

Collaboration Opportunities

WIOA YOUTH PROGRAM AND APPRENTICESHIP

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program and Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) provide an opportunity for the public workforce system to improve the quality of life for job seekers, including youth, through an integrated, job-driven system. This document describes how the WIOA Youth Program and RAPs can coordinate and mutually benefit from strategic coordination.

The WIOA Youth Program

The WIOA Youth Program provides a comprehensive array of services and training opportunities for in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY) with one or more employment barriers. The program prepares youth for postsecondary education and employment opportunities, to attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and to secure employment with career/promotional opportunities. Local programs must prioritize training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors.

To be eligible, OSY must be between the ages of 16 and 24, not attending school, and have one or more employment barriers. ISY must be between the ages of 14 and 21, attending school, low income, and have one or more employment barriers.

Funds for youth services are allotted to states and allocated to local areas based on a formula. The WIOA Youth Program focuses primarily on OSY, requiring local areas to expend a minimum of 75% of WIOA youth funds on them. Services offered within the WIOA Youth Program include paid and unpaid work experiences, such as summer and year-round employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, on-the-job training, and occupational skills training. WIOA also prioritizes work experience through a 20% minimum expenditure requirement for the work experience program element. The Program also includes tutoring and alternative secondary school services, leadership development opportunities, supportive services, mentoring, follow-up services, comprehensive guidance and counseling, financial literacy education, entrepreneurial skills training, services that provide labor market and employment information, and postsecondary education and training preparation activities. The WIOA Youth Program operates in all states and territories. To learn more, please visit www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/youth/wioa-formula.

Registered Apprenticeship Program

Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) under the National Apprenticeship Act of 1937 (see also 29 CFR 29 Subpart A), are industry-driven programs validated by the Department of Labor (DOL or the Department) or a DOL-recognized State Apprenticeship Agency, which combine paid on-the-job training (OJT) with related instruction to progressively increase workers' skill levels and wages. As an "earn and learn" model, apprentices are employed and earn wages from the first day on the job. RAPs are a flexible training strategy that can be customized to meet the needs of any business. RAPs can last for one to six years, depending on the occupation. Each year apprentices normally receive 2,000 hours of OJT and a recommended minimum of 144 hours of related instruction. There are over 1,200 apprenticeable occupations.

RAPs also provide an effective, business-driven model for employers to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers. They allow workforce partners, educators, and employers to develop and apply industry standards to training programs, thereby increasing the quality and productivity of the workforce. RAPs are a job from day one, so this approach provides immediate employment that pays sustainable wages and offers advancement along a career path as apprentices complete their training. RAP graduates receive nationally-recognized, portable credentials, and their training can frequently be applied toward further postsecondary education.

Benefits of Coordination between a WIOA Youth Program and Registered Apprenticeship When Serving Youth

The implementation of WIOA provides opportunities to more fully align and integrate RAP strategies into the public workforce system. Collaboration between WIOA Youth Programs and RAPs is vital to bridging the gap between pre-apprenticeship and other work-based learning programs to connect our nation's youth to in-demand careers. RAPs can: (1) play a vital role in this development by offering students a pathway into high-demand careers and a college degree; and (2) be useful for both ISY and OSY for career and professional development.

Many workforce systems around the country have adopted registered apprenticeship as an effective strategy in working with employers, adults, dislocated workers, and youth. RAPs have been proven to help youth immediately start working and increase skills and earnings. They are also an effective strategy to connect with employers in diverse fields and as part of an industry sector strategy. Using registered apprenticeship as a workforce strategy can contribute to improved performance outcomes for youth in the WIOA core indicators, including the second and fourth quarter employment/education rates, median earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skill gains.

Examples of coordination opportunities include:

- **Requirement to engage apprenticeship representatives on workforce boards.** Under WIOA, state and local workforce development boards should include a member of the registered apprenticeship system. This connection can help youth practitioners align their pre-apprenticeship programs with RAPs. To learn more about this membership requirement and other action steps to better align systems, read TEGL No. 13-16: https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=9125.

- **Ability for RAPs to receive status as an eligible training provider.** RAP sponsors have automatic eligibility to be added to the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) list. WIOA funds may be used to offset costs associated with the related instruction component of RAPs. Once an apprenticeship sponsor is on the ETP list, local American Job Centers (AJCs) can refer WIOA participants to RAP sponsors and use Individual Training Account (ITA) funds to pay for the cost of related instruction for participants who enroll.
- **Eligibility for RAPs to receive OJT funding support through AJCs.** The AJCs can also fund portions of the OJT component of the RAP using contracts based on local procurement policies. WIOA OJT contracts can be used to fund OJT for one or more eligible participants and can be used to reimburse employers for the extraordinary costs of training at a level usually at 50% of the apprentice wage rate. WIOA funds can also be used for supportive services, such as transportation, books and supplies, and child care.
- **Promotion of RAPs as an extension of WIOA Youth Program work experience.** The WIOA Youth Program prioritizes work experience, which includes shorter-term work experiences such as job shadowing, internships, and pre-apprenticeships that can lead to a RAP.
- **Support of career pathways for youth through apprenticeship.** WIOA supports apprenticeship as a workforce strategy for youth and recognizes apprenticeship as a career pathway for youth enrolled in WIOA formula programs. Use the Apprenticeship Finder to identify local opportunities: www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-finder.
- **Integration of apprenticeship models in workforce business engagement.** The increased emphasis on work-based learning and business engagement in WIOA provides a new opportunity for the workforce system to integrate apprenticeship into its business services. Since employers are at the center of the apprenticeship model, apprenticeship automatically brings industry to the table. By working together, both the apprenticeship system and WIOA Youth Programs can align education and training with the needs of employers to help youth attain relevant certifications, connect successfully to work, and advance to higher levels of education.

Technical Assistance Resources

Contact Us! Look up your state, local, regional, and/or national apprenticeship representative here and reach out with any questions about the connection between WIOA Youth Programs and RAPs:

www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship/contact/state-offices.

Funding Sources for Registered Apprenticeship Programs shares examples of federal and state funding resources such as WIOA that your organization can use when developing a strategy to fund RAPs:

apprenticeshipusa.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/04/27/10/56/Funding-Sources-for-Registered-Apprenticeship-Programs.

High School Apprenticeship page provides a fact sheet, guide, examples of high school apprenticeship programs, and additional resources: www.apprenticeship.gov/educators/high-school-and-middle-school.

Youth Apprenticeship page shares resources to help you grow apprenticeships for the youth and young adult populations: apprenticeship.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/02/02/10/56/Apprenticeship_Youth.

Enough Is Known for Action: Building Registered Apprenticeship Opportunities for Out-of-School Youth is a webinar to inspire strategic planning and action as the system is in the early stages of implementation of WIOA:

apprenticeshipusa.workforcegps.org/sitecore/content/global/events/2016/04/19/11/27/Enough_Is_Known_for_Acti-on-Building_Registered_Apprenticeship_Opportunities_for_Out-of-School_Youth.