



ABA



Apprenticeship Building America

2024 Trends in Registered Apprenticeship Expansion

August 2024

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Introduction

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) is a work-based learning model where apprentices have supervised on-the-job training with progressive wage increases with job-related instruction, leading to a portable, nationally recognized credential. RA Programs are intended for long-term employment and research has shown that they benefit employers, through increased worker productivity and decreased attrition, and the apprentices through increased wages, skills, and employability.

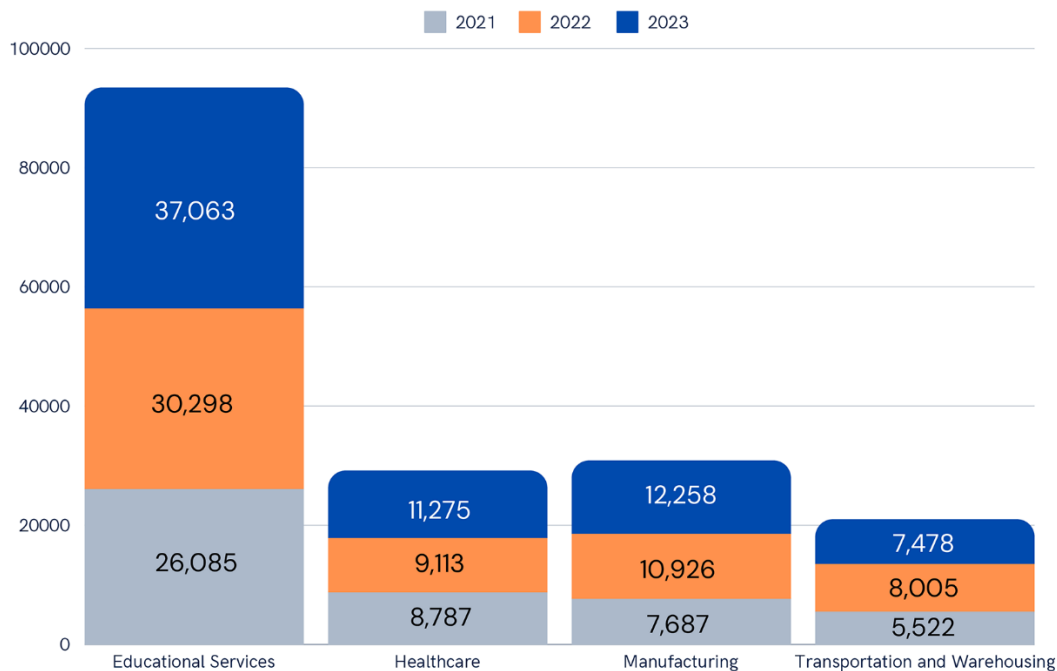
RAs have increasingly become a growing strategy for employers to fill positions that are in high demand. The number of new RA apprentices has increased nationally from 580,548 in 2021 to 643,447 in 2023, a roughly 11% increase. Several industries have experienced even greater growth. This research brief examines which industries and occupations are leading the growth of apprentices, what may be driving this growth, and pre-apprenticeship and RA Program models from the Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) grantee cohort that are aligned to this growth.

The ABA grantee cohort is made up of 39 state and local workforce boards, local and state community colleges/systems, nonprofits, and labor unions who received their grant awards in July and August 2022 then 43 grantees who were awarded a second round of grants in July 2024.

Registered Apprenticeship Trends by Industry and Occupation

RA Programs in the country have been traditionally concentrated in construction trades, however, recently there has been an effort to expand RA Programs into a variety of other sectors to fill high demand jobs. The graphic below shows new RA Programs each year between 2021 and 2023 in industries that have recently increased their use of RA Programs to fill their workforce needs. These industry sectors include educational services, healthcare, manufacturing, and transportation and warehousing.

New Apprentices by Occupation 2021-2023



These industries have increased the number of new apprentices employed between 2021 and 2023 by roughly 42% compared to an 11% increase in all new apprentices in all industries combined. The manufacturing and education sectors are leading this growth with an increase in new apprentices of 59% and 42% between 2021 and 2023, respectively.

The next graphic displays new apprentices with the greatest growth between 2021 and 2023 by occupation in the educational services, healthcare, manufacturing, and transportation and warehousing industry sectors. The occupations in the education



sector that experienced the greatest growth in apprentices include k-12 teachers, teacher aides, and early childhood educators. In the healthcare sector, apprentice numbers have grown the greatest for registered nurse residents, certified nursing assistants, and medical assistants. In manufacturing, RAs among welders, machine setters/operators, millwrights, and computer numerical control (CNC) operators/programmers have grown the greatest, while in the transportation sector, heavy and tractor trailer drivers have led the growth.

