States Embrace Their Role as Key Facilitators and Drivers of Apprenticeship Expansion
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Executive Summary

The last two years (2020–2021) represented a unique time for the role of states in our nation’s efforts to expand Registered Apprenticeship¹ to a significant scale across the country. For the first time, all 57 states and territories received funding from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to support their roles as key facilitators and drivers of apprenticeship expansion. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted apprenticeship stakeholders, including state implementing agencies, key apprenticeship partners, employer sponsors, and apprentices themselves.

As part of the Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grants awarded by USDOL, every state and territory submitted an annual report that described both grant activities and broader apprenticeship activities underway in the state. Maher & Maher, an affiliate of the American Institutes for Research, serves as a technical assistance partner to USDOL for ASE and other state apprenticeship grants. To capture a snapshot of the work states are doing to facilitate and drive Registered Apprenticeship expansion during this unique time, the Maher team reviewed the ASE annual reports and paired what we learned through this review with the insights we have gained through five years of TA support for these efforts. As our team reviewed the ASE annual reports, a story began to emerge. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, states made important progress on their expansion efforts, and many states either laid the groundwork for or significantly enhanced their ability to position Registered Apprenticeship as a key component of our nation’s economic recovery.

States’ descriptions of their apprenticeship expansion efforts in 2020-2021 coalesced around three themes:

♦ **State Apprenticeship Capacity and Infrastructure.** States are building robust, sustainable apprenticeship expansion infrastructure through system integration. States are making significant progress in integrating Registered Apprenticeship and the public workforce system. States are also increasing statewide capacity by expanding roles for intermediaries and sector partnerships.

♦ **Outreach and Business Engagement.** States are developing sophisticated outreach and business engagement strategies and taking them to scale. These activities increase business awareness of Registered Apprenticeship and increase the quality of outreach and engagement, resulting in increased numbers of apprenticeship programs.

♦ **Diverse Apprentice Pipelines.** States are making progress in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts that are increasing the number of apprentices from underrepresented populations enrolled in Registered Apprenticeship Programs. States are also putting in place partnerships that support the success of apprentices.

This report focuses on stories told by states organized by these three themes. These curated stories are meant to highlight what is happening in the field, celebrate state progress, and encourage states to leverage ideas from their peers.

As the country emerges from the public health crisis, states should continue to develop and bring to scale the partnerships, policies, systems, and processes that support capacity and infrastructure building, outreach and business engagement, and ongoing diversity efforts. These key apprenticeship expansion activities require the collaboration of government agencies, private businesses, and nongovernmental organizations. We encourage states and their collaborators to consider whether some of the progress we have highlighted here might translate to their states as well.

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¹ Registered Apprenticeship is a workforce development strategy that raises workers’ wages, increases employee productivity, and improves employers’ bottom lines. An apprentice is a paid employee who receives formal on-the-job learning and classroom-based related technical instruction leading to a nationally recognized credential. Because apprentices are employees, they earn while they learn and receive an education while incurring little or no debt. At the same time, employers gain a pipeline of skilled workers and benefit from increased productivity and retention.
Introduction and Background

Since 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has invested over $650 million to support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship in the United States. The vision for this expansion is to establish apprenticeship in nontraditional industries and occupations, increase the diversity of apprentices, and bring the use of the Registered Apprenticeship model to scale.

States have played a key role since the start of U.S. apprenticeship expansion efforts. As leaders in workforce development, education, and economic development, states are natural partners in apprenticeship, and USDOL sees them as key facilitators and drivers of apprenticeship expansion. Since 2016, USDOL has invested nearly $400 million in states through five grant initiatives (see Appendix A for a list of these grants). These grants enable states to support strategic Registered Apprenticeship functions and increase the capacity of the Registered Apprenticeship system in the United States to create new Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Grant funds have been used to support 1) increased capacity to support the development, modernization, and diversification of Registered Apprenticeship Programs; 2) partnerships and alignment to support the integration of apprenticeship into workforce and education systems; 3) efforts to increase the number of apprentices enrolled in Registered Apprenticeship Programs, including from underrepresented populations; and 4) innovation in program development and recruitment strategies.

**Total Amount of USDOL Funded State Apprenticeship Expansion Grants by State and Territory**

Source: Investments, Tax Credits, and Tuition Support | Apprenticeship.gov

The federal strategy to expand apprenticeship includes funding for:

- Program development through grant initiatives such as the American Apprenticeship Initiative, Youth Apprenticeship Readiness, and AAI, YARG, and H1-B funded grants
- Intermediaries focused on key industry sectors, apprentice diversity, and youth apprenticeship
- Expanding the role of states as key facilitators of RAP expansion
- Expanding the role of community colleges as sponsors and RTI providers
- Development of competency-based standards
- National outreach materials available on apprenticeship.gov
- Data and IT infrastructure
- TA centers of excellence
States as Key Facilitators of Apprenticeship Expansion

These investments have significantly increased the capacity of states to facilitate Registered Apprenticeship expansion. For states whose apprenticeships are registered by the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship, these grants enabled state agencies to build apprenticeship expertise and take on apprenticeship roles within the state for the first time. For states that serve as the registration agency, the grants provide resources to expand their capacity for Registered Apprenticeship Program development, introduce Registered Apprenticeship Programs to new industry sectors, and develop partnerships that support apprentice recruitment and success.

