

## Bridging Benefits

# Guiding RA Sponsors and Employers Through U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Approval of Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs offer a powerful pathway to meaningful careers, especially for veterans transitioning to civilian life. Veterans are also able to access critical benefits such as the GI Bill through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that can support them in an RA program. Unlocking these benefits requires VA approval of the RA program.

This tip sheet provides practical guidance to help you, as an RA sponsor or participating employer, navigate the process of obtaining VA approval for your RA programs. Achieving VA approval expands benefits for veterans and supports workforce development efforts nationwide. The steps outlined in this tip sheet may be completed by an RA sponsor, a participating employer, or both. In cases where the employer is not the RA sponsor, the more the sponsor can do to ease the burden on the employer, the more efficient and positive the experience tends to be.

## Why Should an RA Sponsor or Employer Get their RA Program VA-Approved?

There are several practical reasons why you should consider getting VA approval. Most importantly, VA approval for an RA program can:

### EXPAND THE TALENT PIPELINE

VA approval enables RA sponsors to offer eligible veterans and their dependents access to valuable VA education benefits—most notably, a Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) and potential stipends—while they train and earn wages in an approved RA program. These added benefits make RA programs significantly more appealing to the approximately 200,000 service members who transition to civilian life each year, offering a smoother pathway to stable employment and long-term success.



**The national average MHA is approximately \$1,600 per month, though the exact amount varies based on the training location.**

### PROVIDE VETERANS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT THAT BOOSTS RETENTION AND COMPLETION IN RA PROGRAMS

Eligible veterans can receive a tax-free MHA benefit payment for each month they are employed and training in an approved RA program. They can also receive a monthly subsistence allowance to supplement their income while training in a new occupation. The amount is based on their number of dependents and their attendance in the training program.



**The FY25 subsistence rate for full-time attendance in an approved RA program with no dependents is \$693.94 a month.** (Note that RA wages plus subsistence allowance cannot exceed a journey worker's wage.)

## REDUCE RA PROGRAM COSTS

Veterans can leverage their VA education benefits to cover expenses such as tuition, books, and supplies, significantly reducing the out-of-pocket costs associated with RA programs. In addition, through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), veterans may access supplemental funding, primarily via Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program. While these funds are not paid directly to veterans, they help offset training costs and provide essential supportive services such as transportation and childcare through approved providers. These resources not only reduce overall program costs, but also ensure that veterans receive priority access to career advancement opportunities.

## CREATE A COMPETITIVE HIRING ADVANTAGE

VA-approved programs showcase a company's dedication to supporting veterans, making it more attractive to those seeking employers who value their service. These programs offer a clear pathway to in-demand careers and allow veterans to fully utilize their hard-earned VA benefits, strengthening both recruitment and retention of veteran talent.

## ■ The Approval Process

The process to secure VA approval of your RA program can seem daunting. The steps outlined below will help you to efficiently and successfully achieve VA approval. Once you receive approval for one program, you will be well-positioned to complete the process for additional programs.

### STEP 1

**Ensure your program is officially registered.** The RA program must be approved and registered with the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL) Office of Apprenticeship or your State Apprenticeship Agency before engaging in the VA approval process. You will need a copy of the approved RA standards and any related appendices.

### STEP 2

**Contact your State Approving Agency.** This agency can help guide you through the approval process. You can find your state's contact through the [National Association of State Approving Agencies'](#) website. Typically, your State Approving Agency can authorize an RA program as VA-approved within 30 days. Source: [Apprenticeship\\_Veterans\\_FactSheet.pdf](#)

### STEP 3

**Prepare and submit an application packet.** The RA sponsor and/or employer must ensure the required documents are submitted to the State Approving Agency.

The core VA forms that must be included in the application packet are

- The Employer's Application to Provide Job Training, [VA Form 22-8865](#). This is a one-page form that specifically outlines the RA Program information, including the RA training location, occupation, and wage information, as well as the company contact name and phone number.
- The Designation of Certifying Official, [VA Form 22-8794](#). This form submits the names and signatures of authorized certifying official(s) responsible for reporting trainee enrollment and progress to the VA.
- Training Agreement for Apprenticeship and Other On-The-Job Training Programs, [VA Form 22-8864](#). This is the signed agreement outlining responsibilities, wage scales, and terms between the employer/sponsor and the VA and apprentices.

The supporting documents that must be submitted are

- A copy of your RA standards, including all appendices such as the work process schedule, as approved by the Department of Labor or State Apprenticeship Agency.
- Training outline and/or work process schedule that details total training hours, tasks, and on-the-job versus classroom training components. This information should align with Block 8 on VA Form 22-8865 mentioned above.

#### STEP 4

**Respond to State Approving Agency questions.** Be prepared to answer questions or provide clarification during the review and approval process.

## Post-VA Approval Checklist



### Register in RAPIDS or state agency data system

The RA sponsor or employer must register the Veteran into the RA program through DOL RAPIDS or the State Apprenticeship Agency's data system.



### Ensure Veteran updates benefits

The Veteran must update their benefits in their VA Benefits Portal with the address and occupation information associated with his/her VA-approved RA program.



### Ensure submission of monthly wage and hours report

The employer must submit a monthly wage and hours report (often VA Form 22-8865 or a state-specific equivalent). This report confirms the veteran's

- hours worked,
- current pay rate, and
- level of progression through the apprenticeship.

These monthly updates are essential because MHA payments are based on the veteran's wage level and training status.



### Maintain program compliance

To maintain VA approval, employers must

- Notify the VA of any changes (e.g., wage changes, program structure, or a veteran dropping out).
- Keep accurate records.
- Ensure that the training meets both apprenticeship standards and VA education benefits requirements.
- Participate in compliance reviews.
- Renew or update VA approval as needed.



**Through proactive engagement with both veterans and employers, you can help maximize the effectiveness of these interconnected programs and significantly improve employment outcomes for veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce.**

# Key Ways the Veterans Apprenticeship and Labor Opportunity Reform (VALOR) Act Applies to Apprenticeship Programs



## **NATIONAL RA PROGRAM SPONSORS WHO ARE ALSO THE RA EMPLOYER**

(i.e., under their own DOL sponsorship) are considered VALOR Act eligible. These employers must

- Contact the VA State Approving Agency Director for the state in which their headquarters is located.
- Complete VA Form 22-8865 Employer's Application to Provide Job Training.
- Complete VA Form 22-8794 Designation of Certifying Officials.
- Submit both completed documents, along with the signed copy of their DOL-approved program standards, to the VA State Approving Agency contact.



## **PARTICIPATING EMPLOYERS WHO ARE NOT THE RA SPONSOR ARE NON-VALOR-ACT EMPLOYERS**

These employers must apply separately with the VA State Approving Agency Director in each state where their RA training occurs.

Once approved, RA program sponsors and employers can conduct RA training and offer MHA benefits to veterans in all states where they are approved to operate.

[Frequently Asked Questions: VALOR Act](#)

[Circular 2020-04 DOL ETA OA Guidance for the Implementation of Section 2\(b\)\(2\) of the Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act of 2019 \(PL 116-134, 134 Stat. 277\)](#)

## **Conclusion**

Getting your RA program approved by the VA opens the door to valuable education benefits for Veteran apprentices, making your program more attractive to a skilled, motivated talent pool while supporting those who served. By following the steps outlined in this Tip Sheet and coordinating closely with your State Approving Agency and the VA, RA sponsors and employers can streamline the approval process and enhance their workforce development efforts.

For further support, visit [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill).

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