

Preparing for Apprenticeship: Pre-Apprenticeship Programs as a Pathway to Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprentice Experiences in Them



The U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL’s) investment in the **American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI)** aimed to increase registered apprenticeship opportunities in a large array of occupations (beyond the traditional construction industry) and to populations that traditionally did not participate in apprenticeship programs, including women and people of color. For workers who were not ready to enter a registered apprenticeship program directly—for instance they needed to upgrade their skills or wanted to assess occupational fit—AAI also supported pre-apprenticeship programs as a strategy to increase access to registered apprenticeship.

Pre-apprenticeship programs provide:

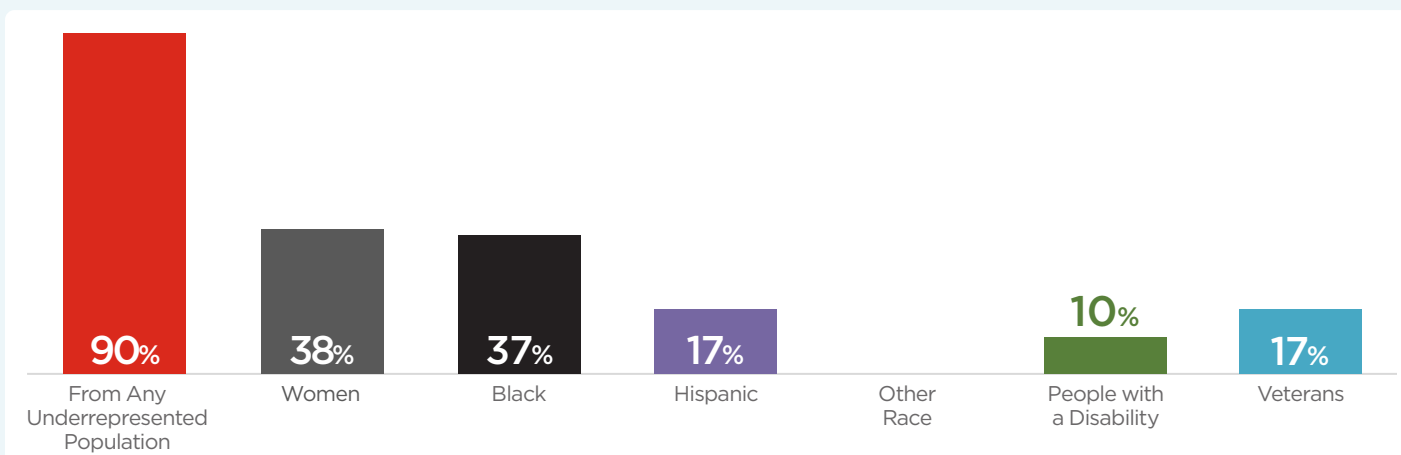
- Approved training and curriculum based on industry standards;
- Strategies to increase registered apprenticeship opportunities for underrepresented populations, including recruitment, educational and pre-vocational services, and assistance applying to registered apprenticeship programs;
- Meaningful hands-on training that does not displace paid employees;
- A formal partnership with a registered apprenticeship program and a clear pathway to registered apprenticeship programs; and
- Access to support services, such as financial support and academic support.

Pre-apprenticeship programs also promote greater use of registered apprenticeships by employers. Pre-apprenticeship programs generally are short. The average AAI pre-apprenticeship program was 91 days, or about 3 months.

Findings from the Evaluation of the American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) describe the people served in AAI pre-apprenticeship programs and the occupations they prepared for, as well as AAI pre-apprenticeship program outcomes and earnings.

Is pre-apprenticeship a promising pathway to registered apprenticeship programs for diverse job seekers?

Yes, nine in 10 pre-apprentices were from underrepresented populations.



