

**OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP  
BULLETIN**

**NO .**  
2026-35

**DATE**  
March 9, 2026

**TO:** NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS  
OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP STAFF  
STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCIES  
REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP SPONSORS  
STATE CTE DIRECTORS  
STATE EDUCATION AGENCY HEADS  
STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY HEADS

**FROM:** MEGAN BAIRD /s/  
Acting Administrator, Office of Apprenticeship

**SUBJECT:** Announcement of Office of Apprenticeship 30-day Commitment to Apprenticeship Program Registration Determinations and new virtual “Shot Clock” website

**1. Purpose.**

To announce the U.S. Department of Labor’s (Department), Office of Apprenticeship (OA) commitment to make apprenticeship program registration determinations within 30 days of a sponsor’s final submission of signed local program standards when submitted in Standards Builder, as well as National Program Standards and National Guideline Standards submitted to OA staff. To promote transparency and showcase the result of this 30-day commitment, OA is also announcing the launch of a virtual “shot clock” website to highlight the number of apprenticeship programs registered in OA states on a monthly basis, and the average amount of time it took to register the programs. This commitment will improve efficiency and provide more consistent customer experience, supporting the Administration's goal to meet and surpass one million active apprentices in Registered Apprenticeship programs.

**2. Action Requested.**

DOL requests that OA staff, industry intermediary contractors, grantees, and other Registered Apprenticeship stakeholders in OA States familiarize themselves with this bulletin and Standards Builder. The use of Standards Builder will ensure transparency in approval times and allow OA to track the length of the registration process. To support efforts to meet and surpass the President’s goal of one million active apprentices, State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAAs) are encouraged to streamline apprenticeship program registration processes and adopt the 30-day “shot clock” commitment, but this Bulletin does not require any action or pertain to sponsors seeking registration in SAA states. In addition, SAAs that use the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information System (RAPIDS) and have access to Standards Builder are encouraged to continue or begin using Standards Builder to register programs.

### **3. Summary and Background.**

- a. Summary – OA is committed to making apprenticeship program registration determinations within 30 days of a sponsor’s final submission of signed local program standards when submitted in Standards Builder, as well as National Program Standards and National Guideline Standards submitted to OA staff. OA is also launching a virtual “shot clock” website to publicly disclose OA’s apprenticeship program registration metrics.
- b. Background – On April 23, 2025, President Donald J. Trump issued an [Executive Order on Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future](#) which requires the Secretaries of Labor, Commerce, and Education to develop a plan to reach and surpass one million new active apprentices, including through measures to scale the proven model of Registered Apprenticeship across the country, improve its efficiency, and provide consistent support to program participants. To reach and surpass the Administration’s goal of one million active apprentices, OA is committed to making the necessary improvements to internal processes and using online platforms to streamline and expedite the registration process, increase transparency, improve user experience, and meet the needs of industry and career seekers.

### **4. Launching OA Registration “Shot Clock” Commitment.**

To promote the timely consideration of standards of apprenticeship and program registrations across all OA National and Field Offices and improve the quality and consistency of OA customer and stakeholder experiences, OA is announcing a commitment to make apprenticeship program registration determinations within 30 days of a sponsor’s final submission of signed local program standards in Standards Builder, as well as National Program Standards and National Guideline Standards submitted to OA staff. To ensure transparency and showcase the result of this 30-day commitment, OA has developed a “shot clock” website to highlight the number of apprenticeship programs registered in OA states on a monthly basis and the average amount of time it takes to register the programs. This commitment will improve efficiency, increase transparency, and provide a more consistent customer experience for program sponsors.

While establishing this 30-day commitment is intended to yield operational efficiency, OA emphasizes that the regulatory requirements and processes currently contained within Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations at part 29 remain applicable to the approval of program standards and registration determinations. The consistent application of these regulatory criteria by OA staff is essential to safeguarding the quality and integrity of Registered Apprenticeship programs and standards, and OA remains committed to adhering to all regulatory and quality assurance requirements. In the event OA is unable to make a program registration determination within 30 days, OA will provide the prospective sponsor with written notification providing a reason for the delay. As the sole entity authorized to approve program registration in OA states, no program is registered without the express approval of OA.

To see the new virtual shot clock website, please visit [Apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov).

## **5. Program Development and Registration Background.**

There are two phases of the program registration process: 1) the program development phase; and 2) the program determination phase. The program development phase begins when an employer or organization contacts OA to inquire about establishing a Registered Apprenticeship program. OA then connects the prospective sponsor with an Apprenticeship Training Representative (ATR) who provides information on the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship programs and works with the prospective sponsor to understand their workforce challenges and how Registered Apprenticeship can potentially meet their workforce needs. If the employer decides to develop a Registered Apprenticeship program, the ATR initiates a consultative process to assist the potential sponsor in the development of Registered Apprenticeship standards that meet their workforce needs, align with their organizational structure, and are in conformity with the governing Federal Regulations.

In some cases, the employer may be familiar with apprenticeship programs, either because they already have an informal apprenticeship program and simply want to register their program with a Registration Agency, or because they have previously developed a Registered Apprenticeship program. In those instances, the employer can submit their Registered Apprenticeship program standards on their own through Standards Builder and do not need to work with an ATR, thereby bypassing the program development phase.

Once the program development phase is complete, the final standards are signed by the sponsor and submitted to OA leadership for review and approval; this step initiates the 30-day program agency review and approval process by OA leadership. The final approval of a sponsor's completed apprenticeship standards by the appropriate OA deciding official will generate a written communication to the applicant in Standards Builder that their standards have been approved by OA for registration, thus completing the registration process. If the standards do not meet the criteria for Registration and OA is not able to approve them, OA will notify the sponsor within 30 days and they will be able to revise and resubmit final signed standards, which will start a new 30-day clock.

## **6. Inquiries.**

If you have any questions concerning the content of this Circular, please contact the Office of Apprenticeship at [OA.Policy@dol.gov](mailto:OA.Policy@dol.gov).

## **7. References.**

- Executive Order 14278- [\*Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future\*](#)
- [National Apprenticeship Act, 29 U.S.C. 50](#)
- [29 CFR§ part 29](#)