Welcome Message

Welcome to the November/December edition of the Scaling Apprenticeship (SA) Newsletter!

In this month’s edition you can find a high-level summary and highlights of the H-1B Apprenticeship Virtual Grantee Convening. You can also find:

• Information on how apprenticeship providers can improve employee career retention
• A spotlight on two grantees
• A TA activity update
• Additional research findings for you to incorporate into your programs.

As always, we would be delighted to hear from you, so please send us news of upcoming events that your peers would like to know. We would also like to hear about your project accomplishments or topics you would like the newsletter to cover. Please contact us at ScalingApprenticeship@dol.gov with your feedback.

DOL H1-B Apprenticeship Conference
Nearly 300 H-1B Scaling Apprenticeship Through Sector-Based Strategies and Closing the Skills Gap grantees participated in the Convening this year.

Tips for Promoting Career Retention
At the heart of Career Pathways is the recognition that a job placement is not the end of workforce development; in most cases, it is just the beginning!

Technical Assistance Updates
Stay up to date on a variety of webinars, program information and Apprenticeship research.

Grantee Spotlight
Spotlight on two new grantees in the IT & Cybersecurity sectors the Advanced Manufacturing.

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Thank you for your participation in the H-1B Apprenticeship Virtual Convening and making it a success! Nearly 300 H-1B Scaling Apprenticeship Through Sector-Based Strategies and Closing the Skills Gap grantees participated in the Convening this year. The Convening featured more than 30 grantees and partners in 18 breakout sessions, along with virtual networking and plenary sessions.

Popular breakout sessions included “Messaging and ROI to Market Apprenticeship to New Employers” and “Braiding Funds.” Grantee breakout session speakers also provided attendees with their apprenticeship models, relevant practices, and resources to help others improve apprenticeship programs.

Other highlights of the conference included an opening plenary session from the Department of Labor, including Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training John P. Pallasch, Office of Workforce Investment (OWI) Administrator, Kimberly Vitelli, Office of Apprenticeship (OA) Administrator, John Ladd and Employment and Training Administration, Office of Workforce Investment Deputy Administrator, Robin Fernkas. Other plenary sessions included:

**Why Apprenticeship? Employer Partners and Apprenticeship Programs**
Employer partners are essential components of successful apprenticeship programs. Employers shared their perspectives on apprenticeships including why they chose to utilize apprenticeships, discussed the Return on Investment (ROI) to their business, and described how they successfully launched apprenticeships.

**Sector-Based Approaches for Apprenticeships**
A panel of H-1B grantees discussed sector-based approaches to apprenticeships, including how this approach can facilitate the development of better apprenticeship programs, accelerate employer recruitment, and provide benefits to smaller employers, all at a lower level of effort for grantees compared to engagement of one employer at a time.

**Apprenticeship and the Future of Work**
New technologies, demographic shifts and the current economy are radically transforming the way that organizations conduct business and the type of skills their talent needs to help them thrive in this new age of work. Two states discussed the role apprenticeship plays in ensuring that youth and adults have the skills businesses need now and in the future to succeed in a thriving, resilient economy.

If you were unable to attend the conference, missed a session due to competing time slots, or want to refresh your memory, we encourage you to access the plenary recordings and the breakout session PowerPoint presentations for here: Day 1 (Tuesday, October 20), Day 2 (Wednesday, October 21), Day 3 (Thursday, October 22) or Day 4 (Friday, October 23).
Tips for Promoting Career Retention

Promoting Career Retention
At the heart of Career Pathways is the recognition that a job placement is not the end of workforce development; in most cases, it is just the beginning!

Promoting career retention is an essential aspect of success in apprenticeships. Long-standing career placements are a benefit to the career-seeker, who can shift their focus from attaining income and meeting their basic needs to cultivating both skill and asset for long-term success. However, they are equally important to our employer partners, for whom turnover is a significant expense. Further, finding employees who can continue to develop in their role is the key to every employer’s growth. See some resources below for ways to promote career retention.

Relationships
The Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) Retention and Engagement Tip Sheet notes the need for strong connections and continued communication with both the employer and career seeker is essential before and after placement. A close working relationship will allow apprenticeship staff to identify any challenges, concerns, or potential barriers, and address those barriers before they threaten a current or future placement.

Preparation
America’s Promise, a grant program focused on strengthening the pipeline of skilled workers to expand an economic region’s middle- to high-skilled workforce, held a roundtable discussion earlier this year, discussing future placement with the career seekers you serve, it is important to plan ahead, and to ask questions about potential challenges. Has the career seeker considered transportation and childcare needs? Does the career seeker use accessibility equipment or software? Do they have any potential barriers that may need to be addressed? The apprenticeship period is an ideal time to identify and address these kinds of concerns. View Tips from the America’s Promise Roundtable Discussion.

Retention Starts Now
Retention begins when a career-seeker starts an apprenticeship. There are many challenges to retention, the biggest threat being “poor match” between the employer and the candidate. This can mean anything from the employee not enjoying the job tasks, to a bad “fit” with the employer’s management style, the work environment, or even the required schedule.

The benefit of apprenticeships is that they give an opportunity for both the employer and the apprentices to understand all of this prior to a final placement. If a candidate or apprentice is unlikely to thrive with an employer, that should be clear during their apprenticeship period.

