U.S. Department of Labor presents:

**Youth with Disabilities Entering the Workplace through Apprenticeship**

**About this Tool Kit:**

This tool kit was developed under contract with the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy. A companion research paper was also prepared that examined issues surrounding apprenticeship and people with disabilities. A number of experts in the apprenticeship, disability and youth development fields were consulted in the preparation of both of these documents. Their assistance is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of the tool kit is to provide information on a series of topical areas around registered apprenticeship and how it can be used to provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The intended audiences for this tool kit are service providers, both public and private, that work with young people, including young people with disabilities. As such, a variety of service providers should find this useful, including youth workforce development professionals, vocational rehabilitation service providers, other disability service providers, including community rehabilitation providers, One-Stop Career Center personnel, and high school personnel that work with youth on post-secondary transition planning. Although the emphasis is on young people with disabilities, much of the information is applicable to all youth and young adults.
The tool kit is organized by the following six topical areas:

1. Understanding Apprenticeship Basics
2. Preparing Youth and Young Adults for Apprenticeship Programs
3. Increasing Participation of Young Adults with Disabilities In Apprenticeship Programs
4. Establishing New Apprenticeship Programs
5. What Apprenticeship Employers Need to Know About Working with Young Adults with Disabilities
6. Looking to Future Opportunities in Apprenticeship

Each of the guide sheets in this tool kit has three sections: 1) An Overview, which introduces the topic; 2) What You Need to Know, which provides content information on the topic; and 3) Where to Go for More Information, which provides additional web-based resources. The guide sheets, which collectively provide a comprehensive resource on registered apprenticeship, can also be used individually. Some information is repeated to facilitate individual use. Users of this guide should feel free to distribute it in its entirety or in parts. For example, the guide sheet “What Apprenticeship Employers Need to Know about Working with Young Adults with Disabilities” may serve as a suitable stand-alone handout for employers.
Youth with Disabilities Entering the Workplace through Apprenticeship

Understanding Apprenticeship Basics
An Overview:
Apprenticeship is one of the oldest forms of training. It involves learning on the job under the direction of a master or senior worker. In the U.S., registered apprenticeship has a defined meaning and a long, rich history. The registered apprenticeship system dates back to 1937 with the passage of the Fitzgerald Act—national legislation that lays the foundation for the federal-state system that exists today.

What You Need to Know:
The Fitzgerald Act, also known as the National Apprenticeship Act, officially authorized and established the national apprenticeship system. This Act gave the U.S. Secretary of Labor authority over apprenticeship programs, established an office of apprenticeship within the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and provided for the recognition of state agencies to register and administer apprenticeship programs. Twenty-five states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have recognized state apprenticeship operations. In the remaining states, DOL administers apprenticeship. DOL also recognizes apprenticeship occupations and maintains records on all apprenticeship programs and registered apprentices.

Apprenticeship is limited to skilled occupations and trades that meet basic criteria. Apprenticeable occupations are: 1) customarily learned in a practical way through a structured, systematic program of on-the-job supervised training supplemented by related technical instruction; 2) clearly identified and commonly recognized throughout an industry; and 3) involve the acquisition of manual or technical skills and knowledge. There are currently over 950 occupations that have been recognized as apprenticeable, and occupations are continually being added to the list.

Apprenticeship is a highly desirable form of training for workers because it is first and foremost a job. It allows for: learning job skills while earning an income; wage progression; and a widely recognized and portable certificate of completion and proficiency.
Related instruction is commonly provided in the classroom, but other types of instruction, such as on-line learning and individualized instruction are also permitted. Federal rules recommend that apprentices complete at least 144 hours of related instruction per year, which many apprenticeship programs choose to require. In many apprenticeship programs, the related instruction can also lead to a college degree, thereby providing the individual with an opportunity to earn both academic and occupational credentials simultaneously.

Apprenticeship programs are operated by both the public and private sectors. Employers, employer associations and labor-management committees sponsor and operate apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeship sponsors typically pay the training costs, although some financial incentives and assistance may be available.

There are currently approximately 28,000 registered apprenticeship programs and more than 450,000 active apprentices. In 2007 alone, over 3,000 new programs were added and over 200,000 individuals entered apprenticeship programs. Registered apprenticeship programs and apprentices are found in nearly all industries. The largest number of apprentices are within the building and construction trades—the historical base of apprenticeship. Other occupations that have a significant number of registered apprentices include truck drivers, correction officers, cooks and child care development specialists.

