

## **APPENDIX A: Apprenticeship Illinois Framework**

Utilizing apprenticeship as a workforce strategy for businesses and a career pathway for individuals aligns the Governor's vision as well as the plans required for state education and workforce entities. These include the following: Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2019-03; the Illinois Economic Plan, the Illinois Unified State Plan, including the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, WIOA, and Perkins V. The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) established the Apprenticeship Committee in 2016. The Committee integrates their work into the larger framework of career pathways, establishing apprenticeship as a work-based learning model. The Committee recognized that apprenticeships are a promising work-based learning strategy connecting individuals to a career pathway as well as being a solution for businesses to find and tap into undiscovered talent, all branded under the name of Apprenticeship Illinois.

Some states, such as Illinois, do not have state apprenticeship offices, where apprenticeship development and programming can be centralized and expanded. Currently apprenticeship programs cut across five state entities: Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Department of Employment Security, Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois State Board of Education. The website, [www.ApprenticeshipIllinois.com](http://www.ApprenticeshipIllinois.com) is used as a hub for the state to direct employers and workforce partners to resources and contacts. The Department of Commerce has a long-term vision for growing apprenticeships that revolves around supporting apprenticeship specialists to promote apprenticeships regionally and apprenticeship intermediaries that support the apprentice experience from start to finish. Since Illinois has a decentralized apprenticeship structure as a state, expanding apprenticeships statewide requires an infrastructure to support apprenticeship development and implementation.

**Apprenticeship Specialists:** Without businesses sponsoring registered apprenticeships, there are no apprenticeships to fill and no apprenticeship opportunities for career seekers. Apprenticeship Specialists are an essential component to the Apprenticeship Illinois framework as they work directly with businesses to cultivate and launch new apprenticeships. Apprenticeship specialists build capacity and support the business ecosystem in key industry sectors.

Apprenticeship Specialists are embedded within local workforce area business services teams and work at the regional level, being the key point of contact in their area for the expansion of apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeship Specialists build relationships with regional employers to expand the use of apprenticeship as a work-based learning strategy. Apprenticeship Specialists build and maintain effective partnerships among businesses, the workforce system, education/training providers, and other stakeholders. The **primary objective** of the Apprenticeship Specialists is to ease the burden on employers to expand apprenticeship sponsorship in existing and new occupations. They do this by engaging businesses and providing one-stop concierge service to build a Registered Apprenticeship program from start to finish at no cost. Apprenticeship Specialists support workforce demand by utilizing apprenticeship as a workforce development tool for businesses. This is a formalized approach that enhances existing business practices to support workforce success.

**Apprenticeship Intermediaries:** Apprenticeship Intermediaries are participant facing and ensure the completion and success of apprentices. They do this by sponsoring and/or aligning the apprenticeship programs, coordinate with employers to hire and mentor apprentices, facilitate the provision of related instruction, and manage other components of the program. They aggregate and align the needs of employers with apprenticeship programs. They ease the burden for businesses, particularly small companies that do not have the personnel to execute such tasks, by performing administrative responsibilities such as registering businesses and apprentices, tracking activities, and reporting results. The major goal of this grant is to increase the number of registered apprentices in Illinois.