

APPRENTICESHIPUSA™

AMERICAN MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE FUND

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Updated October 14, 2026

DISCLAIMER: This FAQ is intended to provide information about the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund (“Incentive Fund”). The portal to apply for incentive funding is now open and may be accessed here: [American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund Application Portal](#). Questions about the Incentive Fund may be directed to: OSD.MFGfund@arkansas.gov. Please allow 3-5 business days for a response.

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 14, 2026: NEW CHANGES TO THE AMERICAN MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE FUND BASED ON SPONSOR & EMPLOYER FEEDBACK:

- The limit of 10 employers per sponsor **is removed**. The application portal currently accepts up to 10 employers per application. Program Sponsors working with more than 10 employers can submit additional applications for the remaining employers. Enhancements to allow more than 10 employers on a single application are under consideration.
- The limit of apprentices per employer **increased** from 100 to **200 apprentices per employer**.
- The updated [AMAIF occupations list \(10.14.2026\)](#) (“Occupations List”) contains the eligible occupations for the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund. As of October 14, 2026, 16 titles were added to the list. These titles were determined to match the RAPIDS (Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database) Occupation Code and O*NET Code.

1. WHAT IS THE AMERICAN MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE FUND?

- The “American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund” (“Incentive Fund”) is a national project that is managed and operated by the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services, which is 100% funded through a [\\$38.5 million Cooperative Agreement](#) Cooperative Agreement with the [U.S. Department of Labor](#).
- To address the urgent need to grow and modernize the U.S. manufacturing workforce and in direct response to [Executive Order 14278: Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future](#), to expand access to high-quality

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Registered Apprenticeship Programs, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services will serve as the lead grantee and convener to establish the Incentive Fund.

- The Incentive Fund supports the expansion of advanced manufacturing Registered Apprenticeships nationwide, to include occupations in Advanced Manufacturing subsectors such as, but not limited to, Aerospace, Automotive, Biotechnology, Maritime Industrial Defense and Shipbuilding, Supply Chain & Automation, Nuclear Energy, and Semiconductors.
- Through an incentive funding model, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services, motivates sponsors on a national scale to develop, expand, and/or join existing advanced manufacturing Registered Apprenticeship Programs and hire apprentices.
- Incentive funding is distributed through a “pay for performance” (sometimes also referred to as “pay for success”) model, where payments are linked to specific performance criteria or predefined outcomes. The Incentive Fund aims to stimulate innovation and reduce barriers that prevent sponsors from committing to Registered Apprenticeships, thus promoting program scale and sustainability.

2. IS THE AMERICAN MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE FUND AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE?

- Yes. The Incentive Fund is nationwide and open to Registered Apprenticeship sponsors in all U.S. states and territories.

3. CAN I APPLY FOR THE AMERICAN MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE FUND AND OTHER INCENTIVE FUNDING AVAILABLE THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR?

- Program Sponsors can apply for incentive funding under the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund and the Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program, as applicable. Program Sponsors may also apply for State incentive programs, subject to applicable requirements.
- Program Sponsors must follow eligibility requirements and approved occupations established for all DOL incentive fund models.
- Program Sponsors receiving incentive funding from more than one DOL-funded source, specifically, the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund and the Pay-for-performance Incentive Payments Program, must indicate in their application(s) (1) if they are currently receiving incentive funding under the Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program or the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive fund and (2) If they have an application pending for

incentive funding under the Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program or the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive fund.

- Program Sponsors **cannot** apply for incentive funding across the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund and the Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program for the **same apprentice in the same occupation**.
- Arkansas Department of Commerce will follow-up with the appropriate Pay-for-Performance Incentive Fund regarding Program Sponsors that indicate in their application they are receiving incentive funds or have a pending application from the Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program, as applicable.

4. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR INCENTIVE FUNDS?

- Eligible Incentive Fund applicants include:
 - Individual Registered Apprenticeship Program sponsors (i.e., apprenticeship programs operated by one business/employer for building its own skilled labor force);
 - Group sponsors or consortia (i.e., apprenticeship programs operated by groups of employers, unions, industry intermediaries, trade associations, etc.);
 - Applicants may also refer to [U.S. CFR § 29.2](#) for definitions of “Employer” and “Sponsor”; or
 - Staffing Agencies.
 - Applicants must have a program registered in an eligible occupation in the allowable occupations list and identify that occupation in the application.

5. WHAT ENTITIES ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR INCENTIVE FUNDS?

- Sponsors that do not have an apprenticeship program that is registered with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) or a State Apprenticeship Agency (i.e. pre-apprenticeship programs or unregistered apprenticeship programs).

6. MY APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM IS NOT REGISTERED. WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?

