

The Value of Group Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce and individuals can obtain paid work experience with a mentor, receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally recognized credential. To successfully launch an RA program, you must have an RA sponsor. An effective RA program sponsor plays a key role in establishing and implementing the program by handling the essential responsibilities—completing required documentation, developing program standards in collaboration with employers, and coordinating supplemental education.

RA sponsors may work with a single employer, or they may choose to work with multiple employers. When a sponsor works with multiple employers, this is considered a group RA program. This resource explores group RA programs and how they can significantly enhance the reach and effectiveness of RA programs.

What is a group RA program?

A group RA program is a collaborative workforce development model that allows multiple employers to participate in a single apprenticeship program. Rather than each employer building and managing a program independently, group RA programs provide a shared structure for developing talent across an industry or region.

Just as with single-employer RA programs, group programs have a sponsor, which is the entity responsible for operating and administering the program. The sponsor role can be fulfilled by a number of different entities, including but not limited to educational institutions, workforce entities, chambers of commerce, community-based organizations, unions, and industry associations. Some group RA programs are sponsored by the cohort of participating employers.

Benefits of a group RA program

Group RA programs can help employers meet important workforce goals while making RA more accessible and streamlined to implement. The collaborative nature of group RA programs allows for leveraging expertise and sharing of resources in a way that positively impacts the development, implementation, and success of the programs.

In addition to the return on investment for all types of RA programs, which is 44.3% and \$1.44 for every dollar invested, group RA programs offer several additional benefits, including, but not limited to the following:

EFFICIENCY, FLEXIBILITY, AND SPEED

Group RA programs offer a dynamic and streamlined approach to RA programs designed to meet the fast-paced demands of today's business environment. They are particularly beneficial for small and mid-sized employers that may lack the capacity to manage programs independently. Key advantages include:

- **Agility and scalability:** Employers can quickly join a group RA program through a simple one to two-page employer acceptance agreement, enabling faster scaling and flexibility compared to standalone programs.
- **Rapid implementation:** Group RA programs often allow for program launch within 48 to 72 hours, significantly accelerating time to execution.
- **Shared administrative support:** The administrative responsibilities are distributed across multiple employers, reducing the oversight burden for any single organization.
- **Streamlined talent development:** Participating employers can more quickly access, onboard, and train new talent to meet evolving workforce needs.
- **Expert support and resources:** These programs are often sponsored by intermediary organizations that provide technical assistance and access to funding resources.

PEER COLLABORATION AND SHARED LEARNING

Group RA programs foster a collaborative environment where participating employers can learn from one another and continuously enhance program effectiveness. Key benefits include:

- **Exchange of best practices:** Increased collaboration enables employers to share proven strategies for recruiting, training, and retaining apprentices.
- **Peer-to-peer learning:** Open dialogue among employers helps identify what works and what doesn't, strengthening overall program quality.
- **Collective problem-solving:** Regular communication and shared insights ensure apprentices are developing the skills most relevant to industry needs, efficiently and effectively.
- **Culture of continuous improvement:** Collaboration encourages innovation, allowing employers to adapt training models and curricula quickly in response to changing workforce demands.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

Group RA programs provide a cost-efficient model for workforce development by leveraging shared resources and reducing the financial burden on individual employers. Key cost-saving advantages include:

- **Shared operational expenses:** Participating employers can jointly fund instruction, curriculum development, program coordination, and overall program management.
- **Shared infrastructure and tools:** Costs for essential tools, such as assessment platforms, learning management systems, and even physical training facilities, can be distributed among employers.
- **Access to external funding:** Group programs are often well-positioned to secure workforce system grants and other funding sources to help offset training and program expenses.
- **Maximized tax incentives:** Employers benefit from shared knowledge and examples of successful applications for tax credits. For additional guidance, visit: [Investments, Tax Credits, and Tuition Support | Apprenticeship.gov](#).

How to get involved

Whether you are an employer looking for a proven workforce development strategy to build a talented workforce, an organization committed to building high-quality career pathways for students or career seekers, or a stakeholder aiming to expand apprenticeship opportunities in your community, region, or state, joining a group RA program is an efficient and effective approach to achieving your workforce development goals.

FIND A GROUP SPONSOR

- Use DOL's [Partner Finder](#) to find a group RA program to join or to identify potential partners in developing or expanding a group RA program.
- [Identify](#) and contact your [USDOL Office of Apprenticeship Regional Office](#) or your [State Apprenticeship Agency](#).

BECOME A SPONSOR OF A GROUP RA PROGRAM

- [Explore the wide variety of organizations acting as group sponsors](#), including educational institutions, trade associations, and workforce boards.
- [Utilize resources](#) and [technical assistance](#) to map your path toward becoming a group sponsor.
- If you are a workforce board, [discover specific benefits of acting as a group sponsor](#) and leverage resources to identify key partners.

Resources

The following resources can help you better understand sponsorship roles and access tools for launching or joining a group RA program:

- [“What is an apprenticeship program sponsor?”](#) (DOL)
- [Registered Apprenticeship Partner Finder](#) and [Partner Finder Guide](#) (via US DOL)
- [Sample Standards of Apprenticeship](#) (DOL)