

Registering a Pre-Apprenticeship Program in Pennsylvania

A Guide for Sponsors

January 2023

OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

This detailed guide on registering your pre-apprenticeship program in Pennsylvania includes step-by-step instructions to developing your program, completing your registration paperwork, and launching and maintaining your program.

THE BASICS

Pre-apprenticeship programs are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship program, and ultimately a career. They can be delivered by a range of entities including community-based organizations, high schools, labor organizations, workforce agencies, or community colleges. For educational institutions, the programs can and should integrate directly into their existing curriculum and structure. Pre-apprenticeship programs link directly to existing apprenticeship programs and provide the instruction, preparation, and supports to advance participants to apprenticeship programs or careers.

With high-quality implementation, these programs can be a bridge to career opportunities for students, new workers, or underprepared learners. **This is a particularly effective strategy to prepare underrepresented populations for high-quality employment opportunities and to increase diversity and equity through the apprenticeship and workforce systems.**

ELEMENTS OF PRE-APPRENTICESHIP

The U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship has defined quality pre-apprenticeship programs as those that incorporate the following elements:

- Connection to existing apprenticeship programs into which successful pre-apprentices will advance
- Approved training and curriculum
- Hands-on learning with a career focus
- Opportunity to earn an industry-recognized credential
- Access to support services and career counseling

BENEFITS OF PRE-APPRENTICESHIP

Pre-apprenticeship programs expands participants' career pathway opportunities with industry-based training and classroom instruction, preparing individuals to enter and succeed in registered apprenticeships.

Pre-apprenticeship training is a great way for participants to:

- Explore and learn about exciting careers.
- Qualify to meet the minimum standards for selection to a registered apprenticeship program.
- Benefit from classroom and technology-based training.
- Build the literacy, math, English, and work-readiness skills employers desire.
- Gain advanced standing in partnered Registered Apprenticeship programs.

For registered apprenticeship program sponsors, pre-apprenticeship training is a great way to recruit and pre-screen qualified, job-ready apprentices likely to complete their apprenticeship program.

HOW TO START AND REGISTER A PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Registering your pre-apprenticeship program is easy, and involves four main steps:

STEP #1: Develop your pre-apprenticeship program (p. 3)

STEP #2: Complete your registration paperwork (p. 4), including:

- Standards (p. 5)
- Appendix A (p. 6)
- Appendix B (p. 7)
- Appendix C (p. 8)
- Appendix D (p. 8)

STEP #3: Register your pre-apprenticeship program with the State (p. 9)

STEP #4: Launch and maintain your program (p. 10)

Detailed instructions for each of these steps are contained in this guide. As you begin to develop your program, please reach out to the Pre-Apprenticeship Manager or designated staff member, who can provide additional assistance as you register your pre-apprenticeship program. They can be reached anytime at pre-RA@pa.gov.

STEP #1: Develop Your Pre-Apprenticeship Program

The first step in developing a pre-apprenticeship program is to determine which registered apprenticeship programs the pre-apprenticeship will link with, what training will be provided, and who will provide it.

Identify existing Registered Apprenticeship Program sponsor partners

The first step in developing a pre-apprenticeship program is determining which registered apprenticeship programs that the pre-apprenticeship will link with. Pre-RA programs are required to partner with at least one current RA program sponsor whose apprenticeship program successful pre-apprentices will have an opportunity to matriculate into.

Sponsors of existing RA programs can also support pre-apprenticeship programs by:

- Articulating apprenticeship eligibility requirements.
- Serving on advisory committees or negotiating formal Memoranda of Agreement.
- Offering guidance and helping to establish training goals or competency models.
- Collaborating on assessment, curriculum and preparatory training.
- Sharing state-of-the-art technology.
- Considering direct entry and advance placement agreements in apprenticeship.

Develop a training plan for your pre-apprenticeship program

Pre-apprenticeship programs prepare individuals for success in registered apprenticeship programs through a combination of industry-based training and classroom instruction. They provide meaningful hands-on instruction in addition to technical training that often lead to industry-recognized credentials. The programs also help students develop the literacy, math, foundational and work-readiness skills employers desire. A key aspect of any pre-apprenticeship program is the industry exposure and pathways toward employment from pre-apprentice to apprentice they provide. Often this includes work-based learning opportunities for students, such as paid internships or summer employment.

Identify a training provider to instruct the classroom/technical training component

Many different organizations can provide the classroom training portion of a pre-apprenticeship program, including community-based organizations, high schools, labor organizations, workforce agencies, or community colleges. For educational institutions, the programs can and should integrate directly into their existing curriculum and structure.

