

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO . 05-26
	DATE September 8, 2026

TO: STATE EDUCATION AGENCY HEADS AND COMMISSIONERS
STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES, LIAISONS AND ADMINISTRATORS
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS
STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCIES AND DIRECTORS
STATE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS
STATE LABOR COMMISSIONERS
OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP (OA) STATE DIRECTORS
APPRENTICESHIP GRANT RECIPIENTS
ALL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION GRANTEEES
YOUTHBUILD PROGRAMS
AMERICAN JOB CENTERS
JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS AND DIRECTORS

FROM: MAREK LACO 
Acting Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Framework for Effective Pre-Apprenticeships

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this Training and Employment Notice (TEN) is to: (1) present the core components of effective pre-apprenticeships through a clear, actionable framework; (2) reaffirm the definition of pre-apprenticeship and its essential connection to Registered Apprenticeship programs; and (3) clarify how pre-apprenticeships can be delivered across federally-funded workforce and education programs.

This TEN rescinds and replaces TEN 23-23: Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs, published on March 5, 2024.

2. **Action Requested.** Stakeholders are requested to disseminate this information broadly to state and local workforce development agencies, workforce boards, and other workforce, secondary, and postsecondary education partners. This TEN intends to build broader understanding of pre-apprenticeship programs, their connection to Registered Apprenticeships, and the role they play in developing skilled talent. It also provides a framework that outlines how existing workforce and education programs can serve as pre-apprenticeship programs by partnering with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors in related industries to create pathways that prepare participants for entry into Registered Apprenticeship programs. Stakeholders are also encouraged to identify existing workforce and education programs that can easily serve as pre-apprenticeships and visit the Partner

Finder¹ on Apprenticeship.gov² to find and partner with local Registered Apprenticeship sponsors in related industries.

3. Summary, Background, and Definition.

- a. Summary – As Registered Apprenticeship continues to expand across industries and occupations, pre-apprenticeships can be an effective on-ramp, preparing career seekers with the foundational, technical, and employability skills needed to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship and beyond. This TEN establishes a clear framework for increasing effective pre-apprenticeship program outcomes across a variety of settings and industries.

The U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) framework for effective pre-apprenticeships centers on five core components: (1) direct pathways into Registered Apprenticeship through strong partnerships with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors and employers; (2) industry-driven training and curriculum aligned to Registered Apprenticeship standards; (3) hands-on, work-based learning and career exposure; (4) broad workforce and education partnerships to expand access and leverage available resources; and (5) outcomes tracking and continuous improvement. Together, these five components ensure that pre-apprenticeship is more than just curriculum delivery. A pre-apprenticeship should offer participants clearly defined pathways into Registered Apprenticeship career opportunities.

- b. Background – Registered Apprenticeship is a proven, industry-driven earn-and-learn model where employers develop their future workforce and individuals obtain paid work experience, progressive wage increases, related instruction (RI), and a portable, nationally recognized credential. In Fiscal Year 2025, over 980,000 apprentices participated in Registered Apprenticeship while earning wages and gaining industry-aligned skills through more than 26,000 Registered Apprenticeship programs nationwide. Apprentices who complete their Registered Apprenticeship earn an average annual starting salary of approximately \$86,000, and 93 percent³ remain employed a year or more after completion. Benefits for employers are substantial. The empirical estimates of the employer return on investment to Registered Apprenticeships range from 40 to 90 percent. Meaning, for each \$1.00 invested, employers can expect to reap a benefit of \$1.40 to \$1.90.⁴

Executive Order 14278⁵, *Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future*, sets a goal of reaching and surpassing one million active apprentices and directs DOL, the Department of Education, and the Department of Commerce to

¹ <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/partner-finder>

² <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/>

³ Based on information available through Kansas Department of Commerce Common Reporting Information System as of April 2026.

⁴ <https://www.dol.gov/resource-library/return-investment-roi-employers-registered-apprenticeships>

⁵ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/preparing-americans-for-high-paying-skilled-trade-jobs-of-the-future/>

modernize workforce programs, expand Registered Apprenticeship, and strengthen transparency and accountability. America's Talent Strategy⁶, issued jointly by these Departments, establishes a blueprint for strengthening the nation's workforce through industry-driven strategies, including Registered Apprenticeship. Under Pillar I, the Strategy emphasizes aligning education and training with industry needs, including through effective pre-apprenticeships that provide foundational, competency-based preparation linked directly to Registered Apprenticeship pathways.

