

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: *Advancing Apprenticeship as a Workforce Strategy*

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides an extraordinary opportunity for the public workforce system to transform and improve the quality of life for job seekers and workers through an integrated, job-driven system that links diverse talent to our nation’s businesses.

Registered Apprenticeship is a proven workforce strategy that can help state and local workforce systems transform how they meet the needs of businesses and workers and fully achieve the vision for the workforce system under WIOA.

The critical strategies that are called for in WIOA, such as sector strategies and career pathways, are at the heart of the apprenticeship model. The foundation of apprenticeship is deep industry engagement that can further the workforce system’s efforts to support regional economies. Apprenticeship is an effective work-based learning approach that builds worker skills and establishes pathways to higher levels of employment and wages.



Why is Apprenticeship a Valuable Strategy for the Workforce System?

Registered Apprenticeship is an industry-driven model that combines on-the-job learning with job-related instruction. As an “earn and learn” model, apprentices are employed and earn wages from the first day on the job. Apprenticeship is a flexible training strategy that can be customized to meet the needs of any business. There are currently more than 1,000 occupations – including careers in health care, information technology, transportation, and energy – in which apprenticeship is used to meet business needs for qualified workers. Using apprenticeship as a workforce strategy will also contribute to higher performance outcomes in employment, retention, earnings, and credential attainment.

How does WIOA Build Stronger Connections to Apprenticeship?

Many workforce systems around the country have adopted Registered Apprenticeship as an effective strategy in working with employers, adults, dislocated workers, and youth. The implementation of WIOA provides clear opportunities to more fully align and integrate apprenticeship strategies into the public workforce system.

WIOA includes several changes that strengthen Registered Apprenticeship as a resource, a training strategy, and as a partner in the workforce system.

- ★ **Naming an apprenticeship representative to state and local workforce boards**
WIOA specifies inclusion of a member of the apprenticeship system on state and local workforce boards. Specifically, WIOA indicates that boards must include a representative of a joint labor-management apprenticeship program or, if none exists, a representative of an apprenticeship program. An apprenticeship representative may already be engaged on boards in some states and local areas. For others, the State Apprenticeship Agencies and the state offices of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship can assist you with identifying these representatives.
- ★ **Including Registered Apprenticeship programs on the Eligible Training Provider List**
All Registered Apprenticeship programs, by virtue of their registration, can be on a state's Eligible Training Provider List and thereby eligible to receive federal workforce funding as pre-approved training providers. This is one of the most important changes in WIOA, as it expands opportunities for job seekers and for the workforce system to use WIOA funds for related instruction and other apprenticeship costs.
- ★ **Promoting work-based learning to meet employer needs for skilled workers**
WIOA promotes greater use of work-based learning and a stronger emphasis on business services. WIOA provides for increased reimbursement rates for employers for on-the-job training (OJT). OJT can be used to support apprenticeship programs, and this change promotes the greater use of apprenticeship as a strategy to address the needs of both employers and job seekers.
- ★ **Supporting career pathways for youth through apprenticeship**
WIOA supports apprenticeship as a workforce strategy for youth. The law cites pre-apprenticeship activities and work-based learning among the youth program elements. WIOA also recognizes apprenticeship as a career pathway for Job Corps students, and supports coordination of the Youth Build program with pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.
- ★ **Using the apprenticeship model as a key strategy in meeting the needs of business**
The increased emphasis on work-based learning and business engagement in WIOA provides a new opportunity for the workforce system to integrate apprenticeship into its business services. Since employers are at the center of the model, apprenticeship automatically brings industry to the table. Therefore, apprenticeship aligns perfectly with sector strategies, industry partnerships, and other investments in meeting the needs of the business community.

To learn more about apprenticeship and its value to the public workforce system, please visit the ApprenticeshipUSA Toolkit at www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/toolkit.htm