

An aerial view of a city skyline at sunset, with a network diagram overlay consisting of white dots connected by curved lines.

# **EXPANDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP THROUGH THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT TITLE I AND TITLE II PARTNERSHIPS**



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## About Safal and COABE

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Safal is a national leader in mission-driven education and workforce consulting, helping clients bridge the gap between ideas and outcomes. Safal's apprenticeship team has built, expanded, and sustained hundreds of Registered Apprenticeship programs across virtually every sector of the U.S. economy. We work with employers, colleges, workforce boards, career and technical education centers, unions and labor management associations, and intermediaries to identify workforce needs and develop high-quality Registered Apprenticeship programs that provide workers with family-sustaining wages and promising career pathways. The Center's work builds on Safal's expertise as an apprenticeship, workforce, and technical assistance provider.

COABE is organized to advance national and international adult education and literacy opportunities for all persons. COABE represents the system of 79,000 adult educators in the United States. The organization's membership continues to grow, with more than 23,000 active members. COABE provides leadership in advancing the education of adults in the lifelong learning process by unifying the profession, developing human resources, encouraging and using research, communicating with its members and the public, and otherwise advancing adult education and literacy. The organization promotes adult education and literacy programs, including Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Family Literacy, skills development, and workforce development.



# Table of Contents

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Introduction	1
Workforce Development and Adult Education: Complementary Roles in Expanding Apprenticeship	4
Readiness of the Workforce Development and Adult Education Systems for Apprenticeship Expansion: Findings of The Center's Baseline Knowledge Assessments	6
Recommendation 1: Enhance Understanding of Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship	8
Recommendation 2: Build Capacity to Provide Pre-Apprenticeship Programs	9
Recommendation 3: Build Capacity to Improve Access to Registered Apprenticeships	11
Recommendation 4: Build Capacity to Use Integrated Education and Training in Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship Programs	12
Recommendation 5: Strengthen Industry Partner Engagement	15
Conclusion	17
Appendices	18

# Introduction

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Collectively, each year the U.S.'s public workforce development and adult education systems funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and Title II (the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, or AEFLA) serve over 1.7 million individuals who seek the knowledge, skills, work experience, and professional ties they need to enter the workforce and grow in family-supporting careers.<sup>1</sup> Registered Apprenticeship is a proven workforce development model that provides specific, tangible, and relevant benefits for adults with these goals, for employers, and for WIOA-funded programs. Through Registered Apprenticeship programs,

- **Apprentices** gain employment, receive applied on-the-job learning (OJL) and professional mentoring, and learn industry-relevant skills through low or no-cost related classroom instruction (RI) which in some cases counts as credits toward a college degree. Apprentices in Registered Apprenticeship programs always receive progressive wage gains as their skills and knowledge increase, as well as a nationally recognized, industry-valued credential upon completion of the program. Many Registered Apprenticeship programs also offer specific industry credentials in addition to the universal certificate of completion.
- **Employers** benefit from a proven, industry-driven, and customizable strategy to recruit and grow the talent they need to compete locally and globally.
- **WIOA Title I and Title II/AEFLA programs** can meet performance targets related to employment, median earnings, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers through work-based training strategies that help advance the goals of WIOA.<sup>2</sup>

An expansion of Registered Apprenticeship is underway in the U.S. in response to increasing awareness of the strengths of this model and significant investments of public and private funds.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, 614,434 adults and youth were enrolled in WIOA Title I programs and 1,120,769 adults were enrolled in Title II programs. "WIOA Title I and III Annual Report Data: Program Year 2022," U.S. DOL ETA <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/results>. "National Reporting System," AEFLA, U.S. Department of Education, <https://aefta.ed.gov/national-reporting-system>.

<sup>2</sup> Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 13-16, "Guidance on Registered Apprenticeship Provisions and Opportunities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act," U.S. DOL ETA, January 12, 2017, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/training-and-employment-guidance-letter-no-13-16>.

<sup>3</sup> "Registered Apprenticeship National Results Fiscal Year 2021" Fiscal Year 2021 Data and Statistics, U.S. DOL ETA <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship/about/statistics/2021>.



To realize the benefits of the increased awareness and Federal investment in Registered Apprenticeship, it is imperative that stakeholders make concerted efforts to reach populations that, historically, have had less access to apprenticeship programs and high-wage occupations. Registered Apprenticeship programs can benefit both workers and industries by reducing barriers to employment and promoting job quality for all Americans. Through partnerships with workforce development and adult education providers, Registered Apprenticeship programs are a tool for employers to build a skilled workforce that is inclusive of low income adults, English language learners, adults with disabilities, adults lacking a high school diploma, and others with foundational skills gaps.