On October 29, 2008, for the first time in 30 years, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) published new regulations to modernize the National Apprenticeship System in the Federal Register. These regulations provide for more flexibility in how Related Technical Instruction (RTI) can be delivered, and provide registration agencies with the option of issuing interim credentials to offer active apprentices official recognition of their accomplishments and equip them with a portfolio of skills and incentives to complete their programs and continue their career preparation. Finally, these regulations allow program sponsors to offer three different ways for apprentices to complete a registered apprenticeship program:

1. The traditional, time-based approach, which requires the apprentice to complete a specific number of on-the-job (OJT) and RTI hours;
2. A competency-based approach, which requires the apprentice to demonstrate competency in the defined subject areas and requires OJT and RTI; and
3. A hybrid approach, which requires the apprentice to complete a minimum number of OJT and RTI hours and demonstrate competency in the defined subject areas.

The Web site for DOL’s Office of Apprenticeship, referenced next, contains the new regulations as well as related information.

Apprenticeship training programs in apprenticeship occupations must meet basic standards to be registered by a federal or state apprenticeship agency. There are currently 23 different standards for recognition of apprenticeship programs. These standards relate to:

- The type of occupations and the duration of training;
- The methods of training and the contents of the training agreement between the apprentice and program sponsor;
- Employment and supervision of apprentices, including requirements for wage progression;
- Registration, record maintenance, reporting and certification; and
- Compliance with equal employment opportunity requirements.
Where to Go For More Information:
The U.S. Department of Labor maintains a Web site for apprenticeship (www.doleta.gov/OA). Information on state apprenticeship agencies may be accessed through this site or through the National Association of State and Territorial Apprenticeship Directors Web site (www.nastad.us).

DOL also sponsors a Web site called Career Voyages that includes a section on apprenticeship (www.careervoyages.gov/apprenticeship-main.cfm).

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Preparing Youth and Young Adults for Apprenticeship Programs
An Overview:
Far too many youth, particularly those with disabilities, leave secondary education without a clear plan for post-secondary studies and careers. Youth with disabilities are half as likely as their peers to participate in post-secondary education. Effective transition services are key for young people to make informed choices about their futures. Federal law requires that transition planning for youth with disabilities begin no later than age 16, and the plan must include measurable post-secondary goals. Although apprenticeship programs can create opportunities for both employment and post-secondary education, they are rarely considered as an option for youth with disabilities during transition planning.

What You Need to Know:
Each year approximately 200,000 individuals enter apprenticeship programs. Although apprenticeship jobs cut across a wide-breadth of industries and occupations, there is a concentration within the building and construction trades, the traditional base for apprenticeship. The vast majority of apprentices are at least 18 years old, and apprenticeship programs generally require that individuals have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent to enter apprenticeship programs. Given that apprenticeship is largely an adult program, it should be considered as a post-secondary option.

Certainly not all youth have the interest or aptitude for apprenticeship programs. Career assessment and planning is the key to determining whether a young person should consider apprenticeship as a post-secondary option. The assessment process may begin with less formal methods of assessment, such as discovery or a career interest inventory. Either of these methods can help an individual identify their occupational preferences based on a series of questions around their general interests and aptitudes.

There are many widely available resources that youth, parents, school administrators and service providers can use to facilitate the process. One example is Career Planning Begins with Assessment: A Guide for Professionals Serving Youth with Educational and Career Challenges. This guide, tailored to service providers working with youth and young adults with disabilities, contains a comprehensive inventory of various assessment instruments, and information on their purposes, how they are administered, and target groups and costs. Please see the Where to Go For More Information section to learn more about this resource.
Vocational programs focus on the skills, knowledge and abilities that prepare youth for the workplace. All youth, particularly those with disabilities, also benefit from including work-based learning opportunities in their career planning and preparation. Work-based learning provides youth with exposure to the workplace through a variety of options, including internships, job shadowing, and summer employment. Many vocational programs include work-based learning components.

In some communities, there are secondary programs that tie directly into apprenticeship. These programs are called pre-apprenticeship, school-to-apprenticeship, or youth apprenticeship programs. They are generally available only in certain states and school districts. Technical education officials in school districts have information about these programs.

For young people who are out of school, there are a number of options available to prepare for apprenticeship programs. Many of these programs also offer high school diplomas or intensive preparation for the General Education Development Diploma (GED). These workforce development programs typically also provide youth with help finding a job and offer some post-placement support. Information on these programs is generally available at One-Stop Career Centers located in communities across the country and through program-sponsored Web site locations.

Pre-apprenticeship programs are sponsored by a variety of organizations, often those that are directly connected to apprenticeship programs, such as the Home Builder’s Institute. These programs offer an individual the opportunity to acquire basic skills needed for the occupation. In some instances, individuals that go into registered apprenticeship programs can get credit towards their apprenticeship certification for skills that were acquired in the pre-apprenticeship program. While these programs have traditionally been in the building and construction trades, some communities may have programs for other apprenticeship occupations such as those in health care, culinary arts, and technology.

