

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 the ABA Promising Practices and Innovations series 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 in Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RA Programs). The information provided in this document is a summary of best practices for understanding the role of apprenticeship councils and leveraging their expertise.

The U.S. apprenticeship system has two entities that oversee and register RA Programs, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship (OA) and State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAA), which are recognized by OA. Both the OA and SAAs provide technical assistance and support to program sponsors, answer questions about the apprenticeship model, guide partners on each phase of developing a program, connect businesses to training providers, and advise partners

on available funding sources to support apprenticeships. SAAs act on behalf of OA to register and oversee RA Programs in their states. ¹ Here is a link to a map of OA and SAA states: [Apprenticeship System | Apprenticeship.gov](#).

What Is a State Apprenticeship Council?

In each SAA state, there is a required entity called a State Apprenticeship Council (SAC) that operates under the direction of their respective SAA. Their roles and responsibilities vary from advisory to approval authority, and each SAC must meet the following requirements:

- It must be composed of persons familiar with apprenticeable occupations, and
- The committee should have an equal number of members from employer and employee organizations. Additionally, it should include public members, but their representation should not exceed the number of representatives from either the employer or the employee organizations.

SACS are the public support representatives that endorse state and national priorities and policies for RA Programs. This may include expansion in certain sectors, emphasis on non-traditional RA Programs, improving services to underserved populations or regions, or increase engagement with various workforce partners. ABA grantees in SAA states are encouraged to explore how partnering with their SAC can help them to achieve their grant goals.

What Are the Advantages of Collaborating with State Apprenticeship Councils?

Access to Sponsor/Employer Support

In many cases, SAAs direct and manage Apprenticeship Navigators responsible for assisting sponsors/employers through the RA Program registration process from initial inquiry to approval. They often are the supporting staff to the SAC. ABA grantees in SAA states can capitalize on this support as they launch new RA Programs and expand existing ones. This may include connecting with new employers, exploring how to leverage the SAC with existing partners, and providing hands-on assistance to RA sponsors/employers.

Streamlining RA Program Expansion

ABA grantees may be engaging with an apprenticeship sponsor working on behalf of several employers. SACs can support grantees, expedite both national and regional expansion, offer streamlined processes, and provide access to state resources.

- **National Expansion**

For a national approval, there must be:

- ◆ At least three employers identified that have business operations in at least five U.S. states;

¹ [Apprenticeship System | Apprenticeship.gov](#)

- ◆ At least 300 employees; and
- ◆ The ability to register at least 20 apprentices within two years of approval.

For national expansion, [Circular No. 2022-01](#) outlines minimum requirements for National Program Standards. These are programs registered on a national basis and consist of occupational standards which are developed by a national employer, national trade association, labor organization, educational institution, or consortium. Grantees will need to seek approval for a national expansion with OA first. Once these national RA Programs are approved, SAA states grant reciprocal approval. While these programs may operate within a SAA state without state approval, these nationally approved programs may seek separate registration in SAA states to request state specific benefits, such as grants and tax-credits.

- **Regional Expansion**

Regional expansion may be preferred when grantees are seeking to expand to a geographic multi-state region, a few states (not necessarily contiguous), or one entire state.

For regional or state-by-state expansion, [Circular No. 2022-02](#) outlines minimum requirements for National Guideline Standards. This may be a better match for local affiliates of national associations, or ABA Category 4 grantees that are hubs and plan expansion across various states. This may also be beneficial to Related Technical Instruction providers who have a presence across a state or region.

Connection to State and Local Workforce Boards

Given the limitation of funding to directly support RA Programs, aligning funding available through the state and local workforce development system is recommended. As identified by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), state and local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) are key supporters of RA Programs. SACs often serve as the lead in policy development and support with WDBs, assisting in the alignment of resources with local boards and promising practices to braid WIOA resources with RA Programs.

Support of Innovation

States often lead innovations and operate as laboratories for innovative RA Programs, providing incentive grants, dedicated technical assistance and support, and information about state tax credits. For example, Massachusetts provides state tax credits, Kentucky offers special programs for technology careers, and Colorado allows for the utilization of 529 saving plans for apprenticeships. These are ever changing and evolving, check with each state. With the ABA focus on innovation, collaborating with SACs can offer increased opportunities to align programming and resources toward more successful outcomes.

What Is the Best Way to Connect with State Apprenticeship Councils?

The best place to start connecting to the SAC is through each state's respective SAA website. Grantees can do a search for SACs or reach out to a staff member at the SAA to identify an initial contact. This could range from the director to the staff specifically in charge of new programs, introductions, or orientation. Some states have scheduled and/or pre-recorded information to assist in learning about the SAC.