Increased engagement between Registered Apprenticeship and WIOA Title I and Title II programs and a deeper collaboration between these two complementary systems can contribute to the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship. Two recent surveys of workforce development and adult education providers conducted by the U.S. DOL Registered Apprenticeship Technical Assistance (TA) Center of Excellence on Strategic Partnerships and System Alignment (COE, or The Center) indicate that, while capacity exists among WIOA service providers to design and deliver pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs, much more can be done to leverage these programs' respective strengths for greater impact.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the findings of these surveys and discuss opportunities for **deepening the engagement of, and collaboration among, WIOA Title I and Title II service providers in supporting pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs.** The intended audience of the report includes both adult education and workforce development practitioners, in whose hands lies the potential to bridge more Americans to high-quality jobs and to address the talent needs of industry through the time-tested Registered Apprenticeship approach.

**What Is Registered Apprenticeship?** As described in TEGL No. 13-16, "Guidance on Registered Apprenticeship Provisions and Opportunities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act," Registered Apprenticeship is a proven model of career preparation that combines paid OJL with RI to progressively increase workers' skill levels and wages.<sup>4</sup> Registered Apprenticeship is also a business-driven model that provides an effective way for employers to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers by developing and applying industry standards to training programs, thereby increasing productivity and the quality of the workforce. As an "earn and learn" strategy, Registered Apprenticeship provides job seekers employment opportunities that pay sustainable, progressively increasing wages and offer opportunities for career advancement. Program completers receive nationally recognized credentials, and time spent in training or RI may be applied toward industry certification or further post-secondary education.

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<sup>4</sup> TEGL No. 13-16.

## Five Core Components of Registered Apprenticeship



Employer involvement



Structured on-the-job learning



Related instruction



Rewards for skill gains



National occupational credential

**What Is a Pre-Apprenticeship?** As described in Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 23-23, "Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs," pre-apprenticeship programs provide instruction and/or training to increase math, literacy, and other vocational and pre-vocational skills needed to enter a Registered Apprenticeship program.<sup>5</sup> Pre-apprenticeship programs generally consist of training and curriculum that aligns with industry skills needs; hands-on, meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training; opportunities to attain at least one industry-recognized credential; educational and career counseling and other supportive services; and a formal partnership with one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs.

Quality pre-apprenticeship programs adopt strategies (often through community partnerships) that increase Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for populations facing barriers to employment. Pre-apprenticeships are not registered by U.S. DOL but may be registered or otherwise defined at the state level.

**What Is the U.S. DOL COE?** The Center's purpose is to accelerate national scaling of Registered Apprenticeship programs by fostering strategic partnerships and providing TA that supports system alignment among the nation's apprenticeship, workforce, and education systems. In July 2021, U.S. DOL selected Safal, a national consultancy and recognized Registered Apprenticeship and TA leader, to lead The Center. Safal and a national consortium of partners —the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE), National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP), FASTPORT, Wireless Infrastructure Association and National Disability Institute — are committed to advancing understanding about Registered Apprenticeship in the workforce system; improving alignment among workforce, education, and Registered Apprenticeship; and documenting promising practices in partnerships between industry, workforce, education, and apprenticeship systems.

<sup>5</sup> Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 23-23, "Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs," U.S. DOL ETA March 4, 2024, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/ten-23-23/>.

## Workforce Development and Adult Education: Complementary Roles in Expanding Apprenticeship

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Successful Registered Apprenticeship programs are based on strong collaboration among industry, education, workforce development, and other community organizations, which results in quality training for job seekers and customized support to meet the workforce needs of employers. This report explores several questions:

- What roles can WIOA Title I and Title II providers play in designing and delivering Registered Apprenticeship programs?
- How can their coordinated efforts lead to increased co-enrollment of participants in adult education, workforce development, and Registered Apprenticeship programs?
- How can these efforts result in more positive outcomes for employers and for job seekers?

**The Role of Workforce Development:** WIOA Title I funds (administered by the U.S. DOL ETA) can be used in many ways to support Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.<sup>6</sup> These include financing pre-apprenticeship training or a Registered Apprenticeship program's RI component, providing supportive services for participants (including childcare, transportation, books, supplies, uniforms, and tools), and reimbursing up to 75% of apprentice wages for OJL for a designated period. Local workforce development boards (LWDBs) play the important role of convening apprenticeship partners, including AEFLA-funded adult education providers, to coordinate industry engagement and service delivery. TEGL 13-16 and TEN 23-23 elaborate on the allowable uses of WIOA Title I funds and the roles WIOA Title I providers can play in supporting Registered Apprenticeship programs.<sup>7</sup>

By collaborating with adult education and co-enrolling customers in both WIOA Title I and Title II programs, the public workforce system can help ensure that adults with limited academic skills, emerging English language proficiency, little prior educational attainment, or limited familiarity with the workforce development system access Registered Apprenticeship programs and take advantage of the education and services they need to succeed. Title I investments that are used to address barriers to training success can complement Title II educational strategies that equip lower-skilled adults with the knowledge they need to achieve learning and employment goals. Workforce development programs can also partner with adult education and industry representatives to create pre-apprenticeships that respond to employer hiring and skill-development needs and connect to Registered Apprenticeship programs, as described in TEN 23-23 and prioritized in the recent U.S. DOL Apprenticeship Building America Round 2 funding opportunity announcement.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> TEGL No. 13-16.

