apprenticeship Success Coordinator .
Minnesota	Apprenticeship Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry	Email dli.apprenticeship@state.mn.us or call (651) 284-5090.
Mississippi	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Complete the interest form through the Mississippi Apprenticeship Program.
Missouri	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Email Apprenticeship Missouri at apprenticeship@dhewd.mo.gov .
Montana	Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program, Montana Department of Labor and Industry	Complete the contact form .
Nebraska	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Email ndol.apprenticeship@nebraska.gov .
Nevada	Nevada State Apprenticeship Council, Nevada Department of Business and Industry	Email nevadasac@labor.nv.gov .
New Hampshire	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Fill out the contact form for the Community College System of New Hampshire's ApprenticeshipNH.
New Jersey	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Complete the intake form for the New Jersey Office of Apprenticeship.
New Mexico	State Apprenticeship Office, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions	Email apprenticeship.info@dws.nm.gov or call (505) 841-8565.
New York	New York Department of Labor	Contact a Supervising Apprentice Training Representative .
North Carolina	ApprenticeshipNC, North Carolina Community Colleges	Contact an ApprenticeshipNC Consultant in your area.

State	Apprenticeship Approving Authority	Contact Information
North Dakota	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Contact Apprenticeship Program Coordinator Barry Dutton at Dutton.barry@dol.gov or (701) 250-4700.
Ohio	ApprenticeOhio, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services	Complete the online interest form .
Oklahoma	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Email wbl@okcommerce.gov .
Oregon	Oregon Apprenticeship, Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries	Email generalATD@boli.state.or.us or call (971) 673-0760 to connect with an Apprenticeship Representative.
Pennsylvania	Apprenticeship and Training Office, Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry	Email apprenticeship@pa.gov to connect with your regional Apprenticeship and Training Representative.
Rhode Island	Apprenticeship Office, Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training	Submit the Sponsor Information Sheet by emailing dlt.apprenticeship@dlt.ri.gov .
South Carolina	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Contact an Apprenticeship Consultant at the South Carolina Technical College System.
South Dakota	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Submit the Registered Apprenticeship Provider Packet to starttoday@state.sd.us .
Tennessee	Apprenticeship TN	Complete the Apprenticeship TN interest form or email apprenticeship.tn@tn.gov to connect with an apprenticeship director.
Texas	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Email apprenticeship@twc.texas.gov .
Utah	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Email apprenticeship@utah.gov to connect with an apprenticeship expert.
Vermont	Vermont Department of Labor	Contact an apprenticeship specialist at a local Vermont Job Center or email labor.apprenticeship@vermont.gov .
Virginia	Virginia Department of Labor and Industry	Complete the online interest form .
Washington	Washington State Department of Labor and Industries	Call (360) 902-5320 to be referred to an apprenticeship consultant.
West Virginia	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Fill out the contact form for the West Virginia Department of Economic Development.
Wisconsin	Wisconsin Apprenticeship, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development	Contact the regional Apprenticeship Training Representative .
Wyoming	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship	Email dws-wdtf@wyo.gov or call (307) 777-5723.