# 2021 Apprenticeship Listening Sessions

**U.S. Department of Labor**

Employment and Training Administration

*Office of Apprenticeship*

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Apprenticeship (OA) created this report to provide DOL leadership, the Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (ACA), and other stakeholders with insights from a series of virtual listening sessions with industry, labor unions, the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) community, and apprenticeship, workforce, and education stakeholders. **This report does not reflect the views of the Department but rather reflects the views of stakeholders that attended the listening sessions.** All sessions were held in direct response to the Biden Administration's call on February 17, 2021, to expand and strengthen Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) and the pipelines into these programs [1].

Beginning in March 2021, OA coordinated with its partners and stakeholders to host over 20 listening sessions with industry, labor union, apprenticeship, education, and workforce stakeholders to hear perspectives on the current state of the national apprenticeship system and gather ideas and suggestions on ways to modernize RAPs, taking into consideration the best practices and lessons learned from 80 years of RAPs and the recent Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program (IRAP) model. DOL also convened six additional listening sessions in September 2021 with a variety of DEIA community stakeholder groups to further explore the current state of DEIA across the national apprenticeship system, including barriers to entry, among various demographic groups.

In addition to discussing the future of Registered Apprenticeship more generally, as part of these listening sessions OA asked for targeted feedback and perspectives related to the following key Administration priorities:

- Expanding RAPs into new and emerging occupations and industries;
- Increasing DEIA in apprenticeship;
- Modernizing RAPs; and,
- Improving alignment with the education and workforce systems

## 1.2 PARTICIPATING STAKEHOLDERS

OA engaged individuals from the following six stakeholder groups to attend the listening sessions, including:

- **Industry Groups:** OA's various industry intermediary contractors hosted virtual discussions that covered emerging industries like advanced manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, hospitality, and more, and discussed the needs and recommendations required for a more industry-driven Registered Apprenticeship system. These discussions also focused on DEIA challenges and efforts within each respective industry.

- **Labor Unions:** OA partnered with North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) to hold a construction trades and diversity-focused session with leaders and RAP training subject matter experts from NABTU's affiliate unions. At the time of the issuance of this report, ETA is exploring

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[1] [Fact Sheet: Biden Administration to Take Steps to Bolster Registered Apprenticeships | The White House](#). Accessed August 1, 2021.

additional mechanisms and/or planning additional union-specific dialogue that could result in an updated version of this report.

- **Apprenticeship, Education, and Workforce Systems:** OA hosted a virtual listening session with the National Association of State and Territorial Apprenticeship Directors (NASTAD) to discuss the current challenges State Apprenticeship Agencies are facing with the RAP system and their thoughts on how to modernize, expand, diversify, and improve it. OA also conducted a listening session with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Apprenticeship Affinity Group meeting to get feedback from state workforce leaders across the country about how to modernize, expand, diversify, and strengthen Registered Apprenticeship. OA and DOL's Office of Workforce Investment hosted two listening sessions with apprenticeship grantees from four different apprenticeship-focused H-1B grant programs (Rural Healthcare Grant Program, One Workforce Grant Program, Apprenticeship Closing the Skills Gap, and Scaling Apprenticeship through Sector-Based Strategies).

- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Organizations:** OA hosted several listening sessions with a wide range of DEIA organizations to discuss the barriers these groups face in participating in apprenticeship. The sessions also explored new partnerships, best practices, and proposed legislative and/or regulatory changes that may support greater diversity and inclusion in apprenticeship. Key stakeholders included: women's advocacy organizations; Latino stakeholders; African American stakeholders; Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander stakeholders; Native American Tribal organizations; and disability-focused and other advocacy organizations. In addition, representatives from Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) joined, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and community colleges with students from underserved communities.

  **Education and Youth-Focused Organizations:** OA partnered with Jobs for the Future (JFF) to hold a youth and education-focused session with schools, workforce boards, non-profits, postsecondary institutions, youth-serving organizations, and community-based organizations.

- **IRAP Standards Recognition Entities (SREs):** OA invited the 27 approved IRAP SREs to a listening session to discuss what has worked with IRAP model and how the flexibilities in the IRAP model could be incorporated into an updated Registered Apprenticeship system to create one centralized and modern system. The discussion also heavily focused on DEIA efforts.

See the appendix for a list of the events and key questions covered during each of the stakeholder group listening sessions.

## 1.3 RECURRING THEMES

Several cross-cutting themes and ideas emerged within and across the stakeholder sessions. At a high level, attendees raised a set of ideas or actions to address the challenges with Registered Apprenticeship and to advance the national apprenticeship system, including but not limited to those listed below.

**Industry Stakeholders:**

- **Streamline the Program Registration Process:** Despite recent efforts to improve it, the program registration process is still seen as cumbersome and time-consuming by many prospective apprenticeship sponsors and partners. Continued updates to this process can help increase the number of apprenticeship programs. Some attendees recommended: focusing on addressing the perceived 2,000-hour OJT requirement, stating that it is too long for many emerging occupations; expediting the approval of occupations and standards so DOL can "move at the speed of business"; and designating experts who can help prospective sponsors navigate the process.

- **Provide Additional Industry Incentives:** Participants noted that the costs associated with starting and sustaining an apprenticeship program are high, and additional funding is needed to bring more sponsors into the apprenticeship system. Attendees in multiple sessions suggested providing more support through incentives and tax credits and/or restructuring OA's investments to support easier braiding with WIOA and state funds; allowing employers to offset wages; and providing greater investment access to MSIs and minority- and women-owned businesses to also alleviate current funding constraints.

**Union Stakeholders**

- **Explore the Applicability of Union Structures and Designs that Support Success:** Apprenticeship has been prevalent in building trades for generations, and its prevalence and success may be traced to the unique structures designed to support both employees and employers. Listening session attendees acknowledged that unions' joint management approach, which emphasizes employer and employee contributions to professional growth, helps drive apprenticeship adoption while also mitigating concerns about employee mobility. Attendees suggested leveraging the structures already utilized by unions to develop and strengthen adoption in other industries.

- **Sustained Dialogue and Enhanced Structures are Imperative to Improving DEIA**: Attendees acknowledged the success labor unions have had facilitating the growth and sustainment of apprenticeship in the building trades. Attendees also acknowledged the lack of diversity in the trades and highlighted the importance of sustained dialogue in building deep relationships within underrepresented communities. Attendees noted the importance of addressing the needs of underrepresented populations, which could include broader use of pre-apprenticeship and wraparound services, to better enable their entry and success in apprenticeships.

**Apprenticeship, Education, and Workforce System Stakeholders**

- **Continue Raising Awareness about Apprenticeship:** Attendees across sessions emphasized that apprenticeship continues to be misunderstood by not just career seekers and employers, but also the broader education and workforce systems. Session attendees noted the lack of transparency across these systems and the general lack of knowledge about apprenticeship, which might be addressed through additional communications tools.

- **Enhance Federal Coordination:** Attendees noted the lack of knowledge and collaboration among education and workforce stakeholders, including other Federal workforce programs targeted towards Veterans, the formerly incarcerated, as well as the broader workforce system. Sessions also highlighted the need for additional collaboration between OA and SAA states to support consistency and scale.

**DEIA Community Stakeholders:**

- **Recognize that One Size Does Not Fit All:** Members of underserved groups are not interchangeable and should not be lumped together. DEIA community stakeholder groups indicated that different groups have unique perspectives, concerns, and are at different stages of engagement with the apprenticeship system. However, while every group is at a different level of engagement, all demonstrated enthusiasm about developing relationships and partnerships to support apprenticeship. Attendees emphasized meeting communities where they are by building relationships with relevant messages and specific engagement strategies, while staying true to the core of the apprenticeship model.

- **Create More Pathways through Pre-apprenticeship and Youth Apprenticeship:** Across sessions, participants noted the importance of increased youth engagement so that middle and high school students learn about the career pathways through apprenticeship and are aware of the various industries and occupations available to them at a younger age. Pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship opportunities can also help increase DEIA by giving young people hardest hit by the recession and underrepresented groups a way to develop critical skills and earn credentials, so they are better prepared for apprenticeship or other careers.

# 2 INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSION THEMES

## 2.1 EXPANSION INTO NEW AND EMERGING OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES

Attendees in the numerous industry listening sessions provided key insights into how apprenticeship could expand into new and emerging occupations like IT, cybersecurity, and healthcare. Discussions highlighted four major themes around ways to expand apprenticeship into new and emerging occupations, centering on employer engagement and incentives; enhanced flexibility; partnerships; and outreach and promotion. Summarized below are the major challenges raised by the attendees and their suggested feedback on how to address them.

