



INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (IRAP) GENERAL FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

In June 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order (EO) on Expanding Apprenticeships in America. Section 4 of the EO, titled “Establishing Industry-Recognized Apprenticeships,” directed the Secretary to consider proposing regulations that promote the development of apprenticeship programs by third parties. Section 8 of the EO directed the Secretary of Labor to establish a Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion to identify strategies and proposals to promote apprenticeships, especially in sectors where apprenticeship programs are insufficient. In May 2018, the Task Force on Apprenticeship transmitted its final report to the President, including recommendations noting that the establishment of Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs) could provide industry organizations and employers more tools to create high-quality apprenticeship programs and opportunities. To address America’s skills gap and to rapidly increase the availability of high-quality apprenticeship programs in sectors where apprenticeship opportunities are not widespread, the U.S. Department of Labor has issued a Final Rule that establishes a system for advancing the development of high-quality IRAPs.

WHAT IS AN INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM?

IRAPs are high-quality apprenticeship programs that provide individuals with opportunities to obtain workplace-relevant knowledge and progressively advancing skills. IRAPs include a paid-work component and an educational component and result in an industry-

recognized credential. An IRAP is developed or delivered by entities such as trade and industry groups, corporations, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, unions, and joint labor-management organizations. The final rule establishes a process for the DOL’s Office of Apprenticeship (OA) Administrator (Administrator) to recognize qualified third-party entities, known as Standards Recognition Entities (SREs), which will, in turn, evaluate and recognize IRAPs consistent with the Department’s standards.

High-quality IRAPs include the following components:

- **Paid Work.** IRAPs ensure apprentices are paid at least the applicable Federal, State, or local minimum wage.
- **Written Training Plan.** IRAPs must maintain a written apprenticeship agreement for each apprentice outlines the terms and conditions of the apprentice’s employment and training.
- **On-the-Job Training/Structured Work Experience.** IRAPs must provide structured work experience, designed so that apprentices demonstrate competency and progressively advancing industry-essential skills.
- **Safety and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO).** IRAPs must affirm their adherence to all applicable Federal, State, and local laws pertaining to EEO and must provide a working environment for apprentices that adheres to all applicable Federal, State, and local safety laws and regulations, and complies with any additional safety requirements that the SRE may require.



- **Related Instruction.** IRAPs must provide appropriate related instruction, designed so that apprentices demonstrate competency and progressively advancing industry-essential skills.
- **Mentorship.** On-the-Job Training is conducted in the work setting under the ongoing, focused supervision and training of a mentor.
- **Industry-Recognized Credentials.** IRAPs provide apprentices industry-recognized credential(s) during participation in or upon completion of the program.

IRAPs will supplement the successful Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). Since the Registered Apprenticeship model is already widespread within the construction industry, IRAPs can be developed in any sector except construction, as it is defined § 29.30 of the new regulation.

WHY IRAPS?

To help close the growing skills gap, we need to expand the apprenticeship model to help Americans obtain relevant skills and high-paying jobs. IRAPs offer benefits for today's business leaders and career seekers:

For Business Leaders, IRAPs:

- Provide an additional pathway to assist career seekers and job creators;
- Serve the needs of business by expanding apprenticeships across more industries;
- Use innovative, industry-driven approaches to scale a proven workforce education model;
- Allow more flexibility to design apprenticeship programs that meet business needs;
- Supply an immediate pool of workers for today and skilled talent for tomorrow;
- Create potential to access tools and products to help businesses develop and launch programs quickly; and,
- Are approved by organizations that have received recognition from USDOL.

For Career Seekers, IRAPs:

- Offer an opportunity to earn and learn, while obtaining valuable, portable, industry-recognized, competency-based credentials;
- Provide training in standards that are developed by the industry, ensuring an apprentice develops the skillset needed for career success;
- Increase the opportunities for apprenticeship programs across all sectors in the economy; and,

- Provide an alternative to college for finding career success that allows workers to obtain high paying jobs without going into debt.

HOW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT IRAPS:

DOL plans to launch an online SRE application portal in Spring 2020 to begin accepting applications from organizations interested in serving as SREs when the Final Rule is effective. To prepare, those interested in becoming SREs can begin to develop plans of action, structures, and key partnerships that will form the basis for a successful application.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT IRAPS AND SRES

- Visit our www.apprenticeship.gov to review the IRAP Final Rule and resources to become familiar with IRAPs and the roles and responsibilities of SREs.
- Sign up for our [Apprenticeship Newsletter](http://www.apprenticeship.gov/newsletter) to receive the latest apprenticeship related news from the USDOL. (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDOL/subscriber/new>)

