



ABA Quick Tips

Setting the Stage for Sustainability

The purpose of this **Quick Tip** is to offer ABA grantees promising strategies related to program sustainability. Key objectives of ABA grants are to strengthen, modernize, expand, diversify, and promote RAPs as a workforce development solution. To ensure the longevity of the RAPs developed, it is imperative for ABA grantees to develop a sustainability plan. Below are quick tips and strategies for building a sustainable RAP.

Quick Tips offer short, easy to use strategies, recommendations, and tips for Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) grantee consideration, exploration, and use. The tips and recommendations listed below draw from the expertise of ABA Technical Assistance Coaches, research, and grey literature (see references below).

DEMONSTRATE SUSTAINABILITY

Making plans to sustain your ABA activities beyond the grant period should start early in the grant life cycle. The work has been done, outcomes have been measured, partnerships have been developed, apprentices have completed trainings, certifications and (hopefully) received salaried employment. The next step is to keep going.

Sustainable programs demonstrate the value and priority of the apprenticeship program; develop a plan to carry the program forward and continue to meet the needs of the clients after the life of the grant; and demonstrate to potential new funders that grantees are stable enough to carry the apprenticeship program further.

Investors and, in this case, employers are looking to maximize their Return on Investment (ROI) by investing in apprenticeship programs that will deliver the highest value over time. Grantees should invest time in building a strong sustainability plan to bring to current and potential new funders by showing detailed and ambitious strategies to ensure long-term program success.

3 TIPS TO BUILD A STRONG SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

- ▶ **Paint the big picture:** Funders want to see an organization's capacity and overall stability for sustainability. Painting the "big picture" should include highlighting organizational and fiscal health, and transparently identifying the organization's pain points and how they will be addressed.
- ▶ **Develop a comprehensive funding plan:** The sustainability plan should reflect the collaborative work done by the organization's executive leaders, development staff, and board of directors to design a long-term, diversified funding strategy. If your organization doesn't have this kind of plan, make it a priority to create one.
- ▶ **Discuss an intention to leverage diversified funds:** This section of your sustainability plan will describe how you will leverage diversified funding strategies to maintain the program after the grant cycle ends.

DIVERSIFY FUNDING STRATEGIES

Including a variety of potential funding strategies in your sustainability plan will allow for long-term implementation while adjusting for potential changes in funding sources. This diversified funding strategy will support continuous program implementation and ensure apprentices are still being trained and employed at all stages of the program's life cycle.

A few potential funding strategies to consider for your sustainability plan:



- ▶ **Earned Income:** Avenues of earned income can include fees for services provided to clients who can afford to pay, earnings from social enterprise ventures, and delivering trainings or consulting services within the community.
- ▶ **Government grants:** ABA grantee awards are often an initial investment in development and organization of RAPs. There are continued grant resources at the state and federal level to assist in sustainability, such as WIOA Title I and IV, SNAP Employment & Training funds, and other opportunities available through the Department of Education, Department of Transportation, and Department of Housing and Urban Development. You can find Department of Labor grant opportunities here: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/apply/find-opportunities>. At the state and local levels, funding is often available through state Department of Education, Department of Labor, Department of Corrections, Governor's Office, Workforce Development Boards, School Districts, and other sources.
- ▶ **Non-Governmental Public and Private grants:** Look for non-governmental public and private grants that can support the ABA programs and boost the capacity of the organization. Private funds are often available through industry associations, community-based organizations, and philanthropic foundations.
- ▶ **Individual or organizational donor giving:** Determine activities to solicit donors through an annual fund or major gift program.

PERFORMANCE REPORTING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

When applying for extended or additional grant funding, take into consideration the growing trend in grant awards favoring past grantees with a solid track record of submitting complete and timely performance reports and meeting planned performance measures. The practice of frequent performance reporting offers additional rewards in terms of longer-term project resilience and sustainability.

According to the ETA Grantee Handbook, by accumulating fine-tuned information on the grant's performance and outcomes, you can help your organization strengthen and expand its workforce development strategies by:

- ▶ Demonstrating the positive outcomes of the grant activities to investors and partners to help ensure sustainability of the project and partnerships;
- ▶ Illustrating the ROI of the grant to employer partners, which is an important factor in maintaining and securing partnerships and resources; and
- ▶ Using collected data to adopt a model of continuous improvement in your management and implementation of grants by establishing a regular practice of identifying barriers to success, soliciting feedback from partners and participants, and implementing corrective measures as needed to ensure that the grant is best meeting stakeholder needs.

References

Association of Nonprofit Accountants & Finance Professionals (ANAFP). *Best Practices in Grants Management*. <https://www.anafp.org/Best-Practices-in-Grants-Management>

Robb, Jessica. Grants Plus. *Funder ROI: Sustainability After the Grant*. (2018). <https://grantsplus.com/sustainability-after-the-grant/>

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. *Grantee Handbook: Effectively Managing Competitive Grants*. (2020). https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/grants/pdfs/ETA_Grantee_Handbook.pdf



Resources

[The Federal Resources Playbook for Registered Apprenticeship](#)

[Funding Inclusive Apprenticeships: Strategies for Braiding, Blending, and Aligning Resources](#)

[Youth Apprenticeships and Opportunity Youth - What's Working and How Can WIOA Youth Funds be Used? - NAWDP](#)

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