

Journeyworkers are integral for all Registered Apprenticeship programs, playing a central role in facilitating on-the-job training (OJT). Many serve as mentors to apprentices, providing them with the support of a skilled worker to assist and enhance their hands-on learning.

WHAT IS A JOURNEYWORKER?

A journeyworker is a worker who has attained a level of skills, abilities, and competencies recognized within an industry as mastery of the skills and competencies required for the occupation. It is what an apprentice is referred to after they successfully complete an apprenticeship program. Often in the context of non-traditional apprenticeship, the term may also refer to a mentor, technician, specialist, or other skilled worker who has documented sufficient skills and knowledge of an occupation, either through formal apprenticeship or through practical on-the-job experience and formal training.

Structured and supervised on-the-job training (OJT) is a key component of all registered apprenticeship programs, and journeyworkers are central to facilitating this aspect of the training. Journeyworker participation allows for the transfer of knowledge from skilled experienced workers to those less skilled, helping to preserve the institutional knowledge of the program sponsor. Journeyworkers are responsible for making work assignments, providing mentorship, and ensuring safety at the worksite. Ensuring an adequate number of journeyworkers for each apprentice helps ensure that the apprentice is satisfactorily trained, and is safely receiving that training.

JOURNEYWORKER RATIOS IN PA

In the state of Pennsylvania, the required apprentice to journeyworker ratio is:

- 1 apprentice to 1- 4 journeyworkers
- 2 apprentices to 5-9 journeyworkers
- 3 apprentices to 10-14 journeyworkers
- Each additional apprentice requires an additional 5 journeyworkers

In other words, only one journeyworker is needed to oversee the OJT of your first apprentice. Five journeyworkers are needed to enroll your second apprentice, and an additional five journeyworkers are required for each additional apprentice enrolled.

There are two circumstances where the journeyworker ratio may be different from what's listed above. The first instance applies to joint programs that involve unions. The apprentice to journeyworker ratio in joint programs must be consistent with proper supervision, training, safety, continuity of employment, and applicable provisions in Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs).

Exemptions to the standard ratios may also be granted upon written request and approval of PA Apprenticeship and Training Council. In these instances, the sponsor must provide an adequate justification for why an alternative journeyworker ratio is warranted for their specific program.

WHO COUNTS AS A JOURNEYWORKER?

Apprentices who complete a registered apprenticeship program are referred to as journeyworkers, and receive an official nationally-recognized credential that certifies their journeyworker status. However other skilled workers who have similar skills and competencies can step into the 'journeyworker' role within an apprenticeship. Anyone who provides supervision or mentorship to an apprentice during their on-the-job learning may count as a journeyworker to meet ratio requirements.

To adequately or properly supervise an apprentice does not mean the apprentice must be within eyesight or reach of the supervisor, but that the supervisor knows what the apprentice is working on; is readily available to the apprentice; and is making sure the apprentice has the necessary instruction and guidance to perform tasks safely, correctly, and efficiently.

In addition, not all journeyworkers will necessarily have all of the skills that an apprentice will be trained to learn. They may, for example, only provide supervision and/or mentorship to a single component of an apprentice's on-the-job-training objectives. The important thing is that whomever is overseeing the training of competencies will have a mastery of those competencies.

WHAT IS MENTORSHIP & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Mentorship by journeyworkers is a key component of Registered Apprenticeship programs. Mentorship sets apprentices up for success in their on-the-job training by providing the support, coaching, tools and resources needed to help apprentices make the most of their on-the-job learning experiences.

The role of a mentor is to support and motivate the apprentice to problem solve and take risks. Mentorship helps improve the connection between the RTI and the OJT by:

- Providing a resource for questions (even after the apprenticeship is completed).
- Translating information from the class to the field.
- Passing along the employers' institutional knowledge, culture, and practices to apprentices.
- Ensuring consistent messaging across apprentices.

Beyond apprenticeship training, mentorship reinvigorates the engagement of senior employees and creates a network of support and a culture of personal growth for both the mentor and mentee. Strong relationships can develop between mentors and apprentices through mutual trust, guidance, and growth. By fostering increased collaboration, mentorship can also help improve a company's overall corporate culture, resulting in improved productivity and an increased retention of employees at all levels.

