Integrating Registered Apprenticeship in Service Delivery Planning to Increase WIOA/RA Co-Enrollment

A Guide for One-Stop Operators

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to equip One-Stop Operators (OSOs) with a clear framework for integrating Registered Apprenticeship (RA) into WIOA services by defining core OSO responsibilities, outlining strategic steps to boost WIOA/RA co-enrollment, and providing sample metrics and resources. The guide covers how to embed apprenticeship discussions into regular agendas, build interagency apprenticeship teams, standardize workflows, leverage data, and target population-focused practices to drive apprenticeship results.

WHAT IS CO-ENROLLMENT?

As used in this guide, co-enrollment refers to simultaneously enrolling a participant in RA and more than one of the six WIOA core programs:

- Title I - Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
- Title II - Adult Education
- Title III - Wagner-Peyser
- Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation
- WIOA partner programs (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] Employment and Training [E&T], Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF])

WHAT IS REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP?

RA offers employers a customizable, proven talent development strategy that combines paid On-the-Job Training (OJT) with Related Instruction (RI), utilizing standards validated by industry and approved by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) or your State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA). Key RA benefits for the employer include

- Built-in skill progression that ensures employees grow with the business needs.
- Industry-recognized credentials that guarantee consistent, high-quality performance.
- A culture of mentorship and strong employer commitment that boosts retention and loyalty.

Think of RA as a strategic investment for employers who want to build a hands-on, fully customizable training program and talent pipeline that produces skilled, loyal workers capable of thriving and advancing within their organization. From an OSO perspective, it should be considered a key strategy for both delivering service and meeting WIOA performance metrics.

Key OSO Responsibilities as they Relate to Registered Apprenticeship

SYSTEM INTEGRATION AND PARTNERSHIP ALIGNMENT

The OSO must bring together all workforce partners (Title I, II, III, IV, TANF, SNAP, etc.) and RA system leaders (e.g., local Apprenticeship Training Representatives [ATRs]) into a shared service framework. For RA alignment, this means creating joint intake protocols so that any customer who expresses interest in paid OJT can be seamlessly referred into a RA pathway alongside co-enrollment in WIOA services.

> ⭐ **EXPERT TIP**
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> Partner roles and referral workflows can be handled by co-authoring a referral protocol document with all partners. This document details which team owns eligibility screening, who initiates warm introductions, and how progress is tracked. The document can also be a part of the quarterly governance meetings to review referral timeliness, conversion rates, and any breakdowns, allowing you to update your protocol and service level expectations based on real-world data.
>
> One specific example for aligning partners is to ensure Adult Education Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs or pre-apprenticeship programs are aligned to local RA programs' OJT technical requirements, ensuring students have the foundational skills required for direct or accelerated entry into the RA program upon graduation.
>
> Another promising practice is to develop a menu that layers WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), OJT reimbursements, SNAP/TANF supportive services, other partner services, and any federal or state RA incentives (e.g., tax credits, grant funding) into one clear cost plan for employers.

OPERATIONAL OVERSIGHT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The OSO is charged with monitoring and refining One-Stop processes. By embedding RA milestones (referral, registration, completion) into the One-Stop's performance dashboards, the OSO can identify where RA is under-utilized or where customers need extra support and then lead rapid after-action reviews to tighten workflows.

> ⭐ **EXPERT TIP**
>
> OSOs should be able to pull participant-level data for career seekers who are in an RA program, as well as WIOA performance data from the Management Information System (MIS). Using this data, or dashboards/scorecards, to spot co-enrollment lags, measure ROI, and make continuous improvement adjustments is a promising practice. For instance, if as part of your work to increase access to RA you notice that there is a 'cold spot' among specific demographics' co-enrollment into RA, it may lead to a strategy adjustment, such as expanding outreach.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT COORDINATION

Cultivating employer relationships is central to the OSO role. For RA, this means coordinating business services representatives (BSRs) and RA system ATRs to intentionally collaborate by, for example, cohosting sector-focused forums, mapping funding incentives, and co-designing RA program standards that align employer needs with WIOA-funded supports.

