

Apprenticeship Policy

Reference:

Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Sec. 122; Federal Register/Vol. 65, No. 156/Aug. 11, 2000; Federal Register/Vol. 73, No. 210/Oct. 29, 2008; National Apprenticeship Act of 1937; TEGL 2-07; TEGL 17-05; TEN 17-06; TEN 18-13; 21st Century Registered Apprenticeship: A Shared Vision Report; Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance; Eligibility for Dislocated Workers policy; Eligibility for Adult Programs policy; Attainment of a Degree or Certificate Performance Measure policy; and State Workforce Investment Plan, as modified.

Background:

The National Registered Apprenticeship System provides an effective approach to building a skilled, knowledgeable and competitive workforce in regional economies. The longevity of the apprenticeship program as a system of training may be attributed to many things including quality, adaptability, and a reputation for opening doors to lifetime careers.

Since technological advances, demographic changes, and globalization have significantly altered the context in which apprenticeship programs operate, it was necessary to issue new regulations for Registered Apprenticeship Programs in October of 2008. The final regulations provide a variety of industries with greater flexibility and options to address their talent-development needs through apprenticeship.

In coordination with the 75th anniversary of the National Apprenticeship Act, the Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (ACA) produced a leading-edge report entitled, *21st Century Registered Apprenticeship: A Shared Vision for Increasing Opportunity, Innovation, and Competitiveness for American Workers and Employers*. The report provides goals and strategies for states, localities, and the workforce system to look at the national Registered Apprenticeship system from an entirely new perspective and as an important career pathway for American workers. This report was detailed in TEN 18-13 and is accessible at

https://21stcenturyapprenticeship.workforce3one.org/view/21st_Century_Vision_for_Registered_Apprenticeship_/info.

This policy provides information regarding how apprenticeship programs can assist in developing a skilled, competitive workforce. In addition, this policy outlines methods and goals for expanding apprenticeships into new and traditional industries and increasing pathways for underrepresented populations as outlined in ACA's report. Specific information on Registered Apprenticeship in Nebraska is posted on the Nebraska Department of Labor Web site at <http://www.dol.nebraska.gov/nwd/Apprentice/index.html>.

Action:

After the 10 day public review period, this policy is considered final. Questions and comments should be submitted in writing to Stan Odenthal, Policy Coordinator, stan.odenthal@nebraska.gov.

Policy:

The U.S. Registered Apprenticeship system offers many opportunities to meet Nebraska's Workforce Investment System goals. Apprenticeship programs are industry-driven, voluntarily sponsored by individual employers, employer associations, or partnerships between employers and labor unions. Instructions in technical subjects related to the occupation may be accomplished through media such as classroom, occupational or industry courses, electronic media or other instruction approved by the Registration Agency. Workforce Investment Act funding may be used to pay for books, tools, etc. Apprenticeship combines immediate employment with a structured program of skill attainment; combines on-the-job-learning with related instruction; provides for wage increases as skills increase; and includes mentoring and established career pathways.

Definition

"Registered Apprenticeship is a national training system that combines paid learning on-the-job and related technical and theoretical instruction in a skilled occupation." [TEGL 2-07]

Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 29.4 states that an apprenticeable occupation is one which is specified by industry and which must:

- Involve skills that are customarily learned in a practical way through a structured, systematic program of on-the-job supervised learning.
- Be clearly identified and commonly recognized throughout an industry.
- Involve the progressive attainment of manual, mechanical or technical skills and knowledge which, in accordance with the industry standard for the occupation, would require the completion of at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning to attain; and
- Require related instruction to supplement the on-the-job learning.

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Eligibility Issues

Applicants for the apprenticeship training program must be at least 16 years old. If applying to be an apprentice in a hazardous occupation, individuals must usually be at least 18. The apprenticeship program sponsor may have additional requirements to ensure the applicants have sufficient ability, aptitude, and education to master the basics of the trade/occupation and to satisfactorily complete the related theoretical instruction required in the program. In addition to the completed application form, each prospective apprentice may be required by the sponsor to submit a transcript of school courses and grades, proof of age, honorable military discharge (if applicable) and high school diploma or equivalency certificate (if applicable.) Although no previous experience is necessary to become an apprentice, some sponsors may require references from previous employers.

Apprenticeship Program Sponsors in Nebraska

Organizations which apply for apprenticeship sponsorship enter into a written agreement with the Federal Office of Apprenticeship or cognizant State government to operate their proposed programs consistent with 29 CFR Parts 29 and 30. An outline of the work processes in which the apprentice will receive supervised work experience and training on the job, and the allocation of the approximate amount of time to be spent in each major process are part of this agreement.

A listing of apprenticeship program sponsors recognized in Nebraska can be viewed at <http://oa.doleta.gov/>.

Certification

The Office of Apprenticeship provides a nationally recognized, portable Certificate of Completion from the Department of Labor verifying completion of the registered apprenticeship program. This certificate is valuable because it is a portable industry credential that is accepted by employers throughout the country.

In addition, the classroom instruction may often be applied toward college degrees and certifications. Many apprenticeship programs – particularly in high-growth industries such as health care, advanced manufacturing and transportation – offer interim credentials and training certificates based on a competency model. According to TEGL 2-07, interim credentials may be recorded as appropriate credentials for the purposes of reporting under the Youth Common Measures. “For example, apprentices in competency-based programs may receive a Certificate of Training upon completion of each level working towards a Certificate of Completion.”

