

# APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM REGISTRATION PROCESS ASSESSMENT

## OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

As federal and state agencies collaborate to bring Registered Apprenticeship to scale in the United States, many processes and procedures must be modified to accommodate significantly larger numbers of programs, sponsors, and apprentices. One of those is the program registration process. The Labor Standards for Registration of Apprenticeship Programs (Title 29 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 29) provide a framework for the development and registration of apprenticeship. The U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (OA) and State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAA) work in tandem with state apprenticeship expansion grantees and other partners to develop and register quality apprenticeship programs. To develop, register, and support apprenticeship expansion programs, states have internal processes to assist in program development and registration. This tool will help grantees understand the current process for registering programs in their state, assess its strengths, and gather feedback to determine and prioritize areas where the process can be streamlined while ensuring quality program standards development.

## MAPPING THE APPRENTICESHIP REGISTRATION PROCESS

An important first step in understanding a state's current program registration procedure is developing a process map. A process map graphically shows the inputs, actions, and outputs of a process in a clear, step-by-step fashion. Process mapping allows organizations to illustrate the flow of a process and identify opportunities for improvement. It also provides the opportunity for all stakeholders to see the process in the same way.

There are six steps to process mapping:

1. Convene a team.
2. Brainstorm the process steps.
3. Organize the process steps.
4. Draw the baseline process map.
5. Identify strengths and areas for improvement.
6. Implement and monitor improvements: Test your ideas on a small scale, and monitor the results before standardizing them.

## CONVENE A TEAM

Bring together everyone involved in carrying out, managing, and providing input into the program registration process. This should include business engagement staff, apprenticeship navigators or training representatives, program staff, and OA or SAA staff. *Be as inclusive as possible* when convening the team since staff in the apprenticeship system may offer unique input on the registration process.

## BRAINSTORM THE PROCESS STEPS

Gather all information from start to finish, including steps, inputs such as an employer requesting information about apprenticeship, outputs such as completed program registration, roles, time durations, etc.

At a high level, the process of registering a program consists of three parts: **Employer Engagement**, **Standards Development**, and **Registration**. The prompts below can help uncover the steps as they currently are to register an apprenticeship program for each part of the process.



### EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

The **employer engagement** part of the process should include all steps from the time an employer and a member of the apprenticeship team come into contact to when the employer makes the decision to commit to program development or decline the opportunity.

1. Where does the process begin?
2. What is the very first thing that happens to initiate a discussion about apprenticeship with an employer/potential sponsor, and who does it?
3. What happens next, and who assists with this step?

On the simplest level, the map may be constructed by repeating Question 3 until the entire process is mapped. However, there are some specific situations and items that you should know how to represent on your map.

4. How long does each of these steps take?
5. What information/material is provided to businesses (inputs), and when in the process is it provided? Are there preliminary forms required from the employer during this process? If so, what are they, and what is their purpose?
6. What information is gathered from businesses? Who gathers it, when do they gather it, how do they document it, and what happens with the information?

If there are any if/then situations in your employer engagement process—decision points that create alternate paths—identify and map those.

*Ask yourself:* Is there a decision to be made after any of the steps in the employer engagement process? If so, what is the decision, and what are the branches that the process might take after this decision? What are the first steps in each of the branches? Continue with Question 3 for each of the branches.

7. Identify people and roles that connect with employers to develop standards in the state.
8. Identify any tools or resources used in the standards development process. What are they, and how and when are they used?

### STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

The **standards development** process starts at the time the employer commits to developing a program and continues when standards are submitted for registration. This also includes the handoff process, if standards are drafted by the OA or SAA office.

1. Where does the process begin—what is the very first thing that happens to start the standards development process with an employer/potential sponsor—and who does it?
2. What happens next, and who assists with this step?

You can continue to use Question 2 to map the process just as you did in the business engagement portion of your process. Below are some additional considerations to include in the process.

3. How long does each of these steps take?
4. What information or material is provided to businesses (inputs), and when in the process is it provided?

5. What information is gathered from businesses? Who gathers it, when do they gather it, how do they document it, and what happens with the information?

As during brainstorming around business engagement, if there are any if/then situations in your standards development process—decision points that create alternate paths—you should identify and map those.

*Ask yourself:* Is there a decision to be made after any of the steps in the standards development process? If so, what is the decision, and what are the branches that the process might take after this decision? What are the first steps in each of the branches? Continue with Question 2 for each of the branches.

6. Identify people/roles that register the program in the state.
7. Identify any tools or resources used in the standards development process. What are they, and how and when are they used?

### REGISTRATION

Document the **registration process** beginning with the time the paperwork is submitted to the registering agency to when the employer receives their approval of their Registered Apprenticeship Program. This process may differ for each state depending on whether a state is an OA or SAA state. State grantees should work closely with the registering agency to determine the process steps. Just as you did with business engagement and standards development, use prompts below to brainstorm the steps for registering a program.

