



Thursday, January 20, 2022

# Inclusive Apprenticeship

A Summary of What We Know about Apprentices with Disabilities



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# What do we know about apprenticeship programs inclusive of people with disabilities?

- Expanded protections for apprentices with disabilities
- Who are apprentices with disabilities?
- The critical role of employers in inclusive apprenticeship
  - Costs and benefits for employers
  - Technical assistance to support inclusive apprenticeship

# Expanded protections for apprentices with disabilities

The registered apprenticeship Equal Employment Opportunity regulations were revised in 2016 to protect against discrimination based on disability, age, sexual orientation, and genetic information.

Apprenticeship program sponsors are required to:

- Provide reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Invite all apprentices and applicants for apprenticeship to voluntarily self-identify whether they have a disability.

# Few apprentices identify as having a disability

In 2019, in states reporting data on individual apprentices to the federal Office of Apprenticeship:

- 1,900 apprentices identify as having a disability
- 580 apprentices report they do not have a disability
- 479,551 apprentices have no information on their disability status

Connecticut does not submit data to the federal government.

# Selected characteristics of apprentices who identify as having a disability

- More apprentices who identify as having a disability are women (12.3 percent compared to 9.3 percent)
- More apprentices who identify as having a disability are white and Latinx than those who do not. Fewer are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. There is no statistical difference in the share of Black, Asian, or American Indian or Alaska natives.
- Over a third of apprentices identifying as having a disability are veterans, compared to 9.9 percent of those who do not.
- Apprentices identifying as having a disability are much more likely to be employed in information technology jobs than those who do not.

# Apprentices with disability are successful in their training

- Apprentices who identify as having a disability have higher completion rates and lower cancellation rates than those who do not.
- Apprentices identifying as having a disability have a higher average starting wage (\$17.00) than those who do not (\$16.59)



# Apprentices and employers benefit from apprenticeship

- Research shows that **apprentices**' lifetime earnings are significantly increased by participation in apprenticeship.
- Research on the benefits for **employers** is more recent, but it also shows that employers benefit from sponsoring apprenticeship programs:
  - Helper et al. (2016) found that the costs of a medical assistant apprentices' employer enjoyed a 40 percent internal rate of return. They also found that a major manufacturer enjoyed a 50 percent rate of return on its apprentices, compared with workers hired off the street.
  - Payne (2020) also finds positive returns for employers of industrial manufacturing technician apprentices ranging from 26 to 72 percent.



# Employers need an accurate understanding of the costs and benefits of inclusive apprenticeship

*“Employers need to understand that a reasonable accommodation doesn’t have to be an \$18,000 a year interpreter.”*

*– State apprenticeship agency staff member*

*“Employers should see inclusive apprenticeship as a business solution, to have a broader pipeline of talent.”*

*– Apprenticeship intermediary staff member*

# Employers need training and technical assistance

Employers need support to successfully sponsor inclusive apprenticeship programs.

- In the Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Program, where 9 percent of apprentices identified as having a disability, accommodations were not systematically planned because employers lacked tools and experience (Mooney and Scholl 2002)
- Research on Project SEARCH in Virginia shows that early and consistent contact with Vocational Rehabilitation counselors improved outcomes for participants (Bellman et al. 2014)

# Preapprenticeship and youth apprenticeship improve access

Preapprenticeship and youth apprenticeship can be incorporated into individualized education plans (IEPs). Preapprenticeships support access, and youth apprenticeships smooth school to work transitions.

- The Texas “Explore Apprenticeship” program at San Jacinto College and Dallas Community College District
- The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation developed a preapprenticeship program in warehousing

# State apprenticeship agencies can support inclusive apprenticeship

- Support employer efforts to let apprentices self-identify as having a disability and track the data
- Provide employers with technical assistance and funding support to make their apprenticeship programs inclusive of apprentices with disabilities
- Register programs that are inclusive of apprentices with disabilities
- Build relationships with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services in the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services

# Questions?

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