

Scaling Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) in Registered Apprenticeship

WHAT IS DEIA?

Per [Executive Order 14035](#)¹ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce), the following definitions are utilized to define the terms Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.

DIVERSITY

The practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of the American people, including underserved communities.

EQUITY

The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.

INCLUSION

The recognition, appreciation, and use of talent and skill from employees of all backgrounds.

ACCESSIBILITY

The intentional design, construction, and development of facilities, information technology, communication technology, programs, and services. This intentionality ensures that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use these resources.

The Executive Order on DEIA includes members of the following **underserved communities** who face discrimination based on the following identities. Keep in mind that individuals may belong to more than one underserved community and face intersecting barriers.

- ▶ Black & African American
- ▶ Hispanic & Latino
- ▶ Native American, Native Alaskan, & Indigenous People Asian American, Native Hawaiian, & Pacific Islander Middle Eastern, North African
- ▶ Women
- ▶ LGBTQ+
- ▶ Pregnancy
- ▶ Parents
- ▶ Caregivers
- ▶ Religious Beliefs
- ▶ Persons with Disabilities
- ▶ 1st Generation Professional/College Limited English Proficiency Immigrants
- ▶ Older Age
- ▶ Formerly Incarcerated Inhabitants of Rural Areas Veterans & Military Spouses
- ▶ Persistent Poverty



While all of the above groups are defined as members of underserved communities, Registered Apprenticeship regulations require sponsors to set standards for gender, race, ethnicity, and individuals with disabilities (CFR 29.30) based on the local area. Below are the Federal figures based on census data² for demographic groupings accounted for in the Registered Apprentice Intermediary Contract. One or more of these groups **are** present in your areas. With women representing over half the population, these populations combined represent roughly 70 percent of the U.S. population nationally. In many cases, the percentages of specific groups may be significantly higher at the local level. [This link](#) provides county-by-county percentages for groups in the U.S. by gender, race, and ethnicity.

Women – 50.8%
Hispanic or Latino – 18.5%
Black/African American – 13.4%
Persons with a disability under 65 – 10.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native – 1.3%
Veterans – 6.9%
Asian – 5.9%
Hispanic or Latino – 18.5%
Supervised by the U.S. Adult correctional system – 1.9%³

As an iterative process, DEIA efforts constantly need to be revisited. By not engaging in DEIA work, employers are essentially cutting themselves off from over 70 percent of the country's workforce. While not all-encompassing and variable by industry, this factsheet provides DEIA information for Industry Intermediary Contractors. This information is meant to help initiate the work with sponsors and employers that is necessary for scaling [DEIA efforts](#). Ultimately, the goal is to promote access, expand opportunity, and encourage retention in Registered Apprenticeship. Apprenticeship.gov has developed a page dedicated to to [diversity in Registered Apprenticeship](#). It offers research, additional factsheets, and case studies that can be utilized to learn more about how DEIA is a benefit to employers.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCALING DEIA IN REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

MAKING A CASE FOR DEIA

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) believes that diversity is one of the defining strengths of America. As such, the diversity of our country's workforce is essential to accomplishing the mission areas of DOL. To ensure a wide range of experiences, perspectives, and skills, DOL is committed to increasing diversity and inclusion throughout Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs). This should **provide better decision-making to drive innovation and creativity**. One of the best ways to convince employers to adopt DEIA is to demonstrate how DEIA has been tried, proven, and positively impactful.

Research shows companies who embrace DEIA **outperform** less diverse companies in profitability.

- ▶ Employee performance increases when diversity within the workforce increases, and employees are **19 percent more likely** to stay longer with a diverse company. This reduces turnover costs for employers.⁴
- ▶ Companies in the top quartiles for gender diversity were **21 percent more likely** to experience above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile.⁵
- ▶ Companies in the top quartiles for ethnic and cultural diversity were **35 percent more likely** to outperform their peers in terms of profitability.⁶
- ▶ For every percentage increase in the rate of under-represented populations, there was a three to nine percent **increase in sales revenue**, making workplace diversity a decisive predictor of a business's sales revenue, customer base, and profitability.⁷
- ▶ **Stock prices increased** at 49 large publicly traded firms in the tech sector the day the company made a diversity announcement, and as diversity figures increased amongst tech sector employers, private investments in the companies increased.⁸

DEIA needs to be infused in all aspects of RAPs and should be an early conversation with employers. Employers need to understand how they can benefit from diversity in the workforce and move from seeing DEIA work as peripheral unrewarded work to core work crucial to organizational success.⁹

BEING STRATEGIC IN REGISTERED APPRENTICE RECRUITMENT

Being strategic in DEIA recruitment is essential. Taking the time to plan DEIA recruitment efforts helps employers define their goals, develop actionable strategies, and effectively communicate and implement DEIA in the workplace. The steps below outline promising practices that can be implemented in any organization.

