In business, it’s talent that drives innovation. To grow and thrive in today’s economy, employers in all industries need a highly skilled workforce. Now, more and more are discovering a proven strategy for building one: Apprenticeship.

Combining classroom instruction with on-the-job training, apprenticeship programs help bridge skills gaps and bring new and more diverse talent into the workplace, including people with disabilities and those with diverse backgrounds and educational experiences. The result is a pipeline of primed and ready workers for years to come.

What’s more, apprenticeship is a strategy for preparing workers in not only traditional trades, such as construction, but also high-growth industries, such as health care, information technology, transportation, energy, and many others.

In short, Apprenticeship Works… for workers, for opportunity, for inclusion, for employers, FOR BUSINESS.

Interested in learning more about how apprenticeships can help build a skilled, diverse workforce for your company or industry? View “Apprenticeship Works,” a video produced by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy. This video features interviews with representatives from four organizations that manage or sponsor apprenticeships in a range of fields, including information technology, health care, information management, and shipbuilding. It is one in a two-part series; the other video focuses on the value of apprenticeships to individuals. To view either video, visit www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/ApprenticeshipWorks-video-series.html.

Hear More About Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship Works for Business: A GUIDE TO BUILDING INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

#APPRENTICESHIPWORKS
What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a job training pathway that allows individuals to simultaneously earn money and learn a skill through a combination of education and hands-on training. For employers, often called “sponsors,” apprenticeships are a business-driven investment in the future. Apprenticeship facilitate flexible training within a company’s own culture in order to meet its unique workforce needs.

The apprenticeship model is flexible. Businesses can customize each program to meet specific needs. Reflecting this, apprenticeships vary in length depending on a number of factors, including the occupation and nature of program. They typically range from one to six years, with most being somewhere in the middle. Regardless, throughout the process, apprentices are full-time employees preparing for long-term career roles. The resulting benefits for sponsors include enhanced retention, increased productivity, and lower recruitment costs. In many industries, such as the traditional trades, apprentices have also been shown to improve safety, in turn reducing workers compensation costs and improving employer productivity.

Who sponsors apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships can be in any workplace or industry in need of a stable, reliable stream of qualified, qualified workers. However, employers don’t have to sponsor apprenticeship programs alone, and in fact the vast majority do not. Typically, programs are run in collaboration with many partners, including but not limited to industry associations, unions, state and economic development entities, two- and four-year colleges and universities, the Apprentice School, or government agencies. President Trump’s June 2017 Executive Order calling for the expansion of apprenticeships and reduction of regulatory burdens on workforce development programs, the U.S. Department of Labor is currently in the process of partnering with industry groups, companies, nonprofit organizations, unions, joint labor-management organizations, and many others to help them design apprenticeship programs that fit their unique needs. Some employers also work with such partners to offer pre-apprenticeships, which prepare people to enter and succeed in apprenticeships. Like apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships involve both instruction and hands-on training.

Do apprenticeships strengthen workforce inclusion?

Yes. Apprenticeships can provide the flexibility and support needed to enter and succeed in the workforce, including for employees with disabilities. Apprenticeships are an efficient and effective strategy for increasing workforce inclusion. Because of the range of opportunities available, they provide a good career path for people from all backgrounds, including people with disabilities. For businesses, this increased diversity means a broader range of perspectives on how to confront challenges and achieve success.

The U.S. Department of Labor protects applicants and current participants in Registered Apprenticeship programs from discrimination on the basis of disability. Moreover, Registered Apprenticeship programs are taking proactive steps to recruit people with disabilities. These steps support an inclusive workforce, which benefits all employers and the business as a whole.

Each Registered Apprenticeship program’s sponsor develops its own minimum qualifications related to education and the ability to perform essential job functions. For a qualified apprentice with a disability, an apprenticeship sponsor must provide a reasonable accommodation to allow equal employment opportunity, unless to do so would cause undue hardship. An apprentice with a disability may need to arrange a reasonable accommodation to assist in applying and interviewing for an apprenticeship. Generally, the individual with a disability must inform the sponsor that an accommodation is needed.

When people with disabilities disclose a disability to request accommodations in a program, they are not required to apply for such accommodations. Typically, programs are run in collaboration with many partners, including but not limited to industry associations, unions, state and economic development entities, two- and four-year colleges and universities, the Apprentice School, or government agencies. The expansion of apprenticeships and reduction of regulatory burdens on workforce development programs, the U.S. Department of Labor is currently in the process of partnering with industry groups, companies, nonprofit organizations, unions, joint labor-management organizations, and many others to help them design apprenticeship programs that fit their unique needs. Some employers also work with such partners to offer pre-apprenticeships, which prepare people to enter and succeed in apprenticeships. Like apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships involve both instruction and hands-on training.

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