Registered Apprenticeship Roles and Responsibilities

Intermediaries and Sponsors

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At a Glance

This document outlines the two major roles that a lead apprenticeship organization can play in establishing a Registered Apprenticeship program—as a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor or Registered Apprenticeship intermediary. This tool is intended to help organizations decide whether they should serve as an intermediary or sponsor and identify the skills and resources they will need to successfully implement the role that they decide to play.

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About JFF

Jobs for the Future (JFF) drives transformation of the American workforce and education systems to achieve equitable economic advancement for all. www.jff.org

About JFF's Center for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning

In 2017, JFF launched the Center for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning (the Center) to spur mainstream adoption of equitable, innovative, and high-quality apprenticeship and work-based learning programs. The Center works to expand apprenticeship and work-based learning programs into new industries and fosters access and success for a broader, more diverse group of workers.

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Disclaimer

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Introduction

With the growth and expansion in Registered Apprenticeship programs, there are organizations new to Registered Apprenticeship that want to play a leadership role but are not sure what apprenticeship design and implementation involves and are not sure of their capacity to take on this work.

The tool provided here is a chart comparing the roles of *Registered Apprenticeship intermediary* and *Registered Apprenticeship sponsor*. The target audience for this tool is aspiring organizations unfamiliar with the specifics of Registered Apprenticeship, which could include community-based organizations, workforce organizations, and a host of other potential agencies that have a workforce focus as part of their mission.

One goal of the tool is to provide an understanding of the two major roles that a lead apprenticeship organization can play in establishing a Registered Apprenticeship program—as a *Registered Apprenticeship sponsor* or *Registered Apprenticeship intermediary*. By providing this understanding, it is hoped that the tool will help aspiring organizations to decide whether they are best positioned to serve as an intermediary or sponsor and identify the skills and resources they will need to successfully implement the role that they decide to play.

There is a myriad of definitions of workforce intermediary as well as apprenticeship intermediary. For the purpose of framing apprenticeship roles related to use of the tool provided here, the following definitions of Registered Apprenticeship sponsor and intermediary will be used:

Registered Apprenticeship sponsor—According to the U.S. Department of Labor, a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor is an organization or employer that administers and operates a Registered Apprenticeship program under the auspices of the government administering agency, either the U.S. Department of Labor or the state apprenticeship agency. Sponsors can be a single business (individual program sponsor) or consortium of businesses (group program sponsor), a labor union, a labor management organization, a workforce intermediary such as a trade association, a workforce board or workforce organization, a community college or university, or a community-based organization.

Registered Apprenticeship intermediary—A Registered Apprenticeship intermediary is an organizational third party that supports the Registered Apprenticeship sponsor in convening and facilitating the development of a collaborative ecosystem of partnering stakeholders in support of designing and/or implementing the Registered Apprenticeship program.

A Registered Apprenticeship sponsor is not required to work with an intermediary. There are examples of sponsors that function as intermediaries, bringing together industry stakeholders in support of the Registered Apprenticeship program. There are also many examples of intermediaries that help create coalitions in support of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors.

This tool is designed to provide a high-level overview of apprenticeship roles and functions to support organizations in understanding the distinction in roles between a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor and Registered Apprenticeship intermediary. The order of roles and functions identified in the tool is not meant to be interpreted as a linear order in the implementation process. The order of implementation will vary depending on the specifics of the ecosystem and the relationship between partners and the sponsor. Overlapping of the identified roles and functions is to be expected, with implementation of the different tasks occurring simultaneously at times.