⭐ EXPERT TIP

The OSO should be aware of the local RA landscape, which includes employers, trade associations, labor organizations, and training providers who are involved in RA either as sponsors, participating employers, or RI providers. By understanding and sharing information on those entities' program capacity, occupational focus areas, and any special requirements with staff, the OSO can help boost the use of RA.

The OSO can help all partners with employer engagement strategies for RA at every meeting. By working with staff to practice conversation starters and opening questions or developing value propositions and sector-specific data to share with employers, the OSO can take an active role in training staff.

The OSO can also coordinate partners to co-host Apprenticeship Accelerators, or to develop a quick-start toolkit that can lower employers' barriers to launching an RA program.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING

The OSO must oversee the collection, analysis, and reporting of outcomes across all programs. For WIOA/RA co-enrollment, this involves ensuring that apprenticeship placements, credential attainment, and retention metrics flow accurately from data input in the MIS to the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) in state and local reports so that both RA and WIOA performance targets are met.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND POLICY ADVOCACY

OSOs serve as the public face of the workforce system. By showcasing RA success stories, engaging community stakeholders, and advocating for grant opportunities or policy changes, the OSO elevates RA as a proven pathway to high-skilled, well-paid careers and drives broader employer and partner buy-in.

⭐ EXPERT TIP

OSOs are also the internal coordination for the workforce system. By working with the correct staff, they can help focus RA recruitment for priority populations such as Veterans. For instance, by working closely with Veteran representatives, the OSO can bring RA directly into veteran transition workshops. OSOs must also make sure that staff are aware of how to coordinate with the Veterans Administration and G.I. Bill administrators so that Veterans understand how to access their Military Housing Allowance during their RA program participation, as well as other benefits such as RI materials and supportive services. Meeting with veteran representatives on a regular basis also provides you with a chance to ensure that veterans are receiving warm handoffs to RA programs, that they are aware of how their military skills translate into RA competencies, and that any adaptive equipment or counseling is being addressed to make their RA journey successful.

Strategic Tips for OSOs to Increase RA Utilization and WIOA/RA Co-Enrollment

MAKE RA A STANDING AGENDA ITEM

If you have a local RA integration team, you likely already have RA on your agenda. If not, adding the topic to your standing agenda can help drive momentum to create a formal team that focuses on increasing RA utilization and co-enrollment.

ESTABLISH A LOCAL RA INTEGRATION TEAM

Consider the following steps when developing a local RA integration team:

1 Identifying and Chartering Core Stakeholders

Begin by **mapping out all partner roles** essential to co-enrollment, including BSRs, WIOA Title I coaches, Vocational Rehabilitation coaches, Adult Education instructors, SNAP/TANF caseworkers, and the ATR or Apprenticeship Navigator. Draft a one-page team charter that defines the team's mission, scope (co-enrollment workflows, data sharing, employer engagement), decision-making authority, and expected meeting cadence.

2 Securing Leadership Buy-In and Resources

Present the charter to executive leadership to obtain formal endorsement, dedicated staff time, and any budget needed or tools for training from each of the partner organizations. This is also the time to **request any support for shared technology** (a common case management dashboard or communications platform) to post referral trackers, meeting minutes, and performance metrics.

3 Developing a Detailed Onboarding and Kickoff Agenda

If you are just beginning to focus on RA with stakeholders, **plan an initial workshop** to set a baseline team understanding of RA and WIOA/RA co-enrollment goals and performance targets, as well as how partners' program rules, funding streams, and data requirements can support your co-enrollment strategy. You may want to consider breakout sessions to map the current state of workflows and identify any handoff gaps to ensure comprehensive planning at the outset. Circulate pre-reads (WIOA/RA overview, sample referral checklist) one week in advance to maximize your team's planning time.

4 Co-Designing Standardized Co-Enrollment Workflows

In facilitated sessions, use **process mapping tools** to lay out each referral handoff, intake step, and supportive service trigger. By assigning clear ownership for each task, you will be able to quickly **produce a standard operating procedure (SOP) document** for everyone to follow.

