

The Providence Plan (ProvPlan) and the RI Department of Labor and Training (DLT) have formed a public/private partnership to design, launch, and operate *Apprenticeship Rhode Island*. ProvPlan is a statewide nonprofit with a mission to improve the social and economic well-being of Rhode Islanders through efforts that catalyze systems change in areas of education, health, and workforce. Under new agency leadership, DLT has recently adopted a bold vision for workforce development that relies on partnerships with employers to grow and expand middle-wage jobs.

In 2007, ProvPlan launched Building Futures as the state's industry partnership for construction. Since that time, ProvPlan has provided state-level leadership in all matters related to registered apprenticeship. Key and relevant accomplishments include: 1) the development of a nationally recognized pre-apprenticeship model and apprentice utilization program with a connection to low-income, residents of color; 2) direct collaboration with industry partners in numerous sectors to transform internships into a pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeships that can support the needs of entry-level workers; 3) the design of hybrid apprenticeship models that accelerate the pace in which apprentices can climb career ladders; and 4) efforts to change policy in ways that incentivize employers to commit themselves to the registered apprenticeship model.

With this record of success, DLT has identified ProvPlan as the most suitable private partner to collaborate with them to operate and lead *Apprenticeship Rhode Island*. Our entities share a collective vision to vastly expand the state's registered apprenticeship system into non-traditional sectors through a series of targeted partnerships with employers and industry associations.

*Apprenticeship Rhode Island* has identified five industries that are poised to capitalize on the value that registered apprenticeship can provide. Sectors include: 1) advanced manufacturing; 2) information technology; 3) defense; 4) healthcare; and 5) marine trades. Our project will be open to all communities in Rhode Island - with a focus on urban neighborhoods where the greatest concentration of women-led households, residents of color, veterans, and young adults exist.

Four goals will guide the activities of *Apprenticeship Rhode Island*. These project goals include: 1) develop, expand, and implement innovative registered apprenticeship programs that meet the identified workforce needs of employers; 2) align and integrate the public workforce

investment system with the registered apprenticeship model; 3) connect Rhode Island jobseekers to employment as apprentices through high-quality recruitment, assessment, counseling, and pre-apprenticeship programs; and 4) enhance the policy/regulatory environment in ways that make apprenticeship a main strategy that helps Rhode Island's industries achieve their economic goals.

The two primary outcomes for Apprenticeship Rhode Island over the next five years are to place 1,200 Rhode Island residents into new registered apprenticeships in these sectors and to have at least 30% of these new apprentices come from underrepresented groups. To achieve these outcomes, ProvPlan will develop and operate a statewide apprenticeship intermediary that elevates the role of registered apprenticeship within the workforce development system, while functioning as a liaison among employers, educational institutions, and the regulatory system.

In developing this model, *Apprenticeship Rhode Island* has assembled a highly motivated set of employers and industry associations who will operate as key partners. Employers include Atrion, CVS Health, and Care New England. Industry associations include the RI Manufacturers Association, the Southeast New England Defense Industry Alliance, and the RI Marine Trades Association. These entities have committed to serve as sponsors for registered apprenticeships in a variety of H-1B-related occupations such as information technology specialists, cybersecurity analysts, and CNC machinists. Other occupations featured in our model include the high-growth fields of specialized nursing, medical coders, and licensed chemical dependency professionals.

Seventy-two percent of new apprenticeships (864) will be in entry-level positions, while 28% (336) will be incumbent workers who will receive significant upskilling that will generate demand for more entry-level workers. While the majority of our apprenticeship programs will be newly registered under this project, a significant portion will occur through an expansion of existing apprenticeship programs – notably Atrion in IT and CVS Health in pharmacy services.

*Apprenticeship Rhode Island* seeks \$5 million in AAI funding. Our director will be Andrew Cortés (401-919-5919 or [acortes@provplan.org](mailto:acortes@provplan.org)). Nationally and locally, Andrew is recognized as an innovative leader in all areas of apprenticeship. In guiding our project, he will leverage his years of experience as the director of YouthBuild Providence and founder of Building Futures.