Federal and State Opportunities for State Health Workforce Development

What are Registered Apprenticeships?

Registered apprenticeships are high-quality career pathways and "earn-and-learn" models that have been verified by the U.S. Department of Labor or a State Apprenticeship Agency. Registered apprenticeships meet industry and federal standards[1] that ensure jobseekers can become skilled in a trade or profession leading to a nationally-recognized credential and/or career in a specified field. They can be a useful strategy and accessible pathway, especially in direct care fields, as the learner gains a blend of education and hands-on experience while healthcare employers shape their talent pool by playing an active role in their training. In the healthcare workforce registered apprenticeship programs for nursing assistants and social and human service assistants, for example, have been successful pathways to careers in healthcare and there are increasing opportunities to build programming for other direct care roles.

How can you establish a registered healthcare apprenticeship program in your state?

1. Select the occupation for your apprenticeship program. The first step in establishing a registered healthcare apprenticeship program in your state is identifying an appropriate and needed occupation. Think about where there is a current or future healthcare workforce need and determine whether it can be appropriately administered in an apprenticeship format.
2. Identify a sponsor(s) and a partner(s).
3. Determine the appropriate registration level. All apprenticeship programs have a set of standards that must be approved by federal and/or state registration agencies. Which approval is needed will be based on the apprenticeship occupation and state policies, but federal approval takes precedence over state approval - thus, if an apprenticeship program has already met the standards for national approval, it does not need to be registered by the state as well[2]. If the apprenticeship program will involve multiple states, it requires national approval. If the program is limited within a state with a state approval agency, that is the only level of approval/registration required.
4. Develop core components of your apprenticeship program.
5. Launch and manage your program.

Additional resources to support establishing a registered healthcare apprenticeship program are available at: U.S. Department of Labor: [Updated Guidance - Minimum National Program Standards for Registered Apprenticeship Programs](#)

Overview of Workforce Development

Workforce development is a way to approach economic growth and opportunity within state and local communities. The goal is to provide workers with information, advice, job search assistance and training so that they develop into the type of employees that get and retain good jobs. The approach of workforce development is personnel focused rather than business focused, and will provide workers with tools to overcome barriers to job acquisition as well as creating skills within the talent pool. Workforce development is generally applied in two ways within a given community: place-based approaches focus on the needs of a population within an area, while sector-based approaches address coupling workers' skill sets to needs in an industry.

State-based Workforce Development Approaches

When identifying occupations of focus for the application of their WIOA funds, states often rely on partnerships formed between employers and educational entities, such as a school or post secondary institution. This is due to the fact that work-based learning programs include a continuum of activities that comprise everything from career exploration to registered apprenticeship. When identifying sectors of focus for their funds, states with existing WBL partnerships referenced multiple best practices to consider when partnering with stakeholders including:

- Using asset mapping and gap analysis' to identify target stakeholders that can help fill existing gaps in student participation or industry representation
- Co-creating and co-branding programs, policies, and resources whenever possible
- Building in a feedback loop so necessary adjustments can be made to address under represented sectors and populations

Partnerships Between the State, Employers, and Training Providers

Work-based learning provides potential employees with authentic work experiences where they apply and develop employability and technical skills that support success in careers and postsecondary education. Work-based learning activities culminate in an assessment and recognition of acquired knowledge and skills. Governors and state policy makers can encourage strong partnerships between education and business through holding regular convenings with both parties, incentivizing partnerships through funding or other avenues, and creating resources to help interested stakeholders form strong partnerships and programs. Examples of potential government partners include state departments of education and/or higher education, two- and four-year colleges, and school districts. These government partners can form relationships with community-based organizations, non-profits, individual employers, and industry associations to enhance worker training. For additional information about state approaches for industry-level coordination of workforce strategies related to health workforce, see the Health Resources and Services Administration's [Health Workforce Strategic Plan](#) from 2021.

Alignment of Earn-and-Learn Strategies with Stackable Credentials
Stackable credentials focus career and technical education programs on building the critical skills needed for students to advance in growing sectors of the economy. By awarding credit for a range of education, training, and workplace learning and skill building experiences that "stack," toward associate degrees, stackable credential programs help working students develop the skills they need to advance on the job and earn credentials that enable further study – at the same time. This accelerates credit attainment and may increase the likelihood of degree completion. [3] By allowing workers to stack credits, states can increase the job pool with skilled workers and use their partnerships to place applicants in fields desperately needing their services.

Other State-based Workforce Development Opportunities
- *Pre-apprenticeships:* Pre-apprenticeship is a program or set of services designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship program. A pre-apprenticeship program, by definition, has a documented partnership with at least one Registered Apprenticeship program. Quality pre-apprenticeship programs are a starting point toward a successful career path for under-represented job seekers (such as disadvantaged women and men, individuals with disabilities and others) who may not be aware of this approach to obtain good jobs with opportunities for advancement. Pre-apprenticeships help individuals meet the entry requirements for apprenticeship programs and ensure they are prepared to be successful in their apprenticeship. [4]
- *Youth apprenticeship:* Youth apprenticeship programs are for high school students who combine academic and technical classroom instruction with work experience through a Registered Apprenticeship Program. It provides the foundation for students to choose among multiple pathways after high school – to enroll in college, to enter an apprenticeship program, begin full-time employment, or a combination.[5]

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[1] Ladd, John v., February 16, 2022. Updated Guidance - Minimum National Program standards for Registered Apprenticeship Programs. https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/bulletins/Circular-2022-01.pdf
[2] https://www.apprenticeship.gov/about-us/legislation-regulations-guidance
[3] https://cte.ed.gov/initiatives/community-college-stackable-credentials
[4] https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/apprenticeship/pdfs/pre_apprenticeship_guideforwomen.pdf
[5] https://www.apprenticeship.gov/help/what-youth-apprenticeship#:~:text=is%20Youth%20Apprenticeship%3F-,Apprentices%20and%20Career%20Seekers,Registered%20Apprenticeship%20Program%20(RAP).