5 Implementing Shared Data Dashboards and Communication Protocol

If you received leadership approval to build a dashboard, **collectively work to understand** what kind of real-time metrics you would like to track. If you already have a dashboard, review it collectively to see if it provides relevant real-time metrics such as referrals made, co-enrolled apprentices, and milestone completions. Make sure to define your notification rules. For instance, should every partner receive email alerts when a new referral arrives, or only some partners? Should there be a notification when an apprentice hits a 90-day retention milestone?

6 Establishing Regular Governance and Continuous Improvement Cycles

If you have already established regular governance and continuous improvement meetings, then **incorporating RA into these meetings** is as easy as adding it to the agenda. If you have not established a regular meeting schedule, collaboratively determine when you want to meet, troubleshoot stalled cases, look at any service provision bottlenecks, and ensure that handoffs are occurring in a timely manner. This is also a good time to determine when you will do 'after-action' meetings to analyze your aggregated data, celebrate successes, and update any workflows or tools based on lessons learned.

7 Fostering Team Cohesion and Cross Training

Rotate a staff spotlight presentation at each meeting and have every partner teach the group about their program's eligibility, funding, key performance measures, and how RA fits within their program goals. A promising practice is to **organize site visits to a live RA program for hands-on observation** of the training model in action.

8 Embedding Accountability and Celebrating Wins

By keeping RA top-of-mind through a scorecard that highlights key metrics against targets and publicly recognizes partners who are driving the top performance, you as the OSO can further encourage RA integration into the workforce system. A promising practice is to **share success stories to reinforce the value of cross-program collaboration**. These success stories can be presented at each partner organization's board meetings to demonstrate you are a team that doesn't just talk about RA co-enrollment but owns and optimizes it end-to-end.

OSO OPERATING PLAN WITH RA GOALS

Take the information developed when you established the integrated RA team and insert it into your required OSO operating plan. As interest in apprenticeship grows, more local workforce development boards are requiring RA integration planning. With the issuance of TEGL 5-18 Change 1, there is a requirement for states to report on their efforts to increase access to RA through the development of new, expanded, and youth apprenticeship programs within their WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative. This will require local boards to gather this information from their OSO in the future. To establish WIOA/RA co-enrollment goals, you will need input from the local workforce development board and partners to determine key performance indicators such as the number of apprentices, the targeted occupations for apprenticeship, and any goals for development of new RA sponsors. In some cases, the local workforce development board will have already developed the goals for you.

STANDARDIZED WIOA/RA CO-ENROLLMENT WORKFLOWS

There are several tools to help you develop your own WIOA/RA co-enrollment workflow including:

- DOL Quick-Start toolkit. This walks you through the four phases of building an RA program, with checklists at each phase for how to loop in WIOA services, draft RA program standards, secure training funds, and submit registration.
- DOL's Apprenticeship Grants Co-Enrollment Policy, which includes an FAQ and recorded webcast that summarizes policy flexibilities and offers sample co-enrollment steps, including referral flows between WIOA and RA staff.
- State Apprenticeship Grants Community on WorkforceGPS provides examples of staff onboarding resources, a guide to support a five-year implementation plan, and a staffing analysis tool. These are all useful items when you are thinking about your overall co-enrollment plan.

By taking all three of these examples and layering in referral handoff points while also including any state- or local-specific steps, you will be able to create an overall standardized workflow for WIOA/RA co-enrollment.

TRAIN FRONTLINE STAFF ACROSS PARTNERS

Training for frontline staff across all partners is vital to the success of co-enrollment for RA and WIOA services. As mentioned above, DOL's Apprenticeship Grants Co-Enrollment Policy has a webcast and FAQ that is a great starting place for training staff on policy flexibilities and co-enrollment steps. Additionally, the "Workforce System RA Baseline Knowledge Assessment Report," developed by the DOL RA Technical Assistance Center of Excellence on Strategic Partnerships and System Alignment, begins with a self-assessment for staff on apprenticeship basics.

Another resource to consider for training frontline staff is the "Aligning RA and Workforce/ Education Systems" workshops and tools, which can be found on WorkforceGPS. These workshops and downloadable toolkits demonstrate co-enrollment best practices and equip staff with outreach scripts.