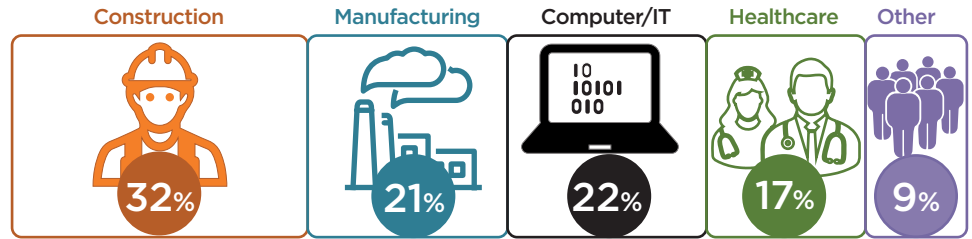
Source: Apprenticeship Quarterly Performance Report (N=6,282). Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022.

By way of comparison, 61 percent of AAI registered apprentices were from underrepresented populations. Thus, in addition to preparing job seekers for registered apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship programs could further diversify registered apprentices.

Is pre-apprenticeship a pathway to registered apprenticeship programs in diverse occupations?

Yes, most pre-apprentices enrolled in nontraditional occupations.

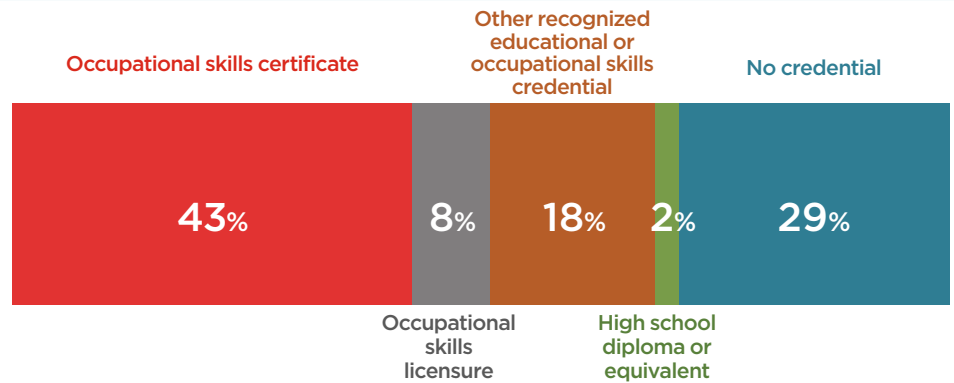
Although the largest share of pre-apprentices—32 percent—enrolled in **construction-related pre-apprenticeships**, two-thirds enrolled in nontraditional occupations.



Note: Other occupations include banking, insurance, transportation, and logistics. Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Source: Apprenticeship Quarterly Performance Report (N=6,282). Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022.

Did pre-apprentices successfully complete their programs and earn credentials?

81 percent of pre-apprentices completed their programs and 71 percent earned a credential.

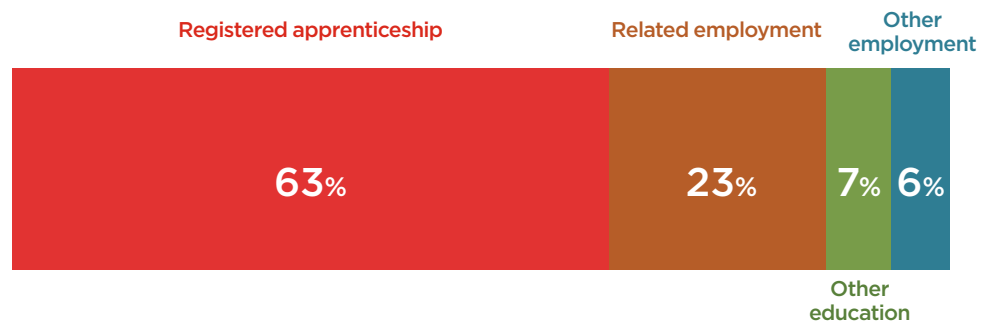


Source: Apprenticeship Quarterly Performance Report (N=6,282). Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022.

Did pre-apprenticeship programs serve as an onramp to registered apprenticeship programs?

Yes, almost two-thirds (63%) of pre-apprentices who completed their programs entered a **registered apprenticeship program**.

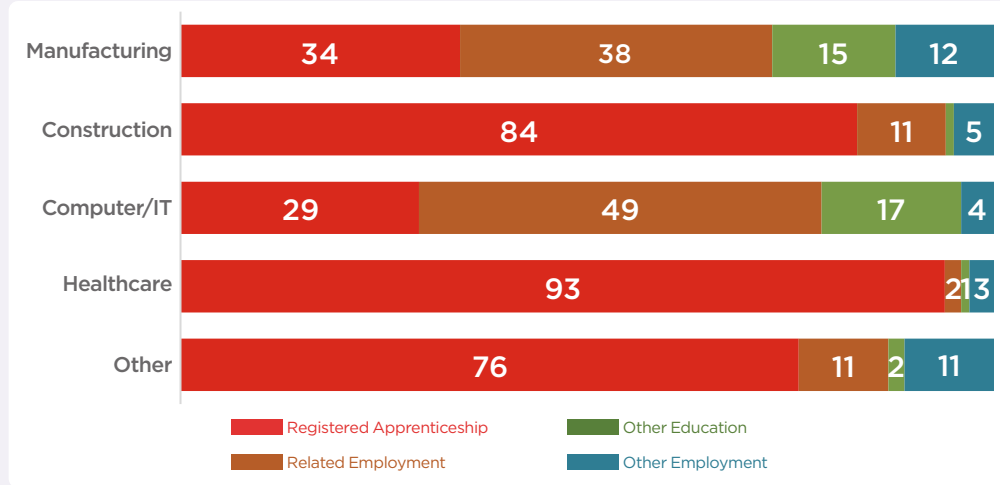
Entry into a registered apprenticeship program varied by demographics. A larger share of women completers (73%) than men completers (58%) continued to a registered apprenticeship program. Most Black (63%), Hispanic (68%) and Other Race (67%) completers entered a registered apprenticeship program.



Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Source: Apprenticeship Quarterly Performance Report (N=6,282). Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022.

Pre-apprentices' destination after the program varied by occupation.

Most pre-apprentices in healthcare (93 percent), construction (84 percent), and other occupations (76 percent) continued to a **registered apprenticeship program**. Conversely, the largest share of pre-apprentices in computer/IT and manufacturing entered **employment in a related occupation** (49 percent and 38 percent, respectively)."



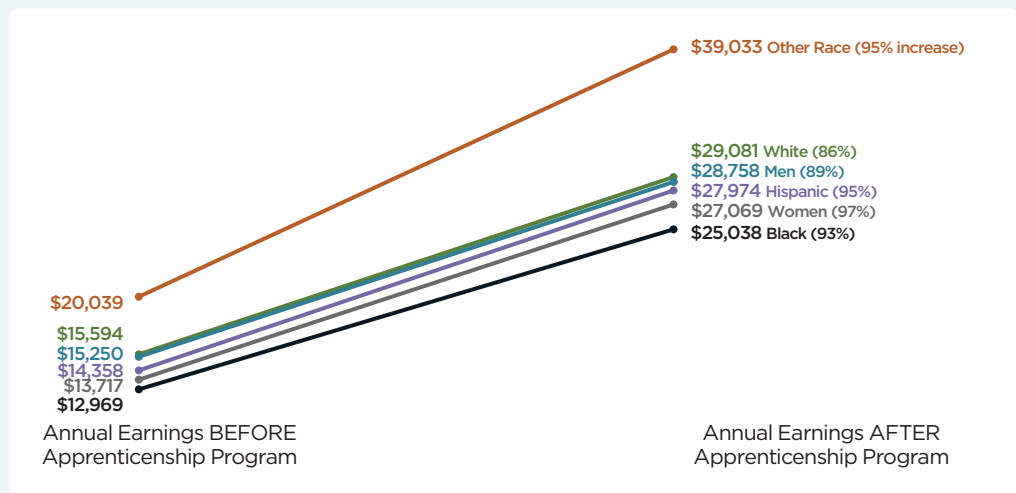
Note: Other occupations include banking, insurance, transportation, and logistics.
Source: Apprenticeship Quarterly Performance Report. Sample includes apprentices who completed their programs (N=3,301). Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022

Did earnings for pre-apprentices increase over time?