### 2.1.1 Employer/Union Engagement

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Joint Management of Programs: Some** employers outside of construction are reluctant to engage in the joint management structure of apprenticeship; however, the joint labor-management approach to program management has been integral for successful outcomes. | Explore policy levers (e.g., Davis-Bacon in construction) that can be used to incentivize employers to participate in apprenticeship, and how joint labor-management program designs (e.g., training funds) can help advance employer adoption of apprenticeship. |
| **Attrition/Training Funds:** Employers outside of the construction industry are reluctant to incur | Leverage lessons from unions, who often utilize Training Funds to support professionals in the |

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| the costs around apprenticeship for fear that an apprentice will move to another company. | industry, which could help alleviate mobility concerns. Training Funds could be utilized for services like program recruitment, retention, and daycare. |
| **Apprenticeship Readiness (Pre-Apprenticeship):** Many industries require apprentices to already have the skills required for an entry-level position; employers cannot sacrifice the time of current employees to train apprentices on basic skills. | Collaborate with Department of Education on allowing school courses and credit to also count for pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs, so apprentices have the necessary skills when starting apprenticeships. Expand support to pre-apprenticeship programs. |
| **Clear Return on Investment (ROI):** Employers need more information and tools to demonstrate the business value and ROI of apprenticeship. | Develop new ROI calculator(s) and share with employers, review past innovative ways to market apprenticeships, and brainstorm new ways to promote the business value of apprenticeships to employers. |

### 2.1.2   Enhanced Flexibility

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Hours Requirement:** RAPs can be rigid in program design and implementation and are not flexible enough to adjust to new technologies. The perceived 2,000-hour requirement is difficult for employers in emerging industries like IT and cyber to fulfill due to their rapidly changing nature. | Clarify the requirements associated with RAPs and dispel misconceptions around training requirements.  Explore how to leverage components of IRAP, such as competency-based models, reduced hour requirements, and overall flexibility based on industry direction to address the needs of employers in emerging industries. |
| **Applicability of the Apprenticeship Model:** The RAP model does not work well for occupations that require advanced skills and for very small organizations that cannot meet the mentoring ratio or do not have the overhead to start a program. | Address how the RAP model and requirements can be tailored based on different sponsor needs – e.g., for specialized, advanced occupations and for very small organizations. |

## 2.2   APPRENTICESHIP MODERNIZATION

Numerous listening session attendees highlighted areas where modernization could be critical for eliminating or reducing several perceived barriers to entry that preclude employers and sponsors from registering an apprenticeship program. Their discussions highlighted three major themes around ways to modernize apprenticeship, which centered on RAP policy; supporting infrastructure; and data and systems modernization. Summarized below are the major challenges raised by the attendees and their suggested feedback on how to address them.

### 2.2.1   Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) Policy

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Time Investment:** Employers perceive RAP registration paperwork and ongoing RAP management requirements as cumbersome and | Consider reforms to the RAP process that will facilitate ease in registration for employers and reduce completion time for apprentices. This will |

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| inflexible, which has hindered employers from seeing outcomes and quickly deploying talent. | make RAPs more appealing for both employers and apprentices as viable career pathways and talent pool creators. |
| **Outdated Processes:** Many apprenticeship processes are outdated and do not account for the competencies and speed that industry needs. | Continue to streamline and update processes to make it easier for sponsors to register a program. Continue emphasis on providing guidance for competency-based models. |
| **Occupation Approval:** The process of registering occupations for apprenticeship is drawn out and deters employers from registering their program. | Partner with industry leaders to streamline the process for registering apprenticeships. |
| **Constraints in the Regulations:** Restrictive language in current and future laws and regulations precludes employers from accessing funds for apprentice wages. | Consider "quick wins" and longer-term efforts to reduce barriers to entry, including regulatory changes that streamline registration, data reporting, creating/expanding employer incentives and more. Consider ways to utilize investments to further incentivize employers. |
| **Hours Requirement: Myriad stakeholders mistakenly believe that RAPs require a minimum of 2,000 hours.** This perceived rigidity has prevented employers, especially those in emerging industries and occupations, from engaging in registered apprenticeship. | Address stakeholder misconceptions around training and other RAP requirements. Continue emphasis on providing guidance for competency-based models and consider seeking other flexibilities. |
| **Accreditation Alternatives:** Industry is looking for a "seal of approval" from DOL for apprenticeship-like programs that they know meet industry standards but not all requirements of a RAP. If they cannot meet the requirements of a RAP and have no other options, they will not register their programs, which prevents OA from accessing key metrics and further muddies the apprenticeship brand for career seekers. | Consider establishing a pilot where OA accredits quality apprenticeship programs that may not initially meet all the requirements of a RAP, but are close, to help understand where additional flexibility may be introduced into the RAP model without compromising quality. |

## 2.2.2 Supporting Infrastructure

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Expert Points of Contact:** Proper training and consistent use of apprenticeship intermediaries, navigators and other mechanisms would more greatly assist with the creation of new registered apprenticeship programs. | Facilitate the expansion of in-depth knowledge among apprenticeship intermediaries/navigators about the policy, process, and other requirements associated with RAPs. Opportunities could include providing enhanced training options, guidance, and more to drive enhanced consistency and quality in apprenticeship programs. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Financial Resources:** RAP requirements, tracking, operations require resources that may preclude smaller employers from participating. | Employ mechanisms to reduce employer burden and consider ways to support efforts that create economies of scale for smaller employers or smaller apprenticeship programs. These could include grouped sponsorships, innovative mentorship or Related Technical Instruction (RTI) that reduces burden for employers, and more. |
| **Enhanced Access to Tools:** Employers and sponsors, particularly smaller or less resourced ones, need additional access to online/open-source Related Technical Instruction (RTI) resources. | Facilitate the collection and dissemination of RTI resources and information to better support apprenticeship sponsors, such as adding resources to the Apprenticeship.gov Partner Finder and/or Resource Hub. |
| **International Models:** The U.S. could leverage components in international apprenticeship models and structures. For example, the U.K. has several mechanisms like the Industry Skills Board, which lays out a long-term vision for apprenticeship, utilizes a payroll levy to fund employer use of funds for training, and more. | Review international apprenticeship models for lessons learned and best practices and consider opportunities to leverage these ideas for improvements to registered apprenticeships in the United States. |

### 2.2.3   Data and Systems Modernization

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Systems for Program Registration:** RAP creation, registration, and reporting is complicated and requires use of multiple systems. State level complexity and parallel reporting systems compound the complexity. | Develop a more centralized, one-stop shop for program creation, registration and more. Such a system could help centralize and standardize key steps of apprenticeship program creation, registration, and management. |
| **Performance Reporting:** Depending on the funding used as part of the effort, apprenticeship stakeholders, including sponsors and employers, are required to track performance in multiple systems, which is onerous. | Streamline the overall performance reporting requirements associated with apprenticeship program registration and regular reporting, including for WIOA and at the state level. Identify ways to streamline the data collected and potentially the system(s) used for collection to emphasize simplicity for employers. |
| **State vs. National Regulations:** In addition to the complicated paperwork and multiple systems involved in RAP registration and program management, state versus national rules are unclear and onerous (e.g., requirement that sponsors must have physical office in a state with an active program). | Consider system and Federal policies that seek to reduce burden for employers, including moving to a fully online registration process, and streamlining of certain rules and reporting. |
| **Outcome Metrics:** Too much time is required for reporting on metrics that do not align to overall outcomes like skills gained and pay. | Review reporting requirements and streamline to those metrics that are focused on demonstrating outcomes. |

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| **Registration Options:** Some employers have found it difficult to work with an SAA and are looking for an alternative way of registering their program. | Apply promising practices from IRAP to RAP modernization efforts. DOL may consider ideas like a National Program Standards pilot that explores additional flexibilities to attract RAP sponsors while assuring RAP quality standards; hiring OA staff in SAA states to better coordinate apprenticeship activities across the Nation; hiring dedicated apprenticeship staff in American Job Centers to improve consistency across states; and more. |

## 2.3  INCREASING DIVERSITY, EQUITY INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

Attendees across industry-focused listening sessions highlighted several ways to increase DEIA in apprenticeship by: reforming policies and investments; reviewing program design and employer practices; improving representation and awareness; and providing additional supportive services. The ideas discussed in the industry-focused sessions are presented below, though DEIA is discussed elsewhere in this report. Summarized below are the major challenges raised by the attendees and their suggested feedback on how to address them.