In March 2026, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) issued sub-regulatory guidance⁷ on Registered Apprenticeship designed to highlight existing regulatory flexibilities for sponsors, reduce administrative burdens, promote clarity and consistency in registration processes across states, elevate quality standards, and improve transparency. Notably, Office of Apprenticeship (OA) Circular 2026-01⁸ includes updated guidance on the granting of advanced standing in Registered Apprenticeships that is particularly relevant for enhancing alignment between pre-apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships.

This Framework for Effective Pre-Apprenticeships TEN encourages the application of these same principles to pre-apprenticeship programs to strengthen their role as effective on-ramps into Registered Apprenticeships that serve America's workforce across all industry sectors broadly, inclusive of Trump Administration priority industries, such as shipbuilding and defense industrial base, artificial intelligence (AI), AI infrastructure, nuclear energy, healthcare, information technology, advanced manufacturing, and quantum computing.

- c. WIOA Definition – The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Final Rule (20 CFR 681.480⁹) defines a pre-apprenticeship as a program designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship and includes five elements: (a) training and curriculum aligned with employer skill needs; (b) access to educational and career counseling and supportive services; (c) hands-on, meaningful learning activities connected to education and training; (d) opportunities to attain at least one industry-recognized credential; and (e) a partnership with one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs that assists in placing completers into Registered Apprenticeship.

By issuing this updated TEN, ETA reinforces the important role of pre-apprenticeships in America's Talent Strategy in support of the Trump Administration's goal of reaching and surpassing one million active apprentices. Building on the WIOA definition of pre-apprenticeship as a foundational baseline, this TEN takes that framework further to ensure pre-apprenticeships function as effective, defined pathways into Registered Apprenticeships that prepare the next generation of skilled workers and deliver real, long-term career value.

⁶ [America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age](#)

⁷ [Office of Apprenticeship Circular No. 2026-03](#)

⁸ [Office of Apprenticeship Circular No. 2026-01](#)

⁹ [§ 681.480 What is a pre-apprenticeship program?](#)

4. **DOL’s Framework for Effective Pre-Apprenticeships.** While program designs may vary based on the participants and settings they serve, this five-component framework is intended to guide National Apprenticeship System stakeholders in building and strengthening pre-apprenticeships that effectively prepare Americans for Registered Apprenticeship across high-demand industries and occupations, with the goal of increasing the number of effective pre-apprenticeship programs, namely those that have the necessary components to ensure demonstrated Registered Apprenticeship program entry rates.

Component 1: Direct Pathways into Registered Apprenticeship Through Strong Partnerships with Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors and Employers

- Effective pre-apprenticeships are built in cooperation with — and have defined agreements with — one or more Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. Best practices may include but are not limited to the following:
 - Leverage available resources, such as the Partner Finder¹⁰ on Apprenticeship.gov or information from Workforce Boards, to identify and contact local Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to serve as prospective pre-apprenticeship program partners.
 - Written Memoranda of Understanding or articulation agreements with one or more Registered Apprenticeship sponsors that establish direct entry, advanced standing, or Credit for Prior Learning for pre-apprenticeship program completers.
 - Documented sponsor engagement such as site visits, mentor access, direct-entry opportunities, and application assistance for participants.
 - Collaborative recruitment and outreach strategies, co-developed with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, to connect with individuals who could benefit from Registered Apprenticeship pathways.
- The goal is seamless connection and advancement: a participant who completes the pre-apprenticeship should have a clear, documented path into one or more specific Registered Apprenticeship programs that are actively hiring new apprentices.

Component 2: Industry-Driven Training and Curriculum Aligned to Registered Apprenticeship Standards

- Pre-apprenticeship curricula¹¹ should be grounded in the competencies required to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship. Best practices may include but are not limited to the following:
 - Instruction validated by Registered Apprenticeship sponsors or employers and aligned to Registered Apprenticeship occupational standards and program entry qualifications.