AAI pre-apprentices' earnings nearly doubled between the year prior to starting the pre-apprenticeship program and the year after their program ended. AAI pre-apprentices earned \$14,699 on average in the year prior to starting their pre-apprenticeship and \$28,150 on average a year following the program end date, representing a 92% increase in earnings.



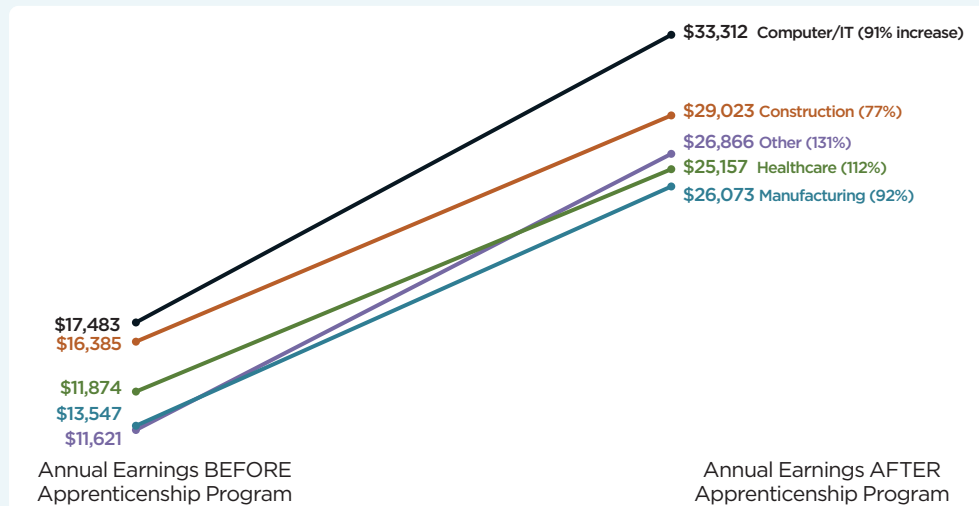
All pre-apprentices experienced earnings growth. Pre-apprentices who identified as **Women, Other Race, Hispanic, and Black** experienced the highest earnings growth.



Note: Before program earnings is calculated as the sum of earnings in the four quarters before starting the program. After program earnings is calculated as the earning in the fifth quarter after the expected program completion date multiplied by four.
Source: National Directory of New Hires (N=2,161). Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022.

Pre-apprentices in all occupations experienced earnings growth.

Pre-apprentices in computer/IT had the largest increase in earnings (\$15,829, or 91 percent), while pre-apprentices in healthcare occupations and those categorized as other (such as finance, transportation, or logistics) had the largest percentage changes in earnings (112 percent and 131 percent, respectively).



Notes: Before program earnings is calculated as the sum of earnings in the four quarters before starting the program. After program earnings is calculated as the earning in the fifth quarter after the expected program completion date multiplied by four.

Other occupations include banking, insurance, transportation, and logistics.

Source: National Directory of New Hires (N=2,161). Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022.

See related publications

[Expanding Apprenticeship to New Sectors and Populations: The Experiences and Outcomes of Apprentices in the American Apprenticeship Initiative](#)

[Expanding Registered Apprenticeship Opportunities to Underrepresented Populations: Findings from the American Apprenticeship Initiative Evaluation.](#)

For more information

[Apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov)

[DOL Employment and Training Administration: AAI Evaluation Page](#)

[DOL Chief Evaluation Office: AAI Evaluation Page](#)