



Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio: State Apprenticeship Capacity Assessment

SUMMARY

In 2020, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the Office of Apprenticeship (OA) and the Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR) within the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and funded contractors Urban Institute and Mathematica to conduct the State Apprenticeship Capacity Assessment as part of the existing Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio. The qualitative study aims to conduct a methodical review and assessment of the capacity of state systems and their partnership to design and deliver Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Programs and services (including pre-apprenticeship services). The findings will be presented in a series of briefs.

This brief highlights key takeaways from virtual group discussions with apprenticeship administrators in eight states, where administrators described how the COVID-19 pandemic affected their Registered Apprenticeship (RA) systems and how they and their apprenticeship partners responded to the pandemic.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the annual process to determine the Department's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [Apprenticeship](#) and [Employment and Training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Leveraging technology allowed apprenticeship administrators to pivot their work online quickly and easily and to streamline work processes.
- By working virtually, state apprenticeship agencies continued supporting partners and expanded their reach and responsiveness.
- Training providers and instructors faced logistical challenges transitioning in-person training online. State administrators noted that many of their training partners did not offer online apprenticeship training prior to the pandemic and had to quickly adapt.
- Online learning was viewed as offering greater flexibility than in-person learning, despite certain challenges in implementing hybrid or remote learning options.
- Online learning may not be a substitute for in-person hands-on learning in all industries, but it may offer opportunities to expand apprenticeships to new industries. Although most administrators interviewed for the study mentioned that hybrid and remote learning opportunities will continue post-COVID, five of the eight administrators interviewed noted the need to retain hands-on learning components in-person for certain apprenticeship programs.



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- Low wages, long apprenticeship programs, and COVID-19 disruptions may have contributed to less participant interest in apprenticeship.
- Some employers were reluctant to hire new apprentices during the economic uncertainty of the pandemic, but no mass cancellations of apprenticeships were reported by the state administrators interviewed for the study.
- Expansion into nontraditional industries, like healthcare and education, accelerated during the pandemic to address workforce shortages and to meet employer demand.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

TIMEFRAME: 2020-2023

SUBMITTED BY: Urban Institute and Mathematica

DATE PREPARED: September 2023

PARTNER AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration

SPONSOR: Chief Evaluation Office

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