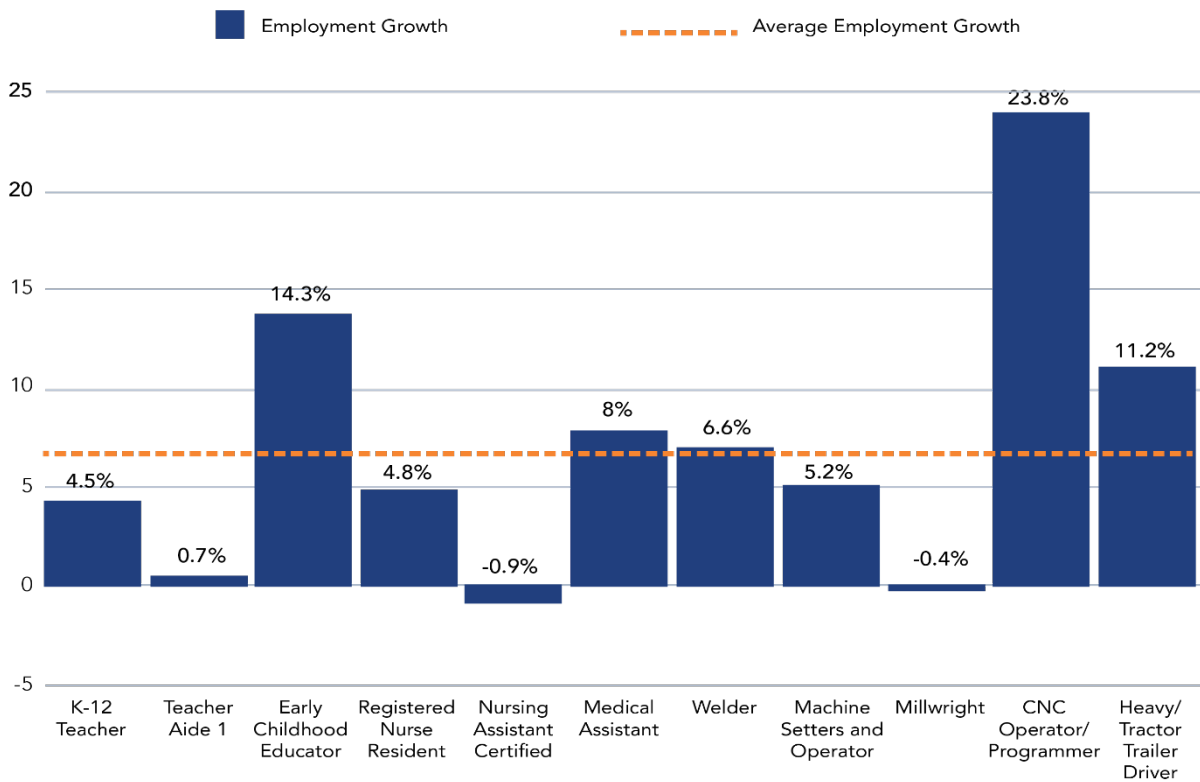
What is Driving These Trends

Trends in new RA Programs and apprentices in these occupations are largely driven by employer demand that is not being met by traditional hiring methods, workplace shortages, and the need for training. Occupations such as teachers, nurses, and nursing assistants are experiencing shortages in staffing, as those leaving these occupations outpace new hires. Truck drivers are experiencing a trend in which demand outpaces supply of newly qualified entries. In the manufacturing sector, machine setters/operators are experiencing rapid changes in technology that require re-skilling, leading to the need for training to help fill the shortage of qualified workers.

The graphic below displays employment growth by occupation in the nation between 2020 and 2023 for occupations that align with the apprenticeship occupations in the previous graphic. Employment in K-12 teachers have experienced modest growth over the past three years, growing by roughly 5% between 2020 and 2023, while preschool teachers have grown by 14%. In the healthcare sector, employment for registered nurses and medical assistants has grown by 5% and 8%, respectively, between 2020 and 2023, while for nursing assistants it has declined by 1%.