¹⁰ [Partner Finder](#)

¹¹ For example, Apprenticeship Readiness Programs offered by TradesFutures teaches the [Multi-Craft Core Curriculum](#), a standardized, comprehensive, 120-hour construction course designed to help young people, adults, or dislocated workers choose and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship programs that are appropriate for them.

- Opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials or certifications aligned with Registered Apprenticeship entry qualifications.
- Integration of essential and employability skills — such as digital and AI literacy¹², financial literacy, civic-life skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, leadership skills, and professional written and verbal communication skills — should be woven into technical instruction rather than treated as separate add-ons.
- Training should be sufficiently rigorous and comprehensive to meaningfully prepare participants for the demands of Registered Apprenticeship: building toward competency and proficiency, not merely exposure.

Component 3: Hands-On, Work-Based Learning and Career Exposure

- Effective pre-apprenticeships should provide supervised, hands-on learning in real or simulated work settings. Best practices may include but are not limited to the following:
 - Reflect actual Registered Apprenticeship occupational tasks and working conditions, without displacing paid, incumbent workers.
 - Give participants direct exposure to the industry and occupation, helping them make informed decisions about whether a career pathway is the right fit before entering into a Registered Apprenticeship.
 - Ideally include stipends or wages when funding permits.
- Career exposure alone is not a pre-apprenticeship, but the inclusion of career exposure is a critical, sometimes overlooked, element of pre-apprenticeship. Programs that give participants a realistic picture of the occupation can reduce early Registered Apprenticeship attrition and improve long-term Registered Apprenticeship program completion rates.

Component 4: Broad Workforce and Education Partnerships to Expand Access and Leverage Available Resources

- Beyond Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, effective pre-apprenticeships should build durable and sustainable partnerships with relevant entities in their communities. Partners may include but are not limited to the following:
 - Employers, industry associations, and chambers of commerce;
 - Workforce boards, American Job Centers, YouthBuild programs, Job Corps Centers and National Training Contractors (NTCs), and Registered Apprenticeship industry intermediaries;
 - Educational institutions (secondary and postsecondary institutions of higher education, including two- and four-year community colleges, colleges and universities); and
 - Labor organizations, joint labor-management partnerships, and community- and faith-based organizations.

¹² [TEN 07-25, *The U.S. Department of Labor's Artificial Intelligence Literacy Framework*, U.S. Department of Labor, \(February 13, 2026\).](#)

- These partnerships expand pathways into Registered Apprenticeship and leverage federal and state funding streams. Examples of such funding includes WIOA, Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), Workforce Pell, and others. This leveraging of resources can help to increase program awareness and ensure participants have access to career counseling, mentoring, and supportive services (such as transportation, childcare, tools, and career coaching), that are often delivered through partner organizations.

Component 5: Outcomes Tracking and Continuous Improvement

- Pre-apprenticeship programs should collect, analyze, and act on data to drive quality, effectiveness, and performance. Best practices include but are not limited to the following:
 - Tracking program-level outcomes: enrollment, completion, credentials earned, and Registered Apprenticeship placement and completion rates, with emphasis on the latter.
 - Partnering with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors and state and local workforce programs to track longer-term outcomes, including employment retention and wage data trends.
 - Transparently reporting pre-apprenticeship completion rates and Registered Apprenticeship placement outcomes to sponsors, funders, workforce boards, relevant workforce stakeholders, and the public.
 - Creating structured mechanisms for ongoing industry feedback to ensure curricula remain current with workforce demand and technological change, including advances in AI.
- Data should drive design; programs should use outcomes, especially pre-apprenticeship to Registered Apprenticeship placement rates, to continuously refine their approach and demonstrate value to partners and participants alike.

Finally, Registered Apprenticeship sponsors and pre-apprenticeship program managers should strongly encourage apprentices to accurately identify their previous participation in a pre-apprenticeship program when completing their Registered Apprenticeship agreement (ETA Form 671, Part II¹³) to ensure this data is captured in the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System (RAPIDS).¹⁴ This step allows for the tracking of which pre-apprentices were able to enter Registered Apprenticeships through their participation in a pre-apprenticeship program. Having data indicating the number of program participants successfully entering Registered Apprenticeships facilitates the evaluation of pre-apprenticeship programs for their effectiveness.