### 2.3.1  Policy and Investment Reform

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Greater Enforcement of Regulations:** Increased implementation and enforcement of existing regulations is needed for improving diversity in apprenticeships and different industries. | Review current regulations and policies around apprenticeship programs. Identify where there is a need for greater enforcement of EEO laws, especially around those programs that receive federal funding, and where pay-for-performance can be implemented into contracts. |
| **Additional Options for Entry:** Current requirements for entry into apprenticeship programs serve as barriers for women and people of color, including through union membership policies. | Explore where additional blockages exist and create additional pathways for women and people of color to enter into apprenticeship, such as through pre-apprenticeships and the removal of unnecessary criteria and qualifications for RAP entry (e.g., need for a secondary degree or GED). |
| **Assessment of Investments:** More assessment of the industries (growth and non-growth) and employers receiving funding, as well as the communities being targeted, is necessary to achieve equity. | Review OA's investments strategy to identify where the funding is directed and where there are gaps that can be filled (e.g., limitations on who can apply, evaluation criteria). |
| **Equitable Access to Funding:** More equitable access for minority-owned, women-owned small businesses to grant funding is needed to help support expansion of apprenticeship programs. | Expand eligibility requirements to either include minority-owned, women-owned business or require lead applicants, like higher education institutions, to partner with small businesses. |
| **Set-Asides for DEIA Recruiting Costs:** Employers need additional funding that is specifically for DEIA efforts, so they can recruit talent outside of their normal pool of candidates. | Consider mechanisms to target support to DEIA recruiting and wraparound services. Consider grants/contract mechanisms that devote funding to DEIA initiatives. |

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| **Referrals for People with Disabilities:** More collaboration with the Departments of Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is needed to move beyond "checking a box" to note a disability, so that an apprentice can go directly to DARS to receive help to succeed in their apprenticeship. | Increase collaboration and coordination with other ETA/DOL offices and Department of Education, including rehabilitative services, to refer apprentices and employers more easily. To be compliant with the Federal requirements consider a joint policy/process with DARS to create referral options for apprentices and sponsors. |
| **Policies for Leadership Development:** Additional focus is needed on developing policies that support training and leadership development pathways for women and people of color. | Provide guidance and direction to employers to help develop policies that address equity and leadership training. |

### 2.3.2 Program Design, Employer Practices, and Support Services

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Recruiting and Hiring:** Organizations and employers are not internally prepared with the policies and infrastructure needed to recruit and retain women and people of color for apprenticeship programs. | Create a DEIA resource guide that employers can use to reform hiring practices. Further develop guidance and training for employers and sponsors to educate their staff about workplace habits, meeting diversity hiring goals, and DEIA strategies and policies to better support women and people of color in their pursuit of apprenticeship programs. |
| **Additional Pre-apprenticeship Pathways:** More pathways into apprenticeship through pre-apprenticeship are needed because it is key to increasing diversity. | Support additional pre-apprenticeship opportunities that are connected to apprenticeship pathways. Explore how the union model, which often utilize training funds, can fund pre-apprenticeship programs and initiatives like English as a Second Language (ESL) and digital literacy. |
| **Mentoring and Job Shadowing:** There is inequity for women in advanced career opportunities and issues with retention, which is partially due to a limited amount of mentoring and job shadowing opportunities. This lack of support results in women occupying administrative, low-wage positions in the trades. | Provide support and guidance for mentoring women in the trades. Use Job Shadowing Day, Labor Day "week," public service week and National Apprenticeship Week to implement an apprentice job shadowing campaign. Write job shadowing into future contracts and grants requirements. |
| **Flexible Work Policies:** There is a need for employers to institute more flexible work policies, like telework, that can allow women with caregiving responsibilities to better balance work and home responsibilities. | Develop guidance for how employers can incorporate more flexible practices, such as online courses and telework, to support apprentices, particularly those from underrepresented populations. |

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| **Focus on Retention:** Dedicated support is needed to better address retention issues with apprentices in order to sustain high participation in apprenticeship programs. | Explore how grant funding can be repurposed to train and increase apprenticeship support staff, such as coordinators and advisors to assist with overall program operations and hands-on professional development of apprentices. |
| **Program Length for Individuals with Disabilities:** Many people with disabilities who start an apprenticeship program are unable to finish due to the length of time required to complete it. | Leverage best practices from existing programs, including the Center for Business Acceleration's IRAP that splits national programs into smaller achievable blocks and emphasizes credential attainment and direct collaboration between the employer and the apprentice so that both can realize their goals. |
| **Needs for People Returning from Incarceration:** Re-entering citizens need to address basic necessities first before looking for job training. | Identify what supportive services are needed for people re-entering the workforce and provide additional funding or establish partnerships to offer that support. |
| **Supportive Services for Women:** There are many barriers to success that women deal with every day, such as lack of transportation, childcare, shifting work hours, justice system issues and more. | Identify comprehensive retention best practices and approaches that encompass breastfeeding needs, childcare, parental leave, on-the-job training, anti-harassment training, and mentorship. Encourage workforce boards and employers to work together to get access to additional funding that would allow more support services to be implemented into the apprenticeship programs, including (but not limited to) 24-hour babysitting group centers, flexible hours, and study group hours. |
| **Transportation:** Some employers are located in rural environments, which poses a transportation issue for many prospective apprentices, including minority populations. Additionally, people living in rural areas may have to travel long distances to work and complete their education. | Provide support for transportation and work with local organizations and municipalities to meet transportation needs. Leverage components of virtual apprenticeships to increase access to training in areas that are challenging to travel to. |
| **Dormitory Space:** More supportive services (such as living space, transportation, healthcare, childcare) are necessary for engaging the Native American community in apprenticeship - most notably, dormitories for apprentices who need to move away from home to take advantage of career opportunities. | Partner with Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for dormitory space. Establish apprenticeship hubs that provide supportive services and are designed with the needs of underrepresented communities in mind, providing a supportive atmosphere for apprentices who are leaving home. |

### 2.3.3 Industry-Specific Considerations

In some listening sessions, attendees noted several challenges related to their industries and occupations that may affect apprenticeship expansion and modernization efforts in those fields. Summarized below are the major challenges raised by the attendees and their suggested feedback on how to address.

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Cybersecurity:** More concerted efforts through existing cybersecurity forums are needed to promoted diversity in the cyber workforce. Employers in cybersecurity are often hesitant to create apprenticeship programs because of the challenges with the talent pool, such as a perceived lack of foundational skills that requires additional training time and lack of representation from diverse communities. | Research current federal initiatives to recruit more people from the cybersecurity industry and how those could be adapted for apprenticeship initiatives. Consider partnering with the National Governor's Association to add to their spring and fall meeting agendas. Deploy renewed focus and vigor in developing and expanding pre-apprenticeships in cybersecurity to provide potential apprentices early exposure to foundational knowledge and skills of cyber and digital literacy, diversifying the talent pool and making them more prepared for employers. |
| **Early Childhood Education:** Within the early childhood education industry, RAPs have not grown due to a lack of funding for intermediaries, mentors, and coaches. | Provide funding for intermediaries focused on early childhood education. Encourage program design that builds in wage increases for employees and stipends for mentors and coaches. |
| **Hospitality:** The reputation of the hospitality industry is suffering due to COVID and many people, especially youth, do not know about the career pathways available in this industry. | Partner with high schools and community-based organizations (CBOs) to develop pre-apprenticeship programs to increase work readiness and work with program sponsors to connect them to RAPs. Consider incentives to attract people to the industry through regular pay increases and leadership development programs. |
| **Healthcare:** Many licensed positions in healthcare require clinical training that involves many hours of unpaid training time, a barrier for advancement for many, including those from underrepresented groups. Healthcare employers need renewed investments in expanding and implementing pre-apprenticeship programs that provide wraparound services to support completion. | Identify leaders like unions who can convene licensing boards, accreditation agencies, and DOL to review the policies around training and required hours to ensure that these requirements are not affecting underrepresented groups at a higher rate. Provide more investment funding for pre-apprenticeships and wraparound services**.** |
| **Skilled Trades:** As participation by women in apprenticeship programs for the skilled trades have increased, recruiting and apprentice registration rates are still very low. | Facilitate more coordination with local unions to focus on sustained efforts to engage women in skilled trades; how to address women's needs to retain their participation; and explore additional mechanisms to educate sponsors and prospective apprentices on the support services that are available with WIOA through apprenticeship grant funds. |
| **Construction:** Women need continued exposure to high-wage career opportunities in construction, particularly through women-owned construction companies, in order to change the | Provide more data to workforce boards to help with awareness raising efforts around apprenticeship. Educate young women on the advantages of a career in the trades; encourage |

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| narrative and improve the perception of apprenticeships as a viable career pathway. | employers to hire more women by establishing a "Diversity in Apprenticeship" Awards program. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
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# 3    LABOR UNION STAKEHOLDER SESSION THEMES

Throughout 2021, OA hosted numerous listening sessions to hear stakeholder perspectives on how OA may increase apprenticeship opportunities, modernize the apprenticeship system, and more. These meetings included a session facilitated by NABTU as well as other sessions in which union engagement or perspectives were mentioned. Summarized below are the major challenges raised by participants and their suggested feedback on how to address them.