STEP #2: Complete your Registration Paperwork

Once you develop your pre-apprenticeship program, the next step is to complete the paperwork necessary to formally register it with the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO). These forms include your program's Standards and its accompanying Appendixes:

- **Standards of Registered Pre-apprenticeship:** Standards are the Sponsor's written plan outlining all terms and conditions for the recruitment, selection, employment, training, and supervision of their pre-apprentices. It specifies the legal requirements of all Registered Pre-apprenticeship programs, and includes details of your specific program.
- **Appendix A – Program Description:** Provides a comprehensive description of the pre-apprenticeship program.
- **Appendix B – Pre-apprentice Agreement:** Appendix B is used by the sponsor to enroll pre-apprentices after a program is registered, and contains the pre-apprentice's personal and demographic information. It is not a required document for registration, but it can be used as a guidance tool for the Pre-RA sponsor.
- **Appendix C – Curriculum and Hands-On Learning Overview:** Provides additional details on the specific classroom trainings that will be provided and on the hands-on training that will take place.
- **Appendix D – Letters of Support:** Includes support letters from classroom training providers and associated registered apprenticeship program sponsor partners.

Current pre-apprenticeship sponsors that want to register additional occupations only need to submit Appendixes A-D for the new occupation.

Templates for the Standards and Appendixes A, B and C have been created and are available on the [PA CareerLink® Resources for RA Programs webpage](https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Apprenticeships/ResourcesForRAPrograms). The templates are easy to customize and require inputting a few of the details about your program.

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

The sections that follow provide detailed instructions on how to customize the documents listed above to your specific program.

Instructions for Completing Pre-RA Program Standards

Standards are the Sponsor's written plan outlining all terms and conditions for the recruitment, selection, employment, training, and supervision of their pre-apprentices. They specify the legal requirements of all Registered Pre-apprenticeship programs, and includes details of your specific program. It also includes a comprehensive list of pre-apprenticeship-related definitions as a reference.

Start by completing the information on the **Cover Page**:

- **DEVELOPED BY:** Identify the Sponsor of the pre-apprenticeship program.
- **OCCUPATION(S):** List the occupation(s) for which the program will provide foundational skills pre-apprentice will be qualified for upon completion of the program.

There are 3 sections of the Standards that need to be customized:

SECTION 1 – PRE-APPRENTICESHIP (PRE-RA) SPONSOR INFORMATION

p. 1

Enter the name of the pre-apprenticeship program. It is suggested that the program name include the program's area of focus (i.e. industry/sector, occupation, etc.). Think of this as your program's first sales tool; an easy way to reference your program in the community and tell its story with the name.

If you do not want to use a creative name, you may simply include the program's area of focus (i.e. industry/sector, occupation, etc.) and/or target demographic. Upon registration, the program certificate will list the sponsor name and the program name, so there is no need to include the sponsor's name in the program name unless you have a specific reason for doing so.

Provide the name and contact information of the pre-apprenticeship sponsor, and choose the organization type from the drop-down list.

SECTION 2 – AFFILIATED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM INFORMATION

p. 1

List the name, RAPIDS ID#, and Occupation of all partnered Registered Apprenticeship programs, and indicate any credit awarded through the pre-apprenticeship program to pre-apprentice completers, should they enter an apprenticeship.

SECTION 6 - OFFICIAL ADOPTION OF PRE-APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS

p. 4

The Sponsor should sign and date the form before submitting it to the ATO for review.

Instructions for Completing Appendix A – Program Description

Appendix A provides a comprehensive description of the pre-apprenticeship program. It provides an overview of its goals, curriculum, outreach approaches, and experience of the sponsor and training providers. Appendix A should also adequately address how the proposed program will connect and align with a Registered Apprenticeship program and the potential pathways available to participants.

