

TO GET AHEAD IN TODAY'S ECONOMY, AMERICA'S WORKERS NEED SKILLS AND REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE. LIKEWISE, EMPLOYERS IN ALL INDUSTRIES NEED A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE TO GROW AND TO THRIVE. THE SOLUTION FOR FULFILLING THE NEEDS OF BOTH?

APPRENTICESHIP.

Apprentices earn a salary while gaining the skills necessary to succeed in exciting, high-demand professions. In many cases, they can also earn college credit, even an associate's or bachelor's degree, paid for by their employer. Combining classroom instruction with on-the-job training, apprenticeships also help businesses, both large and small, bridge skills gaps and bring new and more diverse talent into the workplace.

What's more, apprenticeship programs now exist in not only traditional trades, such as construction, but also high-growth industries, such as health care, information technology, transportation, energy, and many others. Because of this versatility, apprenticeship is a smart, long-term career strategy for many people, including those with disabilities and others with diverse backgrounds and educational experiences.

In short, Apprenticeship Works...

**for individuals,
for employers,
for business,
for opportunity,
FOR INCLUSION.**

Hear More About Apprenticeship

Educators and service providers interested in learning more and educating individuals and employers about the benefits of apprenticeship may want to access the two-part "#ApprenticeshipWorks" video series produced by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. This video series features interviews with four diverse apprentices and former apprentices in a range of fields, including information technology, health care information management, and shipbuilding, as well as representatives from the organizations that sponsor their apprenticeship programs. To view the videos, visit www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/Apprenticeshipworks-video-series.htm



#APPRENTICESHIPWORKS

**Apprenticeship
Works
for Inclusion:**

A GUIDE TO
HELPING PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES
EXPLORE INCLUSIVE
CAREER PATHS

#ApprenticeshipWorks



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REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING

“Our apprentices typically spend two days a week in academics and three days a week down on the job. They’re getting paid the entire time.”

- David Tilman, Manager, Product Training, The Apprentice School, Newport News Shipbuilding

The Apprentice School at Newport News Shipbuilding in Newport News, Virginia, offers multi-year Registered Apprenticeships in a wide range of shipbuilding fields as well as advanced programs of study. These apprenticeships offer the opportunity to simultaneously learn a trade, receive competitive pay, and earn college credit. They also provide Newport News Shipbuilding a continuous supply of employees with the skills and knowledge necessary to grow and succeed in the years ahead.

Why apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a job that allows an individual to both earn money and learn through a combination of technical instruction and hands-on training. Apprentices start working on day one and receive pay increases as they learn new skills and take on more responsibilities. In fact, the average starting wage for an apprentice is \$15.00 per hour.

When researching apprenticeships, individuals should look for whether a program meets national standards that make its credentials transferrable and recognizable to employers across the country. This may also mean the program strives to include people with disabilities and other diverse populations.

Completion of an apprenticeship program lays the foundation for a long-term career with a competitive salary and little, if any, educational debt. The average salary for a fully proficient worker who completes an apprenticeship program is \$60,000. Apprenticeship alumni often work for their employers for years to come, moving into management or, if entrepreneurial in spirit, starting businesses of their own later down the line. Many also become educators or trainers, helping build their industry’s future workforce.

What industries offer apprenticeships?

Whatever someone’s interest or career aspirations, there’s likely a path to achieving it through apprenticeship. Some of the top occupations for Registered Apprenticeship programs include carpenter, chef, construction craft laborer, dental assistant, electrician, software engineer, mechatronics technician, elevator constructor, fire medic, law enforcement agent, over-the-road truck driver, and pipefitter. These examples just scrape the surface of the opportunities available in a wide range of exciting industries, including those predicted to grow significantly in the coming years.

Who are good candidates for apprenticeships?

Because of the diversity of opportunities available, apprenticeships are a good option for people from a wide range of backgrounds and educational experiences, including people with disabilities, minorities, and individuals from other at-risk, underserved, and/or underrepresented populations. The eligible starting age for Registered Apprenticeship can be no less than 16; however, in certain occupations, individuals must be 18. Each apprenticeship program’s sponsor also develops its own minimum qualifications related to education and the ability to perform essential job functions.

