

# Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships

## FAQ

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BASICS ABOUT APPRENTICESHIP AND REGISTRATION?

#### What is registered apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship is an approach to building skills of employed workers that combines classroom instruction with on-the-job training under the supervision of another skilled worker. The objective of apprenticeship is to help workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation. Registered apprenticeship is a program of the U.S. Department of Labor that has five core components to meet quality standards:

1. Employer involvement. The employer hires and trains the apprentice at the workplace, using a curriculum customized to the employers' work processes.
2. Structured on-the-job learning. The apprentice learns by doing.
3. Related instruction. Courses, typically held in a classroom, that complement the work experience.
4. Rewards for skills gains. Apprentices earn wages from day one. The more they learn, the more they earn.
5. National occupational credential. Apprentices receive a certificate once they complete the program.

#### What is a sponsor?

A registered apprenticeship sponsor is the entity that is responsible for managing the apprenticeship program and assuring that it meets the criteria in the apprenticeship agreement. The sponsor can be an employer, or an intermediary acting on behalf of an employer or group of employers. Leverage JFF's national network of partners to develop an approved RA sponsorship or link you to a RA intermediary or group sponsor.

#### Why does registration matter?

Registration was enacted by the National Apprenticeship Act, or Fitzgerald Act, in 1937 to safeguard the wellness of apprentices from harmful and unfair labor practices. Today these policies and procedures are called the Registration Standards for Apprenticeship Programs and help employers to establish labor standards that are in accordance with the law.

#### I already have an apprenticeship, why would I go to the trouble to have it registered?

There are various benefits to registering an apprenticeship. To name a few:

- *Quality.* Just as with ISO certification, registration of an apprenticeship assures that a company's training program meets nationally recognized standards to impart the skills and competencies required for an occupation.
- *Access.* In certain cases, registration opens the door to tax credits and additional funding resources for your program.
- *Talent.* Apprenticeship can also help companies tap into new and diverse pools of talent.
- *Retention.* The opportunity to earn a recognized occupational credential can boost worker loyalty.

### IS REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP AN EFFECTIVE TRAINING APPROACH?

#### Why is apprenticeship better than a customized training program?

Registered Apprenticeship is customized training, but customized training that meets national standards for quality. By investing in your employees, RA improves the long-term strength of your workforce. Apprentices learn about every aspect of the business that you have included in the program and therefore understand more about your business than just the day-to-day tasks. Employers know that it is beneficial to have a flexible, cross-trained workforce. Customized training often is narrowly focused and usually doesn't include the mentorship that is included with apprenticeship.

#### What programs exist today?

See all existing programs at: <https://www.doleta.gov/oa/occupations.cfm>

## WILL APPRENTICESHIP BENEFIT MY FIRM?

### **I thought apprenticeships are for trades and unions only, is this true?**

Like the building trades, manufacturing is a part of this country's apprenticeship history. Following the [industrial revolution](#) the apprenticeship system was modernized to apply to the new machine age. Shipbuilding yards and machinery and electrical equipment plants, deemed growth industries at the time, developed apprenticeship systems grounded within individual companies. Today, with the emergence of advanced manufacturing, you can see history repeating itself and apprenticeship becoming more relevant to manufacturing's future.

### **How much does an apprenticeship cost?**

The cost of an apprenticeship varies because the model is flexible and can be customized to meet the company's unique needs. [Research](#) shows that a program's price tag can range from \$25,000 to \$250,000 with length of time being a key determinant. However, return on investment should be considered alongside the costs. Apprentices should become more productive employees faster than other employees, which offsets those costs. For example, [The Hypertherm](#) program saves the company an estimated \$1.6 million per year relative to its prior training methods.

### **If I only have one employee to be an apprentice, how can that be affordable?**

In many cases, trade associations, community colleges, and others will act as sponsors so that small employers can aggregate their needs and reduce the management burdens of operating a training program.

### **How long does it take an apprentice to become productive and start earning money for me?**

Apprentices are like any other employee—productivity comes with proficiency. Because they are mentored by high performing employees from your organization, following a structured program of skill development, apprentices become proficient faster.

### **If my employees are registered, they'll just leave. Why should I give them a portable credential?**

If poaching is one of your concerns, then you are in good company with [nearly half of U.S. employers](#). However, studies have found that [75%](#) of apprentices that complete an apprenticeship are retained in employment nine months later. Why? The financial investment and mentorship. Apprenticeship training boosts employee loyalty.

## HOW DO I CREATE AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM?

### **Do I have to develop a program on my own, or are there off-the-shelf solutions?**

It's likely that there's an occupation in the DOL list of approved training designs that is a fit for you, as there are programs for over 1,300 existing occupations. If one doesn't exist, JFF can help you to develop it. We'll also help you customize an off-the-shelf program to your company's work processes.

### **What if I have a new skill in an occupation that isn't yet recognized by USDOL?**

Generally, new skills are required for highly technical work. We can connect you with key trainers for rare and new programs to help develop a training program and manage the process of obtaining USDOL recognition of the new occupation for you.

### **What does JFF bring to the table for sponsorship?**

Through our manufacturing partnership contract with the U.S. Department of Labor, JFF can support you to develop an apprenticeship, become registered as the sponsor, and implement the program. For more information, visit [jff.org/msa](http://jff.org/msa).

### **How would I become a sponsor or register my current program?**

Registration of apprenticeship programs is handled by either state or federal apprenticeship agencies, depending on the state where a company is located. JFF has expertise in knowing which system to work with and how to guide a program through the review process. This service is available at no cost to employers or other sponsors through a contract between JFF and the U.S. Office of Apprenticeship.

For more information, contact: Nneka Thompson, 617.728.4446 x400, [njthompson@jff.org](mailto:njthompson@jff.org)