A. TYPE OF APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

p. 1

Start by completing the general information about your program:

- **Pre-Apprenticeship Program Name:** Enter the name of the pre-apprenticeship program. It is suggested that the program name include the Pre-RA sponsor name and the program's area of focus (i.e. industry/sector, occupation, etc.).
- **Pre-Apprenticeship Program Sponsor:** Enter the name of the organization sponsoring the program.
- **Pre-RA Sponsor FEIN:** Enter the Sponsor's Federal Tax Identification Number.
- **Program Website/Page:** If the Pre-RA program is described online, please include the associated website.
- **Program Location:** List the town, county, and/or regions in which the pre-apprenticeship program will operate.
- **Organization Type:** Choose the type of sponsor organization from the list.
- **Occupation(s):** List the occupation(s) for which the program will provide foundational skills.
- **Program Sector(s):** Choose the program sector associated with the Pre-RA program. If multiple sectors or 'Other', please specify in the provided box.
- **Occupation Addition?:** Select 'Yes' if you are a current sponsor of a previously approved pre-apprenticeship program. The process for registering an additional occupation is identical to the process for registering a new sponsor.
- **Total Program Hours:** Input the length of the pre-apprenticeship program (e.g. days, weeks, hours, etc.).
- **Registered Apprenticeship Program Sponsor Partner:** List the RA program sponsor(s) that are affiliated with the pre-apprenticeship program.
- **RAPIDS Program Sponsor Partner Number:** Your RA program partner(s) will be able to provide you with their RAPIDS ID number(s).
- **Available to high school students?:** Select 'YES' if high school students may participate.
- **Is there an application process?:** Select 'YES' if participants must apply to the program.
- **Are pre-apprentices paid?:** Select 'YES' if pre-apprentices receive a wage or stipend.

B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

p. 1

Provide an overall description of your program, the expected goals and outcomes for the program and pre-apprentices, industry-recognized credentials earned, support services offered, and any associated costs.

C. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

p. 3

Discuss how the Pre-RA program will lead to employment outcomes for pre-apprentices. It is important that Pre-RA programs not only have a clear connection with existing RA programs, but also teach skills that lead to other employment options.

D. RELATED TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION CURRICULUM AND HANDS-ON LEARNING

p. 4

Discuss the programs related instruction and hands-on learning, describe how the Pre-RA and RA curriculum align, and detail and potential credit pre-apprentices will receive towards completion of an apprenticeship program.

E. OUTREACH

p. 5

Discuss your outreach and recruitment methods for pre-apprentices, including women and people of color.

F. EXPERIENCE

p. 5

Describe the qualifications of the sponsor and training providers that ensure the pre-apprenticeship program will be a success.

Instructions for Completing Appendix B – Pre-Apprentice Agreement

A pre-apprentice agreement is a signed commitment between the apprentice and the program sponsor to agree to the Pre-apprenticeship Program Standards. These agreements must be kept on file and used to guide regular information requests from the ATO for program and pre-apprentice related data.

Appendix B is not a required registration document, but it can be used as a guidance tool for the Pre-RA sponsor, to know what to expect for monthly reports.

1. PROGRAM INFORMATION

The required program information is primarily taken from the Standards and Appendix A.

- **Pre-Apprenticeship Program Name:** Enter the name of your Pre-RA program.

- **Pre-RA Program Sponsor:** Enter the name of the sponsor organization.
- **Occupation(s):** List the occupation(s) for which the program will provide foundational skills.
- **Program Sector:** Choose the sector in which the occupation resides.
- **Total Program Hours:** Input the length of the pre-apprenticeship program (e.g. days, weeks, hours, etc.).
- **Registered Apprenticeship Program Sponsor Partner(s):** List the RA program sponsor(s) that are affiliated with the pre-apprenticeship program.
- **RAPIDS Program Sponsor Partner Number(s):** Your RA program partner(s) will be able to provide you with their RAPIDS ID number(s).

2. APPRENTICE INFORMATION

This section includes the personal and demographic information of the pre-apprentice. Choose the best descriptors from the drop-down lists.

3. SIGNATURES

Be sure that both the sponsor and pre-apprentice sign and date the agreement.

Instructions for Completing Appendixes C and D

Appendixes C and D are required attachments that provide additional details about your program's training plan and partners.

- **Appendix C – Curriculum and Hands-On Learning Overview** includes details on the pre-apprenticeship curriculum and hands-on learning, including classroom training provider information, training topics and hours, and the competencies, skills, or knowledge that the pre-apprentices will gain through training.

Identify all the topics that will be covered and the hours that will be allocated to each topic. The bulleted lists provide more specific details about what will be covered under each topic. Add additional topics and detail bullets as needed. Also indicate which topics and bullets include a hands on learning component.

- **Appendix D – Letters of Support** includes letters of support (LOS) from your classroom training provider and associated RA program sponsor partners. The letters should include details about the extent of the provider's commitment to pre-apprentice outcomes. The LOS from the RA sponsor your program partners with should include information on any agreements in place for RA credit awarded to successful completers of the pre-apprenticeship program.

Templates for the Standards and Appendixes A, B, and C have been created and are available on the [PA CareerLink® Resources for RA Programs webpage](https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Apprenticeships/ResourcesForRAPrograms). Pre-RA Sponsors can use this suggested template, or provide their own. If providing Appendix C in a different format, please ensure all the required information in the templates is included and properly labeled.
<https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Apprenticeships/ResourcesForRAPrograms>

STEP #3: Register Your Pre-Apprenticeship Program with the State

The last step to starting your pre-apprenticeship program is formally registering it with the State, which involves submitting it for review and approval by the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO). The ATO's approval of a program certifies that it meets the requirements established by the State, thereby making it eligible for government support.

The process for presenting your pre-apprenticeship program to the ATO is as follows:

1. If you haven't already done so, make contact with the ATO via this link: [Pre-RA Information Request \(office.com\)](https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Apprenticeships/ResourcesForRAPrograms)
2. Once the required briefing session(s) is attended, the registration paperwork can be submitted in its entirety to begin the process of reviews and revisions. The Pre-Apprenticeship Manager or designated staff member has 2 weeks to review the packet, send feedback via email, and offer a meeting to discuss the feedback (if necessary). This happens twice. If a third round of review is necessary, the feedback is sent along with potential meeting times to finalize the packet with the Pre-Apprenticeship Manager or designated staff member. Once the packet is considered ready for submission, it will be officially submitted to the ATO Director for approval.
3. The program will be reviewed over the next 30 days, and it is not uncommon that there may be additional feedback or questions from the ATO Director that may require changes to the document and/or be resubmitted.
4. You will be notified of program approval by the Pre-Apprenticeship Manager or designated staff member and at that point a program certification will be processed. It can take up to 60 days to issue a certificate, but the program can function as soon as it receives approval notification.

STEP #4: Launch and Maintain Your Program

Congratulations you've officially registered your new pre-apprenticeship program! Now it's time to start and maintain it. Generally this involves three main things:

RECRUITING PRE-APPRENTICES

Pre-apprenticeship programs are a great tool to train high quality workers who see the potential for career advancement with an employer that invests in their development. Good places to recruit pre-apprentices include:

- **Local Career & Technical Centers (CTCs):** CTCs can provide a pipeline of pre-apprentices that have a desire to work in the skilled trades and demonstrated technical expertise.
- **PA CareerLink® One-Stops:** Many individuals who access PA CareerLink's® services are eligible for additional financial assistance and other support through WIOA federal funding. The staff at your local PA CareerLink® will work with you to determine what support your program and pre-apprentices are eligible for.
- **Community Organizations:** Many community-based organizations are already providing support services to individuals primed to succeed in pre-apprenticeship programs, including youth and individuals with barriers.

ACCESSING FUNDING

Now that your program is registered, it may be eligible for a variety of sources of State and Federal support, including funding for individuals eligible for support through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) who can be recruited through the state's PA CareerLink® One-Stops. Support may also be available from the GI Bill, Pell Grants, and other initiatives such as PAsmart. For more information, check out the [Funding for Apprenticeship Quick Guide](#).

MAINTAINING YOUR PROGRAM

Maintaining your program involves setting up the processes necessary to successfully implement it. This includes:

- **Monitoring your pre-apprentice's progress:** Pre-apprentices require ongoing guidance and support as they complete their training and advance in their knowledge and skills. Regularly monitoring your pre-apprentice's progress will help ensure they are achieving their desired outcomes.
- **Periodically review your program:** As with any new training initiative, it's good to check-in periodically to make sure your pre-apprentices and trainers have the tools and support they need to make the program a success. It's also a good idea to regularly communicate with your employer partners, to make sure that the program is meeting their expectations as well.

- **Submit required data:** Ensure that you are sending in necessary pre-apprentice start and completion data to the ATO as well as specific information in regards to employment outcomes as requested.

CONCLUSION

Pre-apprenticeship programs are a win for both students and employers. Students are able to explore and learn about exciting careers and decide on an occupational track, while receiving meaningful hands-on and classroom training. Employers are able to create a pipeline of talent to existing RA programs, and are able to pre-screen qualified, job-ready individuals likely to complete a registered apprenticeship. The result is more on-ramps to meaningful career pathways and a larger labor pool better able to meet employer needs. The information and resources provided in this guide are meant to make establishing pre-apprenticeship programs easier, but you still probably have a lot of questions. Please [reach out to the ATO](#) anytime at Pre-RA@pa.gov to learn more. We look forward to working with you!