



# STANDARDS RECOGNITION ENTITY (SRE) FACT SHEET

## BACKGROUND

The 2017 Executive Order (EO), “Expanding Apprenticeships in America,” contained several sections to help modernize America’s education systems and workforce development programs. Section 4 of the EO, titled “Establishing Industry-Recognized Apprenticeships,” directed the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to consider proposing regulations that promote the development of apprenticeship programs by third parties. Section 8 of the EO called for the establishment of 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 Expansion submitted a set of 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, DOL has issued a Final Rule that establishes a system for advancing the development of high-quality IRAPs.

## WHAT IS AN INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (IRAP)?

IRAPs are an exciting new form of high-quality apprenticeship programs that provides 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 IRAP Final Rule establishes a process for the Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship 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.

## WHAT IS AN SRE?

An SRE is a third-party entity, recognized by the Department as qualified to recognize apprenticeship programs as IRAPs. The types of entities that can become SREs include, but are not limited to:

- Trade, industry, and employer groups or associations;
- Companies and other corporate entities;
- Educational institutions, such as universities or community colleges;
- State and local government agencies or entities;
- Non-profit organizations;
- Unions;
- Joint labor-management organizations;
- Certification and accreditation bodies or entities for a profession or industry; or
- A consortium or partnership of entities such as those above.

## WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN SRE?

SREs are responsible for recognizing and overseeing IRAPs in accordance with the final rule. This means:

- SREs are responsible for recognizing or rejecting IRAPs in a timely manner.
- SREs must notify the Office of Apprenticeship within 30 days when they have recognized or derecognized an IRAP and include the name and contact information for the program.
- SREs are responsible for providing program and performance data to the Office of Apprenticeship in a timely manner.
- SREs are responsible for only recognizing high-quality IRAPs that meet minimum safety, pay, and training requirements for IRAP apprentices.
- SREs must establish policies and procedures for recognizing, and validating compliance of, programs that ensure that SRE decisions are impartial, consistent, and based on objective and merit-based criteria.



- SREs will review programs and validate that each program meets the high-quality criteria of an IRAP at initial recognition and on an annual basis.
- SREs must remain in an ongoing quality-control relationship with the IRAPs they have recognized, to include periodic compliance reviews and consideration of apprentices' credential attainment, program completion, retention rates, SREs must publicly disclose the credential(s) that apprentices will earn during their participation in, or upon completion of, an IRAP.
- SREs are responsible for developing policies and procedures for the suspension or derecognition of IRAPs that fail to comply with the SRE's requirements.
- SREs are responsible for developing policies and procedures that require IRAPs' adherence to applicable Federal, State, and local laws pertaining to EEO and reflect comprehensive outreach strategies to reach diverse populations.
- SREs are responsible for having policies and procedures for addressing complaints filed against their IRAPs.
- An SRE must notify the Administrator and must provide all related material information if:
  - It makes any major change that could affect the operations of the program, such as involvement in lawsuits that materially affect the SRE, changes in legal status, or any other change that materially affects the SRE's ability to function in its recognition capacity; or
  - It seeks to recognize apprenticeship programs in additional industries, occupational areas, or geographical areas.

#### WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA TO BECOME AN SRE?

SREs are trusted workforce development leaders in their industry. An entity is qualified to be recognized as an SRE if it demonstrates the following:

- SREs must have the expertise to set competency-based standards, through a consensus-based process involving industry experts, for the requisite training, structure, and curricula for apprenticeship programs in the industry(ies) or occupational area(s) in which they seek to be an SRE.
- SREs must have the capacity and quality assurance processes and procedures to ensure IRAPs comply with DOL standards for safety, compensation, and quality.
- SREs must have the resources to operate as an SRE for a 5-year period.
- SREs must demonstrate impartiality by disclosing partners who will be engaged in recognition activities, describing their roles, including their relationships with subsidiaries.
- SREs must be in good standing with the U.S. Federal Government. They cannot be suspended or debarred from doing business with the federal government.
- SREs must have policies, processes, procedures, or structures in place to mitigate any conflicts of interest.

- SREs must have the appropriate industry and occupational expertise and resources in place to recognize IRAPs in their selected geographical area (nationwide or limited to a region, State, or local area).
- SREs cannot recognize IRAPs that seek to train apprentices to perform construction activities.

#### HOW DO YOU BECOME AN SRE?

- Those interested in becoming an SRE must apply to DOL for recognition.
- Organizations may submit their applications online at [www.apprenticeship.gov](http://www.apprenticeship.gov). Entities may consult with and receive technical assistance from DOL about how to prepare their applications.
- DOL's Office of Apprenticeship will review the application and make a determination within approximately 90 days.
- An SRE will be recognized for 5 years and must reapply at least 6 months before the date that its current recognition is set to expire if it seeks re-recognition.
- To reapply to continue serving as an SRE, an entity must complete and submit an updated application to the Administrator for re-recognition as an IRAP SRE.



#### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT IRAPS AND SRES

- Visit [www.apprenticeship.gov](http://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](#) to receive the latest apprenticeship-related news from the USDOL.