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 industry needs.

In some industries, there also may be opportunities for pre-apprenticeships, which prepare people to enter and succeed in apprenticeships by enhancing their qualifications and expertise. Like apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships involve both instruction and hands-on training.

Do apprenticeships offer a disability-inclusive career path?

Yes! Apprenticeship is a tried and tested career pathway for all people, including people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities help diversify and strengthen their workplaces through varied perspectives on how to confront challenges and get the job done. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Labor protects applicants and current participants in Registered Apprenticeship programs from discrimination on the basis of disability.

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 burden. An applicant for an apprenticeship may also require 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. Also, Registered Apprenticeship programs are taking proactive steps to recruit people with disabilities. This is why individuals may be asked to self-identify as a person with a disability, both during the application and hiring process and once enrolled in an apprenticeship program.

Apprentices, educators, employment service providers, and employers who need help determining effective accommodations can use the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). A free service of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy, JAN is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential assistance on workplace accommodations. It offers one-on-one guidance over the phone at **(800) 526-7234** or **(877) 781-9403 (TTY)** or via email or live chat. JAN’s website, **AskJAN.org**, also offers a wealth of information, including an A to Z guide of disabilities and accommodations.



REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: URBAN TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

“On-the-job training is a tried and true practice on building expertise. The young people we work with are diverse. They come from our underserved and underrepresented communities.”

- Edison Freire, Director, Educational Technology, School District of Philadelphia

The Computer Support Specialists Information Technology (IT) apprenticeship program run by the Urban Technology Project trains individuals for IT careers, allowing them to gain technical skills and put them to work in Philadelphia high schools. In addition to providing much needed IT support for these schools, apprentices gain leadership skills by organizing after-school computer clubs and participating in other community-building activities. Upon completion of the program, many alumni go on to work for the school district, while others pursue IT jobs at firms in and around the city.



REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

MEDPARTNERS

“The apprenticeship definitely gave me the confidence that I didn’t have before. It gave me the tools to understand what I am doing. It gave me the tools to look at something in a different way.”

- LaTasha Hall, Health Information Management Professional, MedPartners

MedPartners’ apprenticeship program is designed to bridge education and employment in health information management, often referred to as medical coding. The company developed the program in collaboration with the American Health Information Management Association as a way to build a pipeline of professionals with the skills needed to keep pace with rapid changes in the field. Apprentices serve MedPartners’ client hospitals and other health care facilities across the nation, and the computer-based nature of the work means they may have the opportunity to work from home.



How long are apprenticeship programs?

The time it takes to complete an apprenticeship varies depending on a number of factors, including the occupation and nature of program. They range from one to six years, with most being somewhere in the middle. During this time, apprentices participate in both on-the-job training and classroom-based instruction, which may be delivered by training centers, technical schools, community colleges, or even through online learning. Registered Apprenticeship programs have certain annual requirements for the number of hours apprentices spend in each, and time in the classroom often counts toward college credit, based on the program design.

Where can I learn about apprenticeship opportunities for my students or customers?

Apprenticeship programs exist in communities across the U.S., many sponsored by some of the nation’s most well-known companies. To learn more, interested individuals can visit the Apprenticeship Finder (**www.dol.gov/featured/apprenticeship/find-opportunities**), where they can search for available opportunities by state and city. On this page, they also can read about the experiences of apprentices and former apprentices working in a wide range of occupations.

American Job Centers (**www.servicelocator.org**) are also a good source of information about apprenticeship programs, as well as other opportunities for training and employment. For people with disabilities, state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies (**rsa.ed.gov/people.cfm**) also may be able to help in exploring the options available.

Educators and service providers in a position to help people with disabilities, especially young people with disabilities, explore apprenticeships and other career paths may also want to check out several resources available from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (**www.dol.gov/odep**). Examples include the Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success curriculum and video series (**www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills**) and Youth with Disabilities Entering the Workplace through Apprenticeship toolkit and accompanying research report (**www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/Apprenticeship.htm**).