1. Where does the process begin—what is the very first thing that happens to start the registration process with an employer/potential sponsor—and who does it?
2. What happens next, and who does that?
3. How long does each of these steps take?
4. What information/material is provided to businesses (inputs), and when in the process is it provided?
5. What information is gathered and from whom? Who gathers it, when do they gather it, how do they document it, and what happens with the information?

As during brainstorming around business engagement and standards development, if there are any if/then situations in your standards development process—decision points that create alternate paths—you should identify and map those.

*Ask yourself:* Is there a decision to be made after any of the steps in the standards development process? If so, what is the decision, and what are the branches that the process might take after

this decision? What are the first steps in each of the branches? Continue with Question 2 for each of the branches.

6. Identify people/roles that are involved in the registration process.
7. Identify any tools or resources used in the registration process. What are they, and how and when are they used?

## ORGANIZE THE PROCESS STEPS

Arrange the steps identified during the brainstorming process into sequential order using the process steps template provided.

If your engagement process cuts across different functional areas (e.g., a local business services representative and a state apprenticeship staff person), or if different steps happen at the same time and then rejoin the main process, make a note on your process map.

*Ask yourself:* Regarding the last step performed by function x, is there another function that is performing that same step simultaneously?

# PROCESS STEPS TEMPLATE

Using the table below, arrange the steps in the process of developing and registering an apprenticeship program in sequential order. Include who is responsible for each step and what materials or resources are required to move through the process.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT	STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT	REGISTRATION
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Employer</b> reaches out through website.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials: inquiry form, website</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Business services representative</b> responds, requests employer fill out information form, schedules initial meeting.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials: information form</li> </ul> </li> <li>2a. <b>Program coordinator</b> conducts research on business and populates customer relationship management (CRM) database.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Business services representative</b> sends referral form to <b>OA apprenticeship training representative (ATR)</b>.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials: referral form</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>OA ATR</b> populates standards template and schedules meeting with employer/sponsor.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials: standards template</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>ATR</b> submits packet to Apprenticeship Council.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials: registration packet</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Council coordinator</b> reviews packet for completion and, if the packet is complete, sends packet to director.</li> </ol>

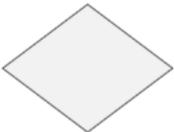
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT	STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT	REGISTRATION

## DRAW THE BASELINE PROCESS MAP

Draw a map that shows the process from beginning to end in its current state using symbols to denote inputs/outputs, action steps, decisions, and the direction of the process. An example of a process map is provided below. The map can be divided by which steps fall under **business engagement, standards development, or registration.**

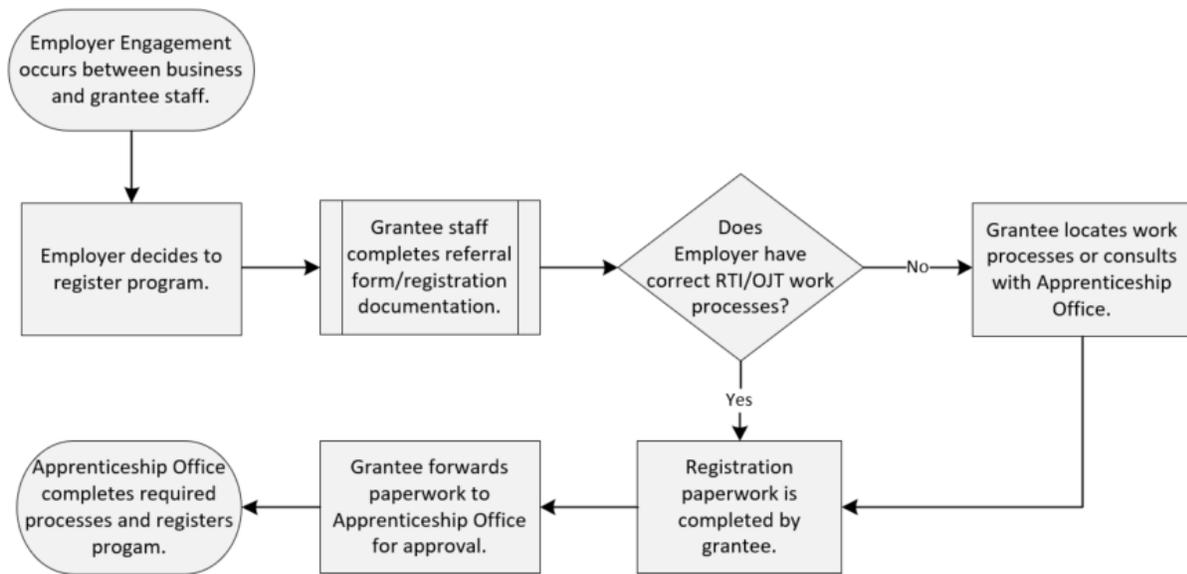
### Basic Process Mapping Symbols

The basic symbols you will use are below. Additional symbols can be found [here](#).