Approaches to Completion of Apprenticeship

The regulations at 29 C.F.R. § 29.5(b)(2) present three methods by which an individual apprentice may progress toward the industry standard for work experience. These methods are:

1. A time-based approach involving completion of at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job work experience as described in a work process schedule;
2. A competency-based approach involving successful demonstration of acquired skills and knowledge by an apprentice, as verified by the program sponsor, plus an on-the-job learning component;
3. A hybrid approach involving completion of a specified minimum number of hours of on-the-job learning plus the successful demonstration of competency as described in a work process schedule; and
4. The determination of the appropriate approach for the program standards is made by the program sponsor, subject to approval by the Registration Agency.

Eligible Providers of Training Services

Entities that carry out programs under the National Apprenticeship Act must meet the requirements specified in WIA Section 122, the final implementing regulations, and the

State “Eligible Training Provider Policy” to be certified as an eligible provider to receive Workforce Investment Act adult and dislocated worker funds through Individual Training Accounts.

Incumbent Worker Status

Since participants become employed after signing the apprenticeship agreement, it is recommended that the Workforce Investment Act eligibility issues be addressed prior to assisting them into the apprenticeship program.

If the individual comes to the Career Center already employed by a company and desires to enter an apprenticeship program, there are some requirements to keep in mind:

- “Individuals that have entered into other employment since a termination or layoff are considered eligible if the employment is less than one continuous year and the individual is earning seventy-five percent or less of the wage paid at the time of termination or layoff. Employment over one continuous year shall be considered an occupational change.” [Eligibility for Dislocated Workers policy]
- “Dislocated workers shall not be considered eligible for services with the same employer or in the same occupation.” [Eligibility for Dislocated Workers policy]
- “Local areas must give priority for adult intensive and training services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals, unless the local area has determined that funds are not limited under the criteria (discussed in policy).” [Eligibility for Adult Programs policy]
- “Apprentices who receive WIA services after enrollment in Registered Apprenticeship to support classroom or on-the-job training, or to provide other services, should be treated as incumbent workers. Retention and earning outcomes should be tracked in this case, but not the placement outcome.” [TEGL 2-07]

Performance

Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser clients who receive core and intensive services resulting in their entry into a Registered Apprenticeship program become employees of the Registered Apprenticeship sponsor and can be tracked in Common Measures associated with employment.

“For the purposes of tracking and common measures, WIA clients associated with apprenticeship programs should be exited from the workforce system after the completion of WIA associated activities. It is not necessary to track apprentices through to the completion of their apprenticeship program unless they are supported by workforce system resources for the entire duration. Thus, an apprentice who receives workforce system resources to support specific portions of classroom training may be exited from the program upon completion of that training, even if they continue in the apprenticeship program for a longer period of time.” [TEGL 2-07]

Recommended Next Steps

- Map existing Registered Apprenticeship programs in your region and display at Career Center.
- Strengthen collaborative relationships between local Workforce Investment Board and apprenticeship staff to explore opportunities to leverage Registered Apprenticeship as a significant workforce development strategy.
- Educate Career Center staff and local Workforce Investment Board members about Registered Apprenticeship, including how to use WIA funding in support of Registered

Apprenticeship and how Registered Apprenticeship applies to performance outcomes under the Common Measures.

- Discuss apprenticeship as a workforce tool with leaders, such as legislators, governor, mayors, county executives, council members, and department heads.
- Encourage the development of new apprenticeship programs as a solution to meet business customer needs.
- Enhance strategic regional partnerships by integrating apprenticeship programming into strategies for talent development and linking apprenticeship programs to other economic development entities and school district administrations, alternative education programs, adult basic education programs, prisons, and city, county, and state governments.
- Adopt local policies and procedures to better integrate Registered Apprenticeship training as an option offered by the workforce investment system.
- Organize regular roundtables or other policy forums in which workforce system, apprenticeship system, education, and employer stakeholders are brought together to discuss policy issues and explore collaborative opportunities.
- Co-sponsor career fairs and other outreach activities related to education and career opportunities with local representatives of the Registered Apprenticeship system.
- Encourage Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to contact their local Workforce Investment Boards to inform them about their training programs.

Goals

The long-term goals for apprenticeships are designed to both set a future vision and to challenge people to think differently about the opportunities in Registered Apprenticeship as a career pathway for American workers. There is a real opportunity to make Registered Apprenticeship a mainstream education and career pathway option, one that can help the country maintain its prominence in building the strongest, most adaptable, and most credentialed workforce in the world.

In an effort to meet the needs of a changing workforce, the goals of the Registered Apprenticeship program should include:

1. Increasing the number of businesses and additional industries that will use and reap the advantages of quality Registered Apprenticeship programs.
2. Help individuals see Registered Apprenticeship as a valuable post-secondary pathway to rewarding careers.
3. Make Registered Apprenticeship opportunities more readily accessible for everyone, including diverse populations.
4. Create public policy that will accurately reflect the increasing power and value of Registered Apprenticeship in order to address economic and workforce development challenge.