

The American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) and AAI Evaluation: Background

Registered apprenticeship is a workforce-training model in which apprentices are employed during their training, earn progressively higher wages as they gain skills, and produce output for their employers like any other employee. Registered apprenticeship trains the apprentice for a specific occupation and delivers occupational skills that are recognized and transferable across employers.

For more information on registered apprenticeship programs: [Homepage](#) | [Apprenticeship.gov](#)

To expand registered apprenticeship in the United States, in 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) launched the **American Apprenticeship Initiative** (AAI). DOL funded 46 grantees across the country to:

- [Support the expansion of quality and innovative registered apprenticeship programs into high-growth occupations and industries](#)
- [Create career pathways that encompass registered apprenticeship and align with other post-secondary educational offerings](#)
- [Use strategies to increase apprenticeship opportunities for job seekers and workers, particularly women and other underrepresented populations in apprenticeship, including people of color, people with disabilities, low-skilled populations, and veterans](#)
- [Leverage and develop public policies that increase demand for registered apprenticeship and support sustainability](#)

Components of a registered apprenticeship program:

- Combines structured on-the-job learning provided by a mentor at an employer's worksite (minimum 2,000 hours) and related technical instruction, generally provided in a classroom (minimum 144 hours)
- Incorporates wage increases over the course of the apprenticeship, tied to time in the program or demonstration of a skill competency
- Confers an industry recognized credential upon completion
- Includes a "sponsor"-often an employer-that oversees the *Standards of Apprenticeship* that document components of the registered apprenticeship
- Is registered with either DOL's Office of Apprenticeship or a State Apprenticeship Agency

Grantees were state government agencies, sub-state agencies such as local workforce development boards, community and technical colleges, other nonprofit organizations, and sector-based organizations. The grants ranged from \$3 million to \$5 million. Originally five years in duration, DOL allowed grantees to request an extension of up to one year; 80 percent did so. DOL funded the grants with a user fee paid by employers to hire foreign workers under the H-1B nonimmigrant visa program.

For more information about the AAI grant program: [American Apprenticeship Initiative | Apprenticeship.gov](#);

DOL also funded an **evaluation of AAI**, which included 45 grantees (one grant ended prior to the evaluation start date). The evaluation had four sub-studies:

- An **implementation study** that documented grantee activities. The study used a survey of grantees, in-person and virtual site visits, and data grantees reported to DOL on their activities. The implementation study produced three reports and two briefs.
 - [Expanding Registered Apprenticeship in the United States: Description of American Apprenticeship Initiative Grantees and Their Programs](#)

- [Implementing Registered Apprenticeship Programs: Experiences of 10 American Apprenticeship Initiative Grantees](#)
- [Achieving Apprenticeship Program and Apprentice Registration Targets: Grantee Outcomes from the American Apprenticeship Initiatives](#)
- [Challenges and Opportunities for Expanding Registered Apprenticeship with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I: Findings from the American Apprenticeship Initiative Evaluation](#)
- [What Are the Costs of Generating Apprenticeship? Findings from the American Apprenticeship Initiative Evaluation](#)
- An **outcomes study** that documented in-program and post-program outcomes for AAI apprentices and pre-apprentices. The study used a survey of AAI apprentices, quarterly wage data, and data grantees reported to DOL on their activities. The outcomes study produced one report and two briefs.
 - [Expanding Apprenticeship to New Sectors and Populations: The Experiences and Outcomes of Apprentices in the American Apprenticeship Initiative](#)
 - [Expanding Registered Apprenticeship to Underrepresented Populations: Findings from the American Apprenticeship Initiative Evaluation](#)
 - [Do Apprentices Achieve Faster Earnings Growth than Comparable Workers? Findings from the American Apprenticeship Initiative Evaluation](#)
- An employer **return-on-investment study** that documented the costs to employers and benefits of registered apprenticeship programs. The study used a survey of employers associated with AAI grantees. The ROI study produced one report and one brief.
 - [Do Employers Earn Positive Returns on Investments in Apprenticeship? Evidence from Registered Programs under the American Apprenticeship Initiative](#)
 - [Beyond Productivity: How Employers Gain More from Apprenticeship: Findings from the American Apprenticeship Initiative Evaluation](#)
- **Evaluation of a demonstration** that assessed the implementation and outcomes of a consultative sales approach to employer recruitment by two AAI grantees. The study used in-person and virtual site visits and administrative data collected by the grantees. The demonstration evaluation produced one report.
 - [Engaging Employers to Register Apprenticeship Programs: Outcomes from the American Apprenticeship Initiative Employer Engagement Demonstration](#)

For more information about apprenticeship and the AAI Evaluation.

Apprenticeship.gov: [Homepage | Apprenticeship.gov](#)

DOL Employment and Training Administration: [Registered Apprenticeship Evidence | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

DOL Chief Evaluation Office: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/currentstudies/Evaluation-of-the-American-Apprenticeship-Initiative>

About the evaluation team.

[Abt Associates](#) led the [AAI Evaluation](#), in partnership with the [Urban Institute](#), [MEF Associates](#), [W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research](#), and [George Washington University](#).