As of November 2021, OA is planning to facilitate additional listening sessions to gather deeper perspectives and insights from labor unions. OA may issue an updated version of this report to incorporate the insights from these prospective sessions.

## 3.1    TRAINING

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Joint Management of Programs:** Employers outside of construction are reluctant to engage in the joint management structure of apprenticeship; the union approach to program management has been integral for successful outcomes. | Explore policy levers (e.g., Davis-Bacon in construction) that can be used to incentivize employers to participate in apprenticeship, and how union program designs (e.g., joint employer/employee Training Funds) can help advance employer adoption of apprenticeship. |
| **Training Funds:** Employers outside of the construction industry are reluctant to incur the costs around apprenticeship for fear that an apprentice will move to another company. | Leverage lessons from unions, who often utilize Training Funds to support professionals in the industry, which could help alleviate mobility concerns. Training Funds could be utilized for services like program recruitment, retention, and daycare. |

## 3.2    DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Additional Options for Entry:** Current requirements for entry into apprenticeship programs serve as barriers for women and people of color, including through union membership policies. | Explore where additional blockages exist and create additional pathways for women and people of color to enter into apprenticeship, such as through pre-apprenticeships and the removal of unnecessary criteria and qualifications for RAP entry (e.g., need for a secondary degree or GED). |
| **Additional Pre-apprenticeship Pathways:** More pathways into apprenticeship through pre-apprenticeship are needed because it is key in increasing diversity. | Support additional pre-apprenticeship opportunities that are connected to apprenticeship pathways. Explore how the union model of training funds can fund pre-apprenticeship programs and initiatives like ESL and digital literacy. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **Healthcare:** Many licensed positions in healthcare require clinical training which involves many hours of unpaid, involuntary training time, a barrier for advancement. Healthcare employers need renewed investments in expanding and implementing pre-apprenticeship programs that provide wraparound services to support completion. | Identify leaders like unions who can convene licensing boards, accreditation agencies and DOL to review the policies around training and required hours to ensure that these requirements are not affecting underrepresented groups at a higher rate. Provide more investment funding for pre-apprenticeships and wraparound services. |
| **Women in Skilled Trades:** As participation by women in apprenticeship programs for the skilled trades have increased, recruiting and apprentice registration rates are still very low. | Facilitate more coordination with local unions to focus on sustained efforts to engage women in skilled trades; how to address women's needs to retain their participation; and explore additional mechanisms to educate sponsors and prospective apprentices on the support services that are available with WIOA through apprenticeship grant funds. |
| **Sustained Engagement:** Labor unions and other apprenticeship sponsors sometimes engage with underserved populations in a tactical way that focuses on a specific goal (e.g., recruiting apprentices for an upcoming training cohort). | Holistically engage in a sustained way with underserved communities to build strong relationships, to raise awareness of RAPs among the respective communities, and to improve the ability to leverage community leaders in creating strong apprenticeship pipelines. |

# 4  DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSION THEMES

In September 2021, OA hosted an Apprenticeship 101 presentation and seven listening sessions with DEIA stakeholders to hear perspectives on how OA may increase apprenticeship opportunities for underrepresented and underserved populations and help develop a workforce that reflects the diversity of the American people. The sessions generated a high level of engagement and follow-up collaboration on developing actual projects and programs.

Attendees shared their insights and strategies on how DOL can make Registered Apprenticeship more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible, and focused on the unique and distinct perspectives and needs of the following stakeholder groups: Women, Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, Persons with Disabilities, Minority Serving Institutions/Education, and American Indians and Native Americans. Summarized below are the major challenges raised by the attendees and their suggested feedback on how to address them.

## 4.1  WOMEN STAKEHOLDERS

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **More Understanding of Women's Needs:** American Job Centers and local job training programs may not have the knowledge and skills necessary to increase women's participation in apprenticeship. | Raise awareness of the specific, unique needs of women that impact successful employment outcomes. Strategies could focus on raising awareness among American Job Center staff around the supportive services available to apprentices. Raise awareness and seriousness about equity (29 CFR part 30) among employers to support women and other under-represented communities in apprenticeship. |
| **Supportive Services for Women:** For women to complete apprenticeships at a higher rate, strategies and interventions must holistically consider and address major pain points for participation in Registered Apprenticeship, including the need for childcare, maternity leave, transportation, shifting work hours, justice system issues and more. In addition, there is a lack of consistent resourcing to support women and other underserved communities in apprenticeship. | Identify comprehensive retention best practices and approaches that encompass breastfeeding needs, childcare, parental leave, on-the-job training, anti-harassment training, and mentorship. Use OA's role/authority to advocate for women in apprenticeship and provide required supports and protections. Consider strategies that better connect employers/sponsors/workforce boards with federal and state supports that would allow more support services to be implemented into the apprenticeship programs (e.g., 24-hour babysitting group centers, flexible hours, and studying group hours). Raise awareness among prospective apprentices as to the availability of these services. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Additional Feedback Mechanisms:** There are few, if any, mechanisms to gauge how apprentices are progressing in their respective programs. As a result, there are limited ways to systematically identify problems or barriers for current apprentices from underrepresented groups. | Moderate the OJT process and provide check-ins with program sponsors. Integrate more formal anti-harassment and equity trainings to combat and intervene in helpful ways. |
| **Increased Awareness of Apprenticeship:** Women are unaware of the high-wage, low debt job opportunities that exist through apprenticeship. | Develop strategic partnerships with national organizations like Dress for Success to create multiple access points for engagement. |
| **Greater Representation of Women:** Women must see themselves in different roles and occupations. As such, diverse representation across different career pathways is a challenge to sustained, meaningful, and consistent participation. | Conduct educational marketing campaigns targeted at career counselors and Job Corps, for example. Include compelling images and real-world perspectives that can break down barriers to participation. |
| **Mentoring and Job Shadowing:** There is inequity for women in advanced career opportunities and issues with retention, which is partially due to a limited amount of mentoring and job shadowing opportunities. This lack of support results in women occupying administrative, low-wage positions in the trades. | Provide support and guidance for mentoring women in the trades. Use Job Shadowing Day, Labor Day "week," public service week and National Apprenticeship Week to implement an apprentice job shadowing campaign. Write job shadowing into future contracts and grants requirements. |
| **Flexible Work Policies:** There is a need for employers to institute more flexible work policies, like telework, for that can allow women to better balance work and home responsibilities. | Develop guidance for how employers can incorporate more flexible practices, such as online courses and telework. |
| **Awareness among Women Returning from Incarceration:** Formerly incarcerated women reentering the workforce experience challenges in finding career opportunities as most programs are developed with men as the target population. As a result, women may not be aware of or may face barriers in accessing these apprenticeship opportunities. | Coordinate with employers, sponsors and anti-recidivism programs to develop specialized marketing and awareness materials for citizen reentry with women and youth in trades through Job Corps, Bureau of Prisons Apprenticeship Program, and Young Adult Reentry Partnership Grants (YARP), which will provide enough scale to properly address the lack of awareness and fight recidivism. |

## 4.2 LATINO STAKEHOLDERS

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Engaging Outreach Strategies:** Outreach to the Latino community should go beyond simply translating existing apprenticeship resources and focus on understanding what Latino stakeholders would see as benefits of apprenticeship. Some | Develop outreach methods and messages that resonate. Examples of these message include the value of pay progression; addressing the needs of the whole family; providing perspectives from people who have completed an apprenticeship program. Provide information to high school |

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| people may not have a broader understanding of the career pathways available. | students, especially those who are at risk of dropping out. |
| **Preparation for Program Pre-Requisites:** Prospective Latino apprentices may need additional support to meet apprenticeship program pre-requisites, such as math and reading, and other skills. | Provide additional opportunities to help people be prepared to meet the pre-requisites of an apprenticeship, such as through pre-apprenticeship programs. |
| **Supportive Services for the Latino Community:** Prospective Latino apprentices may need additional support to address other life challenges, such as transportation and taking care of parents and children. | Explore where WIOA can help address supportive services, such as transportation, IT equipment, Internet access, childcare, and senior care. See examples for how other organizations have addressed these needs, such as Chicago Women in Trades' flexible funding to address various barriers (i.e., legal, housing, family care, purchase tools and equipment, union fees). |
| **Apprenticeship within the Jail System:** it can be difficult for persons with a history of incarceration to get into an apprenticeship program due to lack of integration in other Federal workforce programs (e.g., Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO)) and among employers. | Provide support for apprenticeship programs for current or recently incarcerated individuals, including raising awareness among employers, prospective apprentices. Explore further connections between apprenticeship and other Federal workforce programs like REO. |

