

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 13-12
	DATE November 30, 2012

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY DIRECTORS
STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS AND STAFF
LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS AND STAFF
OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP FIELD STAFF
OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP STATE AND REGIONAL DIRECTORS

FROM: JANE OATES 
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Defining a Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program and Related Tools and Resources

1. **Purpose.** To inform the public workforce system about the pre-apprenticeship program definition and quality framework, as well as promote tools and materials to improve the consistency and quality of pre-apprenticeship programs.

2. **Background.** Registered Apprenticeship is an effective “earn and learn” model with a long history of providing career ladders and pathways to the middle class, particularly for the building and construction industry but increasingly in other industries as well. In Fiscal Year 2011, the average starting wage for an apprentice was \$16.01/hour (\$33,301/year), with wages upon completion of a three to four year apprenticeship at \$26.36/hour (\$54,829/year).¹ These results demonstrate the advantages an apprenticeship offers in providing both a significant wage gain and clear career path for entry-level workers. Quality pre-apprenticeship programs can play a valuable role in preparing qualified entry-level workers for Registered Apprenticeship careers while contributing to the development of a diverse and skilled workforce. Through a variety of unique program designs and approaches, pre-apprenticeship programs can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse populations being trained, the various employers and sponsors they serve, and specific opportunities within the local labor market. However, the standards for pre-apprenticeship programs have varied with no common definition or consistent program elements.

To develop a definition and quality framework for pre-apprenticeship, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA) sought public input by hosting three listening sessions with key stakeholders in the apprenticeship and workforce communities and an online listening session (webinar) with the general public. In addition, ETA engaged the Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (ACA) in the development of recommendations which the ACA approved for submission to the Department at its May 2011 meeting. The Department has accepted these recommendations and this Training and

¹ Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS), 2011.

Employment Notice (TEN) formally announces the definition and quality framework for pre-apprenticeship.

3. Pre-apprenticeship Definition and Quality Framework. Pre-apprenticeship is defined here as a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, Registered Apprenticeship program(s). A quality pre-apprenticeship program is one that incorporates the following elements:

- **Approved Training and Curriculum.** Training and curriculum based on industry standards² and approved by the documented Registered Apprenticeship partner(s) that will prepare individuals with the skills and competencies needed to enter one or more Registered Apprenticeship program(s);
- **Strategies for Long-Term Success.** Strategies that increase Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for under-represented³, disadvantaged or low-skilled individuals, such that, upon completion, they will meet the entry requirements, gain consideration, and are prepared for success in one or more Registered Apprenticeship program(s) including the following:
 - Strong recruitment strategies focused on outreach to populations under-represented³ in local, state, and national Registered Apprenticeship programs;
 - Educational and pre-vocational services that prepare individuals to meet the entry requisites of one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs (e.g. specific career and industry awareness workshops, job readiness courses, English for speakers of other languages, Adult Basic Education, financial literacy seminars, math tutoring, etc.); and
 - Assists in exposing participants to local, state and national Registered Apprenticeship programs and provides direct assistance to participants applying to those programs;

² **INDUSTRY STANDARDS**

Industry Standards in this context refers to the generally accepted practices of an industry, in terms of the knowledge, skills and aptitudes that are demonstrated by members of the industry. Generally accepted practices are represented by the performance of, or instruction in, specific occupational tasks relevant to that industry by employers, journey worker(s), educators, and other subject matter experts. By using the term Industry Standards in this manner, the intent of the definition is to ensure that training and/or curricula used by the pre-apprenticeship program align with the needs of the Registered Apprenticeship partner(s), while still allowing flexibility in pre-apprenticeship program design.

³ **UNDER-REPRESENTED**

In the context of this definition, the term under-represented is intentionally broad. Generally, the term “under-represented” means a population that does not represent the majority, or a proportional share as indicated by appropriate data, of current participants in Registered Apprenticeship. For example, veterans may be an under-represented population in Registered Apprenticeship. Broadly, the intent of this term is to encourage pre-apprenticeship programs to be inclusive of all populations that may benefit from Registered Apprenticeship, including those that do not, proportionally participate in Registered Apprenticeship regardless of the reason.

- **Access to Appropriate Support Services.** Facilitates access to appropriate support services⁴ during the pre-apprenticeship program and a significant portion of the Registered Apprenticeship program;
- **Promotes Greater Use of Registered Apprenticeship to Increase Future Opportunities.** To support the ongoing sustainability of the partnership between pre-apprenticeship providers and Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, these efforts should collaboratively promote the use of Registered Apprenticeship as a preferred means for employers to develop a skilled workforce and to create career opportunities for individuals;
- **Meaningful Hands-on Training that does not Displace Paid Employees.** Provides hands-on training to individuals in a simulated lab experience or through volunteer opportunities, when possible, neither of which supplants a paid employee but accurately simulates the industry and occupational conditions of the partnering Registered Apprenticeship sponsor(s) while observing proper supervision and safety protocols; and
- **Facilitated Entry and/or Articulation.** When possible, formalized agreements⁵ exist with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors that enable individuals who have successfully completed the pre-apprenticeship program to enter directly into a Registered Apprenticeship program and/or include articulation agreements for earning advanced credit/placement for skills and competencies already acquired.