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Scaling Apprenticeship Technical Assistance

Webinar: Recruiting and Retaining: What Works
On December 8, attendees acquired knowledge around a variety of methods used to recruit and retain apprentices. Presenters emphasized the foundational steps they have taken to recruit and retain students in apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, including specific changes to processes developed to address COVID-19 crisis challenges. Presenters provided extra emphasis on pre-apprenticeships as many of the grantees are using this method to transition students into full registered apprenticeship programs. Be on the lookout for the webinar recording.

Subject Matter Expert Dialog: Validating Program Outcomes
Expert dialogs leverage the expertise of those who have been longtime proponents of apprenticeships and who have been in the trenches using apprenticeships as a tool to help shore up employer workforce needs and lead workers to higher paid careers. In this dialog, experts discuss communicating, engaging, and working with employers to adopt and expand apprenticeships – both registered and unregistered – with special attention to working in the COVID-affected economy has been a topic of frequent discussion among grantees and their TA Coaches.

Subject Matter Expert Dialog: Employer Workforce Needs Assessment
In this expert dialog, subject matter experts discuss how Scaling Apprenticeship coaches have been engaging in frequent discussions with grantees on the challenges and successes of communicating, engaging, and working with employers to adopt and expand apprenticeships – both registered and unregistered – with special attention to working in the COVID-affected economy.

Emerging Practices Report
Be on the lookout for the fourth quarter Scaling Apprenticeship (SA) emerging practices report which presents grantee practices, identified via review of grantee quarterly narrative reports (QNR) and of qualitative data collected from coach-grantee calls and peer discussions for the months of October, November, and December. We encourage all SA grantees to use these as resources when addressing their own grant implementation needs.

Apprenticeship Research
CLEAR identifies and summarizes many types of research, including descriptive statistical studies and outcome analyses, implementation, and causal impact studies. CLEAR currently includes more than 60 studies related to apprenticeship, which can be found under the topic area “Apprenticeship and Work-based Training.” Below we present an example relevant to SA grantees.

The promise of worker training: New insights into the effects of government funded training programs.

The study’s objective was to examine the impact of participation in a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) occupational skills training (OST) or on-the-job training (OJT) program on employment and earnings. In a nonexperimental analysis, the author compared average employment rates and earnings for people who received OST or OJT to those who did not receive either employment service. The study found that individuals participating in OST or OJT were more likely to be employed and had higher earnings in the first and third quarters after exiting the program. The quality of causal evidence presented in this report is low which means we are not confident that the estimated effects are attributable to the WIA employment training programs; as other factors are likely to have contributed to the outcomes.

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Grantee Spotlight: Getting to know your peers

In this issue, we feature two grantees: San Jacinto Community College District in the IT & Cybersecurity Sector and West Los Angeles College in the Advanced Manufacturing sector.

San Jacinto Community College District

Finding that rapid advancements in digital technologies are dissolving industry boundaries and rendering information technology "a cross-industry," the Texas Is Information Technology (TXIT) project is partnering with employers in the advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT sectors to build new apprenticeships within the IT industry. The project also is designing its apprenticeships for "new collar adults"—workers without bachelor's degrees—to address a key challenge facing the IT industry, in which many technology companies require a bachelor's degree for jobs that can be performed without one.

TXIT is offering both registered and non-registered apprenticeships, all of which are connected to college credit and/or industry-recognized certificates. In addition, the apprenticeships are portable, stackable, and tailored for online and/or virtual applications to meet the needs of apprentices who must juggle class instruction with on-the-job learning, while also meeting family responsibilities.

A key project focus is building pre-apprenticeships that achieve a steady stream of well-qualified applicants for the newly created apprenticeships. TXIT is developing these pre-apprenticeships based on several models, including the Pre-Apprentice Academy pioneered by partner IBM, which combines coding-camp-style digital learning with hands-on work experience, including soft skills. Another model is a digital literacy pre-apprenticeship, which instructs apprentices in the types of data appropriate for specific uses, the use of data analysis and visual analytics tools, and the effective communication of results through storytelling, among other topics.

TXIT's initial service areas are Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, and Austin—home to the four consortium colleges, as well as urban centers of the state where technology industries are clustered. The project will then move to California through existing industry partners that have company locations in that state, as well as with the support of the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards, which has committed to helping the project scale nationally.

West Los Angeles College

The Growing Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships Across America's (GAMAA) project is building pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships in the advanced manufacturing industry by encouraging collaboration on a national level using the tested and flexible Aero-Flex model. Lead applicant West Los Angeles College was part of the team in 2016 that formed Aero-Flex, an employer-driven methodology and framework in engineering, designed to meet the needs of the aerospace industry, while also working across all advanced manufacturing subsectors.

The framework creates a career pathway for individuals interested in engineering that is based on a three-track training model, incorporating work readiness, technical skills, and work experience/internship. The framework also provides for a customized layer that allows each employer to design or "flex" its own program by selecting curriculum aligned to its specific needs. The Aero-Flex partnership has created the first-in-the-nation, USDOL-approved, Aerospace Engineering Registered Apprenticeship program, as well as the first bachelor-degreed engineering apprenticeship ever registered with USDOL. The partnership is planning to create a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) in Avionics Technician and a Bio-Flex pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship program, among other programs.

With its national focus, GAMAA is building on the Aero-Flex design by bringing together that model and other partner apprenticeship development models into a joint effort that aims to expand and extend apprenticeship. The result will be a mixture of current apprenticeships, new and emerging apprenticeships, and hybrid- and competency-based apprenticeship approaches, all based on the Aero-Flex methodology.