- ▶ Champion DEIA goals to create buy-in and support across the organization
- ▶ Identify who will be the “go-to” person who coordinates efforts, trainings, etc.
- ▶ Engage all stakeholders in planning your DEIA strategy
- ▶ Communicate why your organization is working on DEIA

CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSIVITY

Leadership must prioritize and cultivate an equitable and inclusive environment within their workplace culture to increase retention amongst underserved populations. It is vital not to have a disconnect between diversity recruitment strategies that portray an inclusive environment and an organizational reality where there is no diversity.¹⁰ This can look like tokenizing underserved individuals in advertising while not having actual diversity within the organization. Actionable steps an employer can take to create a climate focused on inclusivity include focusing efforts on:

- ▶ [Inclusive Leaders](#) set the standards for workplace culture, promote awareness, interrupt unfairness, and lead a working atmosphere of infinite learning for personal and professional growth.
- ▶ [Inclusive Decision Making](#), where input from team members is encouraged and valued, can be especially important for new or under-represented members of the team.
- ▶ [Creating a Culture of Recognition](#) that publicly and privately acknowledges minority contributions to the organization.
- ▶ [Mentorship](#) to advance skills and build networks, which can help the underserved develop a positive connection to their workplace.
- ▶ [Prohibitive Voice Against Bias](#) to call out DEIA issues and increase better engagement.



COORDINATE CONVERSATIONS WITH WILLING DEIA PARTNERS

For DEIA efforts to be successful, it is pertinent that organizations have developed partnerships between internal management and staff, as well as external stakeholders and employers. DEIA efforts cannot effectively operate in a silo, as DEIA is not only about hiring but also about a change in the culture and work environment. These conversations aim to create partnerships that “*encourage the kind of thinking and dialogue among a range of stakeholders that makes innovation possible.*”¹¹ Some examples of strategies to scale DEIA partnerships in the workforce include:

- ▶ [Developing partnerships](#) with multiple organizations that lead to a larger pool of applicants with a broad range of identities and skills. The [Universal Outreach Tool](#) is an excellent resource to help identify and connect with potential partners. Partnerships can and should include:
 - [State Vocational and Rehabilitation agencies](#)
 - Community-based non-profits
 - Workforce Development Centers
 - Job Corps Centers
 - [Veteran’s Employment](#) organizations
 - Local school districts
 - Institutions of higher education, including [minority-serving institutions](#), [community colleges](#), and [regionally comprehensive universities](#)
- ▶ [Embodying an inclusive culture](#) that allows everyone to feel as though they will be included and that their insight is vital. It is necessary that difficult conversations happen, and they won’t if the [organizational culture](#) does not allow for it.
- ▶ [Creating Diversity Committees](#) to advise in the recruitment and retention of underserved individuals and help facilitate cohesion and understanding in the workplace. By creating space for these conversations and providing opportunities for underserved populations to voice their needs, you are setting the stage for inclusivity of experiences and perspectives.

MEANINGFUL PRE-APPRENTICESHIP EFFORTS

[Pre-Apprenticeship](#) can be utilized as a pathway for increasing diversity in RAP programs. One key feature of a [successful Pre-Apprenticeship program](#) that can be scaled to increase diversity in RAPs is a program design with viable on-ramps to a RAP. According to Quarterly Performance Data submitted to the DOL from the American Apprenticeship Initiative, as of December 31, 2019:¹²

- ▶ 95 percent of grantees report utilizing pre-apprenticeship as a recruitment tool.
- ▶ 45 percent of Pre-Apprenticeship completers enter a RAP.
- ▶ **89 percent of Pre-Apprentices are from underserved populations**, significantly higher than the underserved populations' percentage in RAP programs.

Jobs for the Future, an organization that effectively utilizes Pre-Apprenticeship programs as a pathway to RAPs, notes that Pre-Apprenticeship programs can be scaled to support the recruitment and preparation of individuals from under-represented populations not only to enter Registered Apprenticeship but also to “help them [pre-apprentices] build supportive networks and prepare them to navigate career options.”¹³

The relationships built during a Pre-Apprenticeship program help to ensure that under-represented individuals are not entering occupations to be siloed into low-wage, entry-level opportunities but rather can grow in their careers and thrive in the workforce.