Two national programs provide opportunities in nearly every state for youth to prepare for apprenticeship.
The U.S. Department of Labor’s Job Corps program provides low-income youth, ages 16 to 24, the opportunity to acquire a high school credential and job skills in a wide variety of occupational areas. The 122 Job Corps Centers located in 48 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico provide training in all of the leading apprenticeship occupations, especially those in the building and construction trades. Most, but not all, Job Corps students reside at the Center while completing their programs of study.

An important feature of the Job Corps is that during the first 60 days of the program, youth receive assistance in creating a Personnel Career Development Plan, which outlines the student’s goals for the program. Assessing students’ interests and aptitudes are a part of this career planning.

The second national program is called YouthBuild, and it provides work readiness training, job training in building and construction-related trades, and community service to low-income youth between 16 and 24 years of age. Youth may also work towards their GED or high school diploma. There are approximately 230 YouthBuild programs operating in 44 states, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The U.S. Department of Labor provides funding to many, but not all, YouthBuild sites.

The availability of workforce development programs for out-of-school youth varies greatly from community to community. An employment counselor is the best person to help a young adult determine what programs are available and their entry requirements. Employment counselors can also help youth assess their interests, aptitudes and abilities. One-Stop Career Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, community rehabilitation providers, and community colleges are the most prominent organizations that have employment counselors available to assist individuals with disabilities.

Where to Go For More Information:


DOL sponsors a Web site called Career Voyages that discusses a young person’s post-secondary options, including apprenticeship: www.careervoyages.gov/apprenticeship-main.cfm.

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/Youth (NCWD/Y) produced a guide that provides guidance and counseling tools necessary to help youth with disabilities successfully transition into the adult world of work. Career Planning Begins With Assessment is available at: www.ncwd-youth.info/resources_&_Publications/assessment.html.

To learn about Job Corps visit: http://jobcorps.dol.gov/pp.

For more information on YouthBuild USA visit: www.youthbuild.org.

The Home Builders Institute develops training materials for the construction trades and sponsors programs for youth and adults in certain states. Learn more about Project CRAFT, an apprenticeship focused training program for youth, at: www.hbi.org/page.cfm?pageID=129. Project HOPE is specifically for individuals with disabilities, but participants must be at least 18 years of age: www.hbi.org/page.cfm?pageID=132.

In many instances, the related training for apprenticeship programs is provided by community colleges. Some also provide pre-apprenticeship programs. Visit community colleges in your area to find more information. For a directory of community colleges and access to individual community college Web sites, visit the American Association of Community Colleges at: www.aacc.nche.edu.
Where to Go For More Information Continued:
The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) works directly with State Education Agencies to enhance transition services and improve post-school outcomes for youth with disabilities. This site, funded through the Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs, offers abundant resources pertaining to transition planning, and can be accessed at www.nsttac.org.

To locate Community Rehabilitation Providers within your community, contact your local Vocational Rehabilitation office. You can search for the office closest to you on America’s Service Locator: www.servicelocator.org.

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Increasing the Participation of Young Adults with Disabilities in Apprenticeship Programs
An Overview:
Apprenticeship programs offer young adults, including those with disabilities, a career pathway that provides employment as the individual learns on the job. Individuals who successfully complete an apprenticeship program become journey level workers and receive a widely recognized credential of skills attainment. Although the availability of apprenticeship openings varies by community, many different industries and occupations are represented in apprenticeship programs. Considering all the benefits of apprenticeship, more focused attention should be given to learning about available apprenticeship openings, developing relationships with apprenticeship employers, and increasing the participation of individuals with disabilities in apprenticeship programs.

What You Need to Know:
There are many myths and misperceptions that surround apprenticeship. Here are some important facts to know when considering apprenticeship as an employment option for young adults.

First and foremost, apprenticeship is a job, making it a highly desirable post-secondary option for young adults, including those with disabilities.

As apprentices progress, they are guaranteed wage increases, as outlined in the apprenticeship program standards.

While apprenticeship originated from and remains prominent in the building and construction trades, many other occupations also have apprenticeship programs. In fact, over 950 occupations have been recognized by the Department of Labor (DOL) for apprenticeship programs.

Registered apprenticeship is a voluntary, industry-driven training program. The program can be a partnership of business and organized labor or implemented by employers or employer associations. Employers generally bear the costs of the program. Government plays a supporting role, providing technical assistance and support, registering programs and apprentices, and issuing credentials to those individuals who successfully complete the program.