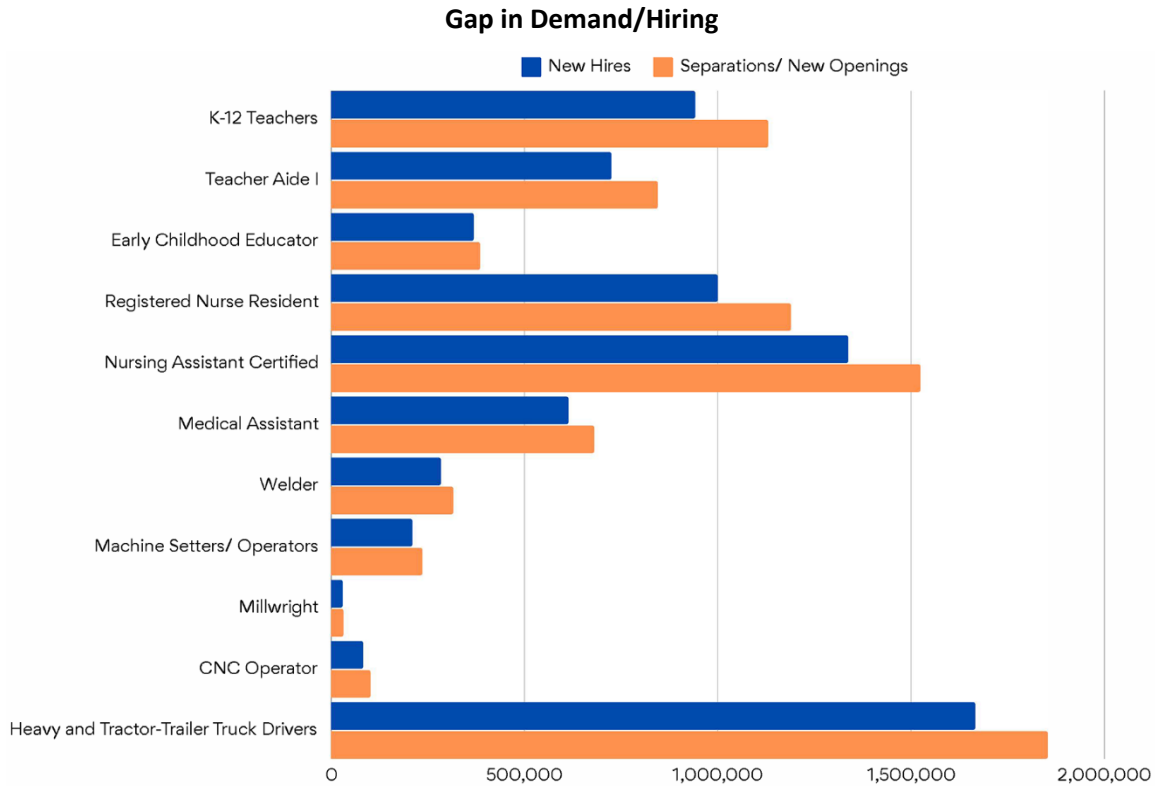
In manufacturing occupations that have experienced increases in apprentices, employment growth has been largely positive; machine and machine tool setters’ occupations have grown by roughly 5% between 2020 and 2023, while welders have grown by almost 7%, CNC tool operators grew by almost 24%, and employment in millwrights has been relatively constant over the time period. In the transportation industry, employment growth in heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers between 2020 and 2023 was roughly 11%.

Employment Trends by Occupation 2021-2023





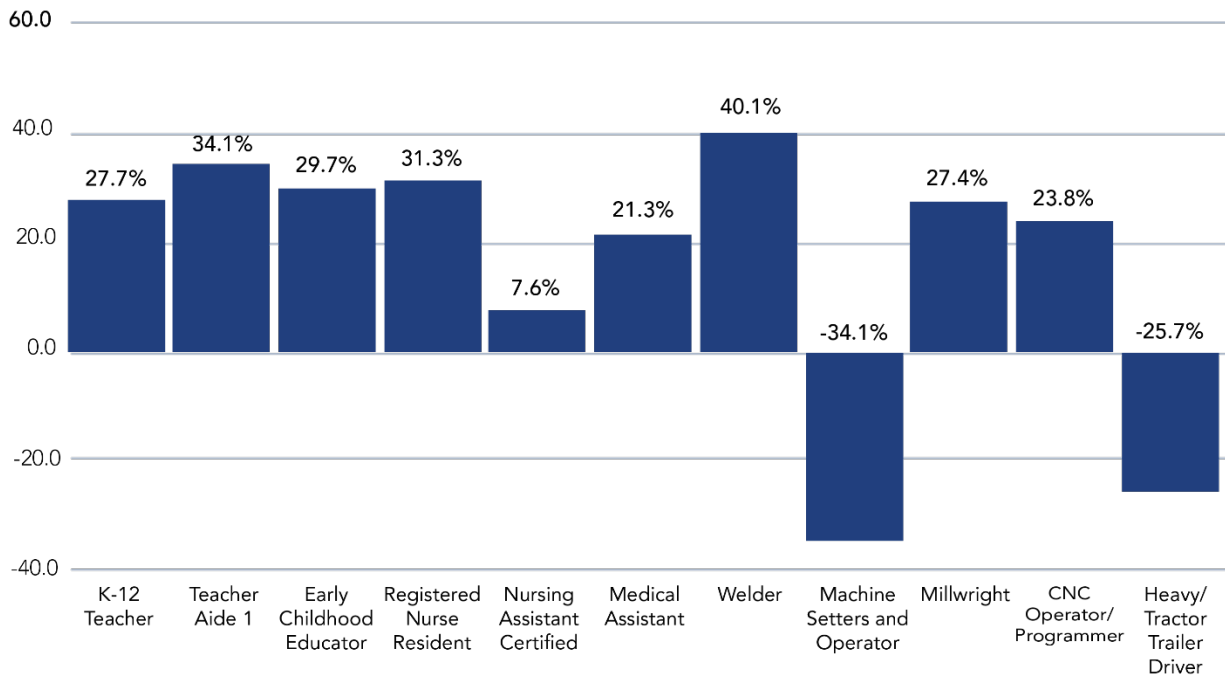
The next graphic illustrates the gap in hiring versus demand in 2023 for occupations that align with each RA occupation above. All occupations that align to the RA Programs have positive gaps, where separations and new openings are greater than the number of hires, and since employment in most of these occupations are growing, this indicates employers are having difficulty filling these positions. Heavy tractor and trailer truck drivers are experiencing the greatest shortage of workers followed by nursing occupations.



