



Apprenticeship Services

Apprenticeship – a world class training and talent development model

This fact sheet will help you establish a better understanding of the costs and benefits of using registered apprenticeship as a skills training model, and discuss the steps toward implementing these programs in Washington State.

What is apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship is a structured system of hands-on training designed to teach highly technical skills. It is designed to produce craftworkers that are fully competent in all aspects of an occupation, including knowledge, skill and proficiency on the job. With apprenticeship training, there is a written agreement between the apprentice and the employer or apprenticeship program sponsor, approved by and registered with the WA Department of Labor & Industries. This agreement specifies the length of training, related technical instruction, an outline of the skills of the trade to be learned and the wages the apprentice will be paid. After successfully completing the prescribed hours of related classroom instruction and hands-on training, the apprentice will graduate to a highly skilled "journey worker."

Another benefit to both workers and agencies is that apprentices who are veterans can receive GI Bill benefits if eligible.

Registered apprenticeships — Good for the State of Washington

America's workforce is aging. As the baby boomers begin to retire, they will take with them a lifetime of skills and expertise, leaving potential gaps in the labor force and a demand for younger, skilled workers. Meanwhile, to compete in a global economy, employers need employees with increasingly specialized skills, and these employees are hard to find and keep.

A growing shortage of skilled workers, coupled with increased demand, means that industry and the trades will need to work hard to attract and retain qualified candidates. Registered apprenticeships, where employees train under the direction of seasoned journeyworkers, are one good way that businesses can prepare for the shifting demographics of the workforce.

In contrast to previous generations, today's workers are accustomed to holding many jobs with many companies, and are comfortable jumping from one employer to the next in search of higher wages, better benefits and more opportunities. Apprenticeships foster loyalty, provide a pathway to family wage jobs and provide employers with a significant return on investment.

Benefits of Registered Apprenticeship

Businesses and companies that offer apprenticeship programs know that these programs make good financial sense. Here's why:

Apprenticeship programs give a sound return on your business investment.

A recent study showed that the financial benefits of apprenticeship training programs exceed the cost for 15 different trades. On average, for each dollar invested, private employers receive a benefit of \$1.38—a net return of \$0.38. (See “Return on Apprenticeship Training Investment.” Canadian Apprenticeship Forum. June 2006)

Apprenticeships put a skilled and trained workforce at your fingertips.

Apprenticeship programs ensure that you have skilled workers who are familiar with your work and production standards. You determine exactly what skills you need, and design training and educational programs to foster those skills.

“Homegrown” employees are more productive.

A skilled professional worker who trained as an apprentice within your business will naturally be more productive, since he or she is already familiar with your agency's standards and procedures. That means your employees will spend their time contributing to producing your expected results, not getting up to speed.

Apprenticeships foster loyalty.

There's something intangible about the loyalty workers feel to a business that values them enough to invest time and money to help them reach their career goals. Training apprentices in your business creates skilled and experienced employees, many of whom will stay with you for the long term.

An Apprenticeship Primer

How apprenticeships work

Registered apprenticeship programs start with the formation of an apprenticeship committee made up of agency members—both managers and workers. Committees develop program guidelines that include:

- Criteria for becoming an apprentice
- Skill and proficiency requirements to reach journeyworker/professional level
- Number of apprenticeship openings
- Wage rates and progressions based upon demonstrated competencies
- Required course curriculum to complement on-the-job training
- Supervision methods
- Equal opportunity procedures

Apprenticeship basics

Registered apprenticeships are made up of the following components:

Structured and supervised training

- Apprenticeships provide on-the-job training under the direction of experienced journeyworkers (skilled workers proficient in a certain job class)
- Related instruction (minimum of 144 hours each year) is provided by Washington community and technical colleges or other educational providers.
- Apprenticeships typically last from one to six years.

Laws and regulations

- Registered apprenticeships are governed by federal and state laws.
- Parties enter into a written agreement called an apprenticeship registration that specifies length of training, related school requirements, an outline of the skills of the trade to be learned and wages the apprentice will receive.
- Apprentices earn wages during the term of their apprenticeship.
- Wages are a portion of the skilled wage rate and increase throughout the training program in accordance with a predetermined wage scale.

