



New Jersey Apprenticeship Network Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is apprenticeship?

A: Apprenticeship is an employment opportunity for an individual to start a new career through a training program that has both on-the-job training and classroom components (related technical instruction). It is a proven approach for preparing workers for jobs while meeting the needs of business for a highly-skilled workforce. It is an employer-driven, “learn-while-you-earn” model that combines on-the-job training provided by the employer that hires the apprentice, with job-related instruction in curricula tied to the attainment of national skills standards. The model also involves progressive increases in an apprentice’s skills and wages.

Apprenticeship is a flexible training strategy that can be customized to meet the needs of any business. Apprentices can be new hires, or businesses can select current employees who need skill upgrades to join the apprenticeship program.

Q: What is the New Jersey Apprenticeship Network?

A: Established under the Office of Apprenticeship in the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the New Jersey Apprenticeship Network (NJAN) serves as the primary contact for employers and potential apprentices for all statewide apprentice initiatives. The office is charged with developing new programs through a new Apprenticeship Innovation Fund and facilitates interactions both at the federal Department of Labor and amongst state stakeholders.

Q: What are the sectors and occupational fields of focus for NJAN?

A: NJAN focuses its efforts on traditional apprenticeship sectors like construction and the building trades, as well as non-traditional, high-growth sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy and utilities, IT and software, and health care. The goal of these efforts is to create demand-driven training that is widely applicable for employers in these sectors.

Q: How does NJAN plan to develop apprenticeship opportunities and expand the number of occupations with apprenticeships in NJ?

A: NJAN works to create formal linkages between K-12, community colleges, higher education systems, and businesses, so that more New Jerseyans receive post-secondary degrees, and students have career-focused options leading to meaningful employment after completion of an apprenticeship. These efforts include the reinvigoration of the NJPLACE apprenticeship coalition, which:

- Helps apprentices earn college credits
- Delivers robust career counseling for middle- and high-school students
- Increases the diversity of program participants
- Provides a more expansive set of apprenticeship opportunities in NJ’s targeted industries

Q: What is a pre-apprenticeship?

A: Pre-apprenticeship is designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in an apprenticeship program. These programs promote a diverse and skilled workforce and prepare participants to meet the basic qualifications for entry into an apprenticeship program. Pre-apprenticeship programs include:

- An approved training curriculum based on industry standards
- Educational and pre-vocational services
- Hands-on training in a simulated lab experience or through volunteer opportunities
- Assistance in applying to apprenticeship programs

Q: What is a Registered Apprenticeship?

A: Registered Apprenticeship is a high-quality, work-based learning, and post-secondary, earn-and-learn model that meets national and/or state standards for registration with the U.S. Department of Labor or federally recognized State Apprenticeship Agencies.

Q: How is registered apprenticeship different from other types of work-based training models?

A: Registered Apprenticeship training is distinguished from other types of on-the-job training methods, in that: (1) participants who are newly hired (or already employed) earn competitive wages, that are guaranteed to increase incrementally as their skills and abilities progress; (2) programs must meet national standards for registration with the U.S. Department of Labor (or federally recognized State Apprenticeship Agencies); (3) programs provide on-the-job learning in concert with job-related technical instruction; (4) on-the-job learning is conducted in the work setting under the direction of a mentor or expert in the field; and (5) training results in an industry-recognized credential and often college credit.

Q: Who oversees or “runs” the Registered Apprenticeship system?

A: The U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship (USDOL-OA) works in collaboration with the Apprenticeship Office of the New Jersey Department of Labor & Workforce Development to administer the program statewide. While the USDOL-OA is the sole registrar of all apprenticeships in the state, the state Office of Apprenticeship

assists the federal office by: (1) ensuring new and existing federally registered apprenticeships meet federal and state standards; (2) inspecting apprenticeship work-sites to safeguard participating apprentices’ well-being; (3) issuing USDOL-OA nationally recognized and portable Certificates of Completion of Apprenticeship to apprentices; (4) promoting the development of new programs through marketing and technical assistance; (5) reviewing training curricula, assuring all programs provide high-quality training; and (6) measuring apprentice program outcomes guaranteeing they continuously produce skilled and competent workers.

In addition, the state Office of Apprenticeship convenes a wide variety of interested stakeholders, including state organizations, industry associations, educational organizations (both secondary and post-secondary), workforce development organizations, economic development organizations, community-based organizations, and others. Through the coordination of forums and integration of the various agencies’ input, the state Office of Apprenticeship strategically advances apprenticeship in a manner customized to New Jersey’s unique labor market needs.

