

BUILDING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.

Structure, ROI, and Implementation





What is a Registered Apprenticeship Program?

It's an **employer-driven** training model that combines on-the-job training with job-related instruction.

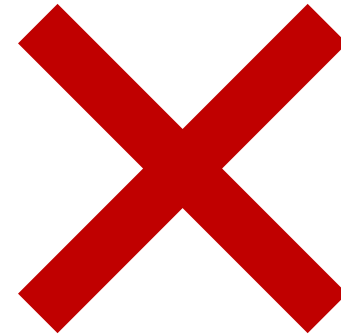
This “**earn and learn**” approach helps workers start new careers and helps businesses recruit and retain a highly-skilled workforce.

The Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center or other educational providers offers **customized support** to help design the registered apprenticeship program to meet each employer's needs.

DEFINING APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships are NOT...

- Unpaid Internships
- Limited to the Trades/Construction
- Limited to Young People/New Hires
- A Delivery System for Corporate Welfare
- A Magic Wand



Why Apprenticeship Programs?

To help manufacturers train and develop workers in roles that are critical to deliver on business strategy

- **Improved Recruitment**
 - There are **currently 900,000 unfilled manufacturing jobs in the US** and, by 2030, it's projected to more than double – attract and retain people
 - **More than 50% of new hires leave after the first 90 days**, often **due to poor training** – get good at training
- **Improve Retention**
 - Competition for employees is fierce – **Keep your people**
 - **The average cost of turning over an employee is \$10-14,000** – Get employees engaged
- **Improved Efficiency**
 - Getting a new hire fully productive takes a long time – Get fast and efficient at training



Components of a Registered Apprenticeship



**EMPLOYER
ENGAGEMENT**



**ON-THE-JOB
TRAINING**



**RELATED TRAINING
AND INSTRUCTION**



**COMPENSATION FOR
SKILLS GAINED**



**NATIONAL
CREDENTIAL**

APPRENTICESHIPS ARE... BUSINESS-DRIVEN.

What does this mean?

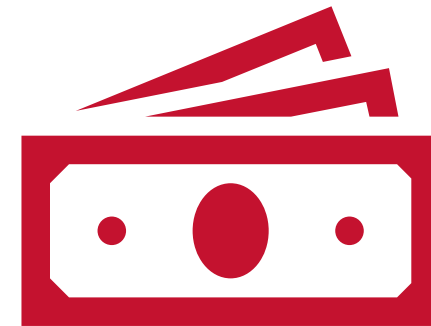
- Employers have final say on program design
- The Specialist role is about **empowering program registration** and **ensuring program quality**.
 - Find opportunities to include employer input/customization
 - Be honest when programs fall short; retention is important!



APPRENTICESHIPS ARE... A PAID JOB.

What does this mean?

- **Apprentices earn a progressive wage schedule**
- Apprentices earn a percentage of the journeyworker or experienced worker hourly rate.
- Wage reflects skill-gains in real time
- **Wage Schedules are entirely customizable**
- **ONET data is useful for determining wage competitiveness**



STAYING COMPETITIVE

The chart below from onetonline.org shows the median hourly wage for Industrial Mechanics in a specific region. We can use this data to ensure that programs we develop are competitive and likely to retain completers.