- U.S. DOL [Registered Apprenticeship Industry Intermediaries](#) and Office of Apprenticeship staff offer free expertise to help employers, sponsors, and industry partners launch, promote, and expand Registered Apprenticeship programs by providing technical assistance for program development, supporting curriculum and competency model development, and connecting employers to existing Registered Apprenticeship programs.

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- More information about Registered Apprenticeship, including the benefits of Registering a program and how to Register can be found on here [Apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov).
- More information about Registered Apprenticeship Intermediaries can be found here [DOL_IndFactsheet_Intermediaries-Factsheet_092526.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/eis/whd/indfactsheet/intermediaries-factsheet-092526.pdf).
- The [Partner Finder tool on Apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov/partner-finder) helps employers and other industry partners locate and connect with existing Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, training providers, intermediaries, and apprenticeship offices in their area or industry.

7. WHAT IS REQUIRED OF SPONSORS?

- Eligible sponsors must have an established Registered Apprenticeship Program **at the time of their intake application submission.**
- Eligible apprentices must be:
 - Newly enrolled apprentices;
 - Incumbent workers being up-skilled by their enrollment in an advanced manufacturing Registered Apprenticeship Program; and/or
 - Former registered apprentices enrolled in a new advanced manufacturing Registered Apprenticeship Program.
- ALL apprentices included in the intake application **must** be enrolled **on or after the application submission date.**
 - **Please note:** Any apprentices formally registered prior to the application submission date will be deemed ineligible for consideration for incentive payments.
- Sponsors must commit to incentivizing individual employers or groups of employers to hire apprentices in any number of U.S. states, territories, and/or the District of Columbia. Sponsors must maintain apprentice enrollment for a minimum of 90 days with the intent for apprentices to successfully complete the program. **Please note, there are no partial payments.**
- Sponsors may submit one or more applications. There is **no longer a limit** to the number of employers per sponsor. The limit of apprentices per employer **increased** from 100 to **200 apprentices per employer.**
- Sponsors must provide current information about total headcount (full-time and part-time equivalent) of the employer or employers that will receive incentive funds.
- Employer partner information must be available in the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS) for sponsors of group programs to be eligible to apply for incentive funding. If the sponsor is in an SAA that does not report in RAPIDS, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services

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will work with SAA Director to confirm the employer and registered apprenticeship program connection.

- It is the sponsor's responsibility to provide employer acceptance agreements during the intake application process.
- Sponsors agree to the terms and conditions established in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services, as an individual sponsor or as a group of sponsors (consortia) represented by an authorized lead designee. Following Arkansas's approval, the sponsor will receive an email from DocuSign which provides the MOU for review and signature.
- Sponsors who are MOU signatories, either individually or as lead designees for a consortium, are responsible for ensuring accurate entry of program and apprentice data into RAPIDS on behalf of Employers receiving incentive funds, in accordance with the MOU. Refer to **Question 8** for more information.
- MOU's provided will have a 6-month period of performance. This means that the sponsor has 6 months to register an apprentice. A sponsor has up to 100 days from the conclusion of the period of performance to request payment. The MOU start date will be the day the application was submitted to the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund or no later than 30 days from the completed submission. After an MOU has ended, sponsors can continue to reapply for the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund and enter into a new MOU with the Arkansas Department of Commerce.
- Sponsors agree to complete the Grant Disclosure Document. It is provided by the Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services, Office of State Procurement. Sponsors may access this form here: [Contract and Grant Disclosure Form](#).
- Once the intake application is approved, sponsors are required to register as a vendor with Arkansas.
- Instructions for the vendor set-up are found here: [Arkansas Vendor Set-up Instructions](#). **Please note:** the registration process is 4-6 weeks. Sponsors will receive an Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information System (AASIS) vendor ID number once the process is finished. Questions about registering for Arkansas Vendor Services or other assistance? **Email:** aasis-osp@arkansas.gov or **Phone:** **501-492-4655**.

8. HOW MUCH INCENTIVE FUNDING WILL BE PROVIDED AND WHEN?

- An incentive amount of \$3,500.00 USD (Three Thousand, Five-Hundred U.S. Dollars) will be awarded to the sponsor per apprentice (up to 200 apprentices per employer)
- Payment will not be made until satisfactory completion of an apprentice's 90-day retention period in an eligible Registered Apprenticeship Program.
- Arkansas will verify with SAA states, as needed, that the 90-day retention period has been fulfilled.
- Registered Apprenticeship Program Sponsors can retain up to 10% of the incentive payment.
- The sponsor **must** provide at least 90% of the total incentive payment received to the employer **and be able to track and validate payment was made to the employer** (refer to question 10 for further instructions). In cases where more than one employer worked with the same apprentice, it is up to the sponsor to determine the breakdown of 90% incentive funding between the employers.
- The sponsor may retain up to 10% of the total incentive payment. Funds may support up to 200 apprentices per employer
 - **Please note:** Employer partner information must be available in RAPIDS for sponsors of group programs to be eligible to apply. Please refer to **Question 7** for more information on what is required of sponsors.
- When requesting an incentive payment, a sponsor must submit the invoice and performance report separately for each MOU. They cannot be combined.