Credentials

- Successful completion of a registered apprenticeship program leads to a nationally recognized certificate of completion and official journeyworker status.

Responsibilities

- Apprentices manage their time, keep work records, attend classes and progress in their apprenticeship program. Apprentices may also be required to pay for tuition or books.
- Employers pay wages, oversee on-the-job training, monitor attendance at training classes and evaluate progress

GENERAL INFORMATION

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get started?

The best way to get started is to call or email a Labor & Industries apprenticeship consultant. He or she can provide you with all the necessary information and resources to start a registered apprenticeship program.

What will L&I do for me?

L & I has consultants who will walk you through the entire process and help you get started. Once you have an apprenticeship program, they will be in contact with you regularly to help you manage your program.

How much will it cost to start an apprenticeship program?

The primary cost to starting an apprenticeship program is time and effort. You pay no fees to Labor & Industries to register a program. If you decide to participate as a training agent partnering with an existing apprenticeship, you may be required to pay a small fee to the apprenticeship program to help cover the costs of training. This fee varies by program.

Are there any financial benefits?

Yes. The financial benefits are both short term and long term. First, you save on payroll costs because you pay your apprentice lower wages than you would pay a journeylevel worker. As time passes and apprentices progress in their training, they earn increasingly higher wage amounts. Additionally, as a Washington state registered apprentice, your apprentice will receive a 50% tuition waiver at a Washington state community or technical college.

Quick example: One Washington city created an apprenticeship program to train an administrative assistant. They could have hired a skilled administrative assistant, but instead, they created an apprenticeship program to train one. Over two years, the city saved \$14,000 in payroll costs and \$840 in tuition costs, and the apprentice got a jump start on her career, and a nationally recognized credential that she can put on her resume.

In the long run, you will benefit financially by having a better trained and more productive workforce. A recent study showed that the financial benefits of apprenticeship training programs exceed the cost for 15 different trades. On average, for each dollar invested, employers receive a benefit of \$1.38—a net return of \$0.38. (See “Return on Apprenticeship Training Investment.” Canadian Apprenticeship Forum. June 2006)

Link: <http://www.caf-fca.org/english/roti.asp>

How long will it take to set up a program?

Creating an apprenticeship program that is registered with and approved by the state usually takes three to six months. Construction employers are encouraged to look into the many quality programs already in existence in the construction trades.

What is my role as an employer?

For jobs that have an established apprenticeship program, an employer is responsible for:

- Overseeing on-the-job training and monitoring attendance at related training classes
- Evaluating progress before recommending advancement to the next pay level
- Recommending award of the certificate of completion when an apprentice has satisfactorily completed the required course work and on-the-job training

What makes apprenticeship training different?

Apprenticeship training includes paid on-site training as well as quality related technical instruction. This training teaches the apprentice the knowledge and hands-on skills needed for

the job. An apprentice is also taught unique craft skills associated with the occupation through the progression toward journey-worker status.

What types of occupations can be learned?

There is a wide variety of occupations for apprenticeship training. Opportunities are available in the building trades, such as carpenters, plumbers and electricians. There are also opportunities that exist outside the construction trades, such as firefighter, machinist, printer, child care development specialist, finance specialist, sign painter, automotive technician, teacher assistant, master craftsman and other professional technical trades.

How long does an apprenticeship last?

Depending upon the occupation, apprenticeship programs can last from one to five years. An additional requirement includes completing 144 hours of related technical instruction each year throughout the apprenticeship program.

Getting Started - Apprenticeship consultants make it easy

Our apprenticeship consultants are located all across the state. They will help you identify which type of apprenticeship model best suits your company and then provide intensive, one-on-one consulting and on-site assistance to get your program up and running.

What to expect from your consultant

Consider your consultant your full-service guide. He or she will help you:

- Identify your business and training needs, and determine how an apprenticeship program could meet those needs
- Connect you with an appropriate program or identify existing programs that can serve as a guide for your own
- Draft required documents
- Set up your program administration
- Troubleshoot problems

Need more information?

Please call your local Labor & Industries Apprenticeship consultant. You may find out who your local consultant is by calling the Office of Apprenticeship at 360-902-5320, and online, a list of local consultants is available at this link:

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/About/AppCoordinators/default.asp>