<sup>7</sup> TEN No. 23-23.

<sup>8</sup> The Apprenticeship Building America, Round 2 grant opportunity announcement ([FOA-ETA-24-04](#)) proposed to award grants in three categories, including "Category 2: Creation of Education System-aligned Pre-apprenticeship Programs and RAPs." These grantees will create and expand pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs that include career technical education, integrated education and training, post-secondary, and/or degreed components and have a documented partnership with at least one education system partner.

**The Role of Adult Education:** WIOA Title II/AEFLA (administered by the U.S. Department of Education, OCTAE, Division of Adult Education and Literacy) is the principal source of Federal funding to states for adult education programs, which are delivered by adult schools, K12 school districts, community colleges, local workforce development agencies and other community-based education providers. Roughly half of AEFLA enrollees seek English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, while others pursue Adult Basic Education (ABE) or a high school diploma or equivalency.<sup>9</sup> As stated in TEN 23-23, “AEFLA funding can be used strategically with other workforce development funds to support the creation of quality pre-apprenticeships.”<sup>10</sup> Three of the four primary purposes of AEFLA’s basic state grant program are directly aligned with the goals of pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship; all of these programs are designed to help adults:

1. Build the knowledge and skills needed to gain employment and become economically self-sufficient;
2. Acquire the education and skills training needed to improve their family’s overall economic stability; and
3. Earn a high school diploma or equivalent and start on a career pathway that is aligned with opportunities for future postsecondary education and training.<sup>11</sup>

With expertise in curriculum and instruction, andragogy<sup>12</sup>, and the integration of academic skills, workforce readiness, and career education, AEFLA-funded adult education providers are well-positioned to deliver collaborative pre-apprenticeship programs and to increase the number of students entering Registered Apprenticeship programs.<sup>13</sup>

For example, a pre-apprenticeship program may incorporate instruction in ESL, foundational English and math, high school equivalency exam preparation, digital literacy, and job readiness that is delivered by an adult education provider and enables students to meet requirements for entry into a Registered Apprenticeship program. Furthermore, adult education program participants could be promising candidates for participation in pre-apprenticeship or Registered Apprenticeship programs, and supportive services for students or other career advising services could help connect them to such opportunities.

**CASE STUDY:** In South Carolina, **Florence County Adult Education’s** six-week Healthcare Pre-Apprenticeship Program offers participants – including ESL students –

- career counseling
- integrated academic and foundational healthcare skills training
- certifications in CPR, first aid, and blood-borne pathogens
- job shadowing
- resume and interview preparation
- virtual reality exposure to healthcare careers
- assistance with transition into Registered Apprenticeship programs.

<sup>9</sup> “Table 1: Participants by Entering Educational Functioning Level, Ethnicity, and Sex,” National Reporting System for Adult Education, <https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/reports/aggregate/2021/all/table-1>.

<sup>10</sup> TEN No. 23-23, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> “Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Resource Guide,” U.S. Department of Education, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/aepla-resource-guide.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Andragogy is the the theory and practice of adult learning. Developed by Malcolm Knowles in the 1960s, it continues to influence adult education to this day.

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that community colleges, in addition to in some cases implementing AEFLA adult education, may participate in Registered Apprenticeship program delivery as RI providers. This role is not the focus of this report because it is not primarily funded by WIOA.



## Readiness of the Workforce Development and Adult Education Systems for Apprenticeship Expansion: Findings of The Center's Baseline Knowledge Assessments

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In 2022, The Center led the development and dissemination of two national surveys: the Workforce Development Registered Apprenticeship Baseline Knowledge Assessment and the Adult Education Registered Apprenticeship Baseline Knowledge Assessment. The Center distributed the 15-question Workforce Development Assessment (see Appendix A) in January 2022 in collaboration with NAWDP to its nearly 15,000 members and contacts, resulting in 542 responses from front-line practitioners, LWDB leadership and members, partner staff, and private business representatives. The Adult Education Assessment (see Appendix B) was disseminated in August 2022 in partnership with COABE and resulted in 1,250 responses from adult education program administrators (432), teachers (508), case workers (218), and other support staff, including career navigators and workforce development specialists.

The purpose of each of these surveys was to identify practitioners' levels of Registered-Apprenticeship-related knowledge, experience, and suggestions for future TA topics. U.S. DOL maintains and continuously develops the [ApprenticeshipUSA](#) website as a resource for workforce development professionals, industry partners, and other stakeholders. OCTAE encourages alignment between adult education and Registered Apprenticeship (including pre-apprenticeship) programs,<sup>14</sup> has developed resources such as the [Integrated Education and Training \(IET\) Toolkit](#) to promote the integration of academic skills and career and technical education programs, and in 2020 sponsored the Rethink Adult Education Challenge to design innovative pre-apprenticeship programs.<sup>15</sup> The Center's [library of TA resources](#), including a framework for building IET programs as pre-apprenticeships, grows as new professional development needs and opportunities are identified. These and other resources may help address the knowledge gaps that currently exist among WIOA providers to increase their engagement with Registered Apprenticeship programs and with each other.

