



Youth Apprenticeship Road Map

A Youth Apprenticeship Intermediary Journey

AT A GLANCE

Jobs for the Future (JFF) was contracted by the U.S. Department of Labor as a Youth Apprenticeship Intermediary (YAI) to register 900 new youth apprentices between 2019 and 2023. By early 2024, JFF and its partners, [Institute for American Apprenticeships](#) (IAA), [MACNY: The Manufacturers Association](#) (MACNY) and CareerWise (CW) had registered more than 1,400 youth apprentices and developed 47 programs. This road map is an account of the strategies implemented to achieve this success and lessons learned along the way.

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About JFF

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

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Contents

Introduction.....	4
Overall Youth Apprenticeship Experience	5
Lessons Learned.....	7
Challenges.....	9
Successes.....	10
Innovation Practices.....	10
Identification and Pre-Implementation Phase	11
Lessons Learned.....	12
Challenges.....	14
Successes.....	15
Innovation Practices.....	16
Implementation Phase	17
Lessons Learned.....	17
Challenges.....	19
Successes.....	20
Innovation Practices.....	21
Conclusion	23



01.

Introduction

[Apprenticeship](#) is a workforce training model that combines paid on-the-job learning and formal classroom or online instruction to help workers master the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for career success. Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs take the basic apprenticeship model of paid on-the-job training and educational instruction and provide additional rigor, standards, and quality.

A [Youth Apprenticeship](#) (YA) program is an apprenticeship designed for and serving youth—whether in or out of school—between the ages of 16 and 24. It provides opportunities for youth to experience and gain skills in a real work environment and gives businesses a chance to inspire and develop a new generation of talent. It's a promising postsecondary option for young people.

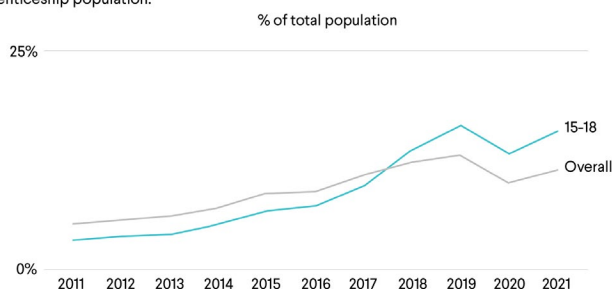
Jobs for the Future was contracted by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) as a Youth Apprenticeship Intermediary (YAI) to register 900 new youth apprentices ages 16-21 between 2019 and 2023. By early 2024, JFF and partners, [Institute for American Apprenticeships](#) (IAA), [MACNY, The Manufacturers Association](#) (MACNY), and [CareerWise](#) (CW) had registered more than 1,400 youth apprentices and developed 47 programs. This road map describes the strategies implemented to achieve this success and lessons learned along the way. The following are the lessons learned, challenges, successes, and innovative practices the YAI team has experienced in this initiative.

Overall Youth Apprenticeship Experience

Expanding youth apprenticeship and other forms of work-based learning (WBL) is a priority for the DOL, which recognizes a need to build the supply of skilled labor at a time when employers are having difficulty finding talent. According to [RAPIDS data](#), Youth Apprenticeship is growing. Participation has almost doubled in the last few years, with apprentice numbers increasing from 6,937 to 13,505 participants between 2015 and 2021. Overall, there was less participation in populations under 18 years of age (see below), which includes high school apprenticeships. Apprentices aged 15-18 only make up about 2.3% of the total apprenticeship population; 85% of that group were age 18. However, participation of youth apprentices ages 15-18 grew more in enrollment relative to the overall apprenticeship population beginning in 2018. In recent years, investments from the DOL, including the YAI contract, have contributed to this growth.

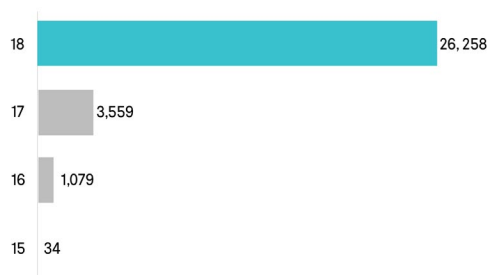
Apprentice Background: Enrollment

Starting in 2018, young apprentices grew more in enrollment relative to the overall apprenticeship population.



Apprentice Background: Enrollment

18 year-olds make up the majority of young people in Registered Apprenticeship.



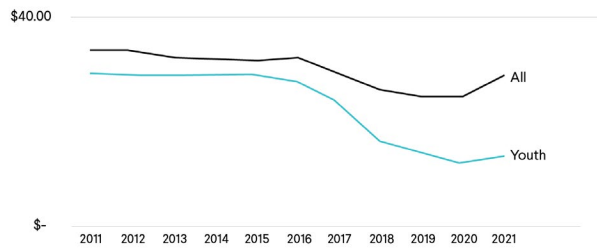
Data was downloaded from: <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/data-and-statistics>



Throughout the YAI experience, JFF often found that employers resist hiring youth apprentices at the same wage as adult apprentices. This is demonstrated by the wage disparity found in RAPIDS data between youth apprentices and the overall apprentice population, and it has grown over time. In 2021, Youth apprentices were paid, on average, nearly \$6 per hour less than adult apprentices. Wages for female apprentices are around \$10 per hour less than male apprentices, regardless of age. To ensure apprentice retention and completion, JFF recommends that apprentices are paid a [living wage](#) regardless of age, race, or gender and have worked with sponsors, employers, and education partners to ensure equitable program design.