Apprentices may begin a registered apprenticeship at 16 years of age, but the minimum age for most programs is 18. Other basic qualifications for apprenticeship programs are set by the employer or partnership that sponsors the program.

It is important to learn about the apprenticeship programs that are operating in your community, the minimum qualifications for applicants, and announcements of openings for new applicants.
There are several ways to learn about the registered apprenticeship programs that are active in the community. The government agencies that register and support apprenticeship programs have a list of program sponsors (the term for apprenticeship programs) in the state. In 25 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, there is a state agency that administers apprenticeship. In the remaining states, that function is performed by the federal Office of Apprenticeship. In addition, DOL’s Office of Apprenticeship maintains a listing of all its program sponsors by state, and this is available through its Web site. The resource section below provides links for the directories of state and federal apprenticeship program officials and the listing of program sponsors.

At the local level, One-Stop Career Centers and community colleges are good sources of information about apprenticeship programs and apprenticeship applicant openings. All One-Stop Career Centers are part of an electronic job bank that is available to the community and may include apprenticeship job openings. Community colleges typically offer employment services to the community, and are one of the primary sources of apprenticeship-related training.

Many apprenticeship programs are suitable for individuals with a broad range of abilities. For example, career lattice apprenticeships found within the culinary, nursing, retail pharmacy, and security officer occupations, offer individuals, including those with disabilities, the opportunity to receive an interim credential called a “Certificate of Training.” This credential recognizes achievement of a specific set of skills. Such career lattice apprenticeships allow individuals, both with and without disabilities, to move laterally or upward within an industry.

It is important that the prospective applicants for apprenticeship have the skills, aptitudes and interests needed to succeed. The Career Voyager Web site, sponsored by DOL, is a good source of information for individuals to learn about careers, emerging occupations and job requirements, including apprenticeship. A vocational assessment may be necessary to determine whether an individual is suited to the available apprenticeship programs. The assessment should include the following areas:

- Academic performance or achievement
- Physical and cognitive abilities
- Vocational interests and aptitudes
- Occupational skill competencies
There are myriad tools and resources within communities to help with the vocational assessment. Most agencies and organizations that work with individuals with disabilities have this capability. Vocational Rehabilitation Services and its network of community resource providers are a particularly good source for obtaining assessments for qualified clients. If assistance is needed, local One-Stop Career Centers and community colleges are also good places to find help.

Some individuals may need additional training before they can qualify for an apprenticeship program. Typically, the training falls into two categories: basic skills needed to qualify for the occupation; and general work-readiness skills that provide an individual with the “soft skills” employers look for in job applicants. Pre-apprenticeship programs provide these types of opportunities, although they mainly exist within the building and construction trades. One-Stop Career Centers and community colleges are good sources for both basic skill and work-readiness training.

Another recommended approach is to develop partnerships with existing program sponsors. These partnerships could include opportunities for individuals to “try out” the jobs without cost to the employer through internships or on-the-job training programs sponsored by the referring agency. Such partnerships also facilitate learning about apprenticeship openings that become available.

Often people with disabilities are involved with more than one system or service provider. For example, a Job Corps student might also be a Vocational Rehabilitation client. Services need to be coordinated to avoid duplication and to insure that only one agency or organization is working directly with an employer on an individual’s behalf.

Helping to defray some of the costs associated with providing apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship training can make an applicant more attractive when competing for apprenticeship openings. Some of the costs that could be supported include those for the related training (normally classroom instruction) that is required in all apprenticeship programs. Additionally, employers usually incur expenses for tools, uniforms, equipment, as well as costs associated with providing reasonable accommodations for an individual with disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation funds can be used to offset training, support services, tools and equipment, and accommodation costs for qualified clients. Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds may also be used for tools, equipment and training, and support services. Continuing to support individuals once they are placed in apprenticeship programs, including the costs of a job coach for individuals with more significant disabilities, is also an important strategy for increasing apprenticeship opportunities.
Where to Go For More Information:

General information on registered apprenticeship may be obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship: www.doleta.gov/OA/eta_default.cfm. Additionally, staff directories are available for:


You can search for program sponsors in your state through the Office of Apprenticeship at: http://oa.doleta.gov/bat.cfm.

For a directory of One-Stop Career Centers across the U.S., visit: www.careeronestop.org/findos/default.aspx.

DOL sponsors a Web site called Career Voyages that discusses a young person’s post-secondary options, including apprenticeship: www.careervoyages.gov/apprenticeship-main.cfm.

Visit the community colleges in your area to find more information about possible apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship programs, and related training. For a directory of community colleges and access to individual community college Web sites, visit the American Association of Community Colleges at: http://www.aacc.nche.edu.