Pre-Apprenticeships in Specific Settings. Pre-apprenticeships are delivered across a broad spectrum of settings, including high schools, community colleges, employers, industry

¹³ [ETA Form 671, Part II, Section A](#), Question 8 asks, “Did the apprentice complete a pre-apprenticeship program prior to their registration in this apprenticeship program.” If an apprentice replies yes, they are asked to provide the pre-apprenticeship program name and address.

¹⁴ <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/help/what-rapids>

associations, labor organizations, community- and faith-based organizations, and federally funded workforce development programs under WIOA, such as Job Corps and YouthBuild programs (which primarily serve youth). Respectively, pre-apprenticeships serve a broad spectrum of Americans, including high school students, postsecondary students, out-of-school youth, and adults who are changing careers, including but not limited to those who meet the WIOA definition of a Dislocated Worker. Pre-apprenticeship programs in any of these settings serving their respective populations are strongly encouraged to apply the five-component framework for effective pre-apprenticeships outlined in Section 4 of this TEN. Additionally, the following considerations may apply in specific settings.

High Schools Including Career and Technical Education (CTE) Settings.

Pre-apprenticeships for high school students should provide Registered Apprenticeship-aligned preparation that equips learners to enter Registered Apprenticeship during high school or immediately after graduation. Best practices in high school settings include but are not limited to the following:

- Dual or concurrent enrollment and articulation agreements that allow students to earn secondary or postsecondary credit that counts toward the RI requirements of a Registered Apprenticeship.
- Work-based learning developed in partnership with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, helping students apply skills in real or simulated settings.

Relationship with CTE. CTE programs can serve as pre-apprenticeship programs when they connect CTE participants to Registered Apprenticeship programs, creating a clear pathway for CTE participants to continue learning while earning. When CTE and Registered Apprenticeship programs are intentionally connected each adds value: CTE contributes career awareness, foundational technical instruction, and school-based infrastructure, while the Registered Apprenticeship program provides industry-validated standards, paid on-the-job learning under the direct supervision of a mentor, related educational instruction, and an industry recognized credential. States may use Perkins V funds to develop, improve, and support Registered Apprenticeship programs, and their respective pre-apprenticeship programs, provided programs meet applicable size, scope, and quality requirements. States may also utilize funds received through ETA's State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) grants to support CTE and Registered Apprenticeship alignment. Ideally, such CTE programs supported through SAEF funding would incorporate the five-component framework for effective pre-apprenticeship components mentioned above.

Postsecondary and Institutions of Higher Education

Community colleges, technical colleges, universities, and community-based organizations frequently offer pre-apprenticeships that lead into Registered Apprenticeship programs, with many offering credit towards the Registered Apprenticeship programs training requirements. These programs typically feature credit-bearing or noncredit coursework aligned to Registered Apprenticeship curricula and opportunities for advanced standing under 29 CFR 29.5(b)(12).¹⁵

¹⁵ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/subtitle-A/part-29/section-29.5>

They may also offer integrated pathways toward stackable credentials or degrees alongside Registered Apprenticeship completion, including degree-connected Registered Apprenticeship models that intentionally align Registered Apprenticeship programs with two- or four-year or even master's degree requirements, allowing apprentices to earn a portable, nationally recognized occupational credential, which is a postsecondary degree as defined by WIOA, as well as a postsecondary degree from an institution of higher education. These concurrent, subsequent, and embedded degree-connected Registered Apprenticeship models represent a powerful convergence of higher education and workforce training, enhancing the value proposition of Registered Apprenticeship for participants, students, employers, and participating postsecondary institutions.

Workforce Development Programs

Workforce development programs can serve as pre-apprenticeships. Often delivered by industry organizations, labor organizations, joint labor-management partnerships, workforce development organizations, or community- or faith-based organizations, these pre-apprenticeships commonly include accelerated, industry-aligned instruction for career changers; pathways to a high school diploma or recognized equivalent when needed; and enhanced supportive services such as childcare assistance, transportation assistance, rehabilitation services and structured Registered Apprenticeship application assistance.

Delivering Pre-Apprenticeships Across Publicly Funded Workforce Programs. The federally funded workforce system and its participants benefit when Registered Apprenticeships are seamlessly integrated into the full suite of services available. Workforce agencies, at all levels of government, can serve both jobseekers and employers alike by weaving effective pre-apprenticeships into their service strategies, toolkits, webpages, social media, and other outreach and educational material. As such, the use of effective pre-apprenticeships is strongly encouraged in the federally funded programs noted below, as well as in other applicable programs.

