



NEW JERSEY
APPRENTICESHIP TECHNICAL
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Connecting Job Seekers and Students to Registered Apprenticeship Opportunities

A DESK REFERENCE FOR WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS



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Purpose

This desk reference is designed for education and career services professionals working with students and job seekers to help them better understand and communicate about Registered Apprenticeship opportunities that support career entry and advancement in a range of New Jersey industries, including but not limited to:

- Construction
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Telecommunications
- Finance and Business
- Transportation
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Energy
- Hospitality

Who should use this desk reference?

Individuals who provide career information, advising, coaching, and support to job seekers and students will find this desk reference useful, specifically:

- Secondary, and post-secondary career counselors;
- Career coaches and case managers who work in New Jersey One-Stop Career Centers or in community-based organizations; and
- Others who help individuals explore workforce education and training.

Note: Like many systems, Registered Apprenticeship has several unique terms and acronyms. An [Acronyms and Definitions](#) appendix is included at the end of this guide to assist users to become familiar with these terms.

Why focus on Registered Apprenticeship?

Expanding apprenticeship is part of New Jersey's strategic initiative for building a stronger and fairer economy in the state.¹ New Jersey has made significant investments that have led to significant growth in Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs). Since FY2018, the number of individuals participating in apprenticeship programs in New Jersey grew by 29%, from 8,094 active apprentices to 10,480 in FY2023.² The number of RA programs has increased from 622 in 2018 to 1,233 in 2023—a 100% increase.³

¹ State of New Jersey, Office of the Governor. (2018). *The State of Innovation: Building a Stronger and Fairer Economy in New Jersey*. <https://www.njeda.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/StrongerAndFairerNewJerseyEconomyReport.pdf>

² Apprentice Population by State Analysis (11-09-2023) by U.S.DOL. https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/dol.apprenticeship/viz/ApprenticePopulationbyStateAnalysis11-09-2023_16995503558600/ApprDemoApprLocation

³ Edwards, J. (2023, November 14). *NJDOL celebrates apprenticeship month, 100 percent increase in registered apprenticeship programs*. WRNJ Radio. <https://wmjr.com/njdol-celebrates-apprenticeship-month-100-percent-increase-in-registered-apprenticeship-programs/>

Apprenticeship is growing because of the value it delivers to individuals, employers, and communities.

Individuals:	Employers:	Communities:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive paid on-the-job learning (OJL) • Earn progressive wage increases • Gain related education that can result in a degree or certification • Accrue little to no student debt • Earn a portable, national credential • Attain a career with growth opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit and develop a skilled workforce • Diversify their workforce • Create and customize flexible training to meet their needs • Increase worker retention during and after apprenticeship training • Potentially receive tax credits for participating in Registered Apprenticeship programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the talent pipeline of skilled workers • Grow the workforce that builds community infrastructure • Increase economic opportunities for community • Expand equitable pathways to the middle class • Strengthen industry sector strategies • Increase economic vitality

For **educators and career advisors**, Registered Apprenticeship operationalizes meaningful career pathways through providing hands-on, real-world experience, aligning education with practical skills sought by employers. Reviewing RAP opportunities with students and job seekers can help them explore careers in various occupations, including the responsibilities and activities required, and develop plans for building the education, training, and experience they may need to meet the eligibility requirements to enter different RAPs.

For **workforce professionals**, RA provides job seekers with a proven work-based learning strategy that has strong outcomes and aligns with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act’s (WIOA) emphasis on employer-focused, hands-on training. Apprenticeship is a win-win: the outcomes attained by apprentices and those that complete RAPs can also lead to strong WIOA performance outcomes.⁴

What is Registered Apprenticeship?

RA offers high-quality career pathways that are approved and overseen by US Department of Labor (USDOL) Office of Apprenticeship (OA) staff to ensure that programs are being administered in accordance with federal regulations.