You can search for the local Vocational Rehabilitation office closest to you on America’s Service Locator: www.servicelocator.org.

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Youth with Disabilities Entering the Workplace through Apprenticeship

Establishing New Apprenticeship Programs
An Overview:
A lack of available apprenticeship openings should not deter interested private and nonprofit agencies and organizations or individuals from pursuing apprenticeship as a post-secondary option for young adults with disabilities. New programs are continually being added to the apprenticeship program rolls, and with over 950 occupations recognized as apprenticeable by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) the possibilities are almost endless. Starting new apprenticeship programs, however, requires a willing employer and the technical support from local apprenticeship staff to make it happen.

What You Need to Know:
Registered apprenticeship is a voluntary industry-driven employment and training program. Apprenticeship programs are operated by a partnership between a business or industry, and organized labor, individual employers, or employer associations. The operator of an apprenticeship program is called a program sponsor. Potential program sponsors need to identify the benefits of apprenticeship to their organization or business before expending the effort and expense involved in establishing and administering an apprenticeship program.

A well-planned apprenticeship program yields many advantages to the employer, and can:
- Attract highly qualified applicants;
- Reduce absenteeism and turnover;
- Increase productivity;
- Ensure employees are trained to industry standards; and
- Provide employers with a competitive edge through a well-trained and flexible workforce.

Some apprenticeship programs are registered with DOL while others, located in 25 states, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, are registered through a State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA). Federal or state apprenticeship staff are located throughout the country and are available to provide technical assistance to all program sponsors. Services provided include the identification of training needs, the development of apprenticeship standards, the development of apprentice recordkeeping systems, and the coordination of services that may be provided through other federal, state, and private employment and training programs, such as Vocational Rehabilitation and its community rehabilitation providers, the One-Stop Career Center System, Job Corps, and school-based preparatory programs.

Federal regulations contain the standards for establishing and registering apprenticeship programs. Currently, there are 23 different standards for recognition of apprenticeship programs that relate to:
- Types of occupations and terms of training (e.g. duration);
- Methods of training and the contents of the training agreement between the apprentice and program sponsor;
- Employment and supervision of apprentices, including requirements for wage progression;
- Registration, record maintenance, reporting and certification; and
- Compliance with equal employment opportunity requirements.
Traditionally, training programs had to be at least one year in length to be eligible for registration, and most were between two and four years. Recent federal rule changes, however, allow programs to be competency-based rather than for a specific time period, or they can be a combination of competency and time-based. Federal regulations also recommend at least 144 hours of related instruction, which is usually classroom based.

A good place to start in developing an apprenticeship program is to look at the criteria used to establish an apprenticeship occupation. These criteria include both the on-the-job competencies that an individual must master (along with an approximate number of hours of work experience) and areas of knowledge that an individual should acquire through related training. Some employers, employer associations and labor-management partnerships have established what are called national standards for their apprenticeship occupations. These national standards are guidelines for apprenticeship programs that facilitate development of registered apprenticeship programs for specific occupations. Federal and state apprenticeship staff can provide assistance in accessing the criteria for an apprenticeship occupation and any available national guideline standards.

Federal and state apprenticeship staff can also help identify those program sponsors that include interim credentialing within their program standards, a concept that may be particularly useful for some individuals with disabilities. Interim credentials are certificates that are issued by the registration agency at the request of the program sponsor as certification of an apprentice's attainment of competency for industry-recognized components of an apprentice's occupation. These credentials provide incentives for apprentices to complete their apprenticeship and are useful in pursuing career goals.

Funding is an important consideration for employers looking at apprenticeship. Agencies and organizations interested in working with employers to establish apprenticeship programs should therefore identify potential funding sources that can be used to defray the costs of apprenticeship. Agencies that work with individuals with disabilities should also determine whether and how their own program resources can be used to help defray training costs. There are many other sources of grants, tax credits and training funds that can be used. These funding sources vary among states since many are state-based. A brochure on Funding Opportunities for Apprenticeship Programs is available through the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship Web site at: www.doleta.gov/OA/pdf/funding_fact_sheet.pdf.
Here are some tips for developing apprenticeship programs:

Create partnerships with other agencies and organizations to facilitate the process. These partnerships might include other service providing agencies and organizations, schools, community colleges, and employer organizations. Enlist the support of state or federal apprenticeship staff. Designate individuals to form a working group to explore opportunities, work with employers, and identify funding resources.

Labor market information is crucial for focusing efforts. Try to answer the following questions: What are the emerging demand occupations in the area? Who are the employers for these demand occupations? Where are they located?