Q: How long are registered apprenticeship programs?

A: The length of an apprenticeship program can vary depending on the employer, the complexity of the occupation, and the type of program. Registered Apprenticeship programs typically range from one to four years. During the program, the apprentice receives both structured, on-the-job training and job-related education. For each year of the apprenticeship, the apprentice will normally receive 2,000 hours of on-the-job training, and a recommended minimum of 144 hours of related classroom instruction.

Q: How can I schedule a meeting with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development about apprenticeship?

A: If you have questions regarding the NJ Apprenticeship Network, or would like to speak with someone from the New Jersey Office of Apprenticeship, please complete the in-take form at nj.gov/labor/IntakeForm or mail to:
New Jersey Department of Labor
& Workforce Development
Office of Apprenticeship
P.O. Box 055 – 7th Floor
Trenton, NJ 08625-0055



Questions by Apprentices

Q: Is an apprenticeship a job?

A: Yes, apprentices start working from day one with incremental wage increases as they become more proficient.

Q: How much money can an apprentice earn?

A: Apprentices earn competitive wages, a paycheck from day one, and incremental raises as skill levels increase. The average wage for a fully proficient worker who completed an apprenticeship is approximately \$60,000 a year. Apprentices who complete their program earn approximately \$300,000 more over the span of their career compared with non-apprenticeship participants.

Q: Do you earn college credit while participating in apprenticeship programs?

A: Today, most apprenticeship opportunities include on-the-job training and classroom instruction provided by apprenticeship training centers, technical schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities, sometimes through distance learning. Often apprenticeship sponsors work directly with community colleges that do provide college credit for apprenticeship experience.

Q: What do I receive upon completion of an apprenticeship program?

A: After completion of an apprenticeship program, the apprentice earns a nationally recognized credential from the U.S. Department of Labor and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development that is portable and stackable. Additionally, an apprentice earns a paycheck throughout the apprenticeship and the potential for increased pay and upward career opportunities.

Q: How do I qualify for an apprenticeship?

A: Apprenticeship program sponsors identify the minimum qualifications to apply for a program. The eligible starting age for a Registered Apprenticeship program is 16 years of age; however, individuals must usually be 18 years old to be an apprentice in hazardous occupations. Program sponsors also identify additional minimum qualifications to apply (e.g., education, ability to physically perform the essential functions of the occupation, proof of age). All applicants are required to meet the minimum qualifications.



Questions by Employers

Q: How do apprenticeships benefit the sponsor?

A: Apprenticeship sponsors the development of highly skilled employees. Once established, apprenticeship programs also reduce turnover rates, lowering the cost of recruitment, increasing productivity and worker satisfaction, and increasing safety in the workplace/job site.

Q: What occupations can I train for through Registered Apprenticeship?

A: The Registered Apprenticeship program touches 1,000 career areas, including the following top occupations: software developer, engineer, pharmacy technician, telecommunications technician, aircraft technician, mechanic, certified nursing assistant, electrician, welder, construction craft laborer, dental assistant, insurance agent, and truck driver. A comprehensive list of occupations can be found here.

Q: Are all apprenticeships union-based?

A: No. Apprenticeships are used widely across all industries and include union and non-union programs. Registered Apprenticeship sponsors include unions, but also other employers such as community colleges and universities, workforce investment boards, industry associations, public sector entities, and the military.

Q: Where can I find technical assistance resources to help me develop and register my apprenticeship program with the Labor Department's Office of Apprenticeship?

A: We maintain a number of resources for employers who want to explore the process of starting an apprenticeship program at nj.gov/labor/Apprenticeship. Here you can find our newest technical assistance products including our Quick Start Toolkit, which provides helpful steps and resources to start and register an apprenticeship program, as well as our Federal Resources Playbook, which provides information on using available funds and resources to support your registered apprenticeship program. The New Jersey Office of Apprenticeship is available to assist you at no extra cost and can be reached at apprenticeships@dol.nj.gov.

Q: Who are typical apprenticeship partners?

A: Through a proven system of public/private partnerships, Registered Apprenticeship partners with a wide range of organizations including (but not limited to): businesses, employer and industry associations, labor-management organizations, state and local workforce development agencies, Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), two- and four-year colleges that offer associate and bachelor's degrees in conjunction with a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship, the U.S. military, community-based organizations, and economic development organizations.