



NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

EVENT PLANNING TOOLKIT 2026

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Introduction

2026 marks the 12th annual **National Apprenticeship Week (NAW)**, which will take place from **April 26 – May 2**. NAW is a nationwide celebration where ApprenticeshipUSA partners – including employers, apprentices and graduates, industry representatives, labor organizations, community-based organizations, workforce partners, educational institutions, and federal, state, and local government agencies - host events to showcase the success and value of Registered Apprenticeship in meeting critical industry workforce needs. This proven, industry-driven workforce strategy drives economic growth across all industries. Registered Apprenticeship develops the highly skilled workforce that employers need and creates pathways for career seekers to catapult into in-demand, high-paying careers. This year provides an opportunity to recognize the U.S. Department of Labor's efforts to expand Registered Apprenticeship and exceed the 1 million active apprentice goal to meet industry needs.

In response to partner feedback, the Department is shifting NAW to the spring, starting this year from **April 26 - May 2, 2026!** Future NAW celebrations will take place during the dates noted below.

- April 25 - May 1, 2027
- April 23 - April 29, 2028

The theme for NAW 2026 is ***"America at Work: Making America Skilled Again Through Registered Apprenticeship."*** As the nation celebrates its 250th year and continues its reindustrialization under President Trump's leadership, the NAW 2026 theme reflects Registered Apprenticeship's prominence as a key strategy to ensure the American worker is equipped for the skilled jobs of today and tomorrow. Apprenticeship events and proclamations this year will also highlight how Registered Apprenticeship has gained increased recognition worldwide as a tool to get America skilled again. Expanding Registered Apprenticeship will address some of our nation's most pressing workforce challenges, such as filling the growing demand for skilled trades, artificial intelligence, manufacturing, shipbuilding, nuclear energy, healthcare, and other industries and occupations,.

Get involved by hosting an event or signing and submitting a proclamation. This toolkit includes talking points, proposed planning schedules, and other tips and templates to make your event a success. If you have any questions or need any help along the way, please email us at NationalApprenticeshipWeek@dol.gov.

Key Messaging

About Registered Apprenticeship

- Registered Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience with a mentor, receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally recognized credential.
- Registered Apprenticeships are industry-vetted and approved by the U.S. Department of Labor or a State Apprenticeship Agency.
- Registered Apprenticeship is a work-based training model that allows apprentices to earn while they learn and provides a pathway to lucrative careers.

- Registered Apprenticeship programs enable employers to develop and train their future workforce while offering career seekers affordable paths to secure high-paying jobs. Registered Apprenticeships can also help employers:
 - Recruit and develop a skilled workforce that helps grow their business.
 - Improve productivity, profitability, and an employer's bottom line.
 - Create flexible training options that ensure workers develop the right occupationally specific skills.
 - Receive tax credits and employee tuition benefits in participating states.
 - Increase staff loyalty and retention of workers, during and after the apprenticeship.
- Registered Apprenticeships provide a critical talent pipeline that have helped address some of our nation's pressing workforce challenges, such as filling the growing demand for skilled trades, advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and other occupations.
- Registered Apprenticeship programs are distinguished from other types of workplace training models by several factors:
 - Registered Apprenticeship programs are jobs from day one, and apprentices earn family-sustaining wages from their employers, allowing them to earn and learn at the same time.
 - Registered Apprenticeship programs provide structured on-the-job learning and job-related classroom training, some with articulation agreements with 2- and 4-year colleges.
 - Apprentices earn wage increases as they learn and gain new skills.
 - On-the-job learning is conducted in the work setting under the direction of a mentor(s).
 - Training results in a portable, nationally recognized credential.
- We also have growing evidence that Registered Apprenticeship is one of the most effective workforce training strategies available:
 - In a [recent study](#), over 60 employer sponsors reported a 44% return on investment for Registered Apprenticeship.
 - Workers who have completed Registered Apprenticeship programs earn an average of \$300,000 more over their career when compared to peers who did not.
 - Registered Apprenticeships can be found in all industries, including artificial intelligence, health care, agriculture, technology, financial services, education, energy, transportation, hospitality, construction, telecommunications, and advanced manufacturing.
- Since Registered Apprenticeship is a flexible model, programs can be customized to meet the needs of every business and industry.