## 4.3 AFRICAN AMERICAN STAKEHOLDERS

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Supportive Services:** Financial support for wraparound services is not available in every state. Such support would help African American apprentices participate in apprenticeship programs. Support to cover additional living expenses while they are participating in the program also would be helpful. | Incentivize states to provide wraparound services, especially transportation. Raise awareness of funding from nontraditional sources, such as DOT (see Oregon as an example). Consider offering funding for apprentices who require support for emergency expenses and childcare. |
| **Effective Recruitment Strategies:** Traditional apprenticeship recruitment methods - such as word of mouth - are ineffective ways to reach prospective African American apprentices. | Encourage employers and sponsors to be more deliberate in their outreach and recruitment to African Americans. Encourage outreach through trusted sources like churches, neighborhood groups, apprenticeship alumni, and social media. |
| **Hostile Work Environments:** Work environments that are hostile to people of color and women prevent them from pursuing or completing apprenticeships. | Elevate enforcement of EEO and other regulations aimed to reduce a hostile work environment. |
| **Prospective Apprentices with Felony Records:** Some African Americans with felony records face challenges, as they are not aware of apprenticeship, and may face additional | Look more closely at prison programs that introduce apprenticeship as a career pathway after incarceration and explore how to raise awareness of and enforce regulations about use of criminal background checks. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| resistance from employers who are reluctant to hire individuals with a criminal history. | |

## 4.4 ASIAN AMERICAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, AND PACIFIC ISLANDER (AANHPI) STAKEHOLDERS

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Cultural Barriers to Apprenticeship:** Some members of the AANHPI community may view apprenticeship and its association with the trades with particular skepticism and/or have difficulty seeing themselves in it. Members of this community may hold specific industries or occupations (e.g., physician) in higher esteem. These cultural barriers hamper efforts to enlist and enroll diverse populations into apprenticeship programs. | Implement targeted strategies and messages to reach and enroll prospective apprentices in differing populations. Consider developing a strategic plan to both set targets for and clear strategies to meet DEIA goals. |
| **Perceptions of Apprenticeship:** Apprenticeship is not understood by AANHPI communities. The language used to highlight/raise awareness of apprenticeship does not convey its power to support family-sustaining careers. | Raise awareness of apprenticeship in the AANHPI community. To raise awareness and reduce stigma among this community, highlight the benefits of apprenticeship and its applicability to both traditional and emerging industries. Consider strategies that leverage pre-apprenticeship and the Perkins Act to raise awareness and engagement among AANHPI youth. |
| **Outreach Strategies to the AANHPI Community:** OA may not be able to access individual AANHPI communities based on its own outreach alone, particularly in light of cultural, language and other barriers. A strategic plan is needed to intentionally reach communities, particularly those that are often overlooked in apprenticeship diversity conversations like AANHPI. | Seek deeper connections to AANHPI communities. Consider implementing partnerships with local workforce boards and American Job Centers and specific outreach to community leaders with deep ties to local communities. Consider providing funding to existing AANHPI organizations to bridge the divide between apprenticeship/workforce development and local communities. |
| **Individual Community Approaches:** Diversity within the AANHPI community makes it difficult to reach everyone with a broad apprenticeship outreach approach. More targeted and local outreach strategies are needed to reach the breadth of stakeholders within the community. | Consider local apprenticeship outreach strategies that address individual community needs. For example, YWCA Oahu started working with a workforce development office and job centers, started their own training programs and collaborated with different local stakeholders. These local community outreach efforts helped to overcome many barriers (e.g., language, lack of understanding of apprenticeship) within the AANHPI community. |

## 4.5 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES STAKEHOLDERS

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Varying Individual Needs:** The community has varying needs depending on the nature of the disability. Tailored needs and opportunities must be identified for disabled individuals, rather than providing a "one size fits all" system for all individuals with disabilities. | Reach out to the disability community to raise awareness about available opportunities that are specific to those individuals with certain disabilities. |
| **Lack of Dialogue around Accommodations:** It can be difficult to know what barriers apprentices with disabilities face because accommodations vary widely, and often employers and other stakeholders within the apprenticeship system are reluctant to ask people directly. | Encourage apprenticeship programs to reach out to stakeholders in the disability community who may already know how to make the accommodations to the program to include people with disabilities. Consider a task force or listening sessions between apprenticeship employers and people with disabilities. |
| **Individual Communication:** Apprentices with disabilities may not feel empowered to raise their need for accommodations due to a fear of employer bias. | Provide support for empowerment training that helps individuals with disabilities advocate for their needs in an apprenticeship program. |
| **Employer Bias:** Employers may have pre-conceived notions about apprentices with disabilities, which can cause them to not hire or create a welcoming environment for people with disabilities. | Promote the success of people with disabilities in apprenticeship programs that addresses how employer expectations have been exceeded and how that outweighs the potential costs (i.e., interpreters, accommodations) associated with hiring a person with a disability. |
| **Support Available Beyond High School:** The support that is available to students with disabilities in secondary schools is often not available through post-secondary institutions or through employers, due to resource availability. | Create greater alignment between the employers and training providers in the post-secondary apprenticeship system. This may be achieved through a stronger alignment in the support and accommodations provided in the transition from pre-apprenticeship to Registered Apprenticeship. |
| **Structural Issues for People Who Are Deaf:** A lot of certified interpreters are retiring and fewer are filling their positions, causing a challenge to provide accommodations to support people who are deaf in their job hunt, interviews, onboarding, and more. In addition, children who are deaf face challenges earlier in life which may affect their readiness to enter an apprenticeship program, such as having to attend many schools before finding the ideal school, which can result in lower-than-average reading skills. | Explore how Registered Apprenticeship opportunities can train American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters to further support the apprenticeship system for individuals with disabilities. Consider how pre-apprenticeship programs could help prepare people who are deaf to enter an apprenticeship. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Referrals for People with Disabilities:** More collaboration with the Departments of Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is needed to move beyond "checking a box" to note a disability, so that an apprentice can go directly to DARS to receive help to succeed in their apprenticeship. | Increase collaboration and coordination with other ETA/DOL offices and Department of Education, including rehabilitative services, to refer apprentices and employers more easily. Consider a joint policy/process with DARS to create referral options for apprentices and sponsors. |
| **Program Length for Individuals with Disabilities:** Many people with disabilities who start an apprenticeship program are unable to finish due to the length of time required to complete it. | Leverage best practices from existing programs, including the Center for Business Acceleration's IRAP that splits national programs into smaller achievable blocks and emphasizes credential attainment and direct collaboration between the employer and the apprentice so that both can achieve their goals. |

## 4.6   MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS (MSIS) / EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS

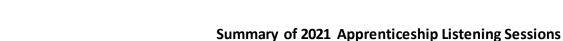| Challenge | Feedback |
|---|---|
| **More Information on Benefits and Financial Supports:** MSIs and MSI students lack information about the value of apprenticeship programs as well as information on how to access these programs. MSI students may also need more information about the existing financial supports that are available to students seeking to complete an apprenticeship. | Facilitate enhanced awareness raising among MSIs and minority students. Identify and emphasize the benefits of apprenticeship (e.g., "earn and learn") that appeal to MSI and minority audiences. Consider methods to enlist/utilize mentors for prospective apprentices. Facilitate awareness raising of the financial supports available to apprentices, including wraparound supports, since many students may need to depend on a high level of financial support to engage in an apprenticeship program. |
| **Unfamiliarity with the Apprenticeship System:** MSIs are often unfamiliar with apprenticeship and may require outside resources to build awareness of Registered Apprenticeship and the programs themselves. | Support articulation agreements with higher education for the portability of apprenticeship credits to degree attainment; support the hiring/training of apprenticeship coordinators at individual schools; develop dedicated offices/hubs that provide intensive technical assistance to schools developing apprenticeship programs; provide OA staff "mentors" for MSI administrators seeking to build apprenticeship programs; and provide services (e.g. daycare, transportation, supplies) to MSI students engaged in apprenticeship. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Perceptions of Apprenticeship:** MSIs may face difficulties implementing apprenticeship programs due to faculty push back on efforts that emphasize the "world of work." Further, minority students may be skeptical of apprenticeships, which may be perceived as in opposition to higher education. By focusing on work-based learning, apprenticeships may seem to be an avenue to a "less than" career. | Conduct outreach to schools and community centers/community organizations. Consider other options to mitigate reluctance by higher education/students in tackling the stigma, as well as practical concerns about engaging in apprenticeship (e.g., engaging in apprenticeship can lengthen the time it takes to earn a degree). |
| **Internal Alignment:** MSIs may not be internally aligned in a way that readily supports apprenticeships. | Encourage alignment and collaboration between Offices of Career Services and Offices of Academic Affairs; more alignment/coordination would be helpful in recognizing that work has measurable learning outcomes of the institutions. Consider disseminating successful strategies to develop apprenticeship programs to break down myths that setting up a RAP is prohibitively difficult. Release a funding opportunity focused on MSIs to encourage engagement with and adoption of apprenticeship. |
| **Role of School Counselors:** Session participants held varying views of the impact of high school counselors on students' awareness of and interest in postsecondary Career Technical Education (CTE) as well as work-based learning models like apprenticeship. | Examine the role of high school counselors to post-secondary student choices and consider strategies that raise awareness of apprenticeship among high school students and their networks, including career counselors. Engage with other Federal and state stakeholders to better understand what, if any, policies are in place that dis-incentivize counselors and other administrators from discussing or encouraging student participation in apprenticeship. |
| **Outreach, Partnerships and Access:** More targeted outreach, additional partnership strategies with HBCUs and MSIs, and direct access into communities is needed to reach underrepresented communities so that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color can gain experience in high-paying occupations through apprenticeship. | Provide guidance for how employers can build in outreach to underrepresented communities into their recruitment plans, like a USA Tour bus to reach "pockets" of under-represented groups and Native American areas. Coordinate efforts at local, state and federal levels and with unions to facilitate and sustain partnerships between industries and HBCUs/MSIs and other organizations reaching underrepresented groups. Support initiatives like regional employer summits where employers, HBCUs/MSIs and community-based organizations can collaborate on developing actionable strategies towards workforce development (potentially via pre-apprenticeships) and increasing equitable access to high-demand career pathways. |