Another indicator of demand is job postings activity. The graphic below shows the growth in unique job postings by occupation in the country between 2020 and 2023, for occupations that align with each RA occupation detailed in this piece. All occupations except molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic; multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic; and heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers experienced growth in the number of unique job postings between 2020 and 2023. Although postings have decreased in those occupations, the data above indicates growing demand and greater difficulty filling those positions. The declining postings may be a result of employers switching hiring practices to more non-traditional methods, such as apprenticeships or other training-based methods.



Change in Unique Job Postings 2020-2023



ABA Grantee Program Models

South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation

ABA grantee South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation is utilizing some of their grant resources to address the teacher shortages in communities across South Dakota. In addition, the state legislature has set aside additional funding to support the second cohort of teacher apprentices that will start in August 2024. The South Dakota Teacher Placement Center data shows 545 teacher openings in the state are either unfilled or needed next school year, with 175 of these positions in special education or elementary education. The grantee has targeted their recruitment on current paraprofessional in-school staff across the state. Participants will gain their bachelor’s degree at completion of their apprenticeship. The length of the K-12 teacher RA Program is determined individually depending on credentials and credits towards a bachelor’s participants have earned at the start of the program. The grantee’s most successful outreach strategy is launching a website with program information and the application, promoting it through email blasts directly to paraprofessionals across the state.

Reset to Success Foundation

ABA grantee Reset to Success Foundation, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that serves as a RA intermediary across the southern state of Illinois. Intermediaries provide technical assistance to employers and other RA partners. Their ABA grant is focused on increasing the diversity of the talent pipeline of their healthcare RA Programs and establishing new healthcare pre-apprenticeships through trauma informed classroom training, wrap around supportive services that includes a psychologist as a part of the team. With the severe shortage and high turnover of health care workers, their Basic Nursing Assistant (BNA)/Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) RA Program serves as both recruitment and retention tools.

The BNA/CNA RA Program prepares apprentices to work in nursing homes and hospitals where they provide direct care to patients and support members of the nursing team under the supervision of a licensed practical nurse and registered nurse. The Certified Medical Assistance (CMA) RA Program prepares apprentices to support and assist the physician in a medical office and the nursing team in clinical operations. The work-based learning component for both RA Programs is 2,000 hours. The ABA grantee’s most successful apprentice outreach and recruitment strategies are social media (Facebook, X formerly



Twitter) and word of mouth through the attention drawn to the apprentices through backpack marketing with the insignia Reset to Success.

Workforce Board of Herkimer, Oneida, and Madison Counties

ABA Grantee the Workforce Board of Herkimer, Oneida, and Madison Counties launched the Regional Apprenticeship Development & Readiness (RADAR) pre-apprenticeship program to serve people with disabilities across an 11-county region as they work towards becoming a registered apprentice. RADAR focuses on addressing and breaking down the barriers people with disabilities face when entering employment. Their pre-apprenticeship programs and supportive services are combined to reduce barriers to entry and to set the stage for their job seekers to enter and maintain employment.

RADAR’s manufacturing pre-apprenticeship programming typically lasts up to three months, welcoming anyone keen on exploring advanced manufacturing and who has a knack for math and computers and is open to support while enjoying the art of making things. The CNC Machinist RA Program employers range from small family-run businesses to larger-scale manufacturing companies. Depending on the demand at any given time, employers may seek one apprentice or several and range from developing, manufacturing, and supplying goods nationwide and beyond. The grantee’s most successful outreach strategy is word of mouth amongst our community partners and participants who have completed the program.