

Registered Apprenticeships are: Business-Led

What does this mean?

Neither DOL, nor a local workforce agency, nor anyone from post-secondary education are going to tell employers what their programs have to look like. Employers make the final call on all details for their program, though they must adhere to DOL minimum standards for OJT and RTI.



Why does this matter?

Employers are oftentimes skeptical about the idea of government intervention in their hiring and training practices. Emphasizing their leadership throughout the process and giving them multiple opportunities to make customized adjustments can help reduce their alienation with the idea of a “registered” program.



What else should I know?

While employers have the final say in regard to what their apprenticeship program looks like, that doesn't mean that it isn't our responsibility to act as quality control by advising them on best practices for ensuring recruitment and retention. This might mean suggesting more worthwhile RTI, encouraging paid classroom time, or providing ONET data on competitive wages for their sector.



Pro Tip: Refer to your ATR by their first name in conversation when discussing DOL with employers. Humanizing the public sector goes a long way towards building trust; plus, “Bruce” sounds a lot less scary than “Our DOL Monitor.”

Registered Apprenticeships are:

A Paid Job

What does this mean?



Unlike internships, which are often unpaid, registered apprenticeships are a paid (usually full-time) job from Day One*. Additionally, apprentices earn a progressive wage schedule throughout their apprenticeship, which consists of time and/or competency-based milestones that they must reach to earn raises towards a journeyworker/mentor-level salary.

Why does this matter?



One of the major reasons behind registered apprenticeship programs' high retention rate is the transparency that comes with the progressive wage schedule; apprentices don't play a guessing game as to when they'll see a pay increase, but earn direct rewards for their skill gains.

What else should I know?



Pay schedules for registered apprenticeships can be as simple or as complex as the employer prefers, but programs that provide apprentices with consistent wage increases will see stronger retention and a greater incentive for improved performance. Employers struggling with the concept of a progressive wage schedule may require a higher level of assistance at that stage of program development.

Pro Tip: To ensure that employers are remaining competitive and enabling the highest possible retention rate for their program, be sure to share with them the regional salary ranges for their program occupations found at [onetonline.org](https://www.onetonline.org)

*In programs where classroom instruction is front-loaded and apprentices are not being paid by the employer for classroom time, apprentices will not begin earning wages until they begin on-the-job training.

Registered Apprenticeships are: On-the-Job Mentorship

What does this mean?



The direct transfer of knowledge from mentor to learner is at the heart of registered apprenticeship, both on the job and in the classroom. Employers assign each apprentice a journeyworker mentor who will train them and evaluate their competencies as they work towards program completion.

Why does this matter?



As employers anticipate major generational shifts in the workforce, apprenticeship offers a means of efficient, diligent succession planning that prevents decades of experience from being lost. Additionally, the opportunity to train a new generation of workers can be a revitalizing experience for long-term employees who may be facing burnout.

What else should I know?



When an apprenticeship program is registered, the employer agrees to maintain a specific ratio of journeyworkers/mentors to apprentices for each occupation. This ratio applies to CEJA worksites and Prevailing Wage worksites, where apprentices are paid their apprentice wage so long as the ratio is upheld.

Pro Tip: Work with your local training providers to determine if there are any available train-the-trainer style curriculums for employers to utilize; mentorship is not an inherent skill, and it is worthwhile to ensure quality training both in the classroom AND on the job for apprentices.

Registered Apprenticeships are:

Supplemental Education

What does this mean?



A core component of registered apprenticeships is the training that apprentices receive in a classroom environment at a college or third-party training provider, which often leads to their earning an occupational credential. A minimum of 144 contact hours of supplemental learning is required per calendar year of each program. This training is funded by the employer in the majority of programs.

Why does this matter?



Classroom education isn't merely a box to be checked when it comes to registered apprenticeship; selecting a worthwhile curriculum from an established training provider is a key aspect of program registration, and acting as a liaison between employers and educational institutions is a crucial function of the navigator consortium.

What else should I know?



For occupations where credentials are required for work (CDL Drivers, Certified Nursing Assistants, etc.) supplemental education may be front-loaded so that it occurs prior to on-the-job training. Employers are not required to pay for time apprentices spend in the classroom, but doing so is a best practice that incentivizes retention and prevents burnout.

Pro Tip: Research existing educational programs (both community colleges and third-party providers) within your region prior to meeting with employers. Presenting employers with “out of the box” training options can prevent “bare minimums” in program development and ensure best outcomes for apprentices.

Registered Apprenticeships are:

Diversity

What does this mean?



Like all communities, apprenticeships are strengthened by the ability of all people to succeed regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and physical/mental disability. Programs are designed to reflect the communities in which they are based through strong non-discrimination, anti-harassment, and recruitment practices that ensure access, equity, and inclusion.

Why does this matter?



Employers list their specific hiring requirements and processes to ensure that all applicants receive equitable treatment. Additionally, employers are required to develop an Affirmative Action Plan for their program so long as they have employed five or more apprentices and do not have an existing EEO program in place.

What else should I know?



Employers must complete an Affirmative Action Plan for their registered apprenticeship program within two years of program registration. This plan primarily consists of A) a Demographic Analysis of their region and workforce, and B) a set of goals/plans for increasing underrepresented groups in the program.

Pro Tip: DOL has ample resources for assisting employers with EEO at <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/eo/sponsors/create-your-plan>

Registered Apprenticeships are: Quality & Safety

What does this mean?



Apprenticeships are controlled for quality and safety by DOL in two primary ways: first, the competencies (skill gains) for each program are reviewed and standardized to ensure apprentices develop an advanced and worthwhile skillset; secondly, employers set and agree to follow a mandatory ratio of journeyworkers/veteran workers to apprentices to ensure that apprentices are always safe while on the jobsite.

Why does this matter?



When helping an employer register their apprenticeship, work with them to ensure that the competencies for each occupation in their program accurately reflect the tasks that apprentices will be completing at their sites. While flexibility and customization are a priority, competencies should not be diluted to the point that the role becomes unrecognizable.

What else should I know?



Apprenticeship navigators can help employers retain apprentices by implementing their own quality control measures throughout the registration process! Advising employers on available resources, competitive wages, and worthwhile classroom training providers is a best practice for building a high-quality registered apprenticeship program!

Pro Tip: For time-based apprenticeship programs, employers can adjust the OJL (On-the-Job Learning) hours for each competency up to 25% (e.g., a 100 Hour competency can be raised up to 125 hours or lowered to 75 hours).

Registered Apprenticeships are: Credentials

What does this mean?



Apprentices who complete their RTI coursework plus a minimum of 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and any additional competency requirements will receive an official Journeyworker certificate from DOL. In addition to this nationally recognized credential, navigators may choose to require employers to design programs that include the attainment of an accredited certificate, degree, or license.

Why does this matter?



Credentials are one of the major value-adds for apprentices and a worthwhile credential indicates a worthwhile program. Apprentices working towards a college credential in addition to their Journeyworker certificate may be more likely to stay committed to their program and career field in the long term.

What else should I know?



Identifying local educational programs that meet the needs of an apprenticeship occupation is one of the first steps in developing a registered apprenticeship with an employer. Community colleges may be willing to develop a customized training program for apprenticeship employers if no pre-existing curriculum for the occupation exists, or they may defer to a well-regarded industry training provider.

Pro Tip: For a list of credential-based training programs in your area for commonly apprenticed occupations, check out the Eligible Training Provider List at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioatrainingsearch>