

Promising Practices and Innovations



Handouts offer clear and concise information of trending policies, practices, and innovations for Apprenticeship Building American (ABA) grantees to consider, explore, and utilize. The trends and innovations listed below draw from the expertise of ABA Technical Assistance Coaches, research, and grey literature (see references below).

The purpose of this ABA Promising Practices and Innovations is to offer ABA grantees either a practice or innovation that can be used to support grantee goals, including increasing the number of pre-apprentices and apprentices and to diversify the industries using Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Programs. The information provided in this document is a summary of best practices utilized by ABA grantee Ivy Tech Community College.

The Ivy Tech Community College system, which includes 19 campuses across the state of Indiana, has been implementing RA Programs since the 1980s. The college has two types of apprenticeship pathways: building trade apprenticeships and industrial apprenticeships. Both pathways lead to a nationally recognized U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) certificate, and a long-term certificate (known as a

technical certificate) or an Associate of Applied Science degree from Ivy Tech.

Ivy Tech's apprentice retention rate is over 80%. The ABA team discussed what they have learned over their extensive history of supporting and retaining apprentices. Teresa Hess (Assistant Vice President of Apprenticeships & Work Based Learning), Scott Derr (Lead Project Navigator of ABA/DOL Grant), and Robin Douthitt (Director of Grant Apprenticeships) of Ivy Tech Community College provided their insights.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Employers

Ivy Tech has a reputation for implementing high-quality training programs in communities across the state and, as a result, employers have frequently approached them to partner. Ivy Tech regularly collaborates with businesses of all sizes, and these employers have substantial input into apprentice selection and the classroom training they receive. Companies have their own internal screening processes to allow them to identify the candidates that best suit their needs, and Ivy Tech is flexible in their related technical instruction (RTI) and adapts their classroom instruction programs to address local industry trends.

Due to the collaborative nature of their business partnerships and the successes of their apprentices, many of Ivy Tech's employer partners have become champions of the program. This has helped generate interest among potential apprentices, which has helped the apprenticeship programs expand. Employer partners are represented on Ivy Tech's advisory board to ensure that industry trends are incorporated into the college system's strategic planning process.

Educators

Ivy Tech has many dual-credit programs with high schools around the state. K-12 staff help promote these dual-enrollment programs and raise awareness about the dual-credit opportunities that are available to students.

Many Ivy Tech adjunct faculty members work in industry, which enables them to deliver a curriculum that is aligned with the current employment landscape. These faculty members often become champions of the apprenticeship opportunities in their fields and act as mentors to their students as they progress through the programs.

Workforce Boards

Ivy Tech has leveraged their relationships with workforce boards across the state to enhance the apprenticeship opportunities they provide. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) funds have been used to purchase work boots, new tires, and other essential items for qualifying apprentices. Given that financial instability is a retention risk factor for apprentices, this helps to support retention by minimizing direct expenses for apprentices.

INTERNAL NETWORKS

A strong internal network of colleagues enables Ivy Tech staff to effectively address students' varying needs. Many available resources have an emphasis on cultural awareness and meeting the needs of diverse groups. Colleagues frequently reach out to each other to share experiences and ask for advice. Because of the long history of the program, there is a wealth of collective experiences colleagues can share across campuses.

Meetings that include deans and select staff from each campus are held weekly. This allows personnel from different locations to share best practices and lessons learned. These meetings have been invaluable in maintaining communication across campuses and learning the best ways to serve students.

WRAPAROUND SERVICES

Ivy Tech has a comprehensive set of support services that can reduce the burden of pursuing an education while completing on-the-job training requirements. They have an extensive network of career coaches, program managers, and other support personnel who have direct and frequent communication with students. The role of this network is to provide coordinated concierge services to address many of the barriers apprentices encounter. Specific examples of supportive services include childcare at some campuses, and transportation or rideshare cards to defray the costs of traveling to campus and to the job sites. Food pantries resources are available in some locations. The combination of supportive services can increase students' retention and completion rates.

Ivy Tech also has a program called Career Link, which can be leveraged to increase the support students receive while enrolled in apprenticeship programs. Career Link provides access to a variety of career development resources: [Career Development: Ivy+ Career Link - Ivy Tech Community College](#)

CONVENIENT COURSE SCHEDULING

Ivy Tech has implemented a course scheduling system that can accommodate all three work shifts. This allows all apprentices to take advantage of the educational opportunities at times that don't interfere with their work schedules.

Another strategy Ivy Tech has found to be successful is utilizing an eight-week course schedule. Ivy Tech has found there is less attrition with these shorter courses than with 16-week courses. This may be because students can 'see the light at the end of the tunnel' when the expected completion time is shorter. It is also more convenient for students to incorporate these shorter courses into their commitments outside of work and school.

NEEDS-BASED PROGRAMMING

The programs at Ivy Tech are tailored to the needs of the apprentices and the businesses they serve. They offer online, in-person, and hybrid related technical instruction (RTI) to suit the needs and schedules of a variety of apprentices. Their academic programs offer many cross-functional interdisciplinary programs. Ivy Tech's website provides a clear snapshot of the degree and certificate programs they offer: [Degrees & Certificates - Ivy Tech Community College](#)

Ivy Tech has a rigorous certification crosswalk process that considers an apprentice's background. This can include various experiences, such as military training, related certifications, and previous career experience. This shortens the path to completion, which can impact apprentice retention.

Programs are based on the occupational needs by geographic region. For example, agriculture programs are offered in areas where there is a need for these services. Regardless of the type of program and the target number of campuses, Ivy Tech rolls out programs as pilots before expanding across the target number of campuses.

Pre-apprentices receive instruction in basic math and English skills when appropriate. An initial assessment exam is administered and, if candidates do not pass, they use online modules to increase their skills in the areas where they are lacking. Ivy Tech offers English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to address the needs of students who may only be fluent in another language.



COHORT MODEL

Ivy Tech has found the cohort model to be effective. The students in the program are motivated to keep pace with their peers, which has helped to increase retention and completion rates. Students have built informal support networks with their cohorts and have benefited from the collaborative nature of progressing through the program together. Ivy Tech also aims to keep their class sizes small to foster communication and collaboration among students and with faculty.

Ivy Tech has a long history of successfully providing apprenticeship opportunities across Indiana, and they have continued to expand and improve their programs over time. They frequently form new community and business partnerships, and they actively adapt to the changing workforce landscape in the different regions of their state.