## 4.7 NATIVE AMERICANS STAKEHOLDERS

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Dormitory Space:** More supportive services (such as living space, transportation, healthcare, childcare) are necessary for engaging the Native American community in apprenticeship - most notably, dormitories for apprentices who need to move away from home to take advantage of career opportunities. On average, members of the Latino community may enter the labor market later in age, often after starting a family, which can present additional challenges to effective job placement. | Partner with Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for dormitory space. Establish apprenticeship hubs that provide supportive services and are designed with the needs of underrepresented communities in mind, providing a supportive atmosphere for apprentices who are leaving home. |
| **Access in Rural Areas:** The federal government is often the primary employer in rural areas, including Reservations and other areas with significant Native American populations, and may be the only option for apprenticeship opportunities, given that there are few long-term jobs in these areas and many small businesses do not understand apprenticeship. | Engage more federal government agencies and tribal colleges that are often the major employers in rural areas with significant Native American populations to provide apprenticeships in in-demand industries like natural resources and logging (e.g., Bureau of Land Management, Park Service). |
| **Needs of Tribal Colleges:** Rural tribal colleges have more challenges than urban colleges, including a smaller population served, and require help with recruiting and retaining industries and employers. | Consider a cohort model where students are brought from several tribal colleges and trades or other industries to encourage success. Foster a stronger pipeline between middle school, high school, tribal colleges, and industry, as well as CTE programs that have not historically engaged with tribal colleges. |

# 5 APPRENTICESHIP, EDUCATION, AND WORKFORCE SYSTEM STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSION THEMES

Throughout 2021, OA hosted numerous listening sessions to hear stakeholder perspectives on how OA may increase apprenticeship opportunities and work more closely with the National Apprenticeship System, including OA and SAA states, as well as the education and workforce systems. The below summary includes the major challenges raised by participants in these sessions and their suggested feedback on how to address them.

## 5.1.1 Connections within the Education System

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Role of Community Colleges:** Community and tribal colleges are trusted organizations that have supportive services and relationships with employers but are not utilized to their full potential within the apprenticeship system. | Engage community and tribal colleges to serve as intermediaries to establish apprenticeship cohorts; provide a stipend where small employers are limited in providing support; offer other supportive services; and more. |
| **Coordination within the Education System:** The lack of coordination and natural constraints in the secondary education system (e.g., block scheduling, transportation) must be considered and addressed to expand apprenticeship. | Identify and explore successful examples of education and workforce systems alignment in state and local areas. Collaborate with the Department of Education to review opportunities to identify policies that hamper youth/pre-apprenticeship program creation and growth, and fund pilot or scaled youth/pre-apprenticeship models. |
| **Credit for Competencies:** Academia is hesitant to change from the traditional paradigm, which includes awarding degrees based on credit hours instead of the competencies needed to perform high technology occupations. | Engage a renewed Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC) to facilitate conversations with colleges and universities that support transparent feedback and present an opportunity to bring awareness of the benefits and success of competency-based learning models, with the hope of finding some synergies that can be converted into actionable policy changes. Engage the Department of Education on how to integrate prior experience from youth apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships into school curriculum so that credit can be applied to both their degree and a RAP. |
| **Higher Education Credits:** Apprenticeship would be a more attractive pathway to prospective apprentices if higher education credits could be earned for training. | Leverage lessons learned from the higher education accreditation of the National Association of Building Trades Unions (NABTU) training centers, which has been working with two accrediting bodies to accredit several of these training centers; engage with the Department of Education to get funding for students (e.g., Pell grants); and provide credits to apprentices by aggregating credits from apprenticeship training. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Degree Registered Apprenticeship Programs:** Additional pathways into emerging fields are needed through avenues such as Degree Registered Apprenticeship Programs, especially to reach underserved communities. | Partner with HBCUs to design, develop, and launch Registered Degree Apprenticeship Program (RDAP) cohorts that result in career pathways to entry level information technology (IT) and cybersecurity occupations. Adopt the NICE Framework (i.e., Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity) standard terminology to describe tasks and competencies for entry level top 10 hardest to fill IT and cybersecurity occupations. Reach out to current partners to get feedback on their experience with programs HBCU efforts around tech apprenticeships to see if OA could adapt it to a larger audience. |

### 5.1.2 Federal, Education and Industry Collaboration

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Comprehensive Preparation for Post-Graduation:** More partnerships across industry, high schools and community colleges are needed to scale youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs so that students are prepared for the workforce upon graduation. | Work with the Department of Education to identify barriers to integrating workplace experiences and the apprenticeship model into local school systems, and how these programs could address requirements for a high school diploma and/or a two-year Associate's degree. |
| **Employer Input on Curriculum:** There is a disconnect between community colleges and local employers; due to structural and cultural constraints, schools place more emphasis on traditional degree programs than on skills and certifications and do not engage with employers on curriculum development. | Consider whether and how a renewed RACC and other DOL partners could lead conversations with higher education and address policy constraints. For example, the RACC, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), or other partners could take the lead on facilitating a series of conversations and/or summits between community colleges and local employers to develop a framework for curriculums to include coursework, skill development, and certification attainment. |
| **Earlier Student/Employer Engagement:** Employers lack mechanisms to identify students suited for IT careers to engage them in apprenticeship opportunities. | Research the Federal government's existing initiatives regarding STEM partnerships with schools to identify opportunities to raise awareness and facilitate apprenticeship pathways for students. Develop partnerships with Job Corps centers across the country with IT training programs to create clear career pathway opportunities for students at the center. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Misconceptions about RAPs:** Apprenticeship suffers from a misconception that it is exclusively aligned to union-affiliated industries and occupations and the related misconception that labor unions must be directly involved in the creation and management of RAPs | Expand awareness of apprenticeship as a workforce solution. Consider lessons learned from state-based awareness raising initiatives or plans, including traditional marketing, collaborative efforts with state public television stations, and employer forums. To expand the reach of government RAP stakeholders, create ways to partner with community college systems to serve as RAP intermediaries. |
| **Awareness Raising and Understanding Perceptions:** There is a lack of equitable representation in the technology and STEM industry sectors that can be traced back to the middle and high school level, as well as misconceptions of the type of career paths available to young people and how apprenticeships differ from internships. | Conduct more research into the barriers that prevent employers and students from pursuing various industry pathways. Increase awareness raising efforts with career seekers, including middle and high school students, about how apprenticeship is a career pathway into high-growth industries, and draw a clear distinction between internships and apprenticeships. |
| **Employer and Executive Awareness:** Employers and executives lack awareness of apprenticeship as a talent management model for hard-to-fill occupations and emerging industries. | Engage in further awareness raising activities and campaigns aimed at helping employers understand the value and relevance of apprenticeship as a talent development model. Explore how the TA Centers of Excellence or restarting the LEADERS campaign could help reach industry leaders and use lessons learned to provide guidance to prospective employers. Leverage other models like the HBCU Caucus' Partnership Challenge, which invited the CEOs of the Fortune 1,000 companies to accept an employer partnership challenge. |
| **RAP Alignment with K-12 Education:** Systematically integrating youth apprenticeship into the K-12 school system and aligning with state agencies and scores of employers/sponsors is logistically complex and time intensive to implement. Rules between school districts lack uniformity, which hinders utilization of youth apprenticeship. | Collaborate with Department of Education and other education stakeholders to identify barriers to policy alignment in school districts. Work to identify opportunities for streamlining opportunities at the Federal, state, and local level to support the scaling of youth apprenticeship. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Coordination with Veterans Programs:** While Transitioning Service Members and Veterans may receive specific career services support, the DOL-funded staff at American Job Centers and Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) Transition Assistance Program (TAP) personnel have limited knowledge of and ability to refer Veterans to RAPs. | Develop materials, trainings, and technology tools to support awareness raising and updates to TAP and staff at American Job Centers. Tools may include one pagers, flyers, and depictions of the apprenticeship journey for career seekers, alerts when new employers register a RAP in an area, and more. Trainings may focus on AJC staff to aid them in their communications with employers or in counseling Veterans on career opportunities. Develop micro-learning opportunities on Apprenticeship.gov and/or create materials on the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) Communities of Practice page. |
| **Other Federal Job Programs:** DOL is not currently leveraging existing government programs like AmeriCorps or the Department of Interior's Climate Corps to facilitate new apprenticeships. | Engage with these programs to explore incorporating youth or pre-apprenticeships into the existing program. Consider providing guidance to other Federal agencies interested in engaging in youth or pre-apprenticeship programs. |
| **Training Implementation:** Training costs and delivery are a barrier to entry and expansion in emerging industries. | Support industry intermediaries that can either create RTI resources or compile industry-approved resources at a free or low cost to programs, especially in nontraditional occupations. |