In 2016, USDOL issued its first competitive grant opportunity targeted to state apprenticeship expansion. Thirty-seven states received these State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) grants. In 2019, USDOL made additional funding available to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 6 territories for the first time. Forty-five states, the District of Columbia, and 4 territories were awarded grants (see Appendix B for a list of grantees). These grants, called Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grants, included a requirement that states submit annual reports on their accomplishments. The reports include updates about grant activities, and many states also use the report as an opportunity to provide information about broader apprenticeship activities underway in the state. Because they cover most of the country, the annual ASE reports offer insights into the complex system-building work states are undertaking to help bring apprenticeship to scale in the United States. The remainder of this report draws on the information in the most recent ASE annual reports (covering 2020–2021) to provide a snapshot of the work states are doing to expand apprenticeship.

The COVID-19 pandemic that began in early 2020 significantly impacted the scope and pace of grant-funded apprenticeship expansion efforts in many states. States whose apprenticeship grants are administered by agencies that also administer Workforce innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Unemployment Insurance (UI) saw many of their grant staff reassigned to assist with UI claims processing or the transition to virtual workforce development and training services. In addition, the pandemic disrupted business engagement activities, program development, and ongoing related technical instruction. Despite these challenges, states continued to embrace their role as facilitators of apprenticeship expansion, and the ASE annual reports provide insights into how states navigated the impacts of the pandemic to continue in this role.

Maher & Maher, an affiliate of the American Institutes for Research, serves as a technical assistance partner to USDOL for ASE and other state apprenticeship grants. Our experience supporting state expansion efforts for the last five years, along with the information shared in the ASE annual reports, allows us to offer current insights into how state expansion efforts are progressing and provide a snapshot of their strategies and challenges. Throughout the report, we also describe impacts of the pandemic on state efforts and ways states are using what they learned from the experience to bring renewed energy to their expansion work.

The report first contextualizes the ASE annual reports by providing an analysis of state apprenticeship data using national data provided by USDOL. It then provides insights into state apprenticeship expansion strategies and activities organized around three themes:

- Building robust, sustainable apprenticeship expansion infrastructure by integrating Registered Apprenticeship and WIOA programs and systems, as well as expanding roles for intermediaries and sector partnerships
- Developing sophisticated outreach and business engagement strategies and taking them to scale
States as Key Facilitators of Apprenticeship Expansion

Making progress in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts that are increasing the number of apprentices from underrepresented populations enrolled in Registered Apprenticeship Programs

The report focuses on stories told by states organized by these three themes. These curated stories are meant to highlight what is happening in the field, celebrate state progress, and encourage states to leverage ideas from their peers.

Apprentice Testimonial

“Thanks to Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC), I was offered a paid position with the apprenticeship program at Envirosep. I am very thankful for the opportunity ... Through on-the-job training, I am learning the skills and experience I will utilize throughout my career. These same skills have already assisted me with the day-to-day schoolwork at HGTC. I look forward to going to work every day!”

— Advanced Manufacturing Apprentice in South Carolina

Employer Testimonial

The [Registered Apprenticeship] Program ... allowed me to take a chance with a young person who seemed very motivated but lacked applicable experience to our position as a veterinary assistant. The program removed some of my risk of hiring and training a new person, which is expensive. With [funds from the ASE grant] [our apprentice] got her degree as a certified veterinary assistant and ... is currently enrolled in an online college where she will receive her associate’s degree and a degree as a certified veterinary technician ... while working full time and doing her clinicals at our clinic. The program truly was a win-win for [our apprentice] and our clinic!”

— South Dakota Apprenticeship Sponsor
State Apprenticeship Expansion: 
By the Numbers

Nationally, the number of active Registered Apprenticeship Programs has grown by 20 percent since 2016, and the number of new apprenticeship programs registered in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 increased by 82 percent over the number registered in 2016. The number of active registered apprentices increased by 30 percent, the number of new apprentices increased by 6 percent, and the number of apprenticeship completers increased by 63 percent. As USDOL observed in its 2020 data analysis, the COVID-19 pandemic’s effect on the national economy resulted in a 12 percent decline in the number of new apprentices in FY 2020 compared to FY 2019. Even with this decline, FY 2020 numbers are the third highest ever for the Registered Apprenticeship Program.

The impact of USDOL’s investments in states is clear in state-level figures on key apprenticeship indicators (see Table 1). Thirty-two states received SAE grants in 2016 and 2018 as well as ASE grants in 2019. These states, which had the benefit of three years of federally funded apprenticeship expansion activity prior to their ASE award, have seen significant growth in the number of apprentices, program completers, and Registered Apprenticeship Programs, despite the impact of COVID-19.

Table: Growth in Key Apprenticeship Expansion Indicators, FY 2016–FY 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Active Apprentices</th>
<th>New Apprentices</th>
<th>Completers</th>
<th>Active Programs</th>
<th>New Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All states</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States whose first federal apprenticeship expansion grant was the ASE grant</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States that received both SAE and ASE grants</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ calculations based on state apprenticeship data provided by U.S. Department of Labor for FY 2016–FY 2020. This data is available at Data and Statistics | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov). Data for the territories is not included due to limited availability.