Role Comparison: Intermediary and Sponsor

Intermediary	Registered Apprenticeship Phases and Milestones	Sponsor
Phase 1: Partner outreach and engagement		
Identifies, convenes, and facilitates initial discussions with a broad range of industry stakeholders on behalf of the Registered Apprenticeship (RA) sponsor. This may include bringing together multiple employers to determine if there is an interest in creating a group sponsorship. Engagement of the government apprenticeship agency is beneficial.	**MILESTONE** Identify champion stakeholders. **DECISION POINT** Identify stakeholders with the potential to support the design and implementation of the RA Program, including employers, unions, labor management orgs, industry/trade orgs, local workforce development board(s), chamber(s) of commerce, education/training providers, policy, advocate, and federal/state/local workforce orgs and other appropriate supporting organizations.	Outreach to industry stakeholders recommended in support of planning and implementing the RA program. Convening stakeholders may include bringing together other employers from the same industry to determine if there is an interest in creating a group sponsorship. Seeking technical assistance from the government apprenticeship agency is recommended.
Phase 2: Assessment of targeted industry workforce needs		
Performs analysis of market demand / supply data, occupational data, existing career paths/ladders, credentials and degrees supporting the career path, wage scales and benefits, and gaps in service delivery. Engagement of the local workforce board in supporting this analysis is recommended.	**MILESTONE** Perform needs assessment that includes data analysis of industry supply and gaps in workforce needs. **DECISION POINT** 1) determine whether there is added value and buy-in in sponsoring an RA program as a strategy to address employer-identified workforce needs and enhance advancement opportunities for the workforce; and 2) determine viability of a group sponsorship with multiple participating employers.	Performs an internal assessment process on the workforce needs within various occupations/job titles, including turnover rates, vacant positions and the ability to fill these positions, skill gaps, internal advancement opportunities, credential attainment, and wage/benefit comparison with the regional industry. Outreach to the local workforce board to support this analysis is recommended.

Intermediary	Registered Apprenticeship Phases and Milestones	Sponsor
Phase 3: Apprentice-to-Journeyperson Occupational Pathway		
Engages the RA sponsor and industry stakeholders in finalizing the occupational pathway from apprentice to journeyperson, identifying specific occupational job titles, credentials, and required education.	**MILESTONE** Finalize career pathway plan from apprentice to journeyperson, identifying specific job titles, credentials, and education. **DECISION POINT** Determine if the RA program will be developed for an individual employer or multiple employers (this decision will impact the design process, partner engagement, and decisions on occupational pathways, job titles, and associated industry credentials).	Engages internal stakeholders to finalize the occupational pathway from apprentice to journeyperson, identifying specific occupational job titles, credentials, and required education.
Phase 4: Competency Requirements		
Engages the RA sponsor and industry stakeholders in identifying existing industry standards, conducting job/task analysis of occupational skills and employability skills, if needed.	**MILESTONE** Finalize competency checklist and on-the-job learning plan specifying required knowledge and skills aligned with credentials that apprentices must attain. **DECISION POINT** 1) determine if RA program is competency-based, time-based, or hybrid; 2) identify prerequisites for each training module and time requirements and benchmarks for assessment and mastery of competencies; and 3) determine methodology for measuring competency attainment.	Identifies existing industry standards and, if needed, conducts job/task analysis of occupational skills and employability skills.

Intermediary	Registered Apprenticeship Phases and Milestones	Sponsor
Phase 5: Instructional and Work Process Plan		
Engages the RA sponsor in selecting the instructional partner(s) responsible for customizing and aligning the related technical instruction (RTI) classroom curriculum with on-the-job learning (OJL) competencies and credentials/degree path, resulting in the instructional plan and work processes that specify the content and hours associated with RTI and OJL.	**MILESTONE** Finalize work process plan with aligned on-the-job learning and RTI classroom instruction. **DECISION POINT** 1) identify skills best taught through RTI or OJL; 2) identify whether RTI is front-loaded or occurs during the delivery of OJL; 3) identify whether basic skills are taught as part of a pre-apprenticeship program or upon entry into an RA program; 4) determine if RTI is taught face to face, online, or with a hybrid model; 5) determine specifics such as class schedule, training locations, instructional and equipment costs, etc.; 6) determine how coordination with the RTI provider will occur; and 7) identify how apprentices qualify for advanced standing toward past experience and past instruction, and the criteria used.	Selects instructional partner(s) responsible for customizing RTI classroom instruction aligned with on-the-job learning and credentials/degree path, resulting in the instructional plan and work processes that specify the content and hours associated with RTI and on-the-job learning.