Note: Mentors and journeyworkers are not synonymous terms. While all mentors must meet journeyworker criteria, not all journeyworkers may be appropriate mentors, especially if not trained to provide mentorship.

WHO MAKES A GOOD MENTOR?

A good mentor is a mentor who:

- Listens well and treats the conversation with the mentee as confidential.
- Determines what is essential to a mentee and explores their ambitions, propensities, and skills.
- Knows the importance of the learning process by creating a genuine and open relationship to promote confidence and trust.
- Accepts the fact that in some cases, a mentee may need to seek other sources of assistance and help.
- Is appropriately trained and has vast knowledge in the subject matter and in mentoring.
- Should have a professional approach in the mentor-mentee relationship.
- Should ideally be a peer, as opposed to a supervisor.

MENTORING BEST PRACTICES

Formal vs. Informal Mentoring

There is a difference between a formal mentoring program and the ongoing informal mentoring that takes place 'unofficially' all the time in the workplace. On-the-job learning happens too. And in sectors like healthcare, mentorship of some sort is typically already formalized, just not in the apprenticeship context. When establishing apprenticeship mentor programs, rather than starting an entirely new program it's easier for employers to start with what they're already doing and expand and improve it. Formalizing and quantifying what already exists by creating a documented, trackable internal mentoring program can help ensure that an apprentice's on-the-job learning is successful.

Managing the Mentorship Process

An internal Apprenticeship & Training Committee (ATC) can help manage the mentorship process, along with all other aspects of the apprenticeship program. Having a structure to help formalize the process (e.g. who will be mentors, how will challenges be identified and managed, etc.) will help the program make adjustments as necessary to ensure the success of the apprentices. Staff who are empowered to affect training (typically HR staff) should be part of the ATC and designated to internally coordinate the mentorship program.

Mentor Ratios

The ideal mentor/mentee ratio is 1:1, which allows for a focused investment in a mentor's time and creates the most opportunity for developing a relationship that allows for good communication and exchange of information. Mentors can mentor multiple people, but preferably not at the same time.

Compensating Mentors

Mentorship requires an investment on the part of the mentor beyond their normal job duties. Mentors should be compensated for the additional time and effort it takes to mentor an apprentice. Whether it's a pay raise, a promotion or both, compensating mentors for their efforts helps ensure that the mentor invests themselves in the relationship. Compensating mentors also helps build overall staff buy-in for apprenticeship programs, increasing their potential for success.

Training Mentors

Mentors should be trained, to ensure they have the skills and mindset to succeed in the mentor role. Offering mentors paid training to develop mentorship skills can further improve the quality of the mentor/apprentice relationship.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JOB SHADOWING & MENTORSHIP

Job shadowing is a type of on-the-job training that allows an interested employee to follow and closely observe another employee performing the role. A mentorship is a version of job shadowing at the highest level, with emphasis placed on developing trusted relationships with productive communication over the long-term.

Job Shadowing	Mentorship
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short-term• General interactions• Observational learning• Irregular communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longer-term• Deep, trusting relationships• Hands-on learning• Regular communication

MENTORSHIP RESOURCES

Many train-the-trainer programs exist, often customized to the industry or program in which it will be implemented. Examples that can inform your own program include:

- **Healthcare:** HCAP - Healthcare mentor training program
<https://www.hcapinc.org/mentorship-training-program>
- **Skilled Trades:** Mentorship Matters - Skilled-trades mentor training program
<https://mentorshipmatters.com/>
- **Agriculture:** Tuft's University - Agriculture mentor training program
<https://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/resources/apprenticeship/mentor-training-toolkit>
- **Youth Apprenticeships:** Urban Institute - Mentor Guide for Youth-focused apprenticeship programs
<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/mentor-guide-youth-registered-apprenticeship-programs>

Creating a **Job Book** based on the competencies defined in the apprenticeship program's work process can provide a useful tool for mentors to monitor an apprentice's progress and identify areas to focus on. A **Job Book Template** is available at:

<https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Apprenticeships/ResourcesForRAPrograms>



Contact Apprenticeship@pa.gov

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