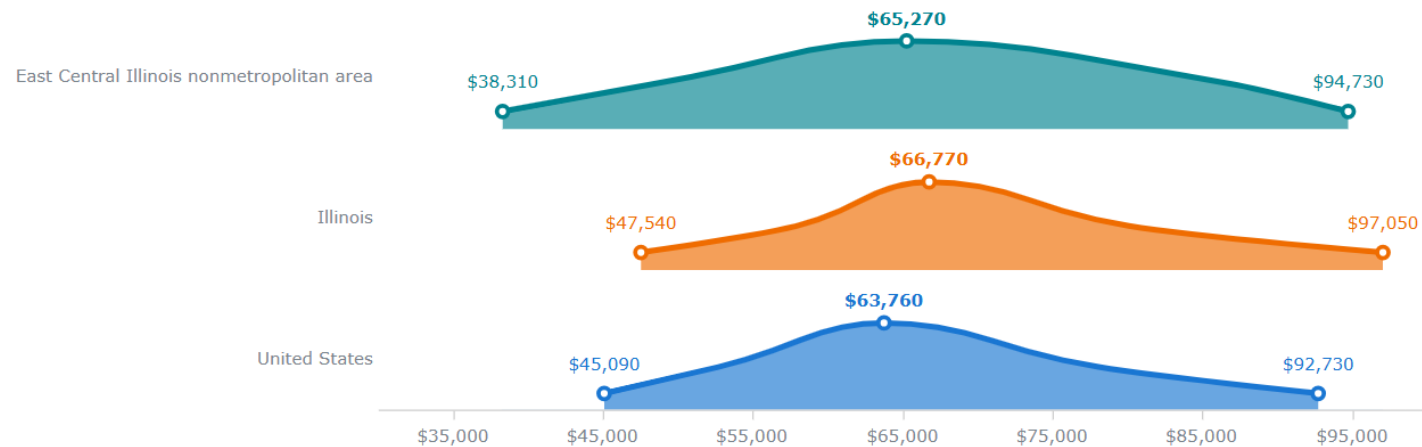
Local Wages

49-9041.00 - [Industrial Machinery Mechanics](#) ☀️ **Bright Outlook**

Wages for state:

Wages near ZIP Code:

Annual Wages Hourly Wages



APPRENTICESHIPS INCLUDE... ON-THE-JOB MENTORSHIP & LEARNING.

What does this mean?

- **Employers assign each apprentice an on-the-job mentor and establish a worksite ratio of journeymen to apprentices**
- Apprentices may work alongside mentors or have regular check-ins/training sessions.
- Mentors monitor apprentices' progress through their program, signing off on competencies
- All apprentices must complete at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job experience, regardless of program occupation and format.



How is a Registered Apprenticeship Program Designed?

Apprenticeships can range from 1-5 years in length, depending on the needs of the employers.

Example: A one-year Registered Apprenticeship program has a minimum of



**144 hours
related instruction**



**2,000 hours
on-the-job training**

APPRENTICESHIPS INCLUDE... SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATION.

What does this mean?

- **Apprentices must receive at least 144 hours of classroom learning per year**
- In most programs, this training is fully funded up-front by the employer
- Community Colleges and industry-recognized third parties are the most common RAP training providers
- Training can be front-loaded as necessary (CNA, CDL, etc.)



APPRENTICESHIPS ENSURE... QUALITY AND SAFETY.

What does this mean?

- Skill Competencies are standardized for each occupation to ensure quality of training outcomes
- Mentor-Apprentice ratio encourages worksite safety
- Specialists take on an advisory role to help employers design programs with **high-quality apprentice outcomes**



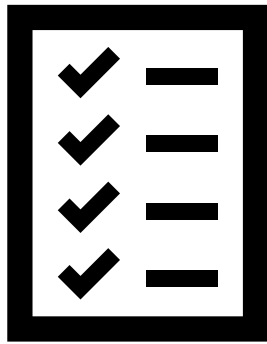
APPRENTICESHIPS PROVIDE... CREDENTIALS.

What does this mean?

- Apprentices who complete their program receive a **nationally-recognized Journeyworker certificate** from US DOL
- Additional credentials such as licenses, degrees, and certificates are often built into apprenticeships as part of program development.
- Better credentials = better value add for apprentices



ROLES IN THE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP ECOSYSTEM



ROLES IN THE RAP ECOSYSTEM:

Regional Specialists:

- Funded by the Apprenticeship Illinois grant program through awards provided to Local Workforce Areas (LWIAs)
- Specialists provide an end-to-end concierge service to employers looking to develop or join a registered apprenticeship program.
- The primary function of the apprenticeship specialist is to work with ATRs to register programs on behalf of interested employers



ROLES IN THE RAP ECOSYSTEM:

Regional Specialists will...

- Conduct in-person and virtual apprenticeship outreach through events and employer consultations
- Receive and pursue referrals received to the Apprenticeship Illinois website
- Work with employers to fully develop and register their apprenticeship programs from start to finish
- Connect employers to intermediary partners and other applicable services



Employment Differences

How is an Apprenticeship Different from Other Types of Work-Based Learning?

First, apprentices are hired by employers and receive a paycheck from the first day of work. Wages increase over time as apprentices advance in their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Apprenticeships last from one to six years – depending on the occupation and model – and connect education and work simultaneously. Apprentices take classes while they are working, combining theoretical and hands-on learning. At the end of the apprenticeship, apprentices earn industry-recognized credentials and in many cases they can receive college credits that may lead to an associate or bachelor's degree.

DEBUNKING APPRENTICESHIP MYTHS

- *Apprenticeships are only in traditional sectors and union shops.*
 - **WRONG! Apprenticeships can be found across all industries and occupations, and most programs are non-union.**
- *Apprenticeships mean red tape and bureaucracy.*
 - **WRONG! RAPS are business-driven, and Apprenticeship Specialists ensure a streamlined registration for employers!**
- *Apprenticeships are internships and are exclusive to new hires.*
 - **WRONG! There are many differences between internships and apprenticeships, and apprenticeships are open to all employees.**

Apprenticeship Benefits

Why Have an Apprentice



94% of apprentices who complete an apprenticeship retain employment.

Through apprenticeships, ***many companies have found their workers more motivated, encouraged, and skilled with their staff more likely to contribute to a more productive work environment.*** New apprentices and trainees become eager to learn and look to develop their skills.

Benefits of a Registered Apprenticeship Program

Apprenticeship programs help employers:

- Recruit and develop a diverse and highly skilled workforce that helps grow their business.
- Improve productivity, profitability and the employer's bottom line.
- Create flexible training options that ensure workers develop the right skills.
- Receive tax credits and employee tuition benefits in participating states.
(Tax credit available in Illinois)
- Increase staff loyalty and retention of workers, during and following the apprenticeship.
- Apprenticeships offer workers paid, relevant workplace experiences while acquiring the skills and credentials that employers value.



Benefits of a Registered Apprenticeship Program

Benefits for Companies

Highly Skilled Employees

Reduced Turnover Costs

Higher Productivity

Access to Sources of Funding

More Diverse Workforce

Benefits for Workers

Increased Skills

Higher Wages

National Credentials

Career Advancement

Retention

Indirect Benefits for our Employers

Employers reported the following indirect benefits for the apprenticeship program:



Apprenticeship Programs

Approved Occupations through DOL's Registered Apprenticeship programs

Apprenticeable Occupations—Current Status

- As of the latest DOL guidance: there are currently **over 1,200 occupations** —reflecting expanded coverage across sectors like manufacturing, IT, healthcare, logistics, and advanced trades — recognized as apprenticeable. These are occupations that meet DOL criteria—including industry recognition, structured OJT + technical instruction requirements, and skill progression protocols. These occupations are continually updated/designated through DOL rulemaking and state approval processes. [DOLUrban Institute](https://www.dol.gov/urbaninstitute/) / miapprenticeship.org



Approved Occupations through the IMEC Registered Apprenticeship programs

- **Additive Manufacturing Technician**
- **CNC Machine Operator**
- **CNC Setup Programmer**
- **Energy Storage Technician**
- **Electromechanical & Mechatronics Technician**
- **Electrical & Electronic Engineering Technician**
- **Electrical & Electronic Equipment Assembly Technician**
- **Fabricator**
- **Industrial Engineer Technician**
- **Industrial Maintenance Mechanic**
- **Industrial Manufacturing Technician**
- **Plastic Process Technician**
- **Quality Control Inspector**
- **Robotics Technician**
- **Tool and Die Maker**
- **Welder**
- **Woodworking Manufacturing Specialist**

IMEC

Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center

Through the Apprenticeship Illinois Intermediary Grant, the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) is part of a statewide initiative to help launch and expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) with hands-on support and minimal administrative burden.

As a U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor, IMEC can provide:

- Manages registration, compliance, and reporting requirements
- Provides **up to \$2,500 per apprentice** to offset Related Technical Instruction (RTI) costs
- Partners with local Workforce Boards, community colleges, and training providers
- Designs customized career pathways aligned to your workforce needs

Result:

Stronger talent pipelines, improved retention, and a more engaged workforce.

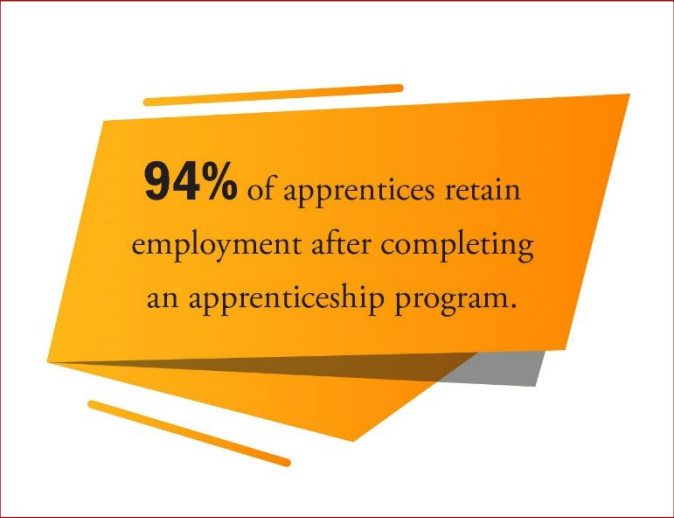


How to Get Started

Steps to Get Started...

- Review Competencies and Standards
- If occupation is not on part of IMEC's/Educational Institution approved occupations with DOL, **IMEC** or Educational Institution will submit paperwork to DOL for approval
- Sign Employer Agreement and Commitment Letter
- Identify potential apprentices and quality supervisors
- IMEC/Educational Institution ensures your training meets standards
- Report on skills mastered, wage increases, and apprentice status

Did you know?



94% of apprentices retain employment after completing an apprenticeship program.

REGISTERING AN APPRENTICESHIP

We can simplify the pieces of information needed to register an apprenticeship program into three easy categories:

The 3 C's of Registered Apprenticeship!

1. Competencies
2. Coursework
3. Compensation

DEFINING THE 3 C'S

COMPETENCIES

What skills should the apprentice have by the time they have completed their apprenticeship?

DEFINING THE 3 C'S

COURSEWORK

What training will the apprentice receive to support their skills growth?

DEFINING THE 3 C'S

COMPENSATION

How much is the apprentice going to be paid, and how are they going to earn their wage increases?

FY2024 Registered Apprenticeship Overview

Why These 2024 Numbers Matter to Employers

1. Talent Pipeline & Scale

Nearly 1 million participants in RAPs indicate a robust, scalable pipeline that spans industries—from trades to tech and healthcare.

2. Workforce Development Opportunity

Strong growth among youth and underrepresented populations shows apprenticeship is effective for building an inclusive talent base aligned with DEIA goals.

3. Shift Toward More Flexible Models

The rise of non-union apprenticeship programs (up 43% since 2019 in participation and 31% in completions) signals broader accessibility and innovation in apprenticeship models. [ABC](#)



Employer Return on Investment (ROI)

- A Department of Labor–sponsored evaluation found a **median ROI of \$144 for every \$100 invested** in Registered Apprenticeship programs under the American Apprenticeship Initiative. [DOL](#)
- Of the employers surveyed, **60% recouped at least 80% of their upfront costs**, while nearly **40% fully recouped costs** during the apprenticeship period—purely from direct apprentice productivity. [DOL](#)
- A clear majority (68%) of employers maintained a **positive net return within 5 years**, counting both direct and indirect benefits such as retention, reduced hiring costs, and improved workplace culture. [DOL](#)




Thank You!



Share your feedback

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