Notes: Percentages represent growth in each indicator from FY 2016 to FY 2020. The 15 states represented in the ASE grants line are Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Maine, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming, as well as the District of Columbia. The 31 states included in the SAE and ASE grants line are Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.
The 15 states whose first apprenticeship expansion grants were the 2019 ASE grants have seen less growth in Registered Apprenticeship Programs, and some contraction in their number of apprentices over the 2016–2020 time period.

Comparing trends between the two groups of states shows that over the 2016–2020 time period the states with both SAE and ASE grants reported growth in active apprentices 31 percentage points higher than the ASE-only states. Similarly, the growth in new apprentices is 23 percentage points higher for states that received both grants.

These trends suggest that the federal investment in building the capacity of states to facilitate and drive apprenticeship expansion is working. If the experience of states that received both grants is any guide, then the states for which the ASE grant is the first USDOL investment in apprenticeship expansion are likely to see effects of their expanded capacity in future years.

Complementing these aggregate figures, states reflected in their ASE annual reports on their progress toward apprenticeship expansion goals, and on the impact of the pandemic on program development and key expansion indicators. The next section focuses on those aspects progress in expansion.
Key State Apprenticeship Expansion Activities in 2020–2021

The last two years (2020 and 2021) represented a unique time for the role of states in our nation’s efforts to expand Registered Apprenticeship to a significant scale across the country. For the first time, all 57 states and territories received funding from USDOL to support their roles as key facilitators and drivers of apprenticeship expansion. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted apprenticeship stakeholders, including state implementing agencies, key apprenticeship partners, employer sponsors, and apprentices themselves.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, states made important progress on their expansion efforts, and many states laid the groundwork for, or significantly enhanced their ability to, position Registered Apprenticeship as a key component of our nation’s economic recovery.

States’ descriptions of their apprenticeship expansion efforts in 2020-2021 coalesced around three themes:

♦ **State Apprenticeship Capacity and Infrastructure.** States are building robust, sustainable apprenticeship expansion infrastructure through system integration. States are making significant progress in integrating Registered Apprenticeship and the public workforce system. States are also increasing statewide capacity by expanding roles for intermediaries and sector partnerships.

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♦ **Diverse Apprentice Pipelines.** States are making progress in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts that are increasing the number of apprentices from underrepresented populations enrolled in Registered Apprenticeship Programs. States are also putting in place partnerships that support the success of apprentices.

In the next few sections, we describe activity in each of these areas and highlight what is happening in the field, celebrate state progress, and invite states to leverage ideas from their peers. Each section also features a spotlight on the ways the pandemic impacted state efforts and how states are using what they learned from the experience to bring renewed energy to their expansion efforts.

**States are building robust, sustainable apprenticeship expansion infrastructure through system integration**

The national vision for a Registered Apprenticeship system that operates at scale includes a role for states as key facilitators and drivers of that expansion. Although states receive significant support through USDOL grant funding, they are also developing strategies that leverage federally funded workforce development programs and private sector resources to ensure that they can effectively manage a greatly expanded Registered Apprenticeship Program system for years to come.

Two key strategies states are using to support apprenticeship expansion include integrating Registered Apprenticeship into the workforce system and building up the capacity of intermediaries and sector partnerships.
Progress Integrating Registered Apprenticeship into the Workforce System

As states scale up the use of Registered Apprenticeship as a work-based learning strategy, they are increasingly integrating apprenticeship strategies and functions into their education and workforce development systems. This integration allows the states’ apprenticeship expansion strategies to leverage the significant footprint the workforce development and education systems have in key industry sectors and among key target populations.

Integrating Registered Apprenticeship into the workforce system is a particularly important strategy for many states because the workforce system can help provide the infrastructure and capacity to operate the Registered Apprenticeship system at scale. The public workforce system is a network of federal, state, and local government-funded agencies and programs that provide services to workers, job seekers, and employers to support economic expansion and develop the talent of the nation’s workforce. The system includes nearly 550 workforce development boards that coordinate and leverage workforce strategies with education and economic development stakeholders within their local communities and 2,400 American Job Centers (AJCs) that deliver services to job seekers and employers. The system is authorized and funded by WIOA and collectively served over 6 million job seekers nationwide in Program Year (PY) 2019.

In their 2020–2021 ASE annual reports, states provided detailed examples of how they are aligning and integrating their Registered Apprenticeship models with the workforce system, and how they are braiding grant funds with WIOA funds and services to support apprentices and employers. These workforce system alignment activities fall into four broad categories: strategic planning and policy, business engagement and Registered Apprenticeship Program development, apprentice recruitment and support, and integrating apprenticeship grant reporting with WIOA’s case management system.

Strategic Planning and Policy

State leaders continued their ongoing efforts to examine how workforce development strategic planning and changes in state policy can strengthen apprenticeship expansion efforts. States created policies and procedures related to business services and job seeker services provided through the workforce system to ensure consistent services are provided throughout the state and apprenticeship is fully integrated into the workforce system. For example:

**OKLAHOMA** created a [business services policy](#) to ensure statewide consistency in employer services and to support the hiring of at least one full-time employee solely dedicated to business services in each of Oklahoma’s six local workforce areas. All newly hired staff have been trained and are now carrying out a required menu of services that includes apprenticeship program development and support.

