

APPRENTICESHIP NETWORKS: A HOW-TO GUIDE

Apprenticeship networks have emerged as a powerful model for expanding registered and unregistered apprenticeship programs across the United States. These networks bring together diverse stakeholders to promote apprenticeship opportunities, often focusing on non-traditional industries and underserved populations.

Safal Partners has worked to identify apprenticeship networks throughout the country to understand who they are, what services they provide, and what their membership consists of. Safal Partners team members interviewed 11 apprenticeship networks throughout the country and developed the following key steps to forming an apprenticeship network.

1. Establish the Network's Goals and Focus Areas:

- Define clear, measurable goals for the network, such as increasing apprenticeship placements, providing adequate resources and support for existing programs, or expanding into new industries.
- Identify the key industries, occupations, and populations the network will prioritize based on regional needs.

2. Identify the Network Structure and Membership:

- Decide if the network will be private-sector led by businesses, following the Chicago Apprenticeship Network model, or public-sector led by workforce boards and other organizations.
- Ensure membership includes a diverse range of partners, such as employers, educational institutions, workforce agencies, labor unions, and community organizations.
- Collaborate with partners to determine how the network will be staffed and who will contribute to operating the network.

3. Secure Diverse Funding Sources:

- Private-sector networks typically leverage funding from member businesses, philanthropic sources, and public grants.
- Public-sector networks often supplement workforce board funding with state/federal grants and private contributions.

Chicago Apprentice Network

- The professional apprenticeship movement originated in Chicago in August 2017, where Accenture, Aon, and Zurich North America co-founded the Chicago Apprentice Network.
- Today, the Chicago Apprentice Network works with dozens of employers across the Chicago metro area and has created over 1,500 apprenticeships.
- The National Apprentice Network now operates in ten areas throughout the United States: Chicago, Philadelphia, Northern California, Southern California, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Minnesota, Greater Washington, and Greater Houston.

4. Provide Valuable Resources and Services:

- Offer regular meetings, convenings, and training sessions to educate members on apprenticeship best practices.
- Develop toolkits, webinars, and other resources to support members in establishing and growing apprenticeship programs.
- Facilitate partnerships, committees, and other collaborative activities among network members.

5. Emphasize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

- Ensure the network's goals, membership, and activities prioritize reaching underrepresented populations and non-traditional industries.
- Embed DEIA principles throughout the network's operations and service delivery.

6. Connect with Your Workforce System:

- If you are a private-sector entity, align with your local workforce system, including workforce boards, American Job Centers, and other key organizations.
- Connect with the apprenticeship registration agency in your [state](#) and develop a relationship to help expedite program development and approval.

7. Measure and Communicate Impact:

- Track key performance metrics, such as apprenticeship placements, program completions, and employment outcomes.
- Regularly share the network's successes and lessons learned to inspire and guide other apprenticeship initiatives.

By following these steps, your organization can establish effective apprenticeship networks that leverage collaborative partnerships to expand quality apprenticeship opportunities in your community.

Southern California Apprentice Network (SCAN)

- Based out of the South Bay Workforce Investment Board, the network is a collaboration between employers and the public workforce system to support apprenticeship in ten Southern California counties.
- With funding from both private and public entities, they have a full-time staff member who coordinates the networks' activities, including monthly meetings, events, and committees.
- Their network's goal is to get 3,000 apprentices hired by 100 different employers in 75 different programs by the end of 2029.