While the baseline survey revealed that approximately 47% of adult educators and 32% of workforce professionals indicate they have “excellent” or “very good” knowledge of Registered Apprenticeship, more than 50% of both adult educators and workforce professionals indicate a need for additional, ongoing technical assistance. Sixty percent of workforce development and 80% of adult education providers said they had “excellent” to “good” knowledge of which Registered Apprenticeship programs exist in their local areas. Adult education representatives may have greater knowledge of Registered Apprenticeship programs because more educational institutions than LWDBs are either Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors or are actively engaged in Registered Apprenticeship as RI providers.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> “Program Memorandum OCTAE 23-1”, U.S. Department of Education, February 28, 2023, [https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/docs/ED-OCTAE\\_Memo\\_23-1\\_Apprenticeship.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/docs/ED-OCTAE_Memo_23-1_Apprenticeship.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> “Rethink Adult Ed Challenge,” U.S. Department of Education, <https://www.rethinkadulthood.com>.

<sup>16</sup> “Workforce System Registered Apprenticeship Baseline Knowledge Assessment Report,” U.S. DOL Registered Apprenticeship TA Center of Excellence, March 2023, [https://dolcoe.safalapps.com/sites/default/files/2023-04/Final\\_Baseline\\_Report\\_0.pdf](https://dolcoe.safalapps.com/sites/default/files/2023-04/Final_Baseline_Report_0.pdf).

At the same time, the surveys also indicate an opportunity to increase understanding of Registered Apprenticeship across the adult education and workforce development systems and to encourage their deeper involvement in collaborative program development. Asked to rate their knowledge of how to communicate the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship programs to employers, 42% of workforce system staff described their knowledge as “very little” or “none.” Similarly, 30% of workforce system staff described having little or no knowledge of how to communicate these benefits to job seekers. Nearly half (46%) of workforce system respondents indicated “very little” or no knowledge of how Registered Apprenticeship correlates with key WIOA performance measures. Among adult education staff, 34% were not currently partnering with a Registered Apprenticeship program, and 32% were not currently partnering with a LWDB to support Registered Apprenticeship. Over half (54%) of adult education providers expressed interest in attending a Registered Apprenticeship 101 training, and 57% requested TA to align their IET programs to Registered Apprenticeship programs.

This survey data on Registered Apprenticeship awareness and interest suggests **there is untapped growth potential that may be unlocked by intentionally increasing understanding of Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs within the U.S. adult education and workforce development systems, aligning efforts, and promoting collaborative program models that leverage the full capacity of both to better serve employers and job seekers.** This would contribute toward the goals of TEGL 13-16 and TEN 23-23, which describe the ETA’s redoubled efforts to promote Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeships. This report recommends five actions practitioners can take to leverage WIOA Title I and Title II toward this expansion of pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship program opportunities and the development of a skilled workforce.



## Recommendation 1: Enhance Understanding of Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship

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Survey findings revealed that 30% of workforce development and 21% of adult education professionals felt their knowledge of Registered Apprenticeship was “very little,” or “none,” suggesting a need to increase Registered Apprenticeship awareness among WIOA-funded practitioners. Among adult education practitioner respondents, 54% expressed interest in workshops about the basics of Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, and 60% requested how-to guidance documents. Indeed, with an enhanced understanding of Registered Apprenticeship, WIOA Title I and Title II-funded systems will be better equipped to act on each of the recommendations included in this report.

By referencing TEGL 13-16 and TEN 23-23, and using resources from The Center, adult education and workforce development practitioners can deepen their understanding of specific Registered Apprenticeship-related topics such as:

- Required and optional Registered Apprenticeship program elements.
- The Federal and state-level Registered Apprenticeship ecosystems.
- Roles of partners, including apprenticeship intermediaries, industry associations, employers, labor organizations, labor-management forums, education providers, and community and faith-based organizations.
- Sources of supportive services and counseling.
- Effective funding models, allowable uses of WIOA funds to support Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship, and other available funding.
- Ways apprenticeship programs can contribute to the primary indicators of performance under WIOA, e.g., entry into and retention in unsubsidized employment, and attainment of measurable skill gains such as “completion of 1 year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones.”<sup>17</sup>
- Ways collaboration on Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs can further the goals of specific WIOA-authorized programs such as Integrated English Language and Civics Education, YouthBuild, JobCorps, etc.

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<sup>17</sup> 34 C.F.R. § 463.155, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-IV/part-463/subpart-I/section-463.155>.