MEANINGFUL MENTORSHIP IN REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP AND PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

Mentorship is a key component of a successful Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship program. While mentorship benefits all, research has shown that under-represented populations particularly benefit from mentorship opportunities. Effective mentorship involves the following elements:

1. Create an **organizational culture** that values the role of mentorship and is committed to the organization's DEIA efforts.
2. **Acknowledge** that disparities exist.¹⁴
3. Create a **sense of inclusion and belonging** by making apprentices feel welcome and supported.¹⁵
4. Establish a **relationship** across differences.¹⁶
5. **Train** your mentors how to mentor apprentices effectively.^{17, 18}

TRAINING ON EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO) IN REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

There are many strategies an intermediary can utilize to train employers and sponsors on Registered Apprenticeship EEO regulations. For example, JFF developed a training course using a Learning Management System (LMS) for employers to walk themselves through the first [five things RAPs need to do to meet EEO Obligations](#).

Additionally, the Office of Apprenticeship's EEO website offers various resources for employers and sponsors. Some examples of resources available on www.apprenticeship.gov/eoo are:

- ▶ [Universal Outreach Tool](#) for access to diverse local communities
- ▶ [Webinars](#) on a range of topics related to different aspects of DEIA
- ▶ [Quick Reference Guides](#) for Sponsors to learn more about EEO
- ▶ Access to [EEO Regulations](#)
- ▶ [7% Disability Utilization Goal](#)
- ▶ [Training materials](#) to download and use

ADDRESSING EMPLOYER CONCERNS AND “MYTH BUSTING”

MYTH

Hiring for diversity means I must lower my standards.

► **REALITY**

Since America’s communities are increasingly diverse, using DEIA strategies expands the number of qualified applicants applying for a Registered-Apprentice position. In fact, research shows that diversity has a positive effect on employee productivity and engagement. Additionally, many organizations have had [success](#) utilizing a Pre-Apprenticeship program to recruit and retain diverse apprentices.

MYTH

There aren’t enough diverse applicants.

► **REALITY**

Since America’s communities are increasingly diverse, The 2020 U.S. Census shows that America’s workforce is becoming increasingly diverse and widespread. Women are nearly half the available workforce. Communities of color make up 40% of the national population. The [U.S. Census prevalence of racial and ethnic diversity maps](#) show “pockets of diversity” on a county-by-county level across the U.S. The [Universal Outreach Tool](#) helps identify recruiting sources that will help generate referrals from all demographic groups.

MYTH

By targeting diverse candidates, I am acting in a discriminatory way.

► **REALITY**

Untrue. The [Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection](#) states that “the use of recruiting procedures designed to attract members of a particular race, sex, or ethnic group, which were previously denied employment opportunities or which are currently underutilized, may be necessary to bring an employer into compliance with Federal law, and is frequently an essential element of any effective affirmative action program.” However, recruitment practices are not the same as selection and hiring of apprentices requires in a “facially neutral” way, meaning requirements and hiring selection do not discriminate against [protected characteristics](#).



MYTH

There is a pipeline problem impacting my ability to recruit candidates from underserved populations.

► **REALITY**

Yes, there are systematic barriers that limit equity in opportunity. However, there are [tools available](#) that allow you to increase your recruitment efforts. You can develop a strategy to increase diversity in your organization and establish partnerships to help with this effort.

MYTH

DEIA means increasing the number of minorities in my organization.

► **REALITY**

While a factor, DEIA is an encompassing term that embraces a range of underserved populations, including racial minorities, women, LGBTQ+, pregnancy status, parents, caregivers, religious beliefs, persons with disabilities, 1st generation professional/college graduate, limited English proficiency, immigrants, older age, formerly incarcerated, inhabitants of rural areas, veterans and military spouses, and individuals in persistent poverty. Refer to [Executive Order 13985](#) for more information.

IMPLEMENT INITIATIVES ON DEIA TODAY!

As America’s population becomes increasingly diverse, positioning yourself with a strong DEIA strategy enables companies to reach a significantly larger potential talent pool. Taking steps now to diversify your RAP will help your organization increase productivity while fostering an inclusive and positive environment for all. Have the difficult conversations, take the steps, do the work, and watch your RAP grow and thrive!

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Explore Registered Apprenticeship Today!

Want to learn more? Visit the U.S. Department of Labor's one-stop source for all things apprenticeship: www.apprenticeship.gov or email us at apprenticeship@dol.gov.

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