

CAPS

Career Prescriptions for Success
A CVS Apprenticeship & Incumbent Worker Initiative

CVS
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As a nationally recognized leader in workforce development, CVS Caremark strives to create partnerships at the city, state, and national levels that provide cutting-edge, diverse employment, training, and life-long learning opportunities to quality associates from every sector of the community. CVS Caremark is an innovator in delivering high-quality, integrated pharmacy and health care services.

"Our mission is to develop partnerships with organizations that can assist us in hiring good people. The CAPS program is an excellent model for that mission. After the great success we have had in Detroit, hiring and training apprentices for career path opportunities, we want to make this opportunity available nationwide."

—Steve Wing, Director, Workforce Initiatives

Career Prescriptions for Success

Given the needs of an aging population and the greater use of medication, employment of pharmacy technicians is expected to grow faster than average for all occupations through 2012. Since the number of degrees granted in pharmacy is expected to be fewer than the number of job openings created by retiring pharmacists, a shortfall of 157,000 pharmacists is projected by 2020.

CVS/pharmacy is addressing this nationwide shortfall of high demand occupations through Career Prescriptions for Success (CAPS)—a U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Registered Apprenticeship program with the following objectives:

1. Build community interest in pharmacy careers.
2. Target recruitment in high-unemployment neighborhoods.
3. Offer 2-week work experience opportunities.
4. Provide paid apprenticeships for technician occupations.
5. Assist incumbent workers with overcoming career barriers.
6. Advance workers through 2- and 4-year academic programs.

Funded with a health care grant from the President's High Growth Job Training Initiative (HGJTI) competitively won in 2005, CVS launched this pilot in Detroit, followed by replication in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, and Indianapolis. As a next step, CVS will replicate the program nationwide.

Project partners included National Retail Federation Foundation, Wayne County Community College District, Wayne State University, Detroit Workforce Development Department, Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit, Partnerships for Economic Independence, Operation ABLE, Holy Ghost and Fire Deliverance Church of God in Christ, Macro International Inc., and Consulting Services for Community Solutions.

Program Outcomes and Benefits

The CVS Workforce Initiatives Department exceeded HGJTI grant goals for its program. Retention rates were found to be higher among apprentices than among non-apprentices in the Detroit market. Apprentices came from diverse backgrounds and many had previously experienced employment barriers.

CVS trained 96 apprentices in Detroit and 134 in the four-replication sites. In Detroit, the CAPS team was able to assist an additional 130 incumbents facing career barriers—providing 62 of them with educational scholarships. The key program benefits are:

1. Faith-based and community organizations provided pre-employment and post-placement retention support.
2. Store Managers were able to hire apprentices from a highly screened and qualified pool of candidates.
3. USDOL Registered Apprenticeship offered a competitive credential in pharmacy technology to CVS workers.
4. The partnership with the public workforce system, community college, and institution of higher education created an education career pathway and internal pipeline for the development of future pharmacists.

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The Employer-Driven Apprenticeship Program

The CVS CAPS team recommends the following steps in setting up a USDOL Registered Apprenticeship program:

1 Develop Apprenticeship Standards with the U.S. Department of Labor

Assess your training program to see if you are ready to create a program that will give your employees an industry-recognized certification and a portable, nationally registered apprenticeship credential. Employers interested in creating a program should meet with a field liaison from the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship. The process of setting up the program involves registering the apprenticeship under a set of standards, including on-the-job training, related classroom instruction, and operating procedures. For more information, go to <http://www.doleta.gov/OA>.

2 Select the Right Leadership Team to Drive Your Program

The best team you can form will have experience in working with the business's field operations and human resources (HR) as well as with workforce initiatives and government programs. You will need to create an Apprenticeship Advisory Committee that is constituted by your project's stakeholders from management, HR, and educational institutions.

3 Solicit the Support from Management at the Start of Your Initiative

Engage the HR business partners and regional managers at the beginning of your project. Clearly define your program structure before involving other project partners. The hiring, placement, and training of apprentices is coordinated more effectively with district managers and supervisors on board, allowing them to communicate what is needed at the store level. Such buy-in is made easier by offering a payroll incentive.

4 Engage Faith-Based and Community Partners to Provide Pre-Employment Services and Retention Support

The business partnership needs to generate value for each partner involved. The following are important considerations:

1. Agency staff provides a nurturing environment to candidates.
2. The agency's leadership is directly involved in the program.
3. Training modules are included in the pre-employment curriculum.
4. The employability skill development is customized to the candidate.
5. Partners communicate openly about a suitable work environment.
6. Agency offers consistent case management and ongoing retention support.

5 Create a Pathway to Employment Through Work Experience Opportunities

Pairing transitional employment and work experience opportunities with employability skills training is an effective strategy for long-term employment.

6 Build a Career Ladder Through Registered Apprenticeship

Career advancement opportunities are more readily available in large businesses. Small companies may need to partner with others in their industry to build successful career ladders. Turnover rates are lower and retention rates are better when workers can improve their skills and move along a defined career ladder. The CVS career pathway was structured over a 2-year training period, including three levels of industry certifications.

7 Develop a Pipeline Through Lifelong Learning Opportunities

Employers can benefit from partnerships with their local workforce board, community college, and institution of higher education. By providing opportunities (e.g., scholarships) to employees to advance their education, employers can create a pipeline of workers for technical and professional jobs.

8 Replicate Your Pilot to Help Others in the Company Create the Program

After creating a successful pilot, use your team's capabilities and expertise to build the knowledge and capacity of others in the company to replicate the results.

9 Win New Resources with the Results You Achieve

Develop a reliable outcomes measurement system and regularly report the results you achieve to the funding agency. Make sure you capture success stories and develop products useful to others. The results you achieve and the partnerships you develop can be leveraged to acquire new funding.

To obtain the CAPS Handbook featuring more details on how-to-steps, lessons learned, and success stories, please contact:

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