## Recommendation 2: Build Capacity to Provide Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

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Pre-apprenticeship programs provide a bridge into Registered Apprenticeship programs for individuals with barriers to direct entry, improving their readiness for employment and for industry-driven training. For this reason, pre-apprenticeships can be an appropriate service strategy for WIOA-eligible populations, including low-income, unemployed, English language learners, adults with foundational skills needs, justice-involved individuals, and adults with disabilities. By collaborating to offer pre-apprenticeship programs, WIOA partners strengthen the pipeline of Registered Apprenticeship opportunities, open doors to high-quality training and jobs for workers, and grow the skilled workforce.

Workforce development and adult education providers can collaborate with Registered Apprenticeship programs to develop and deliver pre-apprenticeships. TEN 23-23 describes the elements of quality pre-apprenticeship programs for Out-of-School Youth (OSY), Adult, and Dislocated Workers (who may enroll in AEFLA education and training), which could leverage WIOA Title I and Title II resources in areas such as:

- **Design:** WIOA Title I and Title II providers can engage with businesses and labor unions to ensure that pre-apprenticeship curricula **align with industry standards, and that pre-apprenticeships facilitate participants' seamless transitions into continuing education and work-based learning opportunities, including Registered Apprenticeship programs.**
- **Contextualized Instruction:** AEFLA programs can **develop and deliver contextualized pre-apprenticeship curricula** to prepare learners for successful entry into, and potentially accelerated completion of, a Registered Apprenticeship program. This approach **integrates foundational skills**, such as literacy and problem-solving, within the occupational context, equipping learners with both job-specific knowledge and transferable skills aligned with College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education.<sup>18</sup>
- **Co-Teaching:** AEFLA programs can partner with Registered Apprenticeship programs and their RI providers to **co-teach pre-apprenticeship classes**, leveraging the strengths of each to equip participants with the range of skills needed for successful Registered Apprenticeship entry.
- **Articulation:** AEFLA programs can **articulate credit for pre-apprenticeship instruction** to Registered Apprenticeship programs' RI and **establish linkage agreements** with Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors to award advance standing.
- **Removing Barriers Through Supportive Services:** WIOA Title I resources can be used to **offer eligible pre-apprenticeship participants supportive services** (such as childcare and transportation assistance, tools, work clothes, and boots), stipends, and paid work experience as components of a pre-apprenticeship program.

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<sup>18</sup> Pimentel, Susan, "College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education," U.S. Department of Education, OCTAE, 2013, <https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CCRStandardsAdultEd.pdf>.



**CASE STUDY:** The **International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 16, Oakland Adult and Career Education (OACE)** and the **Oakland Workforce Development Board** collaborate to offer a four-week pre-apprenticeship in the finishing trades. Community-based career services providers funded by WIOA Title I recruit and refer WIOA-eligible individuals to the pre-apprenticeship. Because the program is posted on California's Eligible Training Provider List, participants receive WIOA Title-I-funded supportive services, including work tools and boots, and a stipend for completion of hands-on training. WIOA Title II funds allow OACE to deliver classroom instruction in work readiness, math, and digital literacy.

## **TEN No. 23-23**

### **Components of Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs for OSY, Adult, and Dislocated Workers**

According to this DOL notice, the following is a list of the components of quality pre-apprenticeship programs. While these are not required for every program or in every state, they do represent the ideal program design.

- Training and curriculum based on industry standards and approved by the documented Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors that will prepare students with the skills and competencies needed to enter one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs.
- Pre-apprenticeship training courses linked to one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs.
- OJL activities that adequately prepare individuals for entry into one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs.
- Valuable occupational skills and opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials or certifications.
- An opportunity for participants to apply to a Registered Apprenticeship program before or after they finish the pre-apprenticeship program.
- Post-secondary credits that are earned based on dual or concurrent enrollment articulation agreements signed with post-secondary educational institutions and Registered Apprenticeship programs, which can help to accelerate both the RI and OJL components of the Registered Apprenticeship program.
- Counselors, teachers, and others within the organization who provide students with valuable career exposure, career planning, career awareness, mentoring, and support throughout the pre-apprenticeship program.
- Supportive services for participants, including funding for or connections to counseling, mentoring, transportation assistance, childcare, dependent care, rehabilitative services, reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, job coaching, books, tools, and other types of services necessary for an individual to succeed in pre-apprenticeship programs and Registered Apprenticeship programs.

## **Recommendation 3: Build Capacity to Improve Access to Registered Apprenticeship Programs**

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WIOA Title I and Title II systems can work together and with industry partners to ensure that populations traditionally excluded from Registered Apprenticeship programs and from apprenticeable occupations are able to benefit from these high-quality training and career opportunities. Toward this end, WIOA Title I can provide:

- Referrals of WIOA-eligible individuals prepared to enter a Registered Apprenticeship program.
- Tuition support for RI so that eligible low-income apprentices can afford to remain in training while gaining exposure to the industry and occupation.
- Wage subsidies through OJT to incentivize employers to participate in Registered Apprenticeship.
- Supportive services necessary to address barriers to Registered Apprenticeship participation and employment, such as tools, transportation, or childcare.