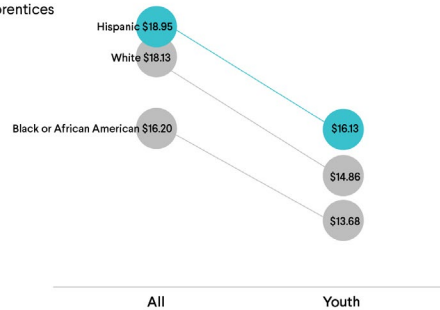
Apprenticeship Outcomes: Exit Wages

The gap between youth exit wages and overall apprenticeship wages has grown over time.



Apprenticeship Outcomes: Entry Wages

Entry wages were lower for youth apprentices across all racial identities.





Apprenticeship Outcomes: Exit Wages

Wage gap between male and female was almost \$10 for all apprentices, which was the same for youth.
Youth apprentices were paid nearly \$6 lower on average, regardless of gender.



Data was downloaded from: <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/data-and-statistics>

Lessons Learned

Strategic and long-term planning are essential to the successful launch and implementation of a youth apprenticeship program. There's an ongoing need for adaptability, especially considering unforeseen events like the pandemic. This involves continually assessing progress and trends to inform effective planning and strategy development. Strategic planning is also critical when expanding YA within Career and Technical Education (CTE). Plans should focus on aligning and expanding CTE instruction across different regions, specifically targeting key industry sectors.

Communication and marketing are crucial to generating awareness and providing information across sectors and regions. Developing a comprehensive communication and marketing plan, including a "funding streams" resource that catalogs current funding resources, can aid in this effort. This also involves meeting stakeholders where they are by understanding their starting points, needs, and available resources. By building strong relationships and providing tailored materials, intermediaries can support key stakeholders in joining and contributing to the apprenticeship initiative. Additionally, conducting focus groups or case studies can help understand the financial impact of sponsoring apprenticeships. This includes outlining clear ROI and steps for participation to help businesses, apprentices, and families recognize the benefits of YA.

Collaboration and partnership are the foundation for a successful YA. Working closely with schools, community partners, intermediaries, and employers is vital for the successful implementation of the YA. Building trust and establishing strong relationships are key components of effective collaboration. Collaboration also fosters innovation. Bringing together industry partners, intermediaries, registration agencies, and school systems can lead to innovative solutions and positive outcomes for all involved partners. School partnerships are essential for the smooth integration of related instruction and overcoming scheduling hurdles. To create strong apprenticeship partnerships, K-12 school districts, schools, and higher education institutions must be involved early in the planning process. This collaboration ensures that apprenticeship programs can align with educational needs effectively.

Investigating the policy impact and identifying potential policy changes to support YA is another critical aspect.

This involves delving deeper into how policies affect various stakeholders and what adjustments might be needed. This includes the state's apprenticeship structure, whether apprenticeships are overseen by the federal Office of Apprenticeship or managed by a State Apprenticeship Agency, as well as any youth apprenticeship and youth employment regulations within the state. This could also include employer incentives and

Concentrating on pathways and occupations that have demonstrated success and meet current supply and demand.

Leveraging existing resources like [O'NET](#) and the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) for Labor Market Information (LMI) can inform these decisions. It's also necessary to navigate child labor laws and [hazardous occupations](#) that prohibit employment of minors.

Youth Apprenticeship can be structured to serve as [options multipliers](#) for young people, empowering apprentices to pursue postsecondary education, employment, or both, while gaining valuable hands-on experience as an apprentice. This dual-path approach enhances the overall educational and career prospects for apprentices.





Challenges

Various misconceptions, misinformation, and a lack of awareness surround youth apprenticeship. These issues range from doubts about feasibility and accessibility to questions about their effectiveness and prospects. Stakeholders, including potential apprentices, parents or guardians, and employers, hold differing regional perceptions about Registered Apprenticeship, highlighting the need for targeted education and outreach efforts. Changing employers' mindsets is also an important step in promoting YA. While employers express the need for workers and are open to providing opportunities to inexperienced individuals, they often hesitate during the hiring process. Considering these challenges, it's important to highlight the value of supporting youth apprenticeship initiatives to address talent shortages.

Employer participation and commitment are vital for the success of apprenticeship programs. Redefining the role of businesses and clarifying their responsibilities within these programs is an ongoing challenge. Finding supervisors willing to take on the apprenticeship supervisor role and its associated responsibilities can be particularly difficult. