



**U.S. Department of Labor's
Advancing Inclusive Apprenticeships: A
National Online Dialogue on Increasing
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and
Accessibility in Apprenticeships**

**November 15 – December 10, 2021
Summary Report**



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Introduction

Background

Apprenticeships have a proven track record of producing strong results for both workers and businesses. And, more specifically, in developing career pathways for employees and producing skilled, inclusive talent pipelines for businesses. Apprenticeship programs offer access to hundreds of occupations, including high-growth and high-demand industries. According to Apprenticeship.gov, 92% of apprentices retain full-time employment after they complete apprenticeship programs, and they can earn higher salaries over their lifetime compared to their peers who don't participate in apprenticeships.

To support the continued growth of apprenticeships, especially to non-traditional industries and underserved populations, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) hosted the seventh annual National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) on November 15-21, 2021. NAW 2021 brought together thousands of partners across industry, labor, equity, workforce, government and education systems. These key stakeholders showcased the successes and value of Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) for strengthening the economy, advancing racial and gender equity and supporting access to work for diverse career seekers.

In celebration of NAW 2021 and the value of apprenticeships, DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) co-hosted a national online dialogue in fall 2021. The following five DOL agencies co-hosted the online dialogue:

- Office of Apprenticeship (OA) in the Employment and Training Administration (ETA)
- Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)
- Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)
- Wage and Hour Division (WHD)
- Women's Bureau (WB)

The dialogue, "Advancing Inclusive Apprenticeships: A National Online Dialogue on Increasing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) in Apprenticeship" ran from November 15 to December 10 and gathered ideas and input on how to promote inclusive apprenticeship programs under DOL's commitment to DEIA in the American workforce.

During the dialogue, stakeholders shared ideas for policies and promising practices to help advance DEIA and address barriers in RAPs. The ideas submitted in the dialogue will support DOL's efforts to foster inclusive apprenticeships that can improve access to work for diverse and underrepresented career seekers. This focus includes (but is not limited to): people with disabilities, women, people of color, veterans and people from the LGBTQIA+ community. It also includes career seekers whose backgrounds may intersect multiple diverse groups.

The online dialogue utilized ePolicyWorks' crowdsourcing platform to gather input and ideas from subject matter experts and key stakeholders— including representatives from the private and public sectors that engage in efforts to expand inclusive apprenticeships and access for career seekers. These stakeholders included employers, intermediary organizations, schools, job seekers and apprentices from diverse backgrounds, policymakers and providers of services and supports.

During the dialogue, more than 1,000 stakeholders visited the dialogue to view, share, comment and vote on ideas in three topic areas related to inclusive apprenticeships: (1) Outreach and Communication; (2) Addressing Barriers; and (3) Private Sector Partnership.

Online Dialogue Topics

The online dialogue's three topics were associated with key areas of interest for DOL overall and the partner agencies, including:

1. Outreach and Communication

This first topic focused on effective ways that employers, labor, intermediaries and other companies, including federal contractors, can drive outreach around apprenticeship programs for diverse and under-represented career seekers. The focus of this topic was on apprenticeships in both traditional and high-growth, high-demand fields.

2. Addressing Barriers

This topic explored the crucial barriers that can hinder access to apprenticeship programs for all career seekers, including people from diverse and under-represented population groups in the U.S. It sought ideas to address barriers that can bar efforts by career seekers to access and complete apprenticeship programs and secure and maintain jobs post completion.

3. Private Sector Partnerships

In this topic, participants discussed promising and best practices to forge partnerships among the public and private sectors to form apprenticeship programs that include diverse and under-represented career seekers.

Outreach Efforts

To ensure a wide range of participants in the online dialogue, ODEP and its partners (ETA, OFCCP, WHD, WB, VETS) conducted numerous strategic outreach efforts. These outreach efforts included distributing targeted eblasts, publishing announcements in newsletters from DOL and

its agencies and posting notices on the @USDOL social media accounts. In addition, ePolicyWorks conducted its own outreach through the @ePolicyWorks Twitter account and through emails to targeted groups, such as the registrants of previous ePolicyWorks online dialogues, advocacy organizations and organizations that represent employers and workers. It also targeted state and local government officials and other key stakeholders, including people with disabilities.

ePolicyWorks Email and Social Media Outreach

ePolicyWorks conducted six distinct email campaigns over the course of the online dialogue. The emails included the following:

1. Dialogue launch announcement emails (general invite)
2. Dialogue email reminder
3. Dialogue “last day” reminder email to dialogue registrants
4. Dialogue “last day” reminder email to ePolicyWorks community
5. Dialogue “extension” email
6. Dialogue “last day” email

In total, approximately 42,000 emails were delivered to stakeholders and ePolicyWorks attained an open rate of 29%—which is well above the industry average of 17%. In addition, 6.5% of individuals who opened one of the outreach emails clicked on a link in the email.

- Total emails delivered: **41,599**
- Total emails opened: **11,920**
- Total number of clicks on links in emails (excluding multiple clicks of the same link): **752**

In addition to email distribution, ePolicyWorks posted 14 tweets to its Twitter account throughout the online dialogue—including two promotional tweets before the dialogue launched and one tweet announcing the extension of the dialogue:

- Number of impressions from all @ePolicyWorks Advancing Inclusive Apprenticeships Online Dialogue promotional tweets: **2,587**
- Total engagement with @ePolicyWorks Advancing Inclusive Apprenticeships tweets (includes likes, clicks, replies or retweets): **59**

Independent Online Dialogue Promotion

Beyond outreach by ePolicyWorks, DOL, host agencies, other public and private organizations promoted the online dialogue through Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, emails, blogs, newsletters and action alerts. Below is a sampling of the organizations and publications that helped promote the online dialogue:

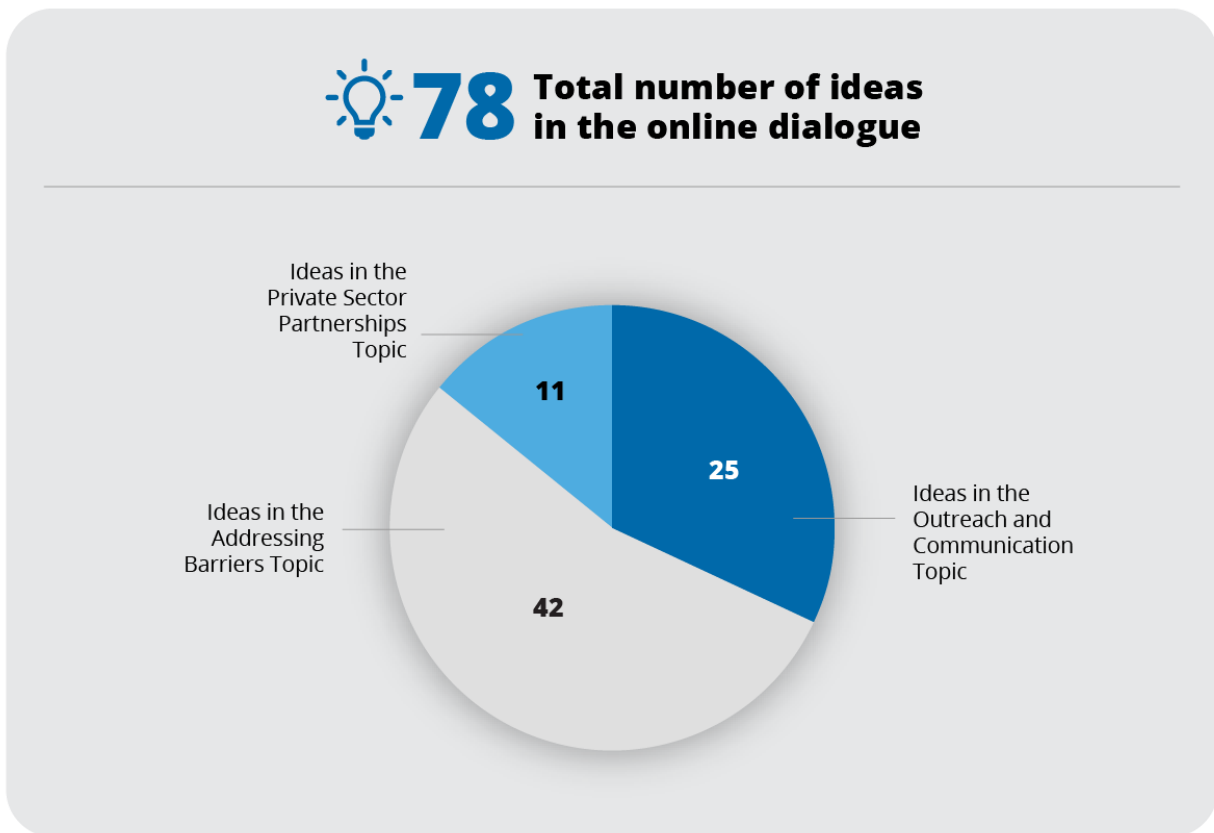
- [The Administration for Community Living \(ACL\)](#)
- [The Association of People Supporting Employment First \(APSE\)](#)
- [Apprenti](#)
- [Apprenticeship Illinois](#)
- [The Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth \(CAPE-Youth\)](#)
- [Disability:IN](#)
- [The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials \(IAPMO\) Government Relations](#)
- [The National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities \(LEAD\)](#)
- [Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services \(DORS\)](#)
- [Northwest ADA Center](#)
- [OFA Peer TA](#)
- [Path to Independence](#)
- [The Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology \(PEAT\)](#)
- [The Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship \(PIA\)](#)
- [National Resources for Access, Independence, Self-Determination and Employment \(RAISE\) Center](#)
- [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\) Foundation](#)
- [Work to Include](#)

On November 22, 2021, HR Dive published an article on their website titled "[DOL launches dialogue to increase marginalized groups' access to apprenticeships.](#)" The article shared information about why the dialogue was being held, what the dialogue was looking for in participation and the timeline. In addition, the article provided insights on the impact of apprenticeships and shared key data and efforts in the Federal Government to promote and advance inclusive apprenticeship programs.

Online Dialogue Participant Summary


The online dialogue opened at 9:00 a.m. ET November 15, 2021 and closed at 11:59 p.m. ET on December 10, 2021. The next section of this report discusses key contributions to the dialogue, including ideas, comments and votes. It also provides information on the number of online dialogue views, registrants, participation rates, locations of registrants and profiles shared by registrants during registration for the online dialogue.

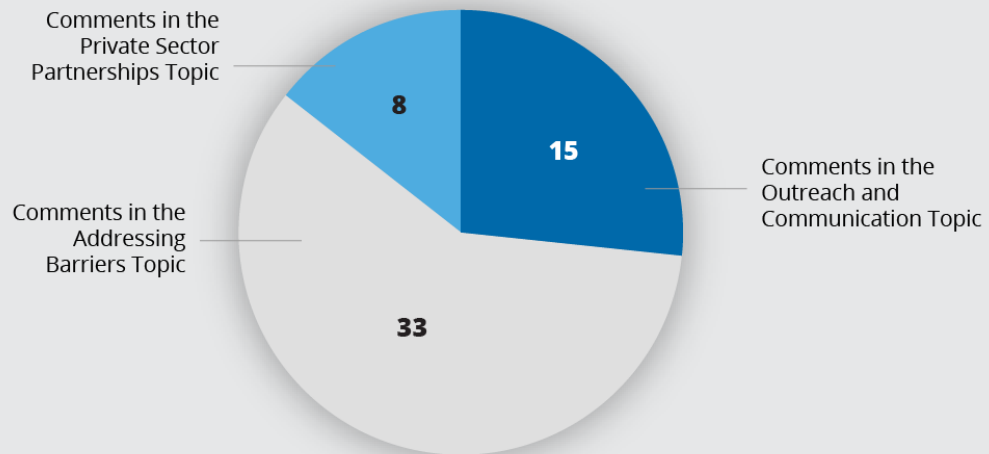
Contributions to the Online Dialogue



Total number of ideas in the online dialogue: 78

- Ideas in the Outreach and Communication topic: 25
- Ideas in the Addressing Barriers topic: 42
- Ideas in the Private Sector Partnerships topic: 11

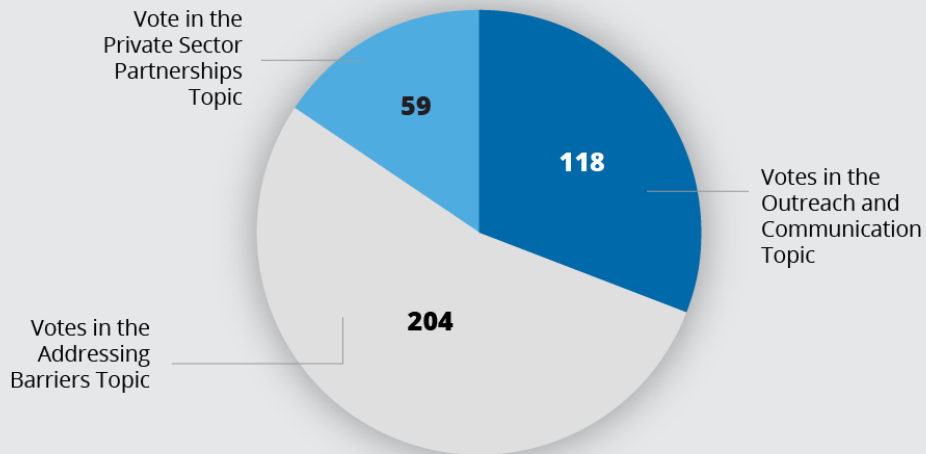
 **56** Total number of comments in the online dialogue



Total number of comments in the online dialogue: 56

- Comments in the Outreach and Communication topic: **15**
- Comments in the Addressing Barriers topic: **33**
- Comments in the Private Sector Partnerships topic: **8**

 **381** Total number of votes in the online dialogue



Total number of votes in the online dialogue: 381

- Votes in the Outreach and Communication topic: **118**
- Votes in the Addressing Barriers topic: **204**
- Vote in the Private Sector Partnerships topic: **59**

Visitors, Registrants and Participants in the Online Dialogue

From November 15 to December 10, 2021, stakeholders could view the online dialogue by visiting InclusiveApprenticeships.IdeaScale.com. Visitors to the website could access all ideas, comments and votes in the online dialogue, as well as links that provided information on how ePolicyWorks dialogues work, what apprenticeship means and related resources from DOL and the partner agencies.

In order to participate in the dialogue—i.e., add an idea, comment or vote—individuals completed a registration process. The registration process entailed an online form that asked to identify their stakeholder group and their occupations, industries and fields of interest. They were also asked if they had participated in an apprenticeship or not. All questions were mandatory, but participants were able to choose “other” as an option for the stakeholder group and area of interest fields. In addition, they could choose more than one option from the list of responses. After the questions are answered and the form is submitted, registrants are asked to verify their email. Once individuals verified, they can create a password, log in and add ideas, as well as comment and vote on ideas submitted by others.

For the following metrics, “visitors” include all individuals who visited the website address (URL) of the dialogue, regardless of whether they had completed the registration process. As noted above, all visitors to the URL could view all ideas, comments and votes in the online dialogue. However, “registrants” are those who successfully verified their email and created a password and “participants” include any person who submitted an idea or commented or voted on an idea submitted by another.

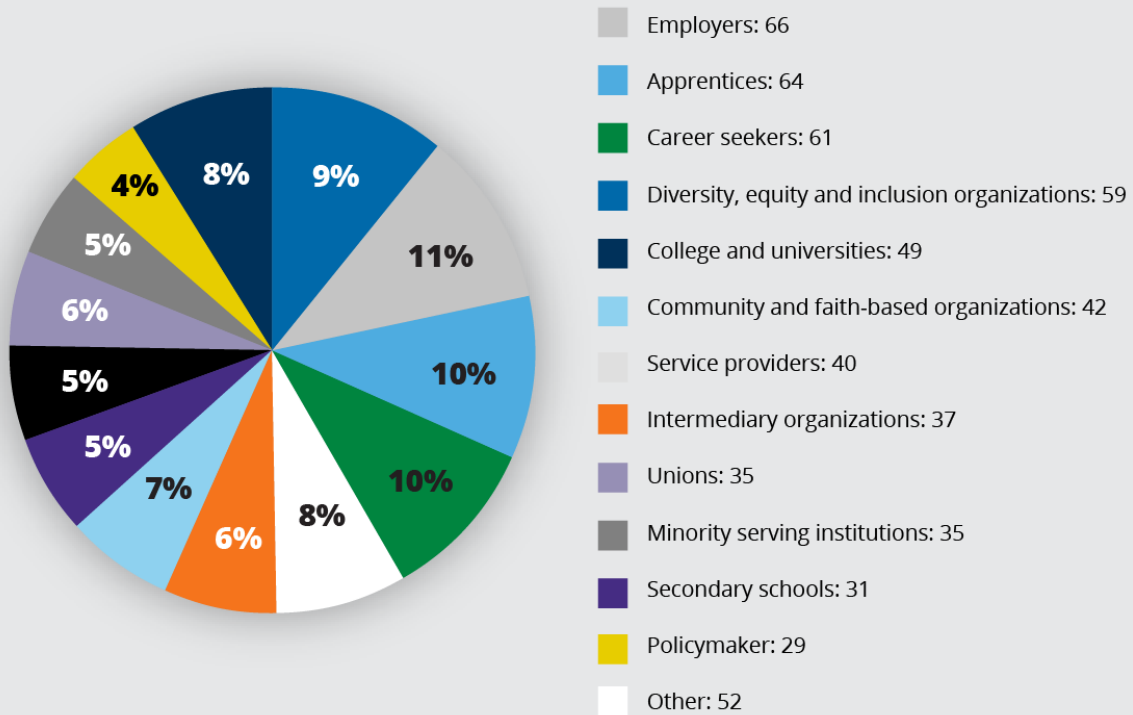
- Total number of visitors to the online dialogue: **1,086 individuals**
- Total number of visits to the online dialogue: **2,334 visits**
- Total number of page views: **9,060 pages**
- Average number of times visitors came to the online dialogue: **2.15 times**
- Average length of time they spent visiting the online dialogue: **5:06 minutes**
- Average pages they viewed during a visit to the online dialogue: **3.88 pages**
- Total number of new registrants or returning past ePolicyWorks dialogue participants: **279**
- Total number of registrants who participated by contributing an idea, comment or vote: **116**
- Total number of registrants who contributed ideas: **63**
- Total number of registrants who contributed comments: **28**
- Total number of registrants who contributed votes: **114**
- Total number of states represented by dialogue registrants: **50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Territories**

Online Dialogue Registration Questions

When registering for the online dialogue, registrants responded to three registration questions. The dialogue registration offered prepopulated choices and registrants could choose all that applied. More than 440 dialogue registrants answered the questions when they registered. A summary of their responses during registration appears below:



Registration Question Responses to "With which stakeholder groups do you identify?" (choose all that apply)



**Registration Question Responses to “With which stakeholder groups do you identify?
[Choose all that apply]**

- Employers: **66 (11%)**
- Apprentices: **64 (10%)**
- Career seekers: **61 (10%)**
- Diversity, equity and inclusion organizations: **59 (9%)**
- College and universities: **49 (8%)**
- Community and faith-based organizations: **42 (7%)**
- Service providers: **40 (6%)**
- Intermediary organizations: **37 (6%)**
- Unions: **35 (5%)**
- Minority serving institutions: **35 (5%)**
- Secondary schools: **31 (5%)**
- Policymaker: **29 (4%)**
- Other: **52 (8%)**

With which occupations, industries or fields of interest do you identify? [Choose all that apply]

- Public service (federal, state or local government, etc.): **89 (13%)**
- Professional services: **70 (10%)**
- Manufacturing: **67 (10%)**
- Healthcare: **65 (10%)**
- Information technology: **59 (9%)**
- Energy : **58 (9%)**
- Logistics: **41 (6%)**
- Transportation: **32 (4%)**
- Financial services and banking: **30 (4%)**
- Retail: **25 (3%)**
- Other: **106 (16%)**

Have you participated in or are you interested in participating an apprenticeship program?

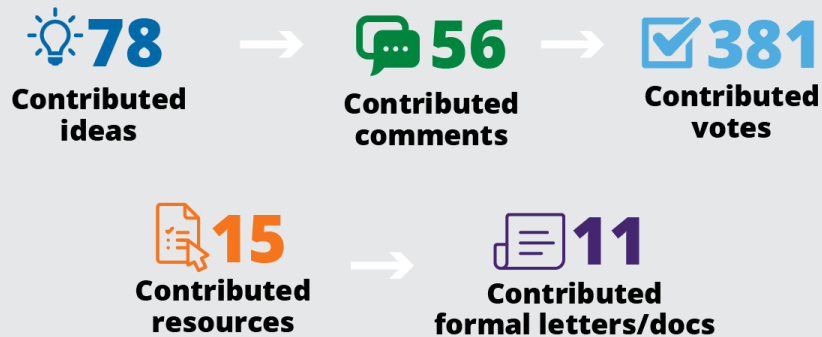
- Yes: **160 (57%)**
- No: **97 (35%)**
- Did Not Answer: **22 (8%)**

Review and Analysis of Online Dialogue Contributions

Over the course of the online dialogue, participants from across the U.S. shared thought-provoking and innovative ideas and recommendations on ways that DOL can help ensure the widespread availability of inclusive and accessible RAPs. The dialogue's results will help formulate future priorities and funding streams in order to ensure that DOL addresses the needs of all career seekers and workers from diverse backgrounds, including people with disabilities. In addition, information gathered through this process will help shape DOL's understanding of key challenges individuals seeking RAPs face and better inform future policies.

The range and depth of the ideas submitted and discussed during the online dialogue demonstrates the immense value of engaging citizens in collaboration efforts. People with disabilities, employers, advocates, organizations, state and local government representatives and other stakeholders contributed 78 ideas, 57 comments and 381 votes and attached 15 resources and 11 letters ([Appendix A](#)) to the dialogue. Based on these contributions, several key themes emerged through the ideas shared by stakeholders, the discussions that took place in the comments and within the attached letters.

People with disabilities, employers, advocates, non-governmental organizations, state and local government representatives and other stakeholders:



Key Themes, Policy Recommendations and Takeaways

Based on a preliminary analysis of the ideas, comments and letters posted to the dialogue, the following key themes, policy recommendations and takeaways emerged:

- Registered Apprenticeships for People in Contact with the Criminal Justice System
- Ensure Accessibility in Registered Apprenticeships
- Build Apprenticeship into K-12 Education/ Support High School Registered Apprenticeship Programs
- Build Equity into all Register Apprenticeships
- Focus Registered Apprenticeship Outreach to Transitioning Students
- Target Immigrants and Refugees for Registered Apprenticeships
- Focus Outreach and Communication on Potential Employers and Apprentices

Registered Apprenticeships for People in Contact with the Criminal Justice System

Several ideas discussed focusing on people who have had contact with the criminal justice system. For instance, one idea suggested that grant applicants should be required to target diverse groups when hiring apprentices as a condition of an awarded grant allocation. This idea highlighted targeting people in contact with the criminal justice system along with single parents and people with disabilities.

One participant shared their experiences in the state of Washington, which currently has people working as apprentices who have had contact with the criminal justice system. Another participant shared information about Roots of Success (RoS), which runs an apprenticeship program that prepares youth and adults from underserved communities for green jobs. This program focuses on people who are currently in the criminal justice system or involved in reentry who have low literacy levels and have limited employment experience and networks. RoS offers its apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs to prisons, jails, juvenile facilities, reentry programs, job training programs, high schools and youth programs throughout the U.S. The RoS program reports high success rates in both employment and recidivism.

Ensure Accessibility in Registered Apprenticeships

Several of the ideas stressed the need to ensure that all communications about RAPs, promotions and materials (both online and hard copy) are accessible for people with disabilities. Comments emphasized approaches to educate employers about ways to help support and drive accessible communication. They also discussed educating employers and workforce professions on the need for accessible and assistive technology and how to provide it to apprentices in all RAPs.

For apprentices with disabilities, a participant recommended clear communication on the processes to request accommodations within RAPs for both work and the classroom. The

comment noted that this process should outline all steps at each phase (e.g., initial interest in apprenticeship and during apprenticeship). Participants noted that information needs to be available in a public way so disability service providers can assist apprentices. This key pursuit may require focused funding. Several ideas discussed whether or not employers can or should include budget lines for work accommodations within their requests for apprenticeship funding.

Build Apprenticeship into K-12 Education/ Support High School Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Several ideas in the dialogue discussed the need to introduce apprenticeship as an option early on in a student's education. For instance, one idea suggested working with the K-12 system to introduce Registered Apprenticeships as a viable option for a living-wage career. Other ideas explored how to work effectively with middle and high schools to introduce and support RAPs. For example, one idea emphasized targeting schools that are in underserved communities and supplying them with information on the apprenticeship programs in their areas. Another idea suggested sending representatives of RAPs from the community to ensure that students in K-12 have information to share with their parents, guardians and others so the information can then reach influencers.

In addition to information sharing, many participants outlined basic improvements for school systems to support RAPs by creating programs that support classroom learning for trades and occupations. These programs would help students earn graduation credits and union credits. Expanding the Registered Apprenticeship system to high school students could also foster a career pathway for more women, people of color and other underserved groups. Participants also discussed efforts to structure local pre-apprenticeship programs to enhance connections between RAPs and their regional areas to effectively recruit, hire and maintain local career seekers as apprentices.

Several ideas discussed working with current high school dual enrollment programs. Participants described tying in both unilateral and single-employer RAPs to dual enrollment programs. This offers students on-the-job training hours while in school and provides employers with trainees who are on a direct path to full-time employment.

Finally, other idea stressed how to make use of funding streams, such as Pell Grants, to support young adults enrolled in RAPs. Funds from the Pell Grant program help college students with the cost of books, housing and transportation to and from school. Most college students must work part-time or full-time at low wages to supplement their living expenses while taking classes. Like working college students, apprentices can also find that they too need assistance with living expenses during their time working at a RAP. Pell Grant access would offer a solution for growing a pool of candidates for RAPs, as well as for retention of apprentices in RAPs.

Build Equity into all Register Apprenticeships

Several participants discussed using metrics to ensure that RAPs are inclusive of career seekers who come from underserved communities. One comment suggested that DOL disaggregate apprentices' placement goals by demographic data to incentivize employers to hire more women, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and people with disabilities. The discussion further recommended creating a new database to track the numbers of available apprenticeships and the demographic information of the ones that have been filled. Workers, activists and other stakeholders could use this information to track progress on placement goals. Finally, DOL could use these metrics to ensure federal procurement dollars support RAP opportunities for diverse communities by requiring federal contractors to set placement goals that disaggregate by demographic data.

Building on this discussion, another participant suggested that grant applicants should be required to target diverse groups when hiring apprentices. This idea emphasized that grant applications should be scored based on the employer's guarantee of a higher starting wage or budgeting allotment. In addition, the idea recommended that some grant award funding should be designated for employee childcare costs, transportation, housing assistance and other barriers to retention in employment.

The dialogue included a discussion about the lack of diversity among apprentices, especially in critical sectors for essential workers (e.g., health care and advanced manufacturing). The Strong Workforce Apprenticeship Group suggested that any strategy to build a diverse pipeline of apprentices should include the following components:

- **A Holistic Approach:** Many people who could benefit from RAPs have emotional, logistical and economic barriers that must be addressed. The need for wrap-around services is critical for making apprenticeship accessible for diverse groups.
- **Target Foster Youth and Opportunity Youth:** Black and Brown youth make up a disproportionate share of youth who are disconnected or come from a foster care background. Programs should thus work with agencies to identify, support and encourage this group to enter RAPs.
- **A Living Wage:** Any RAP must start with a living wage, especially in industry sectors that demand a specific skill set or certification. A living wage includes health care and fringe benefits.
- **Ease of Access:** Individuals from diverse communities benefit from programs that allow them to navigate the enrollment process with ease. Any program should work with their DOL office, employer and education agency to make the enrollment process simple.
- **Funding:** Increased funding can help underwrite all facets of apprenticeship and the work of all stakeholders. Grants should cover the work of the program sponsor, the

workforce intermediary, the employers' costs, the educational institution and community-based organizations. This can be accomplished by leveraging federal funding from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in concert with state and local dollars and funds from private foundations and industry.

Focus Registered Apprenticeship Outreach to Transitioning Students

Several ideas focused on how RAPs can help support transitioning youth. One idea specifically suggested providing the Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeships with the resources it requires to expand its current demonstration project to as many sectors and employers as possible, which would help create a pathway to employment for more job seekers with disabilities. Another idea focused on strengthening the relationships between high school transition teams and local employers who offer RAPs. This pursuit would give transitioning youth the opportunity to connect with employers and experience industries tied to their work interests while still in high school.

Relatedly, participants noted that students and young adults who are eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services can engage in Work-Based Learning Experiences with RAP employers and support from job coaches. This practice would both educate these employers on accommodations and other supports and offer an alternative interview and assessment route for job seekers with an interest in RAPs. Focus on transitioning youth and RAPs would allow access to the support of a job coach while honing on-the-job and technical skills for RAP eligibility.

Several other ideas in the dialogue discussed increasing flexibility for both the hourly commitment and duration of RAPs. Participants noted that this change could allow for customizing career pathways through apprenticeship for people with disabilities, including for youth who are transitioning from high school. It would benefit career seekers who may not be able to meet some of the more stringent hour requirements and other qualifications that are necessary for standard RAPs.

Increase Options and Flexibility in Registered Apprenticeships

Several ideas discussed expanding the number of careers included in RAPs to help increase the amount and degree of diversity of among apprentices. Some of the occupations mentioned included job roles in online technology, caring professions, chefs and bakers, sewing machine operators and hair clinicians. Participants also noted that online apprenticeships that can take place remotely (such as IT programs) can provide easier access. Remote apprenticeships could benefit people in many different situations. For example, career seekers with disabilities and career seekers who cannot find local programs or who cannot move to participate in programs at other locations would find remote programs to be beneficial.

Another idea focused on using RAPs to help advance businesses that are owned by people with disabilities. Although RAPs do not yet focus on fostering entrepreneurship, participants suggested using funding streams and allocations to help support this career pathway. This focus could include tapping inclusive apprenticeships to drive talent pipelines and workforce growth for businesses owned by diverse people with disabilities.

Target Immigrants and Refugees for Registered Apprenticeships

States and private industry, particularly within the health care sector, have begun to partner to develop new work-based learning programs that include tailored services for immigrants and refugees who have received training in another country. Participants shared several examples of these efforts in the dialogue. For instance, they discussed a competency-based apprenticeship program in Maryland for jobs in the health care professions. This program offers both contextualized instruction on English as a Second language and individualized support for careers. Another innovative model shared in the dialogue focused on a pre-apprenticeship program that provides contextualized English to prepare students for how to work as environmental service technicians (environmental service technicians commonly work in hospital or other health care settings to maintain health and safety within the environment.)

One stakeholder from a community college shared details about its work-based learning program that has helped remove barriers to employment for immigrants in the health care sector. Through the Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program, English language learners acquire clinical and language skills to help them land jobs in the bilingual medical assistant field. Participants gain work experience through a 100-hour internship that takes place at local community health centers and doctors' offices. This program also provides assistance with the job search process, including how to enhance resumes and build interview skills and prepare for job interviews.

In addition, the City of Philadelphia began a fellowship program in 2018 in partnership with the Welcoming Center, a nonprofit organization that works to promote economic growth for immigrants. This fellowship provides qualified immigrant jobseekers with 12 weeks of paid work experience and supportive services after they complete a training program run by the Welcoming Center. All members of the first two fellowship cohorts of this program secured full-time employment.

Discussions within the dialogue emphasized that these partnerships offer key examples that others can replicate and promote nationwide. Participants underscored that RAPs could play a key role in increasing employment and career paths in the contexts discussed above. However, they noted that these efforts require addressing core barriers, such as English language training and lack of access to employment-related support systems, such as childcare, transportation, etc. Furthermore, these efforts should also expand awareness of the lived experience for diverse career seekers and experiences among immigrants and refugees in particular.

Focus Outreach and Communication on Potential Employers and Apprentices

A key challenge for creating inclusive RAPs involves changes in the education system. Many participants in the dialogue noted the first step should focus on how federal agencies can provide information that clearly articulates the benefits for employers of creating inclusive apprenticeships. They also underscored that government agencies and apprenticeship leaders in the public sector need to advance efforts to communicate and extoll the core benefits of apprenticeships.

Building on these goals, one recommendation in the dialogue discussed forming a national education campaign targeting potential employers and apprentices. This campaign would focus on the value of RAPs, specifically skill building, job growth and the awarding of nationally recognized credentials. Other ideas discussed promoting success stories of apprentices from RAPs in underserved communities to allow more people across the country to see themselves in these fields and occupations.

Participants recommended that any national education campaign include testimonials from successful apprentices and their experiences and focus on broad media outlets to spread the word on apprenticeships. A national campaign could be used to dispel the myth that apprenticeships are limited to just a range of trade industries, such as manufacturing and construction trades. It would also provide companies with the tools they need to develop apprenticeship programs that can foster DEIA. Many participants expressed the need to place a high concentration of media ads in rural communities and the employers within these communities where the value of an apprenticeship might not be well understood. One idea shared focused on embedding apprenticeship studies and career pathways into the high school college preparation process or courses.

An education-focused idea discussed efforts to work with business trade associations to create an immersive experience that can simulate the work environment from industries and fields in the world of work. This idea noted that such a pursuit can demonstrate the abilities of the participants in the workplace. It can also help participants learn about and understand whether a RAP is a match for their interest, talents, abilities and skills.

Several other ideas focused on how to target communications in places where underemployed or unemployed career seekers might often visit. Some places mentioned include barbershops, movie theaters, Internet gaming sites, fitness centers, grocery stores, parks and churches. Participants also suggested outreach to local English as a Second Language and Graduate Equivalency Degree programs, rehabilitation centers, halfway houses and community centers in suburban, urban and rural areas.

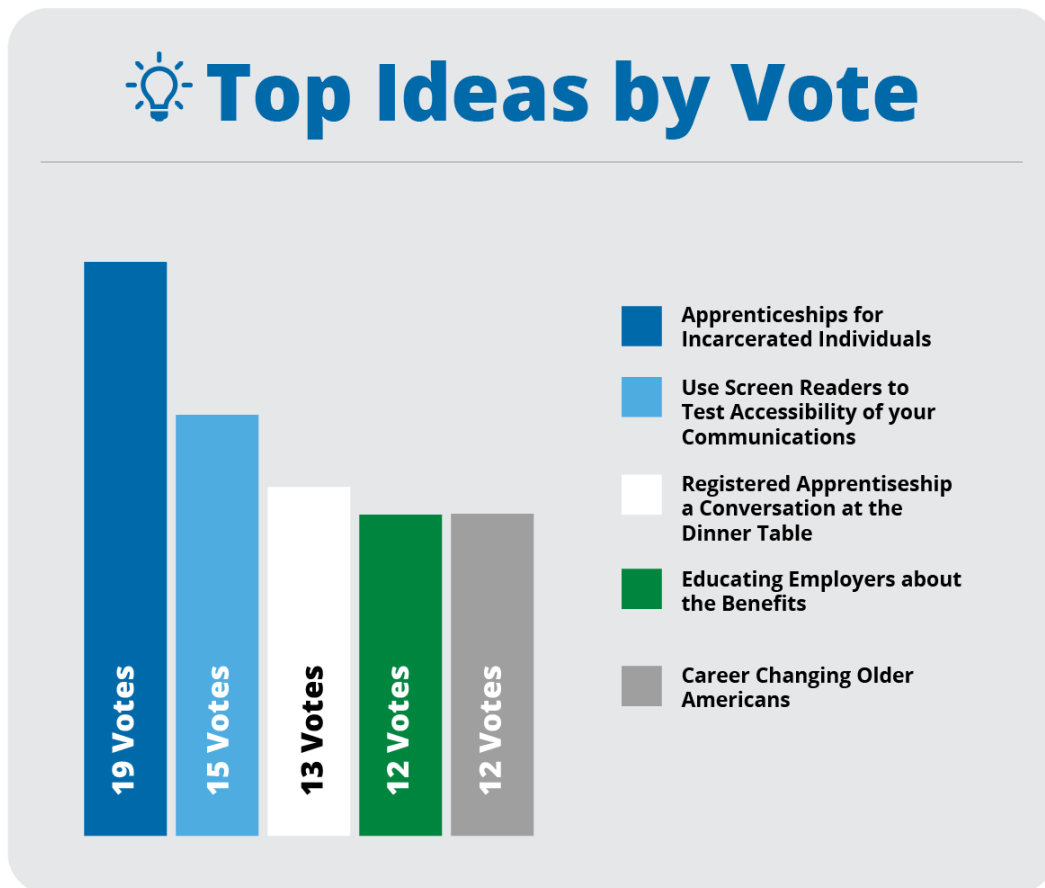
In addition, participants recommended focusing outreach efforts on community organizations. They suggested connecting with cultural support centers, support programs for people with

disabilities, re-entry programs, housing authorities and organizations for people who identify as LGBTQIA+. This would help promote awareness of RAP opportunities within these settings.

Participants also stressed that information sessions and orientations offering more information on RAPs should be ongoing with a broad range of entities and provide materials in alternative languages. They noted that recruiting practices for RAPs applicants should be no different than recruiting for any other job roles or career paths. They underscored the importance of learning best practices from employers and recruiters who have successfully developed inclusive pipelines of diverse applicants. Finally, several participants felt it will take the use of financial incentives and policies for employers to fully embrace apprenticeship programs.

Top Ideas by Vote

The five top ideas by vote from the online dialogue appear below. The ideas listed in the following section include minor typographical corrections—which have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised posts.



Apprenticeships for Incarcerated Individuals

Topic: Addressing Barriers

19 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 19 Net Votes

Comments: 1

Followers: 2

We have thousands of people in prisons in the US. A good number of those people are hardworking individuals and looking for a chance to prove themselves as such. In Washington state we have inmate workers and even electricians working as apprentices getting hours reported to put towards their time as a trainee. We should be offering an official apprenticeship for incarcerated individuals. At the end of their time in prison they will walk away with training,

education, hours on the books, experience and motivation to rise above their past and move forward in a positive manner. Not to mention they will come out way further ahead in life than they were when they came in. Isn't that a good thing, positive rehabilitation? Sending people out in better shape than when they arrived, able to make good money and contribute to society in a positive manner. Sounds like a good plan to me!

Use Screen Readers to test accessibility of your communications

Topic: Outreach and Communication

15 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 15 Net Votes

Comments: 1

Followers: 2

Testing your written communications with a screen reader before issuing is a practical way to ensure your newsletter or other information is accessible for individuals who use screen readers. It's part of an overall recommendation to increase accessibility through direct understanding of the user experience. Connecting Workforce Intermediaries with this service or providing Intermediaries with screen readers could advance inclusive apprenticeships.

Registered Apprenticeship a conversation at the dinner table

Topic: Outreach and Communication

13 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 13 Net Votes

Comments: 2

Followers: 1

I would like to see Registered Apprenticeship as a Topic on Sesame Street. Starting to share the idea of earning and learning at the beginning of a person's lifelong learning. I would like to see more "Montessori" style education put in our public education system. I would like to see Middle School and High Schools work with area companies who have RAP programs. One way they could do that is to utilize their school monitors that share information on upcoming event, to also show RAP opportunities.

Educating employers about the benefits

Topic: Addressing Barriers

12 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 12 Net Votes

Comments: 3

Followers: 4

One barrier to getting diverse populations (including people with disabilities) into apprenticeship programs is a lack of employer understanding. The Department of Labor and other federal agencies that focus on apprenticeships should be proactive and provide more information to companies that clearly articulate the benefits of creating inclusive apprenticeships and the cost savings to companies when they hire diverse candidates,

particularly those with disabilities.

Career Changing Older Americans

Topic: Private Sector Partnerships

12 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 12 Net Votes

Comments: 1

Followers: 2

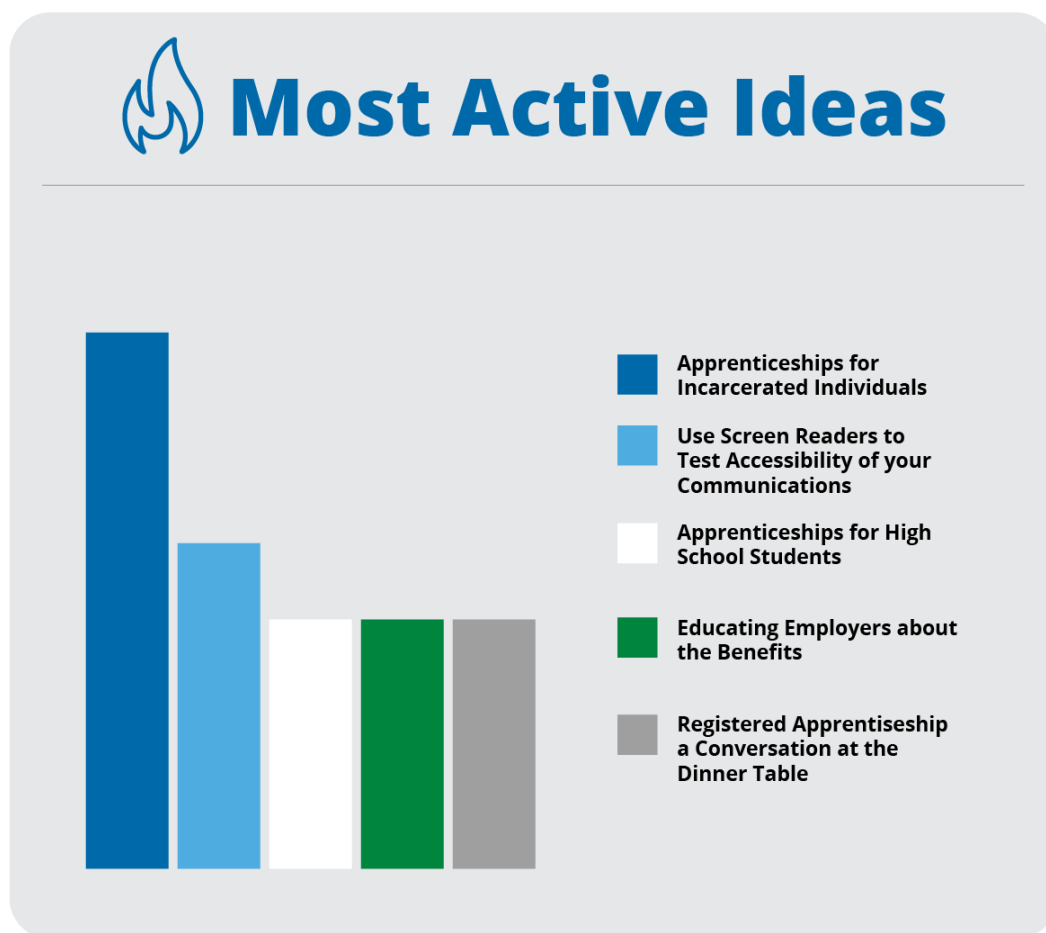
It seems that older Americans are left out of the conversation. Many non-Veteran Americans have no option to retire but often find themselves forced out of jobs where they are paid on seniority for newer workers who enter the workforce at lower wages. Many Americans 50+ are then pushed out of industries and have little opportunity to break into new ones for a complete career pivot. It would be ideal to reach out to this community who have decades of life experience under their belts but are often overlooked.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/unfinished-business-1582243250/>

<https://www.pbs.org/video/unfinished-business-1582243250/>

Most Active Ideas

This section describes the most active ideas from the online dialogue. For the purpose of this dialogue, “most active” reflects an idea’s total number of views, comments, votes and followers over the course of the dialogue. Four of the most active ideas were also the top ideas by vote. These ideas included Apprenticeships for People with Contact with the Criminal Justice System, Using Screen Readers to Test Accessibility of their Communications, Educating Employers about the Benefits and Registered Apprenticeship as a Conversation at the Dinner Table. See the [Top Ideas by Vote](#) sections for a full description. The idea listed in the following section included minor typographical corrections, which have in no way affected the substance or the intention of the revised post.



Apprenticeships for High School Students

Topic: Addressing Barriers

10 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 10 Net Votes

Comments: 5

Followers: 5

Apprenticeships that start in high school offer benefits to students, as well as to employers. They can bring equity in multiple ways, kids who need income could earn during the school day and opt to participate in extracurricular they may not otherwise have time to participate in. Students who don't have a vision for their future, may find one. Students that don't learn in a traditional classroom would have hands-on opportunities to develop skills deemed necessary by future employers. Students that don't have work experience, would get experience and skip looking for a job with no experience. Students will be developing valuable soft skills in an authentic environment. They will be learning job skills as well. As a former plant manager and a current high school teacher, I realize there are many obstacles to overcome for this to work but think of the benefits for all involved. During the past two years, in an attempt to maintain learning in a challenging environment, I have found solutions to many of the anticipated obstacles high school apprenticeships present. Kids of all backgrounds and with various plans for their future, would benefit from an apprenticeship program. Employers would benefit as well. A program of this nature could change our education system for many and would be an answer to so many challenges currently faced by our system, our students and our employers.

Most Popular Ideas

Below are the four most popular ideas from each of the online dialogue's three topic areas. "Most popular" is determined based on the idea's total number of up votes, comments and followers at the conclusion of the dialogue.

The ideas listed in the following section include minor typographical corrections, which have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised posts.

Most Popular Ideas from the Outreach and Communications Topic

- 1. Use Screen Readers to test accessibility of your communications** (The full description of this idea can be found under [Top Ideas by Vote.](#))
15 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 15 Net Votes
Comments: 1
Followers: 2
- 2. Registered Apprenticeship a conversation at the dinner table** (The full description of this idea can be found under [Top Ideas by Vote.](#))
13 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 13 Net Votes
Comments: 2
Followers: 1
- 3. Lived experience and accessibility**
9 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 9 Net Votes
Comments: 0
Followers: 1

When discussing DEI as it relates to apprenticeship, accessibility also needs to be included in that conversation. Universal design and accommodations may increase productivity not just for the individual with a disability but may be incorporated across the employees at a particular business. Documenting this as a cost benefit for employers could help to encourage other employers to see the hidden value of hiring people with disabilities. Utilizing success stories with a variety of RA candidates with the lived experience of unrepresented and underrepresented groups will allow more people across the country to see themselves in those occupations and this could increase the number of people who are looking at entering into an apprenticeship program.

- 4. Where You Find the Under-Employed, You'll Find Your Candidate**
8 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 8 Net Votes
Comments: 2
Followers: 2

Besides on social media, where might one find unemployed or underemployed individuals throughout the days and weeks while workers are working? Barbershops, movie theaters, internet gaming sites, fitness centers, grocery stores, parks, churches, these are places we might find those folks who hoping the answer to their current circumstances will soon appear. For many of these establishments, advertising is an option. Other great resources are in local ESL or GED programs, rehabilitation centers, halfway houses and community centers in suburban, urban and rural areas. Employer's outreach and recruit for Registered Apprenticeships just as they do for any other career opportunity within their organization. We must think outside the box in the quest for an apprentice candidate pool.