WIOA Title I: Workforce Development Activities - Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs. Since pre-apprenticeships include occupational training as a core component, pre-apprenticeship programs are usually considered a training service for Adult and Dislocated Worker program participants, and participants are counted as receiving training services¹⁶ for reporting purposes. If a pre-apprenticeship program does not include sufficient training to be considered a training program, it may be considered a career service. Specifically, pre-apprenticeships that provide pre-vocational services, workforce preparation, or exposure to actual work experiences could be considered as career services within WIOA. Often offered in American Job Centers but available in many locations, career services assist job seekers in finding employment, such as career counseling, resume writing assistance, job search aid, and skill assessments.

¹⁶ As a reference, 20 CFR 680.200 provides a list of activities that are training services for the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-20/chapter-V/part-680/subpart-B/section-680.200>

WIOA participants may use an Individual Training Account (ITA) for a pre-apprenticeship program if it is a training service and is on the state's list of Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). To be included on the ETPL, a pre-apprenticeship program must follow the state's eligibility procedures. All Registered Apprenticeship sponsors are eligible for inclusion on the ETPL but must opt in. The same general rule does not apply to pre-apprenticeship programs. For additional information on ETPL eligibility requirements, refer to TEGLS No. 08-19¹⁷ and No. 13-16, Change 1.¹⁸

A local workforce board may provide its WIOA participants with a pre-apprenticeship program not included on the ETPL by using a training contract instead of an ITA. WIOA requires local workforce boards to have written criteria for training contracts, one of which is whether the program meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness. (Refer to 20 CFR 680.320¹⁹). Local workforce boards can update their training contract policies to be clear that pre-apprenticeship programs that meet the core components of this Framework for Effective Pre-Apprenticeships satisfy the “demonstrated effectiveness” standard.

WIOA Title I: Workforce Development Activities - Youth Program. A pre-apprenticeship program is considered a type of work experience, and the WIOA Youth program includes a requirement to spend a minimum of 20 percent of local youth funds on work experience. In addition, if the pre-apprenticeship program includes an occupational skills training component, separate from the work experience itself, WIOA Youth programs (serving youth and young adults ages 16–24) may report pre-apprenticeship under both the work experience program element and the occupational skills training program element as part of their program performance data. Consistent with ETA's guidance in TEGL No. 05-25,²⁰ states and local areas seeking to prioritize effective pre-apprenticeships in the WIOA Title I Youth Program may request a waiver of the requirement for each local area to make all 14 youth program elements available to focus funding on work experiences, including pre-apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeship programs, beyond the minimum 20 percent work experience expenditure requirement.

YouthBuild and Other Competitive Grant Programs. In the WIOA regulations at 20 CFR 688.120,²¹ YouthBuild programs funded by DOL are recognized as pre-apprenticeship programs. The YouthBuild pre-apprenticeship model encompasses education and occupational skills training, leadership development, and post-program placement opportunities. However, not all YouthBuild programs currently include all five components of an effective pre-apprenticeship program.

ETA strongly encourages all YouthBuild grantees to review and update their respective program models as appropriate and in coordination with their Federal Project Officer, to align with the WIOA definition of pre-apprenticeship at a minimum, specifically all five components of an effective pre-apprenticeship program, and create stronger pathways for

¹⁷ [TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER No. 08-19 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)

¹⁸ [TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER No. 13-16, Change 1 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)

¹⁹ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-20/chapter-V/part-680/subpart-C/section-680.320>

²⁰ [TEGL 05-25 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)

²¹ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-20/chapter-V/part-688/subpart-A/section-688.120>

YouthBuild participants to enter directly into Registered Apprenticeship following program completion as outlined by the framework in Section 4 of this TEN. In fact, the December 2025 YouthBuild funding opportunity announcement specified that, “the Department has set a goal for the percentage of participants that enter a Registered Apprenticeship within one year of exiting the YouthBuild program. This target will ensure grant-funded pre-apprenticeships have genuine partnerships with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, helping to accelerate high-quality career pathways.”²²

Several other DOL-funded competitive grant programs explicitly authorize pre-apprenticeship services, where grant funds can be used to design and deliver programs that include all five of the core components of pre-apprenticeships, and which can become onramps to Registered Apprenticeships and employment success for program participants.