All RA programs must include these seven essential elements:



⁴ American Institutes for Research. (2022). *Aligning the Registered Apprenticeship and Workforce Development Systems: A resource.* <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Aligning-Registered-Apprenticeship-Workforce-Development-Systems-April-2022.pdf>

1. **Industry Led:** Programs are industry-vetted and approved to ensure alignment with industry standards and that apprentices are trained for highly skilled, high-demand occupations.
2. **Paid Job:** Apprenticeships differ from internships in that apprentices are employees that receive progressive wage increases as they gain knowledge and skills.
3. **On-the-Job Learning and Mentorship:** Structured training and instruction are provided in the workplace by an experienced mentor.
4. **Supplemental Education:** Sometimes called Related Classroom Training or Related Technical Instruction, supplemental education supports development of technical, workforce, and academic competencies that apply to the job. It can be provided by a community college, a technical school, or an apprenticeship training school – or by the business itself.
5. **Diversity:** RA programs aspire to reflect the communities in which they operate through strong non-discrimination, anti-harassment, and recruitment practices to ensure access, equity, and inclusion of diverse populations.
6. **Quality and Safety:** Apprentices are afforded worker protections while receiving rigorous training to equip them with the skills they need to succeed and the proper training and supervision they need to be safe.
7. **Credentials:** Apprentices earn a portable, nationally recognized credential within their industry. In many RA programs, apprentices also earn academic credit that can result in post-secondary certificates and credentials.

RA programs must have a minimum of 2,000 OJL hours and can require as many as 12,000 OJL hours, lasting from one to six years depending on the program. All RA programs require at least 144 hours of supplemental education annually, and can be structured as time-based, competency-based, or a hybrid of both. For more information, refer to the USDOL OA website: <https://www.apprenticeship.gov>

What are the eligibility requirements and selection procedures for joining a Registered Apprenticeship Program?

Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility requirements are commonly referred to as minimum qualifications in the apprenticeship system. Program sponsors establish minimum qualifications for eligibility, which may include educational requirements, aptitude test scores, or demonstrated ability to physically perform the essential functions of the occupation. Common eligibility requirements include age and High School Diploma or High School Equivalency (HSE or GED). Eligibility requirements and minimum qualifications are available by contacting the program sponsor.

Individuals must be at least 16 years of age in order to start Registered Apprenticeship programs; however, individuals must be 18 to be apprentices in hazardous occupations.⁵

⁵ Specific information about child labor laws and worker's compensation for apprentices under 18 years of age can be found in Training and Employment Notice No. 31-16: Framework on Registered Apprenticeship for High School Students. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/training-and-employment-notice-no-31-16>

Selection Procedures

Many RAPs conduct job interviews for individuals that meet the minimum qualifications for their programs. However, RAPs in construction and skilled trades, especially those that are operated by large union training centers, score eligible applicants based on a number of factors that can include interviews, experience, portfolio reviews, and/or aptitude test scores. All applicants are scored and placed on a “ranked list” of eligible candidate. Those that score higher are the first to be hired when more spaces open up in the apprenticeship program.

When working with students and job seekers, it is important to review the selection procedures in order to manage expectations about whether or not they will go to work immediately or will be in a waiting period.

If an eligible applicant scores very low, or there are large numbers of individuals before them on the ranked list, it may be beneficial to direct them to experiences that can help improve their application in the future, such as pre-apprenticeship, which is discussed below.

How do I connect students and job seekers with apprenticeship opportunities?

The New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOL) provides a list of current apprenticeship opportunities on its website: [Available Apprenticeships in New Jersey](#). Additionally, many of New Jersey’s 18 [community colleges](#) offer apprenticeship programs; search for these by visiting the community college website and entering “apprenticeship” in the search bar. The New Jersey Apprenticeship Technical Assistance Collaborative (NJ A-TAC) provides a [series of presentations](#) accessible online that provide additional information regarding connecting to opportunities.

What opportunities exist to help individuals prepare for apprenticeship?

Pre-Apprenticeship is a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship programs. Pre-apprenticeships provide exposure to career opportunities while also supporting participants to develop work-readiness skills and build technology, math, writing, and other academic skills.

New Jersey has made significant investments in pre-apprenticeship through grant programs like Pre-Apprenticeship Career Education (PACE) and [NJ BUILD](#) (Builders Utilization Initiative for Labor Diversity).

Pre-apprenticeships are housed in several locations, such as community colleges and non-profit and community-based organizations. In addition, some Registered Apprenticeship sponsors host their own trade-specific pre-apprenticeship training programs.

To find out more about pre-apprenticeship offerings in New Jersey, contact: The Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning at ApprenticeshipUnit@dol.nj.gov.