Most Popular Ideas from the Addressing Barriers Topic

- 1. Apprenticeships for Incarcerated Individuals** (The full description of this idea can be found under [Top Ideas by Vote.](#))
19 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 19 Net Votes
Comments: 1
Followers: 2

- 2. Educating employers about the benefits** (The full description of this idea can be found under [Top Ideas by Vote.](#))
12 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 12 Net Votes
Comments: 3
Followers: 4

- 3. Wrap around Services**
11 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 11 Net Votes
Comments: 1
Followers: 2

Our organization encounter many individuals, primarily women from low-income communities having experienced trauma in their environment (physical, emotional and mentally). There are several barriers to moving an applicant from applying to admittance into one of the programs:

I. Enrolling

1) successfully passing the pre-entrance test (many applicants test at 5th or lesser grade level)- making tutoring a part of the program, 2) passing a drug test (a few tests positive for marijuana)- making drug counseling a part of the program, 3) interview (a few do not know how to interview)- making soft skills a part of the program.

II. Once admitted continuation in the program

1) student encountering personal mental or emotional challenges in which can be disruptive to their progress in the classroom or on the job learning. Making social worker, psychologist, case management a part of the program. making attendance a priority - making soft skills a part of the program. The psychologist works with the student having been referred by a member of the Team to address any trauma related events. Also providing education to the Team to identify trauma related episodes in the classroom

III. Post training job retention

1) students have a tendency to encounter childcare issues, transportation issues, other personal issues that can impact attendance (tardiness and absenteeism). Making case management, Social Worker with supportive services a part of the program The above barriers can be address through the full wrap around service but will need government funding dollars to support the low-income population to provide them with employable skills.

4. A system like RETAIN project for those with hidden disabilities

11 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 11 Net Votes

Comments: 1

Followers: 2

RETAIN programs implement early intervention strategies to improve stay-at-work/return-to-work (SAW/RTW) outcomes of individuals who experience a work disability while employed. SAW/RTW programs succeed by returning injured or ill workers to productive work as soon as medically possible. This model may be useful in looking at individuals who may not have disclosed their disability may not be successful in the academic portions or testing and wash out of the program or not complete the apprenticeship. Developing a system and protocols to identify individuals who are struggling with the academic portions of an apprenticeship program and proactively provide additional supports may increase the success rate for individuals with disabilities.

This could also increase the trust and buy in of employers who are currently working with someone with a disability to more readily consider offering additional and future opportunities to this population.

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/saw-rtw/research-pubs>

Ideas from the Private Sector Partnership Topic

1. **Career Changing Older Americans** (The full description of this idea can be found under [Top Ideas by Vote.](#))

12 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 12 Net Votes

Comments: 1

Followers: 2

2. **Apprenticeships are not only for the Trades**

11 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 11 Net Votes

Comments: 1

Followers: 1

Secretary of Labor, Marty Walsh, shared those apprenticeships are the way of the future and that we need public private partnerships to put these programs into place. Building off of the Secretary's comments, government agencies and apprenticeship leaders in the public sector need to work with companies to help them better understand the benefits of apprenticeships. We can help dispel the belief that apprenticeships are only in trade industries, such as manufacturing and construction trades and provide companies with the tools they need to develop diverse, equitable, inclusive and accessible apprenticeship programs.

3. **Incentives to encourage active participation of employers**

9 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 9 Net Votes

Comments: 0

Followers: 2

Show employers why they should embrace apprenticeships through how they win monetarily by spending time and money to make a program work. Be realistic about how many years it takes to establish an apprenticeship successfully.

This video is an excellent visual showing the power of apprenticeship, highlighting that it is a proven system: <https://youtu.be/--1T0GjzwJc>

Understand that it is not enough to train the underrepresented persons to do the job and stick to the apprenticeship program.

Provide training for current employees on how to train others, understand what an apprenticeship is, how it benefits the existing employees, work with those who do not look like them and train to be allies of incoming apprentices with expectations to use new learned skills. Without the buy in of current employees' apprenticeship cannot succeed.

It will take monetary incentives and policies with actual bite for companies to fully embrace apprenticeship programs.

4. Apprenticeship Funding

8 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 8 Net Votes

Comments: 1

Followers: 1

The State should pay a percentage of the apprentice wages, it would fuel growth in hard to fill occupations and help to close the skills gap. The small tax deduction for apprentices is not enough to offset the cost of an apprenticeship program. Federal and State Funding like Pell Grants etc. should apply to apprenticeship programs.

Appendix A: Resources Shared in the Online Dialogue

Organizations and Not-for-Profits

- RootsOfSuccess.org

Reports and Resources

- [Alison Career Guide | Everything You Need to Know to About a Career](#)
- [Apprentices Blog Series, RespectAbility](#)
- [Apprenticeship: The National Leadership Program, RespectAbility](#)
- [Building an Equitable Recovery: RespectAbility Advises California on Solutions for People with Disabilities, RespectAbility](#)
- [Leadership, RespectAbility](#)
- [Meet our Apprentices, RespectAbility](#)
- [Metrology Education Program \(Brochure\), Verisurf](#)
- [Our Impact, Roots of Success](#)
- [The Union Difference, Pride at Work](#)
- [USA Workforce Skills Development, Alison.com](#)

State, National and International Government Resources

- [Stay at Work/Return to Work Research & Publications, Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)

News Articles, Blogs and Webinars (by date)

- ["Why The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands should be Mandated to register ALL Foreign Owned Businesses that Receive CW-1 Workers in the U.S. Dept of Labor Apprenticeship Program," Zaji O Zajradhara, December 1, 2021](#)
- [Worksource Central Savannah River Area RC, Stephanie Quattlebaum, Deputy Director, Center for Human Services \(Letter\), November 1, 2021](#)
- ["Philadelphia Area Alliance of Diverse Chambers of Commerce Announce New Coalition to Work Collectively for Economic Growth," Independence Business Alliance \(Press Release\), October 6, 2021](#)
- ["NMTI board to activate nomination committee to fill board vacancies", The Saipan Tribune, September 3, 2021](#)
- ["Walmart loses EEOC disability lawsuit that alleged discrimination against a longtime employee with Down syndrome", CNBC, July 16 2021](#)
- [From College or Nothing to College Without Debt, Kevin J Fleming \(YouTube\), November 13, 2020](#)
- ["When older workers are laid off and can't afford to retire," PBS \(Video\), February 20, 2020](#)

- ["Metropolitan Center for Independent Living Receives Bush Foundation Community Innovation Grant," Metropolitan Center for Independent Living \(Press Release\), November 26, 2019](#)
- ["Starting a Disability Employee Resource Group \(ERG\)," Sheri Byrne-Haber Medium page, June 20, 2019](#)