

Engage Businesses Through Registered Apprenticeships: Yes, WIOA Can!

Q & A Document

Date of Webinar: April 20, 2023

Video Link - [WorkforceGPS](#)



PREFACE

This is a follow up Technical Assistance (TA) resource document for the webinar held by the Next Level Now (NLN) Collaborative on April 20, 2023, on WorkforceGPS titled: Engage Businesses Through Registered Apprenticeships: Yes, WIOA Can!

This webinar delivered and provided information on how Registered Apprenticeship (RA) practices can effectively engage businesses, increase retention of employees, and provide career advancement for workers, with a focus on marginalized populations. There was also a brief discussion on co-enrollment between RA and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs.

The speakers included:

Moderator:

Robert Kight, Director, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Workforce Investment, Division of Adult Services and Governance

Presenters:

- **Kimberly Meadows**, Training Director, [National Association of Workforce Development Professionals \(NAWDP\)](#)
- **Katie Adams**, Chief Delivery Officer, [Safal Partners](#)
- **Kathryn Castelloes**, Director of [ApprenticeshipNC](#), North Carolina Community College System
- **Melissa Smith**, Business Services Consultant, [North Carolina Community College System](#), and ACT Job Profiler, [Guilford Works](#)
- **Wanda Ramos-McPherson**, Apprenticeship Consultant, North Carolina Community College System

This document was created to answer the questions during the webinar. The following topics had additional questions from webinar attendees and are covered in this document:

- **Best Practices** – page 3
- **Technical Questions** – page 5
- **Registered Apprenticeship Resources** – page 6

Additionally, you will see a [Submit Request](#) link button at the end of each topic section. Please use this resource link to submit additional questions regarding the topic and/or request a specific TA for any challenge you may face.





Best Practices

Question: I've encountered employers who are reluctant to participate in on-the-job training (OJT) because (at least in my local organization) eligibility determination and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) enrollment must be completed prior to the individual signing any new hire paperwork, doing any work or training. Employers are afraid of losing the person while we are doing our paperwork. What are some tips to help employers feel more comfortable with the OJT process for apprentices?

Answer: One approach is to provide employers with a WIOA eligibility checklist upfront so they can pre-determine if a candidate will qualify. That saves them from referring candidates who do not qualify. Another option is to also offer an intake day at the employer's work location to do all the paperwork on-site.

It is important to give the employer a realistic timeframe of how long it will take to confirm candidates' WIOA eligibility so they can plan accordingly and they can tell the potential candidate what type of timeline to expect. Most people go to other jobs because they don't hear from the employer while going through the WIOA eligibility approval process. It greatly helps if the employer knows the process and the timeline in advance and can communicate both to the candidate as part of the initial screening process. Also, reaching out occasionally to the employer/candidate to update them on the paperwork process helps them know they haven't been forgotten.

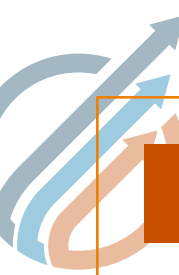
Question: What is the best way to approach cybersecurity employers with apprenticeships? We have had some barriers in getting employers in this industry interested in apprenticeships.

Answer: Using an intermediary can often help you with approaching employers in any industry. The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has awarded national contracts to industry intermediaries who are charged with expanding registered apprenticeships within different industries including cybersecurity. You can view the [list of awarded contracts](#) for more information.

If you are approaching the employer yourself, using a consultative sales approach to understand their talent pipeline needs before you present registered apprenticeship to them is one way to be successful. When you can answer their talent pipeline challenges with the apprenticeship option, you can then show them return on investment (ROI), what you will provide to them, and information about the amount of time it will take them.

Question: How do you facilitate co-enrollment, especially with exit dates and funding, with relation to apprenticeships?

Answer: The best possible way to facilitate co-enrollment is to go to the partnering programs of which you will be co-enrolling and understand their reporting and funding structure. Create a schedule and process of co-enrolling with your partnering programs to ensure that all deadlines are met. If there are specific guidelines related to restrictions of funding for periods of time (e.g., WIOA normally only provides funding for up to two years), create a "reapplication" process or an "extenuation" process with the partner. This could include payments for tuition, supportive services, and/or other services.



Best Practices Cont.

As always, check with your state and/or local workforce development board (LWDB) on policies that may be in place which applies any restrictions on how long you can provide services and process applications before you take any action.

The last tip would be, keep the process as simple as possible, especially related to the responsibilities of the employer and the apprentice. Less “red tape” is always better.

Question: What is the best practice for changing the business perspective on apprenticeship as a “philanthropic” initiative to a business investment? We discuss ROI, but the initial cost to start a program is daunting for small businesses.

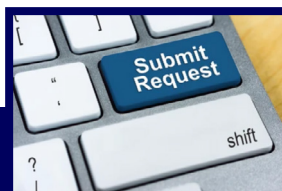
Answer: First, ask the employer if they already have a training program in place. This is the best place to start to build a RA program as the training is already in place and most likely the business may have a checklist of items which new employees must start to learn. Ask questions about the documented training needed. These two factors, upfront, establish the fact that RA could be the right tool for them and that an investment in RA will create a ROI.

Often, employers will train employees from the first day they are hired. Ask about details on the estimated cost of the training and about the cost of training employees especially as related to turnover. The employer would normally absorb all costs outside of using a RA program and potential incentives. In the case of RA, some of those costs could be saved by using RA-related resources from partnering entities.

Additionally, businesses may think they have to hire specific trainers or use a specific higher education program rather than using their own training. Again, this is not the case. However, even more time and effort could be saved by the employer by joining a national group Registered Apprenticeship program, another fact that many employers aren’t aware of and don’t understand. Joining a national program lessens the workload on the employers outside of having a mentor for their apprentices and reviewing/making requests to modify the curriculum as and if needed.