About National Apprenticeship Week 2026

- Help us celebrate the 12th annual National Apprenticeship Week from **April 26 to May 2, 2026!**
- This year marks the first full week celebration in the spring, in response to stakeholder feedback.
- Since its inception in 2015, National Apprenticeship Week has spurred over 10,200 events, over 3,250 proclamations, and over 2 million attendees across the country.
- Events and activities have included apprenticeship program open houses for career seekers, skills competitions, community forums, apprentice graduations, apprentice social media takeovers,

business open houses, high school or college career fairs, apprenticeship signing days, industry roundtable events, and more.

- This year provides an opportunity to recognize the Trump Administration's efforts to expand Registered Apprenticeship and exceed the 1 million active apprentice goal to meet industry needs.
- Events do not need to fall exactly during National Apprenticeship Week to be added to the website: www.apprenticeship.gov/national-apprenticeship-week

Event Planning Checklist

If you're planning an event for National Apprenticeship Week 2026, this checklist will help get you started.

Six or More Weeks Out

- Determine date, time, and format of event.
- Recruit internal volunteers and assign roles as applicable (invitations, set up, social media posting, employee communications, publicity, etc.).
- Reserve location for event.
- Coordinate audio/visual and other vendor needs.
- Develop general invitation and registration list (see invitation tips below).
 - Consider creating an online event (Facebook, EventBrite, etc.) so information is widely accessible.
- Coordinate speaker/panel if applicable.
- Develop agenda for event, including talking points, hand-outs, one-pagers, and PowerPoint presentations, if needed (see the sample agenda in this toolkit).
- Announce event internally as appropriate.
 - Newsletter inclusion, intranet content, staff meetings, etc.
- Begin promoting your event, including press release distribution, media pitching, and social media posts using hashtags **#NAW2026** and **#ApprenticeshipUSA**; online community calendars; an announcement on your website, etc.
- Send personal invitations to key stakeholders, if applicable (local industry, educational organizations in the community, important customers, youth organizations, veterans' groups, etc.).
- Invite additional attendees, if applicable (elected officials, local media outlets, families of employees, local businesses, students from local schools, etc.).
- Add event to the [National Apprenticeship Week website](#).

Four Weeks Out

- Track and confirm event RSVPs.
- Refine event materials needed for speakers (e.g., talking points, presentations, etc.).
- Determine required safety equipment, if applicable.
- Post about event on social media.

Two Weeks Out

- Send invitation reminder to attendees who have not responded.
- Coordinate internal planning group to review event materials and confirm roles and responsibilities for the day of the event.
- Post about event on social media.

One Week Out

- Confirm details and logistics with speakers (e.g., special needs, etc.).
- Practice presentations with company representatives.
- Share final event materials with event speakers.

- Finalize attendee list.
- Post about event on social media.

Three Days Out

- Send reminder to confirmed attendees.
- Hold event run-through of event.
- Post about event on social media.

Day Before

- Set up event space, if applicable.
- Final run-throughs of presentations, if needed.
- Post about event on social media.

Day of Event

- Host event!
- Post about event on social media.

One to Three Days Post-Event

- Send thank you messages to any panelists or speakers in addition to attendees.
- Follow up on any questions raised during the event.
- Post photos of event on social media.
- Consider writing a blog recapping the event.
- Evaluate the event internally.
- Share event photos/videos with us through the [NAW webpage](#).)

Invitation Tips

When developing your National Apprenticeship Week 2026 event invitation list, consider reaching out to the following groups and stakeholders:

- [State and local workforce boards](#).
- Local [American Job Centers](#).
- Local Chambers of Commerce – request list of local member businesses/contacts.
- Local colleges/universities/technical colleges and high schools.
- Local career advisors and high school counselors.
- Local legislators, other government officials, county boards/city councils, etc.
- Local networking/professional groups.
- Local community organizations.
- Local veterans' organizations/military recruiters.
- Local industry groups.
- Local unions (carpenters, plumbers, steelworkers, electricians, etc.).
- U.S. DOL apprenticeship grantees and other funded investments serving your local area.
- Employees – ask them to spread the word to family/friends.
- Customers/clients.
- Suppliers, business partners, etc.

