Best practices for starting and managing apprenticeship programs continues to evolve. This is a 'living document' that captures the latest lessons learned for program sponsors. If you have any additional questions, contact **Apprenticeship@pa.gov** anytime.

Program Development and Registration

How do I know if my occupation is apprenticeable?

More than 1,000 different occupations have already been apprenticed, and **ApprenticeshipStandards.org** has a searchable database of their associated work processes that you can use as a model for your own program. If your occupation has not yet been registered, you can register it yourself through the PA Apprenticeship and Training Council as long as it meets the Criteria for Apprenticeable Occupations found in **34 Pa.Code 83.4**. Already 89 state occupations that specific to PA have already been registered, including Drain Cleaning & Installation Technician, Ag Tech, Software Analyst, and Overhead Line Worker.

How should you register if you're a single employer with multiple locations?

Single employers with multiple locations should register as group sponsor, with the parent company serving as the main sponsor. Each location serving apprentices will complete an Employer Acceptance Agreement (Appendix E) any other necessary appendixes.

How many employers are required to register a group sponsorship?

Two Employer Acceptance Agreements (Appendix E) are required to register a new group sponsorship. Additional employers can be added later as new Agreements are received.

Occupation Additions

Do existing sponsors that are adding an Occupation Addition need to register a new set of Standards?

To register an Occupation Addition, an existing sponsor must submit a new Appendix A, Appendix D (Program Summary), and Appendix E (for Group sponsors) for each new occupation added. Generally existing sponsors *are not* required to complete and sign and new set of Standards when registering an Occupation Addition, but should include their original Standards along with the other required Appendixes when registering their Occupation Addition. The exception is if it has been 5 or more years since the sponsor has registered their initial Standards. If this is the case, it is recommended that the sponsor's Standards are updated and submitted as part of the Occupation Addition registration process.

What information should be included about the Sponsor's existing apprenticeship programs when registering an Occupation Addition?

When registering an Occupation Addition, the completion rates of any current programs should be included in the response to Question #4 of Appendix D - *Describe your organization's history with apprenticeship, and any results/successes to date*. The sponsor can use their RAPIDS data to compile these completion rates. Their regional Apprenticeship & Training Representative (ATR) can also help determine and confirm that the rates are accurate.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Related Technical Instruction (RTI)

What types of competencies are appropriate for apprenticeship?

Competency, as **defined for apprenticeship**, means the attainment of manual, mechanical or technical skills and knowledge, as specified by an occupational standard and demonstrated by an appropriate written and hands-on proficiency measurement. It's important that competencies meet this definition, and are defined specifically and objectively so that their attainment can be independently verified (*see next question*). This is particularly true for competency-based programs, which measure skill acquisition solely through the individual apprentice's successful demonstration of acquired skills and knowledge, as verified by the sponsor.

How should a sponsor verify that the apprentice is mastering the required competencies?

Measures or tests of competency attainment and demonstrated skills performance should be objective, observable and repeatable. These assessments should directly link workplace performance requirements with the foundational knowledge and skills (competence) of the apprentice. Assessments on-the-job and off-the-job should be carried out on a structured on-going basis, and include course work, practical assessments and theoretical assessments. Written and practical end-testing may also be utilized. It *is not* recommended having a mentor or journeyworker signing off on competencies be the only verifying factor in competency attainment.

When is it appropriate to front-load 100% of RTI?

Frontloading 100% of RTI is to be used only when necessary to allow the apprentice to have access to On-the-Job Training (OJT), for example where licenses or certifications are necessary, or safety concerns are otherwise insurmountable. Frontloading is generally not recommended for occupations where registered apprenticeships are well established with concurrent RTI and OJT.

When is appropriate to provide credit for previous experience for 100% of RTI?

If at all possible, previous experience should not be the primary method of attaining RTI.

Program Management

What is the best way to manage an apprenticeship program?

Apprenticeship and Training Committees (ATCs) are required for Joint programs (JATCs), but are recommended for all programs. ATCs provide structure and oversight for apprenticeship programs, bringing together and aligning the sponsor's key internal stakeholders to carry out the responsibilities and duties required of a program sponsor. ATCs take the lead on developing the program, including creating the work process, identifying the classroom training provider, and registering the program with the state. Once a program is launched, ATCs can play a role in the recruitment, supervision and support of apprentices. They also lead the important work of periodically reviewing the program, making sure the apprentices and journeyworkers have the tools and support they need to make the program a success for both employers and employees.

How many journeyworkers do you need for your first apprentice?

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.

How do you use the Voluntary Disability Disclosure form included in the Apprentice Agreement (Appendix B)?

A Voluntary Disability Disclosure form is included on page 4 of the Apprentice Agreement. Although completing this form is voluntary, all apprentices should be encouraged to complete it. The form can let the employer know if they need to make any accommodations that can benefit productivity or comfort of the apprentice, and also helps the DOL track information on individuals with disabilities participating in apprenticeship. The apprentice's disability status should be recorded in RAPIDS.

How long do you have to submit your Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) once you get your 5th apprentice?

Sponsors with five or more apprentices are required to submit an Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) to the ATO within two years of their program's registration. To expedite this process, Compliance staff help the sponsor create an AAP as part of the program's Provisional Review Process, which takes place one year after the program is approved and registered with the state. Sponsors can either create their own AAP, or use the AAP Builder available in RAPIDS with assistance from the ATO. The AAP Builder provides a streamlined process for conducting utilization analysis and makes use of the most accurate, up -to-date national demographic data. If you begin serving at least 5 apprentices after the program's Provisional Review process, contact the ATO and they will work with you to complete the required AAP.

How are Affirmative Action Plans handled under a Group Sponsorship?

Group sponsors must fill out *Appendix C - Affirmative Action Plan* if they will be serving 5 or more apprentices in total across employers participating in the group sponsorship. The sponsor must adhere to the rules, submit their AAP, and collect the required data across the participating employers, including their workforce numbers documented in Appendix E. Individual employers under a group sponsored program *are not* required to fill out an AAP, but *must* adhere to what the group sponsor outlines for their program.

Pre-Apprenticeship (Pre-RA)

Can a pre-apprenticeship program be set up as a feeder for an existing registered apprenticeship (RA) program?

Pre-apprenticeship programs can provide individuals with the foundational skills they need to succeed in a full apprenticeship program, and Pre-RA programs must have linkages with existing RA programs. However, it is not recommended that a Pre-RA program be the only way to get into the full apprenticeship. If the Pre-RA training is a prerequisite, the sponsor should explain why it isn't in the apprenticeship. The apprenticeship program should also be able to stand alone (e.g. Pre-RA is severable and the program still functions).

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY
APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING OFFICE

Contact Apprenticeship@pa.gov

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
Equal Opportunity Employer/Program.

Scan the QR Code for access to PA registered apprenticeship resources.