### 5.1.3  Federal Coordination and Alignment with the Workforce System

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Federal Financial Aid and Benefits:** Apprentices are generally unable to leverage Federal financial aid (e.g., Pell grants) for formal apprenticeship training. In addition, the "benefits cliff" is a concern because it discourages participation in apprenticeship if a wage increase might lead to a loss of housing, SNAP benefits, etc. | Identify and prioritize interagency partnerships to address gaps in benefits and areas for greater connections across programs. For example, DOL could work with the Department of Education to develop criteria/pathways for apprentices to access Federal financial aid (such as Pell Grants and Perkins loans) to gain credentials through apprenticeship training centers and other sanctioned training facilities. |
| **Insights from Experts:** Apprenticeship would benefit from partnerships with other organizations and initiatives like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that understand the rapidly changing technology environment. | Work with other agencies like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and using insights from their Talent Pipeline Management Project to bolster workforce planning efforts in emerging fields. |

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Access in Rural Areas:** The federal government is often the primary employer in rural areas, including Reservations and other areas with significant Native American populations, and may be the only option for apprenticeship opportunities, given that there are few long-term jobs in these areas and many small businesses do not understand apprenticeship. | Engage more federal government agencies and tribal colleges who are often the major employers in rural areas and areas with significant Native American populations to provide apprenticeships in in-demand industries like natural resources and logging (e.g., Bureau of Land Management, Park Service). |
| **Familiarity with WIOA Provisions:** Many local workforce boards are not familiar with WIOA legislation concerning wage subsidies and how to best administer these funds for employers managing apprenticeship programs. | Develop a Training and Employment Notice (TEN) that provides guidance and best practices to workforce boards on how to integrate WIOA funding for wage subsidies and educate employers on these options for their apprenticeship programs. |
| **Use of Apprenticeship and WIOA Funds:** There is a level of inflexibility as it pertains to co-braiding of WIOA and apprenticeship funds, which presents conflicts across various types of funding. Also, there are apprentices who need additional financial support so they can continue to matriculate through apprenticeship programs. | Solicit feedback from a select group of grantees concerning the impact of current funding guidance on their program expansion efforts and conduct a gap analysis to provide insights on how funding restrictions could be reformed for future grant opportunities. |
| **Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL):** There is a communication and information sharing issue between RAP sponsors and local workforce boards when RAPs are registered in their state. Many RAP sponsors are not educated on applying for the ETPL, which hurts efforts to utilize local workforce boards with connecting job seekers to apprenticeship programs. | Work with states to facilitate more partnerships between RAP sponsors and local workforce boards to enhance information sharing. Increase awareness raising efforts so that employers and sponsors can more easily access information on how to apply for the ETPL. |
| **Awareness among Women Returning from Incarceration:** Formerly incarcerated women reentering the workforce are experiencing challenges in finding career opportunities as most programs are targeted to men and may not be aware of apprenticeship opportunities. | Coordinate with employers, sponsors, and recidivism programs to develop specialized marketing and awareness materials for citizen reentry with women and youth in trades through Job Corps, Bureau of Prisons Apprenticeship Program, and Young Adult Reentry Partnership Grants (YARP), which will provide enough scale to properly address the lack of awareness and fight recidivism. |

### 5.1.4 System Alignment and Program Supports

| Challenge | Feedback |
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| **Improved Federal/State Coordination:** The National Apprenticeship System is characterized by state-specific apprenticeship data, systems, tools, and policies. These differences hamper efforts to scale apprenticeship and to present a truly national system. | Where possible, use the same data systems and/or share data across systems. Utilize a single instance of Salesforce, OA's customer relationship management (CRM) tool, across all states to reduce duplication of efforts. Encourage states to utilize RAPIDS instead of their own state-specific systems. Create a directory of approved occupations, which could inform trends in emerging occupations and inform program approval at the national level. Create a Turbo Tax-like tool that supports state use of OA's "boilerplate" standards for program registration. Overall, share data across states to support OA's ability to effectively analyze apprenticeship data to support growth, quality, and impact. |
| **Quality Assurance/Control:** Quality is an imperative component of apprenticeship programs. OA and SAA states should collaborate more to support the continued creation and administration of high-quality RAPs. | Work across OA and SAA states to explore gaps in quality control and develop action plans to address. For example, work across the National Apprenticeship System to identify ideas for consistently implementing program reviews, including aligning reviews with OA's Apprenticeship Program Review (APR) Manual. Identify areas for policy clarifications on National Program Standards and National Guideline Standards to support high quality programs. |
| **Varying Federal Requirements for Investments:** Federal apprenticeship funding has been tied to differing eligibility requirements, reporting requirements, and varying performance expectations. In addition, Federal apprenticeship funding generally has different requirements from WIOA workforce programs. The lack of consistency has created burden for state grantees. | Further streamline and clarify the eligibility and programmatic imperatives associated with DOL grant, cooperative agreement, and contract funding. Continue to utilize a single system and structure to collect reporting data. |
| **Sustainability:** Transitioning grant-initiated apprenticeship program start-ups to sustainability (without funding support from grants) is a challenge to long-term RAP success. | Develop coalitions of stakeholders to create and advocate for sustainable funding streams, including Federal and state tax credits and other initiatives, to support long-term RAP sustainability. |

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| **Federal Guidance:** The lack of timely guidance poses a challenge to states striving to effectively administer apprenticeship programming. For example, perceived lack of clarity on policy related to the administration of virtual apprenticeship programs and incongruity between WIOA funding requirements and RAPs hampers state efforts to scale RAP at the state level. | Work with states and other policy stakeholders to identify and prioritize policy impediments to RAP expansion. |
| **Data for Decision-making:** Data incongruity can be a challenge to supporting decision-making at a state level due to myriad, disparate databases related to the workforce system, registered apprenticeship, and more. | Support state level alignment activities that enable data integration and business intelligence for decision-making. |
| **National Youth Apprenticeship Model:** Starting and scaling youth apprenticeship programs is difficult as prospective sponsors do not have a strong national model to follow. | Identify several strong youth apprenticeship programs that offer a nationally replicable model and can serve as dedicated experts who could provide mentoring and technical assistance to prospective sponsors. |

# 6   APPENDIX

## 6.1   SUMMARY OF INDUSTRY LISTENING SESSION EVENTS

A summary of the events hosted for each of the six high priority stakeholder groups and key questions posed at each listening session follows.

### 6.1.1   IRAP Standards Recognition Entities Event

| Event Name | Host | Audience | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **IRAP SRE Stakeholder Listening Session** | OA | SREs | June 8, 2021 |

#### 6.1.1.1   *Key Questions for the SRE Listening Session*

- What is working and what could be improved upon with the IRAP program?
- What attracted you to the IRAP model vs. the RAP model?
- Based on what you've learned through the IRAP model, what recommendations do you have to strengthen the RAP model to make it more attractive and beneficial for non-traditional industries and occupations?
- The Department would like to make apprenticeship work more for all Americans. How can we improve DEIA in high-quality apprenticeship opportunities?