Emphasize the fact that apprentices are working for the employer right away which means upfront productivity that creates the ROI. It’s important to note that a business must train employees in any case, however, having a documented training program establishes consistency and true understanding of how textbook meets “real world” for their business.

Lastly, show the employer the statistics on RA and the average ROI it produces. It also is very important to remember that having an employer who has used RA successfully is always the best candidate to talk with newly interested employers.



SUBMIT REQUEST ABOUT BEST PRACTICES

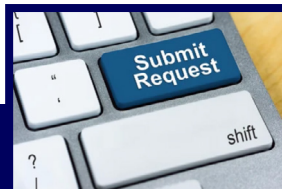
Technical Questions

Question: Who do you visit with to find out if creating an apprenticeship program allows you to hire 17- and 18-year-olds in a jeweler type role? Typically, because jewelers work with polish wheels to polish jewelry, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has age guidelines.

Answer: Federal regulations permit employers to hire youth apprentices as young as 16 years old for any non-hazardous occupation. However, all states also have standards concerning youth employment. When federal and state standards differ, the rule(s) that provide the most protection to young workers will apply. To double check that you are maintaining compliancy, you can view the [list of federally identified hazardous jobs](#) that youth are not permitted to do. Polishing wheels are not listed as hazardous; however you need to check with your [state OSHA office](#) to ensure it is not considered hazardous by any state legislation.

Question: How do you communicate to the employer, the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) provider, and the job seeker that not every apprentice qualifies for funding through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)/OJTs?

Answer: When you are preparing outreach to obtain apprentices (job seekers) include language about needing to qualify for funding through WIOA as well as any other funding program on the table. Qualifiers should be part of your ongoing communication with the RTI providers as you set the program up. Give the RTI provider a checklist of WIOA eligibility and ask them to send people to you before they begin the program if they meet the checklist requirements. Note: the checklist doesn't have to be every item for eligibility but should have the significant ones that would stop them from having tuition paid for by WIOA or other funding. You can do the same for the employer – give them a funding eligibility checklist and ask them to refer people who meet the qualifications before they hire them.



[SUBMIT REQUEST ABOUT TECHNICAL QUESTIONS](#)

Registered Apprenticeship Resources

Question: As an apprenticeship sponsor, how can we find out more about how to access WIOA and other funding for our apprenticeships?

Answer: Connect with your LWDB. You can locate them easily through [CareerOne Stop](#). Ask to meet with their staff who assist job seekers to let them know about your apprenticeship program (i.e., the types of skills, education, knowledge, and experience you are looking for in apprentices, how long the program is, and what kinds of wages will the apprentice make at the beginning and end of the program). Speaking directly to front-line staff about the program means they are better prepared to appropriately refer potential candidates.

Once candidates are identified by American Job Center (AJC) case managers or by your organization who refers to the AJC for WIOA eligibility, the job seeker can go thru the eligibility process and potentially be assisted with program costs such as tuition also known as ITAs for related instruction and/or supportive services. Additionally the employer may also be assisted with wage reimbursement for the job seeker while going thru training (also known as OJT). Each LWDB has different policies and priorities affecting ITAs and OJT contract funding, which is why it is important to establish a relationship with LWDBs, AJCs and their staff first.

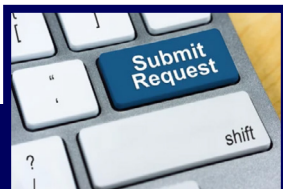
Question: In working with employers who are incorporating an apprenticeship for the first time, do you have any training for the employer mentors?

Answer: There are several online resources to assist with mentor training including:

- Healthcare Career Advancement Program (H-CAP) offers online Mentorship Training Program materials that can be made applicable to any industry. You can review their [Facilitator's Guide and the Training Curriculum](#) as a starting point.
- The Urban Institute developed [specific training materials](#) for Youth Apprenticeship Mentor Training.
- The [Mentoring for Apprenticeship guide](#) developed by Keystone Development Partnership has been utilized by DOL-approved apprenticeship programs.
- Jobs for the Future (JFF) developed eight [online training modules](#) on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) in Mentorship for Registered Apprenticeship.

Question: Can you share the template for the employer agreement? It seems like contracts/agreements from RTI providers we partner with are very lengthy. It would be nice to simplify if possible.

Answer: You will find it attached under the Related Content section of the webinar event page on WorkforceGPS.

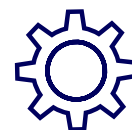


SUBMIT REQUEST ABOUT REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP RESOURCES



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Work smarter, not harder.** Do your due diligence and research what existing apprenticeship models are working, and then tweak them to fit your needs.
- **Questions about funding or the candidate referral process?** Contact your LWDB first and talk to front-line staff to see how you can work together to achieve success. Communication and partnership are key to any successful workforce program.
- Mentors need to be trained as well, but make it easy on the employer by using one of the already developed resources for this training. Healthcare Career Advancement Program (H-CAP) has a [guide for mentorship training](#) that can be modified for any industry.
- Remember there are intermediaries available to help you work with businesses on RA programs. [A list of current intermediaries](#) working with USDOL to expand apprenticeship programs nationwide.



ABOUT US

The Next Level Now (NLN) Collaborative will serve as U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training's hub for delivering strategic, short- and long-term technical assistance (TA) to the public workforce system and partners, assisting them at the state and local level as they improve services, quality, and outcomes for jobseekers and employers. In addition to developing and disseminating field-requested TA tools and resources, the NLN Collaborative will facilitate peer learning opportunities and information sharing, make subject matter experts accessible to increase efficacy and performance, and offer assistance in applying evidence-based practices for all users. Learn more about the NLN Collaborative, access and request TA through the [Collaborative's website](#).

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