Job Corps. To carry out its program purpose under WIOA and consistent with 20 CFR Part 686,²³ Job Corps is designed to provide eligible youth with academic instruction, career technical training, work-based learning, counseling and supportive services that prepare students for employment, including Registered Apprenticeships. Job Corps Center Operators may pursue pre-apprenticeship designation in specific trades; however, implementation, program quality and maturity vary across centers. The Office of Job Corps (OJC) oversees national monitoring and documentation efforts intended to improve program consistency and increase transparency regarding program performance and outcomes.

ETA has strengthened Job Corps’ ability to track Registered Apprenticeship outcomes by updating ETA Form 678²⁴ to capture Registered Apprenticeship placement data more consistently across Center Operators and NTCs. These updates support greater national visibility into Registered Apprenticeship pathways, partnership opportunities, and identified gaps that may inform continuous improvement efforts with NTCs and Center Operators.

Job Corps regulations at 20 CFR 686.505(d)(2),²⁵ in alignment with its program purposes under WIOA, expressly recognize Registered Apprenticeship as an outcome of the Job Corps program. This regulatory framework allows Job Corps Center Operators and NTCs to intentionally align training pathways with employers and Registered Apprenticeship sponsors’ expectations to support students in progressing toward successful entry into Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.

To strengthen alignment with the five components of effective pre-apprenticeships as outlined in this TEN, Job Corps Center Operators and NTCs are strongly encouraged to:

- Leverage resources, guides, and fact sheets from the Apprenticeship.gov Resource Hub to increase emphasis on the benefits of Registered Apprenticeships during the career exploration phase of each student’s enrollment.

²² [FOA-ETA-26-38](#)

²³ [20 CFR Part 686](#)

²⁴ [ETA Form 678](#)

²⁵ [20 CFR 686.505\(d\)\(2\)](#)

- Customize curriculum to align with national or local Registered Apprenticeship occupational standards, including revising training materials based on Registered Apprenticeship sponsor validation.
- Proactively identify Registered Apprenticeship sponsors aligned with Job Corps' existing training offerings and formalize those relationships with written agreements outlining direct entry or advanced standing for eligible Job Corps graduates.
- Maintain structured referral processes and ongoing collaboration and partnership with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors.

NTCs may currently offer training programs that enroll Job Corps graduates, and NTCs are encouraged to seek registration of their programs as a Registered Apprenticeship program with an appropriate Registration Agency (i.e., ETA's Office of Apprenticeship or a DOL-recognized State Apprenticeship Agency).

DOL grantees of programs not listed here are advised to reach out to the Office of Apprenticeship if they have questions or would like to request guidance on how pre-apprenticeship may be incorporated into their respective program.

Perkins V CTE. Perkins V grantees can take steps to expand high-quality work-based learning and align CTE programs with, or develop them into, pre-apprenticeship programs, as described earlier in this guidance. Effective use of Perkins V funds supports alignment of CTE programs of study with labor market needs through employer engagement, internships, clinicals, and other opportunities that connect classroom learning with paid, on-the-job experience. Perkins V funds can be used to develop, improve, coordinate, implement, and support Registered Apprenticeships and their prerequisite pre-apprenticeship components when such activities address essentials identified through the comprehensive local needs assessment and are part of a CTE program of study that is of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective as determined by the state. Perkins V funds may also be used to strengthen employer and workforce partnerships, align curricula to Registered Apprenticeship standards, and support articulation agreements that enable seamless transitions from secondary CTE into Registered Apprenticeship and postsecondary education. When braided with workforce funding and guided by employer input, Perkins V can help states and local recipients build talent pipelines that expand access to high-demand careers, reduce barriers for learners, and meet regional workforce needs.