### **To improve access to Registered Apprenticeship programs, WIOA Title II AEFLA can provide:**

- Referrals of adult education students who have completed ESL, ABE, Adult Secondary Education, and work readiness content that prepares them for Registered Apprenticeship program entry.
- Pre-apprenticeship training that assists participants in succeeding in Registered Apprenticeship programs, including career and industry awareness workshops, job readiness courses, ESL, ABE, financial literacy seminars, and math tutoring (as described in Recommendation 2 and in TEN 23-23).
- Academic skills classes integrated with or concurrent to RI, enrolling apprentices with need for this supplemental instruction.
- If all apprentices are AEFLA-enrolled, design and delivery of the Registered Apprenticeship program's RI.

## Recommendation 4: Build Capacity to use Integrated Education and Training in Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship Programs

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One area of expertise and capacity held by adult education programs and defined in WIOA is the IET approach to training program delivery. IET is an evidence-based educational model grounded in adult learning theory that includes three required components delivered concurrently and contextually: (1) adult education and literacy activities, (2) workforce preparation activities, and (3) workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of the adult learners' educational and career advancement.<sup>19</sup> These three components must be:

- sufficient in intensity and quality;
- based on the most rigorous research available, particularly with respect to improving the reading, writing, mathematics, and English proficiency of eligible individuals;<sup>20</sup>
- simultaneously occurring within the overall scope of the IET program; and
- using occupationally relevant instructional materials.

IET can be used to design pre-apprenticeship instruction that incorporates multiple skill areas needed for Registered Apprenticeship entry and success, or to integrate the teaching of foundational skills and workforce preparation into a Registered Apprenticeship program's RI component. IET can be delivered by a WIOA Title II provider and promoted by a WIOA Title I provider as a training service.

**CASE STUDY: Guam Community College (GCC)**, an awardee of the U.S. Department of Education's Rethink Adult Ed Challenge, uses the IET model to teach shipyard and ship repair skills alongside academic skills in its Marine Transportation Ship Repair Boot Camp pre-apprenticeship. GCC partners closely with private sector partners to design the curriculum, screen applicants, and hire program completers into the Registered Apprenticeship program.

Fortunately, a wealth of existing resources supports IET program development and can be applied to IET in the context of Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship. OCTAE's [IET Toolkit](#) describes the phases typically utilized by adult education providers and their industry partners (which, in this case, could include Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, employers, and labor unions) to design industry-driven training inclusive of the IET approach's three required components. Following the IET Toolkit's guidance, a phased approach to IET development for Registered Apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship could take place as shown in Table 1.

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<sup>19</sup> Code of Federal Regulations, title 34 (2024), §123.35-463.36, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-IV/part-463/subpart-D/section-463.35>.

<sup>20</sup> Code of Federal Regulations, title 34 (2024), §463.37, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-IV/part-463/subpart-D/section-463.37>.

**Table 1: Phased Approach to IET Development for Registered Apprenticeship or Pre-Apprenticeship**

IET Toolkit Phase	Overview	Registered Apprenticeship or Pre-Apprenticeship Application
<b>Research and Assess Phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess regional workforce development and adult learner needs.</li> <li>Determine available resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer, labor union, adult education, and LWDB partners assess the literacy, technical, and workplace readiness skills needed for Registered Apprenticeship entry, training, and employment, as well as potential apprentices' skills gaps, to determine ways an IET program can meet those needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Design and Plan Phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify program goals.</li> <li>Design an IET program and learner experience that address the needs of businesses and adult learners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners align adult academic skills and workplace readiness curriculum with Registered Apprenticeship program entry requirements, OJL work processes, and RI outlines, or with desired pre-apprenticeship content preparatory for Registered Apprenticeship programs.</li> <li>Partners determine an approach to integrating and coordinating the delivery of IET components.</li> </ul>
<b>Develop and Implement Phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop integrated curriculum and materials.</li> <li>Deliver staff professional development.</li> <li>Define data collection plan.</li> <li>Launch IET program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners develop academic skills and workplace readiness curriculum and materials that are contextualized for the apprenticeable occupation.</li> <li>Adult education and industry instructors participate in joint professional development and co-planning.</li> <li>Partners incorporate data collection on WIOA participation with Registered Apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship data tracking.</li> <li>Pre-apprenticeship partners establish direct entry into one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs.</li> <li>Partners launch IET program.</li> </ul>



In response to Adult Education survey results showing that over half of the respondents (57%) were interested in “how to map a program IET to Registered Apprenticeship,” The Center developed an [Adult Education IET Pre-Apprenticeship Roadmap](#). This resource builds upon the IET Toolkit by suggesting specific ways in which the IET approach can be applied to pre-apprenticeship and how adult education providers with existing IET capacity and programs can map these to Registered Apprenticeship programs. The roadmap suggests that IET pre-apprenticeship partners adapt their IET design activities to include the following:

