



CALIFORNIA – Registered Apprenticeship: A Promising Practice

The Challenge: Job seekers with disabilities are not always considered for Registered Apprenticeship (RA) opportunities. Today, there are apprenticeships in over 1,000 occupations including careers in healthcare, technology, advanced manufacturing, and transportation. RA is a program of the U.S. Department of Labor that connects job seekers looking to learn new skills with employers looking for qualified workers.

The Strategy: The California Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grantee at the Merced County location established a partnership with a training provider of the California RA for truck driving.

The Plan: The Merced County American Job Center (AJC) partnered with the local training provider in Commercial Driver's License (CDL) in truck driving to support people with disabilities and employers. In supporting people with disabilities, the Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) provided assistance to help them successfully complete the training requirements. In supporting employers, the DRC, working with AJC management, engaged the RA prior to enrolling customers to learn more about their program. This process allowed the DRC to recruit and assess candidates with disabilities who would be a good match for this opportunity.

- **Pre-Screening:** In order to meet the needs of the trucking businesses participating in the RA and to ensure a good fit with participants, a robust pre-screening process was established to determine suitability for employment on graduation in the following areas: Written Assessment, Program Eligibility, Drug Screening, and Employer Interview. The DRC identified and recommended two candidates with disabilities interested in CDL truck driving. It was discovered that both candidates required an accommodation of needing additional time to complete the pre-screening written assessment. This accommodation was successfully carried out at the AJC.
- **Training:** The CDL training incorporates both classroom and on-the-job training components. In closely working with both job seekers, AJC management and the DRC provided training instructors with information regarding what accommodations were needed to successfully complete the rest of the classroom training. The instructors of this course, having worked with many candidates over the years, were able to provide the right instruction that allowed the two candidates to thrive. Both passed their exams and earned endorsements on the first try allowing them to move to the next stage of their apprenticeship - driving and earning a paycheck!

Management Perspective: While only two individuals with disabilities have entered into this RA to date, the Merced County program manager is optimistic that more individuals with disabilities can be successful candidates in the CDL program by simply noting, "It's important that those with disabilities are included in this opportunity." In order to expand, there is a need to increase awareness on accessibility with training providers and employers as well as maintaining contacts with all key stakeholders in this RA.

System/Workforce/WIOA Outcomes: Two persons with disabilities successfully completed the pre-screening and training for the CDL truck driving RA. Both successfully finished the initial work, and are completing their apprenticeship "on the road" driving and earning a paycheck. Merced County has formed formal partnerships and a network with trainers as well as employers for this RA in order to ensure that persons with disabilities will be included and successful in all future cohorts. This promising practice in Merced County is also a good example of assisting WIOA sub-recipients in being compliant with Section 188 requirements.

Key Career Pathway Elements:

- Build cross-agency partnerships and clarify roles
- Identify sector or industry and engage employers
- Align policies and programs
- Measure system change and performance

Additional Resources on this Topic:

- [A Quick-Start Toolkit: Building Registered Apprenticeship Programs](#): This toolkit provides steps and resources to start and register an apprenticeship program.
- [Expanding Apprenticeship for Individuals with Disabilities](#): This page contains links to resources and examples of programs that encourage hiring individuals with disabilities into apprenticeship programs.
- [Merced County Department of Workforce Development](#): The Website for the AJC highlighted for this promising practice.
- [WorkforceGPS Introduction to Apprenticeship](#): This page provides a compilation of "Apprenticeship 101" resources and tools pulled from various pages within the Apprenticeship Community of Practice.
- [WorkforceGPS Disability and Employment Community](#): An online resource for the AJC network, people with disabilities, and employers. In addition, this is a resource for all key stakeholders who partner with the workforce system to provide services and programs to people with disabilities and other barriers to employment.
- [WorkforceGPS Career Pathways Collection](#): An online resource that helps workforce development leaders, practitioners, and policymakers expand state and local career pathways efforts. The collection of resources will enhance knowledge, skills, and expertise in building effective career pathways systems.
- [Career Pathways: Systems and Program Level Strategies](#): This two-part webinar series examines Career Pathways at the System and Program Level.