AEFLA / WIOA Title II: Adult Education and Literacy. Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) grantees can use adult education funds to help adults build the academic, English language, digital, and workforce readiness skills needed to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. Effective use of AEFLA aligns adult basic education, English language acquisition, workplace adult education, workforce preparation, and integrated education and training with regional labor market needs and employer-designed career pathways. WIOA Title II funds can support contextualized instruction, bridge programming, co-enrollment with workforce partners, and integrated education and training models that pair adult education and literacy activities with workforce preparation and occupational training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

When braided with WIOA Title I, Perkins V, employer, and other workforce resources, AEFLA helps states and local providers expand access to pre-apprenticeship opportunities, particularly for adults who need foundational skills, English language support, a secondary credential, or on-ramps into high-demand careers. This approach strengthens talent pipelines, reduces barriers for adult learners, and helps employers meet regional workforce needs.

Workforce Pell Grants. Workforce Pell Grants, established under the Working Families Tax Cuts Act (signed into law on July 4, 2025), extend Federal Pell Grant eligibility to high-quality, short-term postsecondary programs of 150–599 clock hours delivered in 8 to less than 15 weeks of instruction. This marked the most significant expansion of the Pell Grant in more than 50 years. Workforce Pell Grants can help eligible students finance the RI component of a Registered Apprenticeship and eligible pre-apprenticeships when delivered through an eligible workforce program that meets applicable program requirements, including but not limited to accreditation requirements.²⁶

Effective use of Workforce Pell aligns short-term, high-quality postsecondary instruction with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations and allows the classroom-based portion of a Registered Apprenticeship to be supported. Workforce Pell funds can help cover the instructional costs of RI, support stackable credentials tied to Registered Apprenticeship standards, and expand partnerships among eligible postsecondary institutions, Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, employers, workforce boards, and states.

When braided with employer wages, WIOA, Perkins V, and other workforce resources, Workforce Pell can reduce any upfront cost of Registered Apprenticeship participation, strengthen the technical training component of Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeships, and help build talent pipelines in sectors where employers need skilled workers.

A pre-apprenticeship program that is offered primarily by a Title IV-eligible postsecondary institution may qualify as an eligible workforce program on its own if the pre-apprenticeship meets all the applicable Workforce Pell requirements. Consistent with the pre-apprenticeship framework outlined in Section 4 of this TEN, which emphasizes defined linkages between pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship programs pursuing opportunities to leverage Workforce Pell that do not qualify on their own as an eligible workforce program should consider at least two approaches: (1) partner with a Title IV-eligible (Higher Education Act of 1965) postsecondary institution that delivers the RI component as an eligible workforce program, while the pre-apprenticeship program operator provides complementary supportive and Registered Apprenticeship transition services; or (2) integrate the pre-apprenticeship as a part of the RI component of a Registered Apprenticeship to form an eligible workforce program. With the pre-apprenticeship integrated into Registered Apprenticeship, the Registered Apprenticeship certificate of completion qualifies as the recognized postsecondary credential under 20 CFR 688.120, thereby supporting Workforce Pell eligibility.²⁷

²⁶ 20 U.S.C. § 1099b

²⁷ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-20/chapter-V/part-688/subpart-A/section-688.120>

Both approaches reinforce the DOL's core principle that effective pre-apprenticeships are designed in close partnership with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. Workforce Pell should be braided with WIOA Title I funds, Perkins V resources, state investments, and employer contributions to ensure participants have the financial and support services needed to complete training and transition into Registered Apprenticeship.

WIOA Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Through partnerships with workforce agencies, educational institutions, including community colleges, employers, and Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, state VR agencies may support eligible individuals with disabilities in completing both pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs. Additionally, they may provide other VR services necessary to support their employment goals in competitive integrated employment. State VR agencies outline these services on each participant's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

For students with disabilities, state VR agencies may also provide pre-employment transition services leading to participation in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. These services – provided while individuals with disabilities are enrolled in an educational program – include job exploration counseling, workplace readiness training, work-based learning experiences, instruction in self-advocacy, and counseling on postsecondary education opportunities. Pre-employment transition services may be provided to students with disabilities who have not yet applied for VR services and to eligible individuals with disabilities under IPEs.