- Identify organizations sponsoring or supporting Registered Apprenticeship programs through the LWDB, American Job Centers, OA, or State Apprenticeship Agency;
- Include Registered Apprenticeship program on-the-job hours/competencies and RI standards as part of the IET program’s Single Set of Learning Objectives;
- Customize workforce preparation curricula to ready students for Registered Apprenticeship, RI, OJL, and industry credentialing;
- Incorporate introductory OJL activities into pre-apprenticeship IET classes;
- Develop direct entry or linkage agreement with Registered Apprenticeship program sponsor for pre-apprenticeship program completers;
- Assist and coach participants on the Registered Apprenticeship program application process; and
- Connect pre-apprentices with needed supportive services (provided by Title I, Title II, or community-based partners) to improve retention and completion rates.



## Recommendation 5: Strengthen Industry Partner Engagement

The WIOA Title I and Title II systems' LWDBs, American Job Centers, and adult education programs can work collaboratively with industry partners to meet WIOA performance metrics and advance jobseekers' access to careers through Registered Apprenticeship, but many have not tapped this opportunity. One third (34%) of Adult Education survey respondents said they were not working with employers, local unions, or other educational institutions or were not sure if they were, and a third (31%) said they were not or were unsure if they were partnering with their LWDB on Registered Apprenticeship. Among Workforce Development survey respondents, 42% stated that they had very little or no understanding of how to communicate the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship to employers. Nearly two-thirds of Adult Education respondents (61%) felt employer engagement guides would be helpful to support Registered Apprenticeship partnerships.

These findings suggest opportunities for adult education and workforce development practitioners to develop an understanding of their roles within the Registered Apprenticeship ecosystem inclusive of employers, labor unions, sponsors, and intermediaries; and to raise awareness among these partners about the value WIOA Title I and Title II providers bring to the table in terms of foundational academic skills development, barrier removal, and participant- and employer-based training subsidies. Providers may wish to expand their expertise in areas such as:

- Aligning WIOA Title I and AEFLA programs with the Registered Apprenticeship goals in WIOA State Unified or Combined Plans and LWDB WIOA plans;
- Having Business Services Representatives communicate the value of WIOA Title I and WIOA Title II co-enrollment to Registered Apprenticeship employers and sponsors such as being able to access funding, supportive services, and a wider pool of applicants;
- Using local labor market data and industry engagement to design RI for new or existing Registered Apprenticeship programs;
- Directing WIOA Title I OJL funds to support employers' apprentice wages; and
- Working with employers to establish pre-apprenticeship linkages with and direct entry agreements into Registered Apprenticeship programs.





## TA Opportunities

The Center plans to respond to findings of the Adult Education and Workforce Development Baseline Knowledge Assessments by delivering the following TA resources:

- Registered Apprenticeship resources customized for adult education and workforce development and differentiated by audience (including state leadership, program administrators, instructors, career services staff, and others) on topics such as required and optional program elements, Federal and state-level ecosystems, roles of apprenticeship intermediaries and other partners, effective funding models, and ways apprenticeship programs can contribute to WIOA indicators of performance.
- Pre-apprenticeship development guidance on topics such as developing contextualized pre-apprenticeship curriculum; facilitating seamless transitions to Registered Apprenticeship programs; articulating pre-apprenticeship instruction to RI for advance credit; and integrating supportive services, stipends, and paid work experience.
- Additional IET design guidance documents and professional development opportunities customized to Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship IET programs.
- Resources to raise awareness among Registered Apprenticeship stakeholders of the value of adult education and workforce development system partnerships.



## Conclusion

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The intersecting goals of Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship expansion and WIOA implementation articulated in TEN 23-23 suggest a compelling opportunity for WIOA Title I and Title II service providers to work together much more explicitly and intentionally.

As core WIOA partners, Title I Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker programs and Title II AEFLA programs are key contributors to the success of job seekers and employers. In fact, they can bring considerable Federal resources and effective training program models to bear on growing talent pipelines into Registered Apprenticeship programs. By collaborating more intentionally to align their programming with Registered Apprenticeship, the workforce development and adult education systems can help apprentices attain measurable skill gains, college credit, industry-recognized credentials, and family-sustaining employment and careers, while ensuring the vibrancy of the economy.

Recent survey data from The Center points to gaps in knowledge across these systems. This is an optimal moment to improve the Registered-Apprenticeship-related outcomes of Title I, Title II, and initiatives under the Investing in America initiatives by building the capacity of apprenticeship design teams to include workforce development and adult education partners to deliver pre-apprenticeship programs, improve access to Registered Apprenticeship programs, and apply the IET approach. By playing more substantive roles in Registered Apprenticeship, WIOA Title I and Title II partners can leverage their combined funding and expertise to achieve positive training and employment outcomes for job seekers and businesses.