### 6.1.2 Industry Stakeholder Roundtable Events

| Event Name | Host | Audience | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **North America's Building Trades Union (NABTU) listening session with international training directors and contract staff** | NABTU | Construction industry stakeholders | May 11, 2021 |
| **OA Cybersecurity Work Group** | OA | Cybersecurity industry stakeholders | May 11, 2021 |
| **High-Road Registered Apprenticeships in Healthcare** | Health Career Advancement Program (H-CAP) | Healthcare industry stakeholders | May 13, 2021 |
| **Early Childhood Education Listening Session** | H-CAP | Early childhood education industry stakeholders | May 17, 2021 |
| **Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Roundtable** | JFF | Advanced manufacturing industry stakeholders | May 26, 2021 |
| **Transportation Listening Session** | FASTPORT and Project Opportunity Alliance | Transportation industry stakeholders | May 27, 2021 |
| **Hospitality Listening Session** | National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation/American Hotel and Lodging Association | Hospitality industry stakeholders | June 3, 2021 |
| **TIRAP Partner Meeting** | Wireless Infrastructure Association (WIA) | Telecommunications industry | June 22, 2021 |

#### 6.1.2.1 *Key Questions for the Industry Stakeholder Roundtable Listening Sessions*

- There is a real opportunity for a revitalized national apprenticeship system in 2021 and DOL is seeking input from your industry on suggested improvements to Registered Apprenticeship. What specific measures can DOL take to assist employers in expanding apprenticeships in your industry?
- DOL would like to make apprenticeship work more for all Americans. How can we improve DEIA in high-quality apprenticeship opportunities in your industry?
- What have been the biggest challenges for businesses who are interested in starting or expanding apprenticeship programs in your industry? What suggestions do you have to overcome these challenges and make registered apprenticeship more attractive for your industries' needs?

### 6.1.3 Apprenticeship, Education, and Workforce Related Organizations Events

| Event Name | Host | Audience | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Town Hall Series: Women in Workforce** | National Association of State Workforce Boards | Workforce board representatives | April 20, 2021 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Re-entering Citizens Webinar | Women's Bureau and DOL's Office of Workforce Investment | Workforce development stakeholders | April 26, 2021 |
| **HBCU/Contractor Virtual Handshake Series: "Making Connections"** | Arbor E&T LLC dba Equus Workforce Solutions (Equus) | HBCUs and employers | April 27, 2021 |
| **Encouraging Apprenticeships for Veterans** | National Veterans Training Institute | VETS-funded American Job Centers (AJC) staff | May 4, 2021 |
| **Women's Equity in Apprenticeships Listening Session** | Chicago Women in Trades | Various union, workforce board, and building trades stakeholders | May 18, 2021 |

### 6.1.3.1 *Key Questions for the Apprenticeship, Education, and Workforce Related Organization Listening Sessions*

- To expand our reach and bring more awareness to underrepresented populations about the value of apprenticeship and the opportunities that exist, the Office of Apprenticeship is seeking to develop new partnerships. Please let us know how familiar you are with Registered Apprenticeship and how we can partner with you to ensure that the stakeholders you represent are aware of the ability to earn and learn at the same time through apprenticeship.
- DOL would like to make apprenticeship work more for all Americans. How can we improve DEIA and ensure equal opportunity in high-quality apprenticeship opportunities? Women are particularly underrepresented in apprenticeship, and where they are apprentices, they tend to be concentrated in low-paying jobs. What specific measures can DOL take to promote more women in apprenticeship and into opportunities in high-wage occupations?
- What are the biggest barriers to engaging underserved populations through apprenticeship, and thus supporting them to transition into successful careers?
- What are examples of apprenticeship programs you have seen that have been effective in engaging underrepresented populations? Briefly explain their strategies.

### 6.1.4 Education and Youth Event

| Event Name | Host | Audience | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **JFF/OA Listening Session** | JFF | Youth Stakeholders | May 20, 2021 |

### 6.1.4.1 *Key Questions for the Education and Youth Listening Session*

- What is the best way to educate youth and parents about the benefits of apprenticeships?
- Are more high schools treating apprenticeships as positive outcomes for those who complete high school and start an apprenticeship? Are high school leaders aware that many apprenticeships now offer college credits and paid post-secondary education as part of their training agreements?
- What are the main barriers for high schools to offer more pre- and registered apprenticeship opportunities to their students? Ex: Inflexible schedules, lack of business partnerships, liability.

- How have you seen COVID affect youth apprenticeship programs? Decline of opportunities, increased remote work options, change in focus of occupations? Have the conditions caused by COVID generated more interest in apprenticeships, such as in information technology?
- What are examples of apprenticeship programs you have seen that have done a good job at engaging with in-school and/or out-of-school youth?
- The Department would like to make apprenticeship work more for all Americans. How can we improve DEIA in high-quality apprenticeship opportunities?
- What do you see as the biggest role for Higher Education in expanding and modernizing Registered Apprenticeship and what can the Department of Labor do to assist you in that role?
- What ideas are you hearing from the students and employers regarding ways to modernize, streamline, and promote Registered Apprenticeship?
- For institutions of higher education, what is your process for offering credit for prior learning and how do you make the determination of how much credit to offer for specific RAPs? What is needed to bridge the gap in offering prior learning credit?

### 6.1.5    Workforce System Events

| Event Name | Host | Audience | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **NASTAD Meeting** | NASTAD | NASTAD members | March 19, 2021 |
| **NASWA Affinity Group Meeting** | OA | NASWA members | April 9, 2021 |
| **H-1B Grantee Listening Sessions** | DOL Office of Workforce Investment | H-1B grantees | June 2 and 3, 2021 |

#### 6.1.5.1    *Key Questions for the Workforce System Listening Session*

- How do we engage State Workforce Agencies and workforce board members more to offer more apprenticeship opportunities in their counties, cities, and local communities?
- What are the barriers in getting WIOA-eligible participants into registered apprenticeship programs? How do we overcome these barriers and make apprenticeships a viable option for the unemployed and underemployed one-stop job seekers, and other underrepresented populations?
- Which actors do you see as key to expansion of apprenticeship in your states or regions?
- Are there skilled job opportunities and vacancies in your workforce area that have been difficult to fill, especially considering the past year's changing economic conditions? Do you think there is an opportunity for apprenticeship to close this gap? Why or why not?
- What have been the biggest challenges for the workforce system in terms of partnering with apprenticeship programs and sponsors and scaling registered apprenticeships?
- How may we work together to grow registered apprenticeship, either through future funding or policy initiatives?

#### 6.1.5.2    *Key Questions for the H-1B Grantees Listening Session*

- What measures can DOL take to assist employers in expanding RAPs in new and emerging occupations?
- What are best practices that have worked for you to improve DEIA in RAPs?
- How can we get more industry leaders involved with setting and measuring competencies for high-quality apprenticeship training in your industry?

- DOL has worked to expand apprenticeship and align the apprenticeship system with the rest of the workforce and education system. How can we further expand the apprenticeship model to bridge the gap between industry and education?

## 6.2 SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSIONS

A summary of the sessions that OA hosted with community stakeholder groups and key questions posed at each follow.

### 6.2.1 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Listening Sessions

| Event Name | Host | Audience | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Apprenticeship 101 DEIA Session** | OA | DEIA Community Stakeholders | September 20, 2021 |
| **Women Stakeholders Listening Session** | OA | Women Stakeholders | September 27, 2021 |
| **Latino Stakeholders Listening Session** | OA | Latino Stakeholders | September 27, 2021 |
| **African American Stakeholders Listening Session** | OA | African American Stakeholders | September 27, 2021 |
| **Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Stakeholders Listening Session** | OA | Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Stakeholders | September 27, 2021 |
| **People with Disabilities Stakeholders Listening Session** | OA | People with Disabilities Stakeholders | September 27, 2021 |
| **Minority Serving Institutions/Education Stakeholders Listening Session** | OA | Representatives from MSIs, HBCUs, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and community colleges with students from underserved communities | September 27, 2021 |
| **Native American Advisory Council Regular Meeting** | OA | Native American Advisory Council, Public, OFCCP | June 16, 2021 |

#### 6.2.1.1 Key Questions for the DEIA Listening Sessions

- INSIGHTS: What insights can you give into the barriers that your community faces in connecting job seekers with in-demand, high skilled, well-paid jobs and how could apprenticeships help?
- AWARENESS OF BENEFITS: What is the level of awareness of apprenticeship programs in your community and what benefits of apprenticeship programs and outreach methods could increase interest and participation?
- SUPPORT: What support would you recommend providing to help engage your community in apprenticeship programs?
- HURDLES: What specific issues do we need to address in your community to increase engagement in apprenticeship programs?

STRATEGIES: What strategies have you found to be successful in engaging your community in apprenticeships? Examples?