

How to improve recruitment and retention of apprentices



Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) benefit both apprentices and employers. Emerging evidence* suggests that apprentices earn more than they did before becoming apprentices¹ and employer reporting suggests strong returns on their investment in registered apprenticeship.² Employers also report benefiting from a stronger pipeline of skilled workers, less turnover, greater employee engagement and loyalty, and improved firm culture.²

To realize these benefits, RAPs must make sure apprentices stay in the programs and complete them. Emerging evidence may offer insights into potential strategies that help address barriers to participation and success.



Use inclusive and transparent **recruitment practices** to reach diverse groups and prepare them to succeed.^{3,4}

- Design inclusive and accessible recruitment materials that include images and language reflective of diverse groups. Implement inclusive hiring processes.⁵
- Clearly communicate all program and occupational requirements to help applicants determine fit with their career goals and set expectations.
- Network with community partners that serve underrepresented groups to recruit broadly, change perceptions of apprenticeship, and build trust.⁶
- Use [pre-apprenticeship programs](#) as an on-ramp to the RAP.^{3,7-9}



Create **high-quality learning experiences** in the classroom and on-the-job.^{10,11}

- Use personalized teaching methods: Be available for questions, tailor lessons based on learner needs, make learning enjoyable, and teach the skills needed in the field.
- Strengthen employers' capacity to teach apprentices by helping them identify and train strong mentors and trainers.
- Increase the breadth and relevance of on-the-job experiences.



Build a **supportive and inclusive environment** for all apprentices.

- Provide trained mentors and instructors from diverse backgrounds who can serve as role models and make learning and work environments feel inclusive.¹²⁻¹⁴
- Designate program staff to provide counseling and non-financial support.³
- Adopt family-friendly policies to meet the needs of a diverse workforce.¹⁵
- Provide wraparound supports to address barriers to participation.⁶

**We refer to the evidence base cited in this brief as emerging because it has some limitations. Prior research studies on apprenticeship are well conducted but do not include causal analyses; rather, they rely on self-reported data on perceived benefits. Some of the strategies cited in this brief are based on one or just a few studies, some of which have been conducted in the context of a single industry. Future evidence building is needed on promising recruitment and retention strategies.*



Notes:

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About this Resource:

This resource was developed by the American Institutes for Research for the Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Office under contract 1605DC-18-A-0036. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to DOL, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government. It was last updated November 2023.

Suggested Citation:

Souvanna, P., Corea, C., Amin, S., Middleton, E., Kelly, K. (2023) *How to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Apprentices*. Submitted to U.S. Department of Labor Chief Evaluation Office. Arlington, VA: American Institutes of Research.