	<p>An <b>oval</b> denotes start and end steps.</p>
	<p>A <b>rectangle</b> denotes action steps. <i>Example: Business services representative hands-off employer via email to ATR.</i></p>
	<p>This <b>sectioned rectangle</b> denotes a subprocess. <i>Example: ATR determines what forms are required for the program registration.</i></p>
	<p>A <b>diamond</b> denotes decision. <i>Example: Does the employer have a work process schedule and related technical instruction outlined?</i></p>
	<p><b>Arrows</b> denote the direction of the process and which steps will come next.</p>

### Process Map Example

This example demonstrates how to use the symbols above to construct a simple process map. Beginning with when the employer decides to register a program and ending with the developed set of standards.



## IDENTIFY STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The team should review the process map to determine what is working well, identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies, and outline a plan for improvements.

To determine inefficiencies, delays, or challenges within this process, state apprenticeship grantees must evaluate their current mapped process. Gather feedback from both internal and external stakeholders on which parts of the process are successful and which parts are more likely to see bottlenecks. Some questions to ask when analyzing the current process may be:

- What barriers or challenges stall the business engagement process?
- Does the employer leave this meeting with a clear understanding of the registration process?
- What additional information can you share at the beginning of the process to help with standards development (i.e., labor market information on wages, related training providers—both in-person and online, Equal Employment Opportunity language, or areas that may be pain points discovered in the business engagement process)?
- What are potential challenges that stall the standards development process?
- Is there information from the business engagement process that could be used to complete program registration forms? If so, what is the information, and how can you obtain it?
- What barriers or challenges stall the registration process?

### INTERVIEWING STAKEHOLDERS

Seeking feedback from internal and external stakeholders is key to a thorough analysis of the process. Feedback can be sought in a variety of ways; however, one effective method is conducting interviews with stakeholders. Stakeholders should include current program sponsors, OA or SAA staff, business services representatives, or even employers who chose not to sponsor a program. Share the process map ahead of the interview and explain the purpose, objective, and scope of the interviews as well as the process being evaluated.

#### TIPS FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

- [Come prepared](#) with a set of questions and write down exact responses from the stakeholders.
- Make sure questions are open ended. For example, "Tell me about your experience building your apprenticeship program." or "Will you walk me through a typical experience developing standards with an employer?"
- [Ask follow-up questions](#) to gain clarity, such as why, how come, and what do you mean.
- Interview several stakeholders to gather a range of input. This approach can help you understand if identified challenges are the result of your process or if they are specific to the stakeholder.

### IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR IMPROVEMENTS

Before major changes are made to the registration process, communicate with your findings with the apprenticeship team including the registering agency to determine changes to implement. Then, test your ideas on a small scale and monitor the results before standardizing them. Using the feedback from your interviews and the inefficiencies found through your process map, identify ways to address the challenges including action steps, who will be involved in making the changes, and when changes will occur. Implement improvements on a smaller scale that will allow you to monitor the improved process and make any adjustments before implementing on a larger scale.

Use the [strategy template](#) to prioritize challenges and solutions and create an action plan on how to streamline the registration process. Make sure that the solutions identified are achievable and measurable. Partners should continue to monitor this map process throughout expansion efforts to ensure processes are updated for the most effective registration efforts.

### RESOURCES

The following resources can provide some solutions and strategies for improving the program registration process.

The [Business Engagement Toolkit](#) and [Apprenticeship Promising Practices: Expanding Business Engagement](#) includes best practices and resources for improving the business engagement process.

The [Apprenticeship.gov Standards Builder](#) is an effective tool for developing apprenticeship program standards.

[State Apprenticeship Expansion Promising Practices: Capacity to Launch and Manage Programs](#) includes examples of best practices from states that have enhanced the program development and registration process.

## STRATEGY TEMPLATE

Use the table below to prioritize challenges and potential solutions to help streamline and accelerate the apprenticeship program registration process. Include a timeframe and action steps that are achievable and will allow for evaluation of the results.

CHALLENGE	POTENTIAL SOLUTION	ACTION STEPS	STAFF ASSIGNED	TIMEFRAME
<i>Example: Multiple forms required during the engagement process with similar information cause the employer to disengage or give up.</i>	<i>Combine forms that have similar information into one form.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify duplicate information on forms 1a, 3b, and 5a.</li> <li>2. Add questions from 3b and 5a to 1a to create one form.</li> <li>3. Pilot new form for first quarter and reassess in second.</li> </ol>	<i>Program coordinator steps 1 and 2. Business Services in Region 2 and 3 will pilot.</i>	<i>Develop form: November–December. Pilot form: January–March.</i>

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