Technical Assistance and Resource Materials. DOL and its partners offer the following resources to support effective pre-apprenticeships:

- Apprenticeship.gov Job Finder:²⁸ Tool for searching open apprenticeship job opportunities from employers across the country.
- Apprenticeship.gov Partner Finder:²⁹ Tool for searching for the right partners to help design, develop, or enhance a pre-apprenticeship program.
- Apprenticeships for Young People:³⁰ a webpage on Apprenticeship.gov that includes a factsheet, information, and examples of pre-apprenticeships.
- Office of Apprenticeship Industry Intermediaries:³¹ Registered Apprenticeship Industry Intermediaries are integral stakeholders in the effort to expand the number of Registered Apprenticeship opportunities across industries throughout the U.S.
- The Employment and Training Administration searchable archives:³² these resources contain information about pre-apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeship, including WorkforceGPS.³³

²⁸ <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-job-finder>

²⁹ <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/partner-finder>

³⁰ <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/educators/youth-apprenticeship>

³¹ <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/investments-tax-credits-and-tuition-support/registered-apprenticeship-industry-intermediaries>

³² <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta>

³³ <https://www.workforcegps.org/>

- YouthBuild:³⁴ a community-based pre-apprenticeship program that provides job training and educational services for opportunity youth ages 16–24.
- Job Corps:³⁵ a no-cost education and vocational training program for young people, ages 16–24.
- The Job Accommodation Network (JAN):³⁶ offers free guidance on workplace accommodations³⁷ and accessible training design for individuals with disabilities.
- CAPE-Youth³⁸ and EARN:³⁹ programs funded by DOL’s Office of Disability and Employment Policy that provide resources supporting accessible career pathways and employer practices for youth and adults with disabilities.

5. **Inquiries.** Questions regarding this TEN may be directed to the Office of Apprenticeship at apprenticeship@dol.gov.

6. **References.**

- Act of August 16, 1937, (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.), (<https://www.dol.gov/index.php/agencies/eta/apprenticeship/policy/national-apprenticeship-act>);
- Executive Order 14278, *Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future*, The White House (April 23, 2025), (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/28/2025-07369/preparing-americans-for-high-paying-skilled-trade-jobs-of-the-future>);
- *U.S. Department of Labor issues guidance on Registered Apprenticeship aimed at accelerating growth, reducing burdens, improving transparency*, U.S. Department of Labor (March 9, 2026), (<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20260309>);
- *America’s Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age*, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Education (August 12, 2025), (<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OPA/newsreleases/2025/08/Americas-Talent-Strategy-Building-the-Workforce-for-the-Golden-Age.pdf>);
- WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR part 681, *What is a pre-apprenticeship program?* (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-20/chapter-V/part-681/subpart-C/section-681.480>);
- O*NET OnLine, U.S. Department of Labor (<https://www.onetonline.org/find/career>);
- TEN No. 31-16, *Framework on Registered Apprenticeship for High School Students (TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE No. 31-16 | U.S. Department of Labor)*, issued January 17, 2017;
- TEGL No. 21-16, *Third Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Formula Program Guidance*, ([TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER No. 21-16 | U.S. Department of Labor](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OPA/newsreleases/2017/03/2017-03-21-16-TEGL-Youth-Formula-Program-Guidance.pdf)), issued March 2, 2017;

³⁴ <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/youth/youthbuild>

³⁵ <https://www.jobcorps.gov/>

³⁶ <https://askjan.org/>

³⁷ <https://askjan.org/topics/Disability-Disclosure.cfm>

³⁸ <https://capeyouth.org/>

³⁹ <https://askearn.org/>

- TEGL No. 13-16, *Guidance on Registered Apprenticeship Provisions and Opportunities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*, ([TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER No. 13-16 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)), issued January 12, 2017;
- TEGL No. 13-16, Change 1, *Guidance on Registered Apprenticeship Provisions and Opportunities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*, ([TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER No. 13-16, Change 1 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)), issued May 17, 2021;
- TEGL No. 19-16, *Guidance on Services provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES), as amended by title III of WIOA, and for Implementation of the WIOA Final Rules.* ([TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER No. 19-16 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)), issued March 1, 2017;
- TEGL No. 08-19, *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Training Provider Eligibility and State List of Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) and Programs*, ([TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER No. 08-19 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)), issued January 2, 2020; and
- TEN No. 07-25, *The U.S. Department of Labor's Artificial Intelligence Literacy Framework*, ([TEN 07-25 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)), issued February 13, 2026.

7. **Attachment(s).** N/A