Registered Apprenticeship Resources for Education and Career Advisors and Customer-Facing Workforce Professionals

The following resources can support education and career advisors and customer-facing workforce professionals to better understand pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship at the national and state level so that they can work with customers to explore opportunities and map out their educational and career pathways.

National Level Resources

U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Apprenticeship website.

<https://www.apprenticeship.gov>

This resource from USDOL's Employment and Training Administration provides information about how various types of federal funding can be used for apprenticeship, from WIOA to Federal Student Aid.

[The Federal Resources Playbook for Registered Apprenticeship](#)

Find open apprenticeship programs across the country.

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

Explore information based on your role in the apprenticeship system using the Registered Apprenticeship Academy.

<https://www.apprenticeship.gov/registered-apprenticeship-academy>

Access USDOL's Apprenticeship Toolkit for workforce and education partners.

<https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/toolkit/learn.htm>

Discover resources on a variety of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship topics using the Apprenticeship Professionals Learning Network resources page.

<https://apprenticeshipprofessionals.org/resources>

Join the WorkforceGPS Apprenticeship community of practice to stay up-to-date on trainings and events.

<https://apprenticeshipusa.workforcegps.org/>

New Jersey Apprenticeship Resources

Discover resources for career seekers, employer and organizations, and training providers through the NJDOL New Jersey Apprenticeship Network.

<https://www.nj.gov/labor/career-services/apprenticeship/>

Share with businesses and organizations this link to learn about grant opportunities available through the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

<https://www.nj.gov/labor/research-info/grants.shtml>

Find open apprenticeship opportunities in the state.

<https://njlwdwfd.my.site.com/NJApprenticeship/s/available-apprenticeships>

Make general inquiries about apprenticeship, state grants, and program development.

[NJDOL Intake Form](#)

Locate resources for community college professionals on the New Jersey Apprenticeship Technical Assistance Collaborative web page.

<https://www.njccc.org/a-tac>

Secondary and Post-Secondary Education Resources

Website from USDOL Office of Apprenticeship with resources for post-secondary education opportunities to participate in RAPs.

[The Roles That Colleges and Universities Play in Apprenticeship](#)

Resources for Workforce Professionals

Guide for how to use workforce services and funds for Registered Apprenticeship and how apprenticeship supports WIOA outcomes.

[Making ApprenticeshipUSA Work for the Public Workforce System: Using Workforce Funds to Support Apprenticeship](#)

Resource to support state apprenticeship expansion teams and workforce system partners understand the structure of one another's work.

[Aligning the Registered Apprenticeship and Workforce Development Systems: A Resource](#)

Appendix A. Acronyms and Definitions

Term	Acronym	Definition
Apprentice		A person who is employed to learn an occupation or profession and is registered with a sponsor in an approved apprenticeship program.
On-the-Job Learning , also known as On-the-Job Training	OJL or OJT	Structured on-the-job training from an experienced mentor at the job site. Training focuses on the skills and knowledge an apprentice must learn during the program to be fully proficient on the job.
Pre-Apprenticeship		A program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand participant career pathways with industry training coupled with classroom instruction, industry and occupation exploration, and an opportunity for to build technology, math, English, and work-readiness skills • Provide workforce preparation for populations that have been underrepresented in certain industries or that experience various challenges in gaining admission into RA programs
Registered Apprenticeship Program	RAP	The course of study an apprentice must complete to become proficient in their occupation and is registered with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship. RAPs are governed by a written plan that contains all terms and conditions for the qualification, selection, employment and training of apprentices, including wages, number of hours or competencies required to complete training, and required supplemental education course work.
Sponsor		A person, association, committee, or organization operating an apprenticeship program and in whose name the program is (or is to be) registered or approved. A program sponsor may be an employer or an intermediary organization.
Supplemental Education , also known as Related	RTI	Organized, related instruction in technical subjects related to the occupation.

Classroom Instruction or Related Technical Instruction		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typically provided in a classroom or online• Instructors must meet requirements for a vocational-technical instructor in the state of registration, or be a subject matter expert, such as a journeyworker, who is recognized within an industry as having expertise in a specific occupation• Sponsors must review related technical instruction every year to make sure that it is relevant and current• A minimum of 144 hours per year is recommended.
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