**IOWA** created a job seeker referral procedure with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Department for the Blind to recruit candidates into apprenticeship programs. Although it took several months of strategic planning involving grant partners and state agencies to develop the procedure, the State shared that this investment in time and resources was worth it to help ensure sustainable systems alignment.
Business Engagement and Registered Apprenticeship Program Development

States are leveraging the business engagement capacity of the workforce system and integrating Registered Apprenticeship Programs into the suite of customized workforce development solutions the workforce system provides to employers. States are at different points in these integration efforts, with some already training AJC and local workforce board (LWB) staff in apprenticeship outreach, while others are in the planning phases.

Common topics in states’ training for AJC and workforce board staff include the state’s vision and strategy for apprenticeship expansion; effective business engagement strategies; instructions on accessing funding for sponsor and apprentice support; and technical training on Registered Apprenticeship Programs design, including on-the-job learning, and related technical instruction models. States are also developing communication materials staff can provide to employers and potential apprentices.

Some states embed apprenticeship or grant staff in the AJC and LWBs so that they can coordinate outreach events to existing and prospective sponsors and help with the registration process. A few states provide grant funding to support the hiring of dedicated business service team members within each local workforce development area. States also complement their investment in workforce system business engagement capacity with related outreach activities that direct businesses to the workforce system for apprenticeship services.

In **COLORADO**, area-based grant-funded apprenticeship consultants who focus on outreach help train local workforce area staff. As they proceed through their training, local workforce area staff gradually increase their role in Registered Apprenticeship Program development beyond recruitment efforts and ongoing business service activities. Local area staff learn how to develop Registered Apprenticeship Programs in later phases of the training, during which the apprenticeship consultant presents at employer meetings alongside staff from the local area. The goal is for local area staff to play these roles with increasing independence.

**MICHIGAN** continues to support its apprenticeship success coordinators (ASCs), who are embedded in all 16 local workforce areas. ASCs serve as local Registered Apprenticeship specialists. They promote apprenticeship, help businesses understand the model and develop programs, bring partners and resources to the table to make apprenticeships successful, and track outcomes in coordination with the State. Michigan reports that ASCs have been instrumental to the State’s success expanding apprenticeship capacity and integrating apprenticeship into the workforce system.

**DELAWARE** considers the workforce system as the primary pipeline for potential Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. The State primarily uses federal grant funding to scale up awareness campaigns that pull interested employers into the WIOA business services pipeline.

State-developed apprenticeship training resource

Other states can use existing apprenticeship training resources and frameworks like those created in Colorado and Michigan as models they can adapt to their own state context. WorkforceGPS features a collection of these resources.
Apprentice Recruitment and Support

The statewide networks of AJCs and their affiliate sites represent a tremendous asset to apprenticeship sponsors for apprentice recruitment and for supporting apprentice success. Many states are building out a clear role for AJCs in providing comprehensive job seeker services prior to referral to a Registered Apprenticeship Program. Kansas, Delaware, and New Hampshire offer three examples of how states are working with AJCs and others to recruit apprentices:

To support integration of Registered Apprenticeship into the workforce system, the KANSAS Works Registered Apprenticeship Program partners with LWBs to recruit and co-enroll WIOA-eligible individuals and to provide case management and supportive services. Kansas granted funds to three LWBs to expand recruitment, screening, and enrollment of registered apprentices.

DELAWARE currently works with multiple partners in the State’s workforce system, such as Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments, and Vocational Rehabilitation, through community outreach events and career fairs as the primary pipeline into apprenticeship.

In NEW HAMPSHIRE, AJCs have served as hosts for information sessions on apprenticeship, and grant staff offer regular trainings and information sessions for partner staff so that they can refer their clients to apprenticeship programs. Funding available through WIOA and other state funds from the State’s Department of Employment Security have been used to support apprenticeship training and education costs.

Many states co-enroll grant-funded apprentices in WIOA to provide wraparound services like transportation, childcare, or other support services that help apprentices participate in training.

WISCONSIN partners with LWBs so that all ASE-funded participants are screened for WIOA eligibility and, where appropriate, enrolled in both programs. The State reports that this provides a much broader scope of services to their ASE grant participants.

IOWA started a pilot project with one of its local workforce boards that leverages the WIOA incumbent worker funding stream to create new Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Adding Registered Apprenticeship Program sponsors and eligible training provider lists (ETPLs) that AJCs offer to their participants can similarly provide a steady pipeline of applicants. States have a wide range of processes by which new and existing Registered Apprenticeship sponsors are added to their ETPLs. Many states that have streamlined this process—reducing red tape by changing ETPL documentation requirements, or folding ETPL integration into the program registration process—report benefits in recruitment.

ALASKA reports that they have improved access for workforce system customers to Registered Apprenticeship Programs by encouraging sponsors to list programs on the ETPL and to advertise and recruit for apprentices using the state labor exchange system.

Some states are creating specific roles for local workforce areas to support Quality Pre-Apprenticeship programming.
OHIO has created a role for workforce boards to serve as Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program sponsors that work directly with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to create a pipeline of qualified workers. The State teaches local areas to develop Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs, create partnerships, and provide services to participants.

In OREGON, Worksystems (an LWB) is providing support for pre-apprentices to enter construction-related Registered Apprenticeship Programs. In 2020, Worksystems supported 99 participants in pre-apprenticeship training and is expecting to see a high percentage of these participants matriculate into Registered Apprenticeship.