As the OSO, you may find the following webinar and guide useful in helping you determine the components of success for aligning RA with Workforce components: "Aligning Workforce and Registered Apprenticeship: Key Components for Success". There is also an accompanying guide for this webinar, which outlines key considerations when building your WIOA/RA alignment strategy and suggestions for next steps based on your organization's current progress. Using these tools, you should be able to develop a training series for all workforce system partners on WIOA/RA co-enrollment.

USE DATA TO DRIVE COLLABORATION

OSOs can use data in a cycle of "identify, share, adapt, and review" to increase RA utilization and to strengthen trust and collaboration among all partners. Consider the following hypothetical scenario that demonstrates this continuous cycle.

A STEP BY STEP EXAMPLE

STEP 1

The OSO pulls a quarterly enrollment report from MIS showing the number of apprentices co-enrolled in WIOA services by center and by industry sector. The data reveals that Center A has a 20% WIOA/RA co-enrollment rate within only one industry sector, and Center B has a 60% WIOA/RA co-enrollment rate across three industry sectors.

STEP 2

The OSO meets with the Center A manager, BSR, RA Navigator, and WIOA Career Coach. During the meeting, the OSO presents a simple heat map highlighting which centers and sectors are underperforming and which supportive services are most correlated with high co-enrollment rates. Together, the team reviews the best practices from Center B, where regular co-enrollment huddles and a shared referral dashboard have driven success. Center A agrees to pilot a similar weekly staffing call and to replicate a referral form that automatically flags apprentices for WIOA supportive services. Additionally, the BSR agrees to work with the Center B BSR on how they can expand into different industry sectors.

STEP 3

The OSO establishes a clear target for the next quarter and assigns accountability for each action item, including updating the referral workflow training and building a shared tracking dashboard. At the next quarterly review, the OSO presents updated data showing Center A's increasing co-enrollment and engagement of another industry sector in RA. This quarterly review continues so they can identify, share, adapt, and review their processes to increase RA utilization and co-enrollment.

FACILITATE BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

The following are promising and best practices to consider piloting in order to deepen employer engagement and scale WIOA/RA co-enrollment. These strategies are not meant for everyone, so take what works for you or tweak an item that you read to make it work for you.

Gamify employer onboarding

By creating a points or badges system for businesses that complete milestones, you provide a positive, competitive environment to stimulate employers' interest in bringing others into RA programs. Potential rewards could include recognition at a board meeting, a profile in a newsletter, or targeted grant funding to support their RA program.

Partner with a tech vendor or a community college to develop short virtual reality simulations of key apprentice tasks

Employers love sharing immersive demonstrations that help prospects self-select and visualize the career pathway before hiring even begins. This is also a great tool for introducing a career seeker to the RA occupation they may be interested in.

Look at using predictive analytics for employer outreach

For instance, you may be able to build a 'match score' algorithm that flags which employers are most likely to benefit from apprenticeship based on their vacancy churn, turnover cost, and historical training investments. This is a great tool to use when talking to employers to increase their interest in RA.

Peer learning exchanges

Set up apprenticeship peer circles where high-performing employers mentor newcomers, sharing best practices, mentor training tips, and co-enrollment hacks, so your network's collective expertise accelerates adoption and innovation.

Promising Practices

Indiana Region 4 Workforce Development Board

In the Region 4 Workforce Development Board's OSO Request for Proposal (RFP), RA is named as a core service. One-stop centers are required to train staff about the apprenticeship model, connect job seekers to employers, and develop agreements with employers. This formalizes the operator's role in raising RA awareness internally and ensuring all American Job Center (AJC) staff can promote and support apprenticeship pathways.

Pennsylvania Local Board Appendix D

Pennsylvania's guidance for OSOs specifies that the operator must provide information and access to training services, including those offered by RA programs, and manage resource sharing allocation so that RA becomes a standard menu item for jobseekers. Embedding RA into the OSO scope ensures apprenticeships are actively marketed and integrated into all One-Stop services.