Intermediary	Registered Apprenticeship Phases and Milestones	Sponsor
Phase 6: Formalizing Apprenticeship Standards		
Supports the RA sponsor in completing and seeking approval of apprenticeship standards (developed in accordance with regulatory requirements) to include work processes, wage schedule, governance of the RA program, number of apprentices, apprentice-to-journeyperson ratio, Affirmative Action Plan, apprentice recruitment and selection plan, timeline, and safety standards. Supports the sponsor, if requested, in obtaining employer participation agreement(s) and education provider commitment letter(s).	**MILESTONE** Obtain approval from US DOL or state apprenticeship agency of the apprenticeship standards, employer participation agreement(s), and education provider commitment letter(s). **DECISION POINT** Completion of the apprenticeship standards requires multiple decisions related to both the design and implementation components of the RA program, with coordination and sign-off needed by all partners (employer, union when present, education provider, and other stakeholders with identified responsibilities).	Completes and seeks approval of apprenticeship standards (developed in accordance with regulatory requirements) to include work processes, wage schedule, governance of the RA program, number of apprentices, apprentice-to-journeyperson ratio, Affirmative Action Plan, apprentice recruitment and selection plan, timeline, and safety standards. Obtains employer participation agreement(s) where required and education provider commitment letter(s).
Phase 7: Apprentice Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment		
Supports the RA sponsor and stakeholders in implementing equitable, standardized recruitment and selection processes targeting incumbent and/or new hires from underrepresented groups. Supports the sponsor, if requested, in obtaining signed apprenticeship agreements.	**MILESTONE** Enroll apprentices and obtain apprenticeship agreements signed by apprentice, employer, and sponsor. **DECISION POINT** Determine candidate pool for enrollment in RA Program to include only incumbents, only new hires, or a combination of both groups; identify best practices to ensure equitable recruitment and selection of apprentice candidates.	Implements equitable, standardized recruitment and selection processes targeting incumbent and/or new hires from underrepresented groups. Obtains signed apprenticeship agreements.

Intermediary	Registered Apprenticeship Phases and Milestones	Sponsor
Phase 8: Mentor System		
Supports the RA sponsor in recruiting and selecting motivated, qualified journeyperson mentors to provide on-the-job learning (OJL); identifies mentor trainer and ongoing mentor support and supervision system.	**MILESTONE** Establish formal mentoring practices to support apprentices during the OJL. Select and train mentors. **DECISION POINT** 1) identify qualifications of journeyperson mentors; 2) identify journeyperson mentors' roles and responsibilities as critical to implementing quality OJL instruction; 3) identify competencies for mentor training; 4) identify qualifications for mentor trainer provider; and 5) identify mentors' needs for ongoing support and supervision.	Recruits and selects motivated, qualified journeyperson mentors to provide on-the-job learning; identifies an internal or external mentor trainer and ongoing mentor support and supervision system.
Phase 9: Apprentice Support System		
Support the RA sponsor in engaging education partner(s) and other stakeholders in organizing delivery of apprentice supports, including but not limited to: academic bridge coursework to prepare apprentices for success in the apprenticeship's educational program; counseling supports; robust tutoring support; technology support; financial counseling; college navigation support; childcare and transportation support; and other supports as needed.	**MILESTONE** Identify and implement apprentice supports to ensure success in completing the RA program. **DECISION POINT** Assess needs of the apprentice candidate pool to determine pro-active interventions and supports that will ensure success in completion of the RA program.	Engages educational partner(s), human services organizations, and internal resources to organize and implement the delivery of apprentice supports, including but not limited to: academic bridge coursework to prepare apprentices for success in the apprenticeship's educational program; counseling supports; robust tutoring support; technology support; financial counseling; college navigation support; childcare and transportation support; and other supports as needed.

Intermediary	Registered Apprenticeship Phases and Milestones	Sponsor
Phase 10: Data Collection/Reporting System and Record Retention Established		
If desired by the RA sponsor, support creation and implementation of a data collection/reporting and record retention plan to include initial and ongoing input into RAPIDS, establishing and updating apprentice and program files, and record retention policy.	**MILESTONE** Create and implement data collection/reporting system and record retention plan.

DECISION POINT Importance of prioritizing timely and accurate data collection and data reporting using RAPIDS and internal organizational systems. | Creates and implements internal data collection/reporting system and record retention plan using internal resources to include initial and ongoing input into RAPIDS, establishing and updating apprentice and program files, and record retention policy. |
| **Phase 11: Infrastructure, Management, and Oversight Systems** | | |
| If desired by the RA sponsor, creates and implements an infrastructure/management plan in which a program manager or coordinated is identified (employed by the sponsor or intermediary) with oversight responsibility for program delivery, partnership coordination, RTI and OJL delivery, and outcomes per the apprenticeship standards (including attainment of wage steps, credential and credit attainment, promotions, etc.), work process delivery by education providers and mentors, and regulatory requirements. This should include creation and implementation of monitoring/oversight, reporting, and a communication plan that actively engages all participants and partners. Seeks technical assistance on behalf of the sponsor as needed. | **MILESTONE** Create and implement Infrastructure/management, monitoring and oversight, and reporting plans supported by communication plan.

DECISION POINT 1) determine infrastructure that will ensure quality program delivery and attainment of outcomes that includes designating an apprenticeship manager or coordinator employed by the sponsor or intermediary; 2) determine data points that will form the framework for determining program quality or need for intervention; 3) identify Learning Management System to collect data; and 4) determine reporting protocols and timelines. | Creates and implements an infrastructure/management plan in which the sponsor designates an internal program manager or coordinator responsible for oversight of program delivery, partnership coordination, RTI and OJL delivery, and outcomes per the apprenticeship standards (including attainment of wage steps, credential and credit attainment, promotions, etc.), work process delivery by education providers and mentors, and regulatory requirements. This should include creation and implementation of monitoring/oversight, reporting, and a communication plan that actively engages all participants and partners. Seeks technical assistance as needed. |

Intermediary	Registered Apprenticeship Phases and Milestones	Sponsor
Phase 12: Validation of RA Program Value and Benefits		
If desired by the RA sponsor, creates and implements a continual feedback loop as well as an evaluation plan that identifies program successes and areas for improvement pertaining to the sponsor role, apprentice engagement, instructional and other partners' roles, and mentors in contributing to apprentice retention, wage increases, career advancement, increased diversity, ROI, etc. Develops program recommendations and a program improvement plan for the sponsor based on evaluation results.	**MILESTONE** Create and implement evaluation and continuous program improvement plans **DECISION POINT** 1) determine specific strategies to create a feedback loop; 2) determine evaluation tools (using data collected from Learning Management System) as well as the process and timeline for implementing continual evaluation; and 3) determine infrastructure strategy to support continual program improvement based on evaluation results.	Creates and implements a continual feedback loop as well as an evaluation plan that identifies program successes and areas for improvement pertaining to the sponsor role, apprentice engagement, instructional and other partners' roles; and mentors in contributing to apprentice retention, wage increases, career advancement, increased diversity, ROI, etc. Develops program recommendations and a program improvement plan based on evaluation results.
Phase 13: Sustainability		
Develops a funding plan, in coordination with the RA sponsor and key stakeholders, to support scaling and sustainability strategies.	**MILESTONE** Maintain and grow a diversified funding strategy sufficient to implement, sustain, and expand the apprenticeship program. **DECISION POINT** Identify a variety of funding strategies, including ongoing financial support from participating employers supplemented by diverse private and public funding sources as well as the possibility of a fee for service payment structure aligned with the goal of apprenticeship expansion and sustainability.	Develops a sustainable funding plan to support long-term implementation and expansion.