Integrating apprenticeship grant reporting with WIOA's case management system

Some states have leveraged statewide WIOA data management systems to fulfill their required ASE participant tracking and reporting requirements. These states report that this approach helps with a range of activities from the participants’ point of entry into the grant-funded program through to their completion. States also report that recruiting apprentices from other workforce programs is easier when using the same case management system.

ALABAMA launched its Registered Apprenticeship module in August 2020 within the new Alabama Works case management and participant tracking system (implemented in April 2020) to register, track, and report on the ASE grant participants. The module provides full case management for the employment and training requirements of USDOL-funded apprenticeship grants. It includes application forms, enrollment activity tracking, measurable skills gains, credential tracking, outcomes, and follow-up capabilities. The module also supports mandated federal reporting and extract requirements for apprenticeship grants including the individual participant integrated reporting layout extract, apprenticeship performance report, employer outreach layout, and ASE annual report. It is part of the State’s efforts to continue building its statewide longitudinal data system, the Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS).

Spotlight on the Pandemic

During the pandemic, many states—particularly those whose apprenticeship expansion activities are housed within workforce development agencies—saw a shift in priorities from ASE grant activities to helping process UI claims or revamping education policies to adapt to campus closures and/or transitions to online learning. Similarly, workforce development staff saw a significant disruption in operations as they transitioned to virtual services. These disruptions impacted efforts to align apprenticeship and workforce development systems. However, the long-term value of system alignment meant that many states made workforce system alignment a key priority as grant activities ramped up again in 2021.
States are expanding roles for intermediaries and sector partnerships

As part of their strategies to build the infrastructure and capacity to operate their Registered Apprenticeship systems at scale, some states are building the capacity of intermediaries—including sector partnerships, community colleges, or other organizations—to support their Registered Apprenticeship Program expansion efforts. An apprenticeship intermediary is an organization with the capacity, expertise, and network to help businesses successfully create, launch, and expand apprenticeship programs. Intermediaries play a variety of roles in apprenticeship, including convening key stakeholders (e.g., industry partners, educational institutions, and community-based organizations) to build partnerships to support Registered Apprenticeship Programs. They conduct outreach to industry, aggregate employer demand for apprenticeships, and connect job seekers to apprenticeship opportunities. They can also serve as apprenticeship sponsors.

States are building the capacity of intermediaries through two main strategies. One is to use a grant process to support the development new intermediaries. The other is using a more regular, centralized outreach process focused on recruiting intermediaries (rather than individual employers). Texas and Utah offer examples of these strategies.

**TEXAS** operates a grant process that makes ASE funds available to LWBs, community and technical colleges, or consortia of the two. These subgrantees are then held accountable for ASE grant outcomes.

In **UTAH**, the use of intermediaries is helping create momentum with healthcare apprenticeships. The State reports that it has been able to build an intermediary role for two private colleges that provide training for employers who hire medical assistants and pharmacy technicians. These employers are looking for ways to increase the quality of their workforces and are considering the value of apprenticeship with these colleges. Employer networks were invited to a business-to-business apprenticeship event so they could learn more about the value of apprenticeships. As a result, interested employers have committed to participating in apprenticeships, and both institutions are in the process of registering standards. The State has also made grants to two four-year colleges to help establish them as successful intermediaries.

The few states where technical college systems are the ASE grant implementing entity described the benefits of integrating Registered Apprenticeship Program recruitment, outreach, and program development efforts into the job descriptions of permanent staff at each technical college.

In **GEORGIA**, locally designated apprenticeship coordinators work with community college staff to develop new programs and recruit students as apprentices.

In **NORTH CAROLINA**, one of the technical colleges absorbed an apprenticeship coordinator position that was originally funded by the ASE grant, sustainably increasing the statewide level of effort dedicated to program development.

Several states are developing the capacity of industry intermediaries and sector partnerships to develop and run Registered Apprenticeship Programs on behalf of multiple employers in a sector or occupation. This approach helps move the Registered Apprenticeship model more deeply into new sectors and helps support the participation of smaller employers with more limited internal capacity.
MARYLAND makes grants available to employer-run intermediaries such as industry associations and union joint apprenticeship training committees and to nonprofit-type intermediary contractors like Franklin Apprenticeship and Humanim.

ILLINOIS reports that its grant-funded apprenticeship navigators and the State’s Talent Pipeline Management Coordinator are working on sector collaboratives in healthcare; manufacturing; supply chain; transportation, distribution, and logistics; education; equine management; energy; and business services to align apprenticeship demand planning and competencies for 10th grade students to company onboarding processes.

NEW HAMPSHIRE aims for a consortium approach where possible—to enhance grant impact, create sufficient demand for related technical instruction, (RTI) and keep training costs down for individual (and often small) companies. The State partnered with several state associations, including the New Hampshire Insurance Association, to launch apprenticeships in new sectors and occupations and create new RTI through the community college system—capacity that will extend beyond the life of the grant. The New Hampshire Insurance Association is acting as sponsor for a new claims associate Registered Apprenticeship Program, promoting the program to its members statewide, and screening and matching potential hires.