Identify potential employers. Consider larger employers, employer associations, and employers with multiple locations. Also, be sure to include public agencies and nonprofit organizations, as they are often an overlooked, but potentially willing source for apprenticeship programs. Target employers who are known to be “disability-friendly.” Also, consider working with employers to make them more “disability-friendly” through internships and exposure to people with disabilities in the workplace.

Develop a marketing and outreach strategy to attract potential program sponsors. Include in your plan any available financial resources that can be used as incentives for employers to participate. Be sure to include public sector and nonprofit employers as they are the source of many jobs in apprenticeship occupations.

Once you have secured a commitment from an interested employer, your next steps are to:

- Obtain buy-in from workers and management for the idea and organize an apprenticeship committee of skilled workers and management.
- Determine the type of training to be delivered, both on-the-job and related instruction, and identify sources for delivering the related training. This can be done through a community college or other training providers. Larger employers may also have in-house capabilities to deliver training.
- Develop the standards for training, including: occupations; length of training; selection procedure; affirmative action plan; wages; and number of apprentices to be trained. Make sure that all federal (and where applicable, state) requirements are addressed.
- Recruit potential journey-level mentors and offer training in mentoring an apprentice with a disability to dispel concerns about working with people with disabilities and to help ensure a successful placement.
- Identify an individual to be the program coordinator. This is generally someone within the employer’s organization. However, providing someone to serve as program coordinator for at least the first year of the program, or subsidizing the costs of an individual chosen by the apprenticeship committee can serve as an incentive for employers to participate.
- Present the program standards to federal or state apprenticeship agencies for registration. The same staff can be of assistance in developing the standards for training.
- Once the standards are approved, work with the employer to refer qualified applicants. It is also important to continue to provide support to both applicants and to employers, especially around disability related issues about which employers may not be familiar. (See Fact Sheet 3 in this series: “Increasing The Participation Of Young Adults With Disabilities In Apprenticeship Programs”).
- Work closely with the program sponsor and program coordinator to monitor progress, to resolve any issues that may arise, and track results.
Where to Go For More Information:

For comprehensive information on registered apprenticeship in the U.S., including the steps for setting up an apprenticeship program, visit: www.doleta.gov/OA/eta_default.cfm. The complete standards for the registration of apprenticeship programs are available through the U.S. Department of Labor at: www.doleta.gov/OA/characte.cfm.

State apprenticeship agencies are a crucial local resource if you are developing a new apprenticeship program. Find the contact information for your state at: www.doleta.gov/OA/stateagencies.cfm.

The National Association of State and Territorial Apprenticeship Directors (NASTAD) seeks to promote the expansion of registered apprenticeship, and will work in conjunction with employers and labor organizations: nastad.us/overview.html.

Apprenticeship: It Makes Good Business Sense is a toolkit produced by the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council that specifically informs employers of the steps necessary to create a new apprenticeship program: dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/pdf/06_EmployerToolKit.pdf.

Small businesses may qualify for financial assistance from the Small Business Administration (SBA) when implementing an apprenticeship program: www.sba.gov/services/financialassistance/index.html.

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Youth with Disabilities Entering the Workplace through Apprenticeship

What Apprenticeship Employers Need To Know About Working with Young Adults with Disabilities
An Overview:

According to the 2007 American Community Survey (ACS), 12.8 percent of the civilian non-institutionalized population ages 21 to 64 years in the United States reported a disability — more than 22 million people. This makes individuals with disabilities one of the largest minority groups in the country. The employment rate for people with disabilities is 22.8 percent compared to 70.9 percent for people without disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are the largest untapped pool of potential workers.

Many employers are reluctant to hire individuals with disabilities because they lack understanding about their abilities. In addition, they have fears about their responsibilities for providing reasonable accommodations. Yet, employing people with disabilities improves an employer’s bottom line by reducing recruiting and training costs because they are productive capable workers who tend to stay with their employers longer. Also, in some cases, employers can receive tax benefits for hiring individuals with disabilities.

What You Need to Know:

Prospective apprenticeship employers should have basic information about people with disabilities, including information about their legal responsibilities to provide reasonable accommodations in the workplace. This kind of information can dispel some of the more commonly held myths that create barriers to hiring individuals with disabilities.

When asked to define what it means for a person to have a disability, many of us think of individuals who are hearing or visually impaired, or who have mobility limitations. Certainly, these conditions are included in the definition of disabilities, but the term is far broader. Census Bureau data shows that individuals with sensory (i.e. vision and hearing) and physical disabilities constitute a little over 20 percent of people with disabilities. This means that the largest percentages of disabilities are those with so-called “hidden disabilities,” such as learning and psychological disabilities.
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008, was intended to address the inequities that people with disabilities face in their daily lives and in the workplace. Under the ADA, employers with 15 or more employees must provide individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity for employment. This includes providing reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities who are qualified to perform the work required. A common myth is that employers must hire individuals with disabilities regardless of whether they are qualified. Employers are not required to hire individuals, including those with disabilities, who do not meet the basic qualifications to perform a particular job. The applicable criterion is whether the individual can perform the job with or without reasonable accommodations.

Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to the job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that enable qualified people with disabilities to perform the work. Employers must provide reasonable accommodations unless doing so would cause an “undue hardship”. While “undue hardship” does not have a specific definition, considerations include: the impact of the costs involved, the overall financial resources of the employer; and the impact of the accommodation on the facility.

A common misconception is that accommodations are costly. Two-thirds of accommodations, however cost less than $500; nearly a quarter cost nothing. Reasonable accommodations may include:

- Modifying the work schedule.
- Modifying existing equipment or devices.
- Installing new equipment or devices.
- Modifying how instructions are provided.

Learning disabilities are the most prevalent type of disability. Learning disabilities can affect an individual’s ability to interpret what they see or hear, or impair one’s capacity to link information from different parts of the brain. Difficulties with reading, writing, doing math, coordination and attention are common. A 2007 National Institutes of Health study estimates that at least 15 percent of the population has some form of a learning disability, many of which are not diagnosed. Educational data on school age youth who have been classified as disabled show that over 60 percent have learning disabilities. Given the high prevalence of learning disabilities among the population, it is likely that many, if not most, employers already employ an individual with a disability.
Accommodations are specific to the individual. Typical accommodations that individuals with learning disabilities may need include:

• Reduced-distraction work environments.
• Computer technology for written work.
• Allowing more time to learn new job tasks.
• Instructions presented both in written and oral formats.
• Breaking information into small steps rather than providing a lot of information at once.

People with other types of disabilities will require a variety of other types of accommodations.

Public and private agencies and organizations that work directly with individuals with disabilities can help employers identify and implement reasonable accommodations. Foundations and other funding entities are sources of potential support. These agencies and organizations may also be able to provide assistance in defraying the costs of accommodations. Additionally, tax credits are available to defray the costs for small businesses to provide accommodations in order to remove barriers for people with disabilities at the workplace.

Employers also need to understand their legal obligations in the recruiting process. It is important to know that disability information is confidential, and it is solely up to the individual whether to disclose disability status. Many people with disabilities choose not to disclose that they have a disability. When interviewing an individual, an employer may not directly ask about disability status. Employers may ask questions regarding an individuals’ ability to perform specific tasks provided the same questions are asked of all applicants. After an individual has been offered a job, an employer may ask disability-related questions and require medical exams. However, the rule of thumb is that all applicants, regardless of a possible disability, should be treated alike and not according to any assumptions, myths, or stereotypes.

There are many sources of information to assist employers in providing accommodations and working with employees with disabilities. For example, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) sponsors the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) to connect employers and people with disabilities to resources pertaining to job accommodations, self-employment, and small business opportunities: www.jan.wvu.edu. Additional resources are identified under “Where to Go For More Information”.

Youth with Disabilities Entering the Workplace through Apprenticeship - What Apprenticeship Employers Need To Know
Where to Go For More Information:
Visit the Department of Justice’s Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) homepage at www.ada.gov to learn more about this legislation.

For information from ODEP about tax incentives for providing business accessibility, visit: www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/tifpba.htm.

The Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) is a national network of 10 regional DBTAC: ADA Centers that provide up-to-date information, referrals, resources, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to businesses, employers, government entities, and individuals with disabilities: wwwadata.org.

A wide variety of disability related information, including that pertaining to employment and civil rights, can be found on the DisabilityInfo.gov Web site at: www.disabilityinfo.gov.

Learn More

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5. What Apprenticeship Employers Need to Know About Working with Young Adults with Disabilities
6. Looking to Future Opportunities in Apprenticeship

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Youth with Disabilities Entering the Workplace through Apprenticeship

Looking To Future Opportunities In Apprenticeship
An Overview:

Current projections of employment growth reveal opportunities to expand the number of apprenticeship program sponsors and training slots over the next decade, both within the traditional building and construction base of apprenticeship, and in newer apprenticeship occupations. Job demand in the building and construction trades is likely to remain strong through a combination of job growth and the replacement of workers who retire. Some of the newer apprenticeship occupations, particularly some of those that provide for recognition of a specific set of skills within an apprenticeship occupation, are expected to grow. Future high demand occupations are important considerations in career planning and in pursuing new apprenticeship programs.