Additional Information. In addition to the quality framework above, ETA supports expanded partnership efforts in model pre-apprenticeship training that are a collaboration among:

- Registered Apprenticeship sponsors;
- Workforce development agencies;
- Economic development agencies;
- Business and industry partners;
- Labor management organizations;
- Community colleges and other education partners;

⁴ **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Support services may refer to any service that assists participants to qualify for and maintain participation in a pre-apprenticeship and/or Registered Apprenticeship program. Broadly, support services are those intended to assist individual participants with an assessed or expressed need in order to ensure participants' success in completing the pre-apprenticeship program, gaining employment, acquiring necessary skills, or addressing any other identified barriers (*footnote continued on page three*).

Pre-apprenticeship organizations may directly provide support services or facilitate the provision of support services through referrals. The intent of this term is to ensure support services are available and emphasize the importance of such services being integrated into pre-apprenticeship programs. ETA has determined that YouthBuild programs that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Labor meet the requirements of this definition of pre-apprenticeship.

⁵ **FORMALIZED AGREEMENTS**

In the context of this definition, a "formalized agreement" between the Registered Apprenticeship sponsor(s) and the pre-apprenticeship organization can be any form of documentation that clearly defines the obligations and expectations of each of the parties to the agreement.

- Community and faith-based organizations; and,
- Advocacy organizations that represent underserved populations.

ETA offers youth programs in YouthBuild and Job Corps that often serve as pathways to Registered Apprenticeship programs and have a track record of successful apprenticeship placements because these programs have the attributes of a quality pre-apprenticeship program described in this TEN. In addition, many WIA youth providers work with local Registered Apprenticeship programs to improve the success of students in applying for placement. Finally, as articulated throughout this TEN, pre-apprenticeship is not just a youth program strategy but may also be an effective strategy for participants in the WIA adult programs.

ETA does not currently, nor is it planning to, register or certify pre-apprenticeship programs or individuals participating in a pre-apprenticeship program. ETA intends for this TEN to serve as a catalyst for pre-apprenticeship providers to make contact with Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors. In issuing this notice and technical assistance, ETA seeks to improve the consistency and quality of pre-apprenticeship programs.

4. Workforce System Partnerships with Quality Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship Programs. ETA encourages the American Job Center network to familiarize itself with this definition and framework, as well as to use the technical assistance materials to support expanded partnerships between quality pre-apprenticeship programs and Registered Apprenticeship programs. WIA funding can be used to support pre-apprenticeship programs. The potential benefits of collaboration include:

- *Boosting training* - WIA participants in pre-apprenticeship programs are counted as receiving training services;
- *Promoting diversity* - Pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs offer career pathways for the various adult and youth populations served by the WIA programs;
- *Enhancing job placement* - WIA participants that complete the pre-apprenticeship program and enter a Registered Apprenticeship program are counted as positive placements into employment; and
- *Improving other important workforce indicators* – Placing pre-apprenticeship participants into Registered Apprenticeship may result in improved outcomes in other key areas, such as:
 - employment retention rates and average earnings;
 - degree or certificate attainment; and,
 - gains in literacy and numeracy skills for youth.

5. Technical Assistance and Resource Materials. ETA continues to create resource materials and to provide technical assistance resources to aid the American Job Center network to support expanded partnerships with quality pre-apprenticeship programs and Registered Apprenticeship programs. These materials include:

- *Pathways to Registered Apprenticeship: Partnering for Success*, a soon to be released pre-apprenticeship toolkit which will provide outreach materials to explain the benefits of

pre-apprenticeship training and Registered Apprenticeship programs for a variety of potential partners, such as community colleges, students, parents, the American Job Center network, and industry. This resource will also aid the American Job Center network and other partners in identifying quality pre-apprenticeship programs and effectively building partnerships with such programs. The toolkit will include fliers, Frequently Asked Questions, and brochures targeted at particular audiences. The toolkit will be made available on-line on the 21st Century Registered Apprenticeship Community of Practice (CoP): <http://21stcenturyapprenticeship.workforce3one.org/>.

- *Pathways to Success*: A searchable database of pre-apprenticeship programs to help potential partners identify pre-apprenticeship programs in their region or local area. The database does not provide qualitative information about the program but describes the services and training the programs provide to prepare participants for entry into Registered Apprenticeship. Programs that want to have their information included in the database should send their request to OA.Administrator@dol.gov. The database can be found on the Apprenticeship CoP as described above.
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 02-07, *Leveraging Registered Apprenticeship as a Workforce Development Strategy for the Workforce Investment System*.
- TEN No. 44-11, *Encouraging Enhanced Partnerships and Collaboration between the Workforce Investment System and Registered Apprenticeship Programs*.

For more information regarding these resources and to find additional Registered Apprenticeship information, please visit www.doleta.gov/oa and the Apprenticeship CoP Web site. For first-time users of the CoP, this resource is easy to use and registration is free. Go to the homepage, <http://21stcenturyapprenticeship.workforce3one.org/>, and click on the “sign up” button in the top right corner of the screen to acquire a username and password. This resource provides a wealth of information about innovations in Registered Apprenticeship, successful partnerships with workforce, education, and Registered Apprenticeship programs.

6. Next Steps. ETA will continue to develop and disseminate information to promote partnerships of the American Job Center network with quality pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs.

7. Action Requested. States are requested to disseminate this information broadly to local areas to build broader understanding of pre-apprenticeship programs and this critical connection to Registered Apprenticeship programs.

8. Inquiries. Questions about this TEN should be directed to Ms. Franchella Kendall of the Office of Apprenticeship at (202) 693-3798 or kendall.franchella@dol.gov.