**Spotlight on the Pandemic**

For many states, the pandemic delayed plans for providers of post-secondary education to become intermediary sponsors. With the internal policy shifts and overnight changes post-secondary institutions had to make at the onset of the pandemic, these institutions were forced to prioritize their responses to the public health crisis to the exclusion of other initiatives such as sponsoring apprenticeships. States including Alabama, Colorado, and Puerto Rico all reported that post-secondary institutions delayed becoming apprenticeship sponsors during the pandemic.

**States are developing sophisticated business engagement strategies and taking them to scale**

Because the Registered Apprenticeship model is employer-driven, successful and sustained expansion of Registered Apprenticeship demands effective business engagement strategies. States are increasing awareness-building activities, and state outreach strategies varied along several dimensions, such as the degree of centralization, outreach methods, staffing, and approaches to new industries. States are also putting in place policies and practices that increase business demand for apprenticeship. These strategies are bearing fruit, resulting in new programs in both traditional and nontraditional sectors. For example, Virginia shared that they achieved continuous growth in information technology (IT) apprenticeship programs in the last year and have 13 new IT companies participating in apprenticeships. South Carolina registered 101 new programs in the healthcare sector and 68 new programs in the manufacturing sector.
Outreach Campaigns

Many states described business engagement activities that allow employers and other sponsors to self-select into the program development process. A promising practice common among these states is to set up an apprenticeship interest form on an employer-facing workforce development website, with states indicating that this approach tends to generate high-quality employer leads. Kansas, Idaho, and Illinois have this function on their apprenticeship websites.

A number of states are undertaking comprehensive outreach campaigns that use multiple traditional and social media approaches to reach new businesses.

**SOUTH CAROLINA** has plans for an extensive outreach and advertising campaign in 2021–2022, which will launch simultaneously on electronic platforms such as YouTube, Hulu, and Spotify, as well as being strategically placed on billboards around the State. These ads will highlight the positive impacts of participating in a Registered Apprenticeship Program, both for employers and apprentices.

**NORTH CAROLINA** funded an outreach campaign with radio, television, digital, and social media advertisements, as well as a lead generation campaign through LinkedIn to promote the benefits of apprenticeship and to attract potential sponsors. The campaign has generated 30,222 page views of the State’s website, 90 percent of which were new visitors. Links to the videos created as part of the campaign are available at the YouTube video page of North Carolina’s Registered Apprenticeship Program.

States also describe strategies to actively reach out to employers through more targeted means, such as networking at industry association events or using data on job postings, occupational demand projections, or business financial health indicators to get a sense for which groups of employers may respond well to focused outreach. In some states, regional outreach specialists regularly network at industry association and chamber of commerce events. In other states, community and technical colleges (as well as a smaller number of four-year institutions) are partners in this outreach approach—especially to businesses looking to provide more hands-on training opportunities for their students.

**GEORGIA** conducted capacity-building activities throughout the State to encourage local partners to engage their employers about Registered Apprenticeship Programs. In addition to the efforts of the State’s apprenticeship team staff, Georgia is working closely with all 22 technical colleges and sponsors to open doors of opportunity to new employer partners in their respective regions.

Similarly, while all states target certain industries for Registered Apprenticeship Program growth, some have a stronger focus on this in their business engagement strategies, which involve developing industry-specific materials and tools.
MISSISSIPPI has created apprenticeship promotional packets with branded Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP) folders. These folders include an introduction letter, business card, one-page flyers for industry specific apprenticeship occupations, and funding models created by the MAP team which coordinate with each of the LWBs in the State. The MAP team prioritizes engaging the leading industry sectors in the service areas of each of the State’s four LWBs.

TEXAS uses data on industry concentration to micro-target regional outreach efforts performed by apprenticeship navigators for each subgrantee (e.g., workforce boards, community colleges, or intermediaries).

ALABAMA has a similar approach where regional apprenticeship staff use occupational demand projections and industry concentration data to target outreach and networking efforts.

**Designated Outreach Specialists**

States take different personnel approaches to outreach to businesses. One approach is to formalize positions dedicated to outreach. Several states have established positions such as “apprenticeship coordinators” and “apprenticeship navigators.” Often, individuals with these job titles are assigned a certain region for outreach, usually consistent with the geographical jurisdiction of local workforce boards. Individuals in these roles are generally supported by training that explains the apprenticeship infrastructure and the state’s program development approach. This training is key to helping staff succeed in their outreach efforts to businesses, and the existence of a set training approach and materials also ensures a degree of stability in the face of staff turnover. Illinois’ robust apprenticeship [professional development courses](#) provide a good example of this approach.

**Process Improvements for Business Engagement**

As states bring their business engagement strategies to scale, they are using process mapping and other strategies to improve the efficiency and quality of their business engagement activities. Process mapping allows states to illustrate the flow of their business outreach, program development, and registration processes and identify opportunities for improvement. It also helps all stakeholders see the process in the same way, strengthening communication and collaboration.