Templates

Sample Event Agenda

This sample agenda and mock run of show is to serve as a guideline for your event and should be tailored to your specific event activities, industry, speakers, and guests.

8:00 – 8:15 AM – Opening Remarks & Welcome

*Event introduction made by the moderator (business leader, local government official, apprenticeship program sponsor, etc.). The moderator then invites guests to follow the organization on social media platforms, sharing the recommended hashtags **#NAW2026** and **#ApprenticeshipUSA**.*

8:15 – 8:45 AM – Presentation

Keynote speakers present about the impact of Registered Apprenticeship programs on building the workforce and the economy of the future, best practices, and tips for businesses, success stories and program updates, future apprentices, and more.

8:45 – 9:00 AM – Apprentice Spotlight

Apprentices and/or apprenticeship graduates are given the opportunity to tell their story on how Registered Apprenticeship has impacted their lives.

9:00 – 9:30 AM – Speaker Q&A

Speaker(s) take questions about the Registered Apprenticeship program, the role of Registered Apprenticeships in communities, how people can become apprentices, how companies and organizations can get involved, and more.

9:30 – 9:35 AM – Transition

Speaker directs event attendees to their next activity and where to go if the activity is in a different location.

9:35 – 10:00 AM – Facility Tour & Skills Exhibition

Moderator, business leaders, and/or keynote speakers, take guests on a tour of the facility highlighting the tools and resources available in their Registered Apprenticeship program and/or will exhibit the skills, expertise, and successes of the apprentices.

10:00 – 10:15 AM – Closing Remarks & Questions

*Moderator thanks presenters, speakers, and guests, and closes the event, reminding attendees to visit their organization's website and social channels and share their Registered Apprenticeship journey on social using the hashtags **#NAW2026** and **#ApprenticeshipUSA** and tagging the [U.S. Department of Labor's social media channels](#).*

Sample Event Invitations

Subject: YOU'RE INVITED! JOIN OUR NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK 2026 EVENT

Dear [insert name],

The 12th annual National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) will take place April 26 – May 2, 2026. On [insert event date], [insert entity name] will host a(n) [insert event name/type] to celebrate NAW. We invite you to join us and learn more about our commitment to Registered Apprenticeships and how these unique work-based learning programs make a difference in our community. This year also provides an opportunity to recognize the Trump Administration’s efforts to expand Registered Apprenticeship and exceed the 1million active apprentice goal to meet industry needs.

Date: [insert]

Time: [insert]

Location: [insert address + city, state]

Contact: [insert]

The event will feature [insert activity] and attendees will have the opportunity to hear from [insert speaker]. [Insert any additional necessary information.]

The benefits of Registered Apprenticeship are substantial for both job seekers and job creators. These “earn as you learn” models enable employers to fill open jobs, improve productivity and profitability, and reduce turnover while providing the American workforce with pathways to start new careers and acquire the skills needed for in-demand jobs.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the event or [insert entity name]’s Registered Apprenticeship initiative. If you would like more details about NAW, visit Apprenticeship.gov for information including resources, state apprenticeship contacts, and how to locate and participate in other NAW events around the country.

We look forward to hearing from you and hope you can attend.

Best,

[Insert Name]

[Insert Signature and Contact Information]

Learn more: Apprenticeship.gov/National-Apprenticeship-Week

Sample Thank You Notes

This sample thank you note should be distributed following your National Apprenticeship Week 2026 event.

Dear [Insert Name],

Thank you for attending our National Apprenticeship Week event on [insert event date]. We hope you found the event informative and helpful and welcome any feedback you would like to share. We also encourage you to share your photos/videos from the event via email to our staff at [insert contact email].

For more resources on Registered Apprenticeship and how to start an apprenticeship program at your organization, visit apprenticeship.gov or contact the National Office of Apprenticeship at apprenticeship@dol.gov.

For more information on National Apprenticeship Week and other upcoming events, visit www.apprenticeship.gov/national-apprenticeship-week.

Thank you again,

[Insert Name]

[Insert Signature and Contact Information]