9. WHEN AND HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDS?

- The application portal is open and may be accessed here: [American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund Application Portal](#).
- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until 100% of available incentive funds are obligated.
- Applicants will receive an automated message confirming the intake application was submitted.

10. HOW WILL APPLICATIONS BE DETERMINED ELIGIBLE?

- Application eligibility will be determined based on information included within the [intake application form](#).

11. HOW WILL APPLICANTS KNOW IF THEY'VE BEEN APPROVED AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

- Once the intake application form is submitted, please allow for up to 15 business days for review.

- Following approval, an MOU will be drafted and sent for signature via DocuSign.
- If an application is not accepted, applicants will receive official correspondence by email, notifying the sponsor of the reason(s) for denial and the appeals process.

12. WHAT ARE RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RECEIPT OF INCENTIVE FUNDS?

- Sponsors will commit to the goals/mission of the Incentive Fund listed under **Question 1** of this FAQ.
- Sponsors will adhere to all terms and conditions in the MOU, including the mitigation of fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Sponsors will adhere to all required processes and procedures, including the use of RAPIDS, regarding the formal registration of apprentices and/or the registration or modification of existing apprenticeship programs under the jurisdiction of either the Office of Apprenticeship (OA) of the U.S. Department of Labor or the relevant State Apprenticeship Agency as recognized by OA ([CFR § 29.3](#)).
- Sponsors will provide all necessary reporting data in the form of an Excel file (“Performance Reports”) to the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services in accordance with the reporting process and timelines established in the MOU, along with an accompanying invoice before payment is released.
- Sponsors operating in SAA states that do not use RAPIDS as their case management system are encouraged to apply for incentive funding. The Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services will provide direct one-on-one support to SAA states that do not use RAPIDS to prepare and submit their performance reports and invoices.
- Sponsors that operate in SAA portal states must prioritize timely and accurate reporting to their state’s case management system, as this information will ultimately be submitted to RAPIDS via the SAA portal.
- Sponsors will adhere to specific requirements regarding the collection, storage, destruction, and overall protection of personal information as well as the exemptions of personal information from disclosure in public records requests.

13. WHAT IS THE PAYMENT REQUEST/TRANSFER PROCESS?

- Upon receipt of an invoice and associated Performance Report, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services will review and approve the amount of incentive funding to be paid.

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- Finance Shared Services will process these payments within a period of 10-15 business days.
- If payment is not received after 15 business days, sponsors may be contacted for additional clarification or documentation. Sponsors may follow-up after 15 business days via the following contact email address:
OSD.MFGfund@arkansas.gov
- After the payment has been issued, the sponsor is required to submit proof of payment to the employer to the OSD.MFGfund@arkansas.gov email address **within 30 days**. If the sponsor is the employer, no further action is necessary.

14. WHAT CRITERIA IS USED TO DETERMINE THE LIST OF APPROVED OCCUPATIONS?

- The Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce uses the following criteria for occupation determination:
 - The current approved occupations list reflects occupations with commonly recognized titles that encompass most occupational skills reflected in the relevant O*NET code. Requested occupations must match the RAPIDS Occupation Code and O*NET code associated with the current occupation list.
 - Apprenticeship occupations recognized by USDOL are preferred. However, there is flexibility to consider a State Apprenticeship Agency occupation if the occupation has nationwide application.
 - Submitted SAA Portal States occupations must match the O*NET code and occupation title of the published list to be considered for approval.
- The updated [AMAIF occupations list \(10.14.2026\)](#) (“Occupations List”) contains the eligible occupations. As of October 14, 2026, 16 occupation titles were added to the list. These titles were determined to match the RAPIDS (Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database) Occupation Code and O*NET Code.
- Sponsors that do not see their occupation(s) on the Occupations List are encouraged to explore if the occupation(s) may be eligible under other active U.S. Department of Labor incentive funds. [Five new incentive fund models](#) will launch later this month in priority industry sectors including shipbuilding and the defense industrial base; super intelligence, semiconductor, and nuclear energy infrastructure; telecommunications; information technology; and transportation.

15. NEED ANSWERS TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS NOT COVERED IN THIS FAQ?

- Email: OSD.MFGfund@arkansas.gov
- Phone: (501) 682-6546