IDAHO created two items, a sponsor journey map and a business/apprentice process map, that clearly articulate each step in the registration and implementation process. Apprenticeship staff use these maps to identify pain points and opportunities for improvement and redesign the maps periodically to reflect changes in their processes. This year, Idaho updated their maps to include collaboration points with an expanded group of Idaho Apprenticeship Coalition partners.
Spotlight on the Pandemic

Most outreach and engagement events across the country were postponed or canceled in 2020 due to state and national closures, which disrupted efforts to connect directly with business leaders about apprenticeship expansion. Many states demonstrated resilience and innovation as they transitioned from traditional in-person events to virtual strategies. States also updated their communication strategies to connect with employers, as well as job seekers, in the virtual world. Examples include:

♦ Conducting digital and mail campaigns to participants and employers;
♦ Hosting virtual job fairs for applicants to learn more about local opportunities;
♦ Improving website accessibility for users due to limited services provided in person to applicants;
♦ Providing weekly email messages to Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to discuss challenges and solutions to growing programs through an unprecedented public health emergency;
♦ Updating presentations to cater to a digital outreach model;
♦ Creating engaging social media posts;
♦ Producing video interviews with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to encourage youth participation in programs; and
♦ Posting video content on grantees’ websites highlighting the Registered Apprenticeship Program.

States are advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and access

As apprenticeship opportunities grow, states are taking steps to ensure that all workers and job seekers have access to apprenticeship opportunities. Their approaches include improving access to information about available apprenticeships; increasing access to Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs; partnering with trusted organizations to reach underrepresented populations; and working with businesses to design Registered Apprenticeship Programs that support women, people of color, and individuals with disabilities.

States are building on work done in past years to ensure that real-time information about open apprenticeship positions is easily available to job seekers, career counselors, and youth. This approach opens up access to apprenticeship opportunities beyond individuals with direct connections to sponsors. Many states, including Maine, New York, and Ohio, have worked to include these positions in state job banks and on state websites.

In the last year, a number of states strengthened their investment in Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs as a way to create pipelines of diverse participants for Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Quality Pre-Apprenticeships link directly to existing apprenticeship programs and provide the instruction, preparation, and supports to help participants successfully enter and complete apprenticeship programs. States are strengthening the role of Quality Pre-Apprenticeships in their disability, equity, inclusion, and accessibility strategies by implementing USDOL’s’ elements of Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs. These include using an approved curriculum, providing simulated experiences, facilitating entry into Registered Apprenticeship Programs, increasing diversity, offering supportive services, and creating sustainable partnerships. States such as California, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin are implementing processes to formally recognize Quality Pre-Apprenticeships that meet state requirements and are linked to existing apprenticeship programs.
One of OHIO’s long-term targets to expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs is the implementation of Quality Pre-Apprenticeship in Ohio’s secondary and post-secondary educational institutions. The State has seen growth in Quality Pre-Apprenticeship expansion from 45 Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs in PY 2018 to 99 current programs developed, with 10 pending. Ohio’s Quality Pre-Apprenticeship expansion efforts benefit from partnerships with the Ohio State Apprenticeship Council, Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Higher Education, and Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. The State is now working to build the capacity of local workforce boards to develop and implement Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs as well.

In GUAM, the AJC engaged with the Guam Regional Medical City Hospital and the Guam Memorial Hospital Administration to hire those individuals who satisfactorily completed the Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program and move them into the apprenticeship program. In July 2021, Guam launched the certified nursing assistant (CNA) Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program with a cohort of 19 participants who are co-enrolled through the ASE grant and WIOA. There are plans for two additional CNA programs during PY 2021.

In addition to providing data on apprenticeship positions and investing in Quality Pre-Apprenticeships, states are building partnerships with community organizations that serve underrepresented populations. These target organizations typically have a demonstrated track record of cultural competency, understand the needs of individual apprentices and apprenticeship candidates, and are trusted within the communities they serve.

GEORGIA is reengaging with historically Black colleges and universities in the State to further its efforts to recruit and enroll a diverse workforce pipeline. The ASE grant will provide an opportunity to renew those efforts to increase the presence of underrepresented populations in Georgia’s Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

SOUTH CAROLINA signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Urban Leagues of Columbia, Charleston, and the Upstate. In spring 2021, the State developed the first Quality Pre-Apprenticeship with the Urban League of Columbia. The State is working with Boeing to support the three Urban Leagues with apprenticeship expansion for underrepresented communities. Furthermore, in spring 2021, Apprenticeship Carolina signed an MOU with the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs with the goal of expanding Registered Apprenticeship Programs to minority-owned businesses.

NORTH CAROLINA is working with the Nehemiah Community Empowerment Center to register women, minorities, and older youth (18–24 years old) that are unemployed or underemployed in IT occupations. The center provides childcare and a flexible work schedule, and ApprenticeshipNC anticipates that the partnership will decrease the challenges of inequity and reduce disparities in the representation of women and minorities in the IT industry sector.

In ARIZONA, Gateway Community College registered as an intermediary sponsor of apprenticeship. They are partnering with CompTIA to create their first apprenticeship cohort in tech support and partnering with two community-based organizations—A Mother’s Foundation and Fresh Start Women’s Foundation—to recruit women into their program.
In **WASHINGTON**, Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women (ANEW) plays a role in diversifying the State’s apprentice population. ANEW partners with schools, other nonprofit organizations, contractors, and others to improve access to Quality Pre-Apprenticeship training; bolster retention in the trades; recruit more members of the Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community; and decrease the amount of hazing and bullying that occurs on job sites. In the last year, ANEW developed marketing materials that specifically partner with the Port of Seattle and African Chamber of Commerce, updated existing presentations to cater to a digital outreach model, and created new presentations to disseminate to BIPOC and youth populations.