Recent changes to the federal apprenticeship regulations allow greater flexibility in how related technical instruction can be provided and allow program sponsors to utilize competency-based, hybrid, as well as traditional time-based apprenticeship training approaches. As a result of these changes, it is likely that more employers will participate as program sponsors of apprenticeship training. In addition, the availability of interim credentials in selected apprenticeship occupations is also likely to make apprenticeship an attractive employment option for many more people, including people with disabilities.

What You Need to Know:

Many high-growth technical occupations, particularly those in the medical services fields, are recognized for apprenticeship. Though registered apprenticeship has made progress in expanding beyond the traditional trades to these high-growth, high-demand occupations, most apprentices still come from building and construction. The good news is that current labor market projections indicate that traditional apprenticeship occupations will remain in demand. Two factors dictate the future of occupational demand: growth in the industry or occupation; and the number of replacement workers needed as individuals leave the workforce due to retirement or disability. In the skilled craft trades particularly, replacement is a significant factor as long-time, “baby boomer” journey level workers leave the labor force. Employers who are constantly seeking new workers or who experience a high turnover of staff are good candidates for sponsoring new apprenticeship programs.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publishes data on projected growth in employment by occupation, that includes projected job openings as a result of growth in the occupation and through replacement of existing workers that are projected to leave their jobs. Using this data measure, BLS data indicates that demand for workers in the traditional apprenticeship occupations that employ the most apprentices will remain strong. The chart on the following page, “Projected Job Growth in Top Apprenticeship Occupations,” highlights projected job growth for selected occupations in the building and construction trades. For each of these occupations, the demand is above or near the national average for all occupations.
### Projected Job Growth in Top Apprenticeship Occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number of Workers in Thousands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cement Mason</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction - Bricklayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boilermakers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction - Painters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Engineers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roofer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheet Metal Worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction - Craft Laborers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data in graph is from the appendix to the November 2007 Monthly Labor Review, BLS

### Percent Change in Employment in Occupations Projected to Grow Fastest, 2006-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Projected Percentage Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal/Home Care Aides</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Health Aides</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Technicians</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Assistants</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy Technicians</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forensic Science Technicians</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many apprenticeship occupations outside the building and construction trades are also projected to be in high demand. For some, although the occupation is recognized, no apprenticeship programs have yet been registered. However, in most of these occupations, apprenticeship programs do exist albeit in relatively small numbers. National standards have been established for certain occupations with large employers and associations. National standards facilitate the registration of new apprenticeship programs because they provide a template that an affiliate business can use in putting together its training plan.

Other occupations provide interim certification opportunities through apprenticeship. The flexibility provided through such programs is likely to be useful in expanding apprenticeship opportunities to more people, including people with severe disabilities, because they allow for industry-related recognition of training skills acquired in a given occupational area, even if the individual does not complete the full apprenticeship program. Acquiring these skills will also allow workers who choose to do so to move incrementally towards completing an apprenticeship and still receive recognition for the skills that have been acquired. The interim credential can be useful in finding employment and may be particularly beneficial in designing customized apprenticeship programs for individuals with significant disabilities.

Apprenticeship occupations projected to grow by the largest percentages include personal and home health care aides, veterinary technologists and technicians, medical assistants, and pharmacy technicians. The medical service field is a high-growth industry that provides multiple pathways to certification through apprenticeship. For example, a certified nursing assistant apprenticeship is a three-year program, but there are four interim certifications, each of which requires less training to complete.

Pharmacy technician is another occupation that offers multiple pathways through apprenticeship. The occupation requires the equivalent of one year of work experience and training. However, there are related pharmacy support occupations that provide certifications based on fewer hours. The chart on the previous page, “Percent Change in Employment in Occupations Projected to Grow Fastest, 2006-2016,” shows the anticipated increase in employment occupations for six high growth occupations that are also apprenticeable.

In 2008, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued changes to the rules on apprenticeship. These changes were intended to update the apprenticeship system to meet the demands of the future. Many of the changes, such as the interim credentials described earlier, expand opportunities for all workers, but particularly for individuals with disabilities. Other changes are designed to make apprenticeship appealing to a larger universe of employers. For more information on these changes, see: www.doleta.gov/OA/pdf/Apprenticeship_Final_Fact_Sheet.pdf.
Where to Go For More Information:

Career Voyages, a partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education, provides young people with information on post-secondary education and employment. It gives a particular focus to high growth and emerging industries, in addition to discussing registered apprenticeship: www.careervoyages.gov.

A full list of occupations recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor as apprenticeable may be viewed at: www.doleta.gov/OA/bul08/Bulletin_2008_15.pdf. This bulletin was last updated in May 2008.


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