## Appendices

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### **Appendix A: Workforce Development Registered Apprenticeship Baseline Knowledge Assessment Questions**

1. Overall, how would you rate your knowledge of Registered Apprenticeship?
2. How would you rate your ability to communicate the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship to a job seeker?
3. How would you rate your ability to communicate the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship to businesses?
4. How would you rate your knowledge of convening partners in your local area to support Registered Apprenticeship?
5. How would you rate your knowledge of the existing Registered Apprenticeship programs in your local area?
6. How would you rate your knowledge of the information in your local and state WIOA plans as it pertains to Registered Apprenticeship?
7. How would you rate your knowledge of the related instruction requirements of apprentices?
8. How would you rate your knowledge of the relationship between Registered Apprenticeship related instruction and our state or local eligible training provider list?
9. How would you rate your knowledge of the responsibilities of a program sponsor?
10. How would you rate your knowledge of what the U.S. DOL Office of Apprenticeship does?
11. How would you rate your knowledge of who pays for each part of an apprenticeship program (related instruction, wages, administration)?
12. How would you rate your knowledge on how Registered Apprenticeship correlates with performance measures?
13. How would you rate your knowledge on the differences in Registered Apprenticeship and other work and learn models?
14. How would you rate your knowledge on the supervision of apprentices throughout their apprenticeship program?
15. How would you rate your knowledge on the use of WIOA supportive services to support apprentices?

## **Appendix B: Adult Education Registered Apprenticeship Baseline Knowledge Assessment Questions**

- 1.** Are you a COABE member?
- 2.** Is your institution currently partnering with a Registered Apprenticeship Program(s)?
- 3.** Do you have relationships with any employers, local unions, or other educational institutions that partner with Registered Apprenticeship Programs?
- 4.** Do you currently partner with your local Workforce Board to support Registered Apprenticeship Programs or Youth Apprenticeships?
- 5.** Do you know where to access resources about Registered Apprenticeships in general?
- 6.** Do you know where to access resources about Registered Apprenticeships in your state?
- 7.** Is your program interested in or in need of basic “Registered Apprenticeship 101”?
- 8.** Is your program interested in or in need of assistance to understand how to map your program IET to Registered Apprenticeship?
- 9.** Is your program interested in or in need of program entry requirements for your students?
- 10.** Would outreach materials be helpful to support you with Registered Apprenticeship?
- 11.** Would Desk Aides (How-to Guides) be helpful to support you with Registered Apprenticeship?
- 12.** Would Employer Engagement Guides be helpful to support you with Registered Apprenticeship?
- 13.** Would Implementation Guides be helpful to support you with Registered Apprenticeship?
- 14.** Are you interested in participating in a focus group (optional)?
- 15.** How would you rate your overall knowledge of Registered Apprenticeship?
- 16.** How would you rate your knowledge of Registered Apprenticeship Programs currently available in your state or region?

## Appendix C: Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Resources for WIOA Partners

### WIOA Title II/Adult Education

OCTAE's [Literacy Information and Communication System](#) (LINCS) is a national leadership initiative to expand evidence-based practice in the field of adult education. The LINCS website includes a collection of vetted resources for adult education practitioners, an online community of practice, online courses, and a Learner Center for adult education learners.

[COABE](#) is focused on advancing national and international adult education and literacy opportunities for all persons. The COABE Journal, podcasts, recorded webinars, and public campaigns provide adult education practitioners with information on ways to improve educational and career preparation services that are provided to adult learners across the United States.

### Registered Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship.gov [Fact Sheets](#)

The U.S. DOL's WorkforceGPS [Apprenticeship Community](#) is an online community of practice for apprenticeship practitioners.

### Pre-Apprenticeship

The [Rethink Adult Ed Challenge](#) was a competition implemented by OCTAE to advance pre-apprenticeships in adult education. The challenge website includes multiple resources and access to an online course designed to help adult education providers develop new pre-apprenticeships.

LINCS' [Creating Adult Pre-Apprenticeships](#) course (must log in to enroll) is designed to help adult education providers develop new programs, as well as support providers who are refining existing pre-apprenticeships or implementing similar integrated education and training programs. It includes examples and resources relevant to a range of adult education providers and industries.

## IET

Developed by American Institutes for Research and Safal for OCTAE, the [IET Toolkit](#) provides a foundational set of resources needed to design and implement an IET program that addresses learner and business needs in local communities and regions.

The LINCS [ADVANCE IET](#) page highlights innovative practices around the development and implementation of IET, including co-teaching and integrating supportive services.

COE's [Building an IET Program as a Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#)

The Center for Law and Social Policy's [Integrated Education and Training: Model Programs for Building Career Pathways for Participants at Every Skill Level](#) provides information on how WIOA-funded programs can work together to develop and implement IET programs, including pre-apprenticeships, IET, corrections, and postsecondary programs.

## Industry Engagement

The Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators [Career Pathways Guide – Industry Perspective](#) provides actionable tips and resource links for practitioners seeking to engage industry in career education programs, including apprenticeships.

See additional resources in [TEN 23-23](#).