States are also building cross-agency partnerships to help get access and support for underrepresented populations in Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Once the partner agency is trained to recognize apprenticeship opportunities, referrals can be made quickly to help increase diversity in apprenticeship programs.

**IOWA** is working with the State’s vocational rehabilitation agency and the Department for the blind to increase apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The State started a pilot program in Davenport and Burlington to enroll more individuals with disabilities in Registered Apprenticeship Programs. A pilot program in Cedar Rapids will recruit individuals who are blind into Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs and Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Iowa intends to expand both programs statewide.

Finally, some states are creating new roles that provide support to businesses that are seeking to increase diversity among their apprentices.

**SOUTH CAROLINA** used state apprenticeship expansion grant funds to develop a registered program specialist (RPS) role. There are four RPSs statewide who support companies with program implementation, including providing regular, high-quality technical assistance to companies on diversity, equity, and inclusion and supporting companies with tools to recruit, enroll, and retain diverse apprentices.

These efforts are producing results. For example, ApprenticeshipNC reports that they saw a substantial increase in the number of women and diverse apprentices served in the last year, including 1,832 more women seeking opportunities in Registered Apprenticeship. ApprenticeshipNC also began registering apprentices from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In the last year, 30 participants who were unemployed and one apprentice who was experiencing long-term unemployment prior to starting the program were hired as registered apprentices in the State.

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**Spotlight on the Pandemic**

The expansion of online training for apprenticeships created both opportunities and barriers for nontraditional apprentice populations. Some states reported that virtual training improved access for people with disabilities and those with transportation barriers. At the same time, they acknowledge that this transition also created new barriers, particularly for those with limited access to the Internet (both rural and urban), those without the necessary technology at home, and those with limited technology skills. Some states used supportive service funds to help apprentices acquire technology. States acknowledge the need for focused work in this area in this year and the years to come.
Conclusion

The ASE grants are one investment among many designed to continue expanding apprenticeship in the United States, and one of six recent federal investments in states to support their role as key facilitators and drivers of apprenticeship expansion. The annual reports required of ASE grantees provide USDOL with a source of unique insights into the ways in which states are playing these roles. This report provides an important snapshot of the strategies states are using to help drive the Registered Apprenticeship Program to scale, and how federal investment in states has supported states in playing this important role.

Our review of the ASE annual reports showed that despite the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, states have continued to make progress on apprenticeship expansion, especially in three important areas:

♦ Building robust, sustainable apprenticeship expansion infrastructure by integrating Registered Apprenticeship and WIOA, as well as in expanding roles for intermediaries and sector partnerships
♦ Developing sophisticated outreach and business engagement strategies and taking them to scale
♦ Making progress in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts that are increasing the number of apprentices from underrepresented populations enrolled in Registered Apprenticeship Programs

As the country emerges from the public health crisis, states should continue to develop and bring to scale the partnerships, policies, systems, and processes that support capacity and infrastructure building, outreach and business engagement, and ongoing diversity efforts. These key apprenticeship expansion activities require the collaboration of government agencies, private businesses, and nongovernmental organizations. We encourage states and their collaborators to consider whether some of the progress we have highlighted here might translate to their states as well.
Appendices

A. List of USDOL Investments in State Apprenticeship Expansion

B. List of Apprenticeship State Expansion grantees

**Appendix A. List of USDOL Investments in State Apprenticeship Expansion**

**USDOL Grants that Support State Apprenticeship Expansion, 2016–2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Name and Purpose</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Number of Funded States, Territories, and/or Outlying Areas</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity, and Innovation. These grants support states’ efforts to expand programming and inclusive recruitment strategies to attract a diverse workforce. These grants also aim to develop partnerships with new industries and nontraditional occupations, including industry sectors hardest hit by the pandemic, and align Registered Apprenticeships with other work-based learning opportunities within state education and workforce systems.</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$99 million</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Apprenticeship Expansion 2020. These grants support activities that strengthen the national apprenticeship system, promote system alignment and partnership, and improve data sharing and data integrity. The two-tiered funding system allows states to address local apprenticeship needs while enhancing focus on employer engagement, performance, and positive outcomes for apprentices.</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>$81 million</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>Apprenticeship State Expansion Grants. These grants expand the number of apprentices in Registered Apprenticeships nationwide; encourage apprenticeship diversification, including increasing the diversity of apprentices and growing apprenticeship across industry sectors; and support the integration of Registered Apprenticeship into state workforce development, education, and economic development strategies and programs.</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$73 million</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>State Apprenticeship Expansion Grants. These grants support integrated, statewide apprenticeship strategies and state capacity to engage industry and meet the demand for new programs in both traditional and nontraditional industries and catalyze state innovations to increase apprenticeship opportunities for low-income and underrepresented populations.</td>
<td>2016 and 2018</td>
<td>$101 million</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship Accelerator Grants. These grants allow states to develop a strategic plan and build partnerships for apprenticeship expansion and diversification with state education, workforce, and economic development systems.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$10 million</td>
<td>51</td>
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</table>

Source: Information in this table comes from the list of active grants and contracts provided by USDOL on [apprenticeship.gov](http://apprenticeship.gov).
Appendix B. List of Apprenticeship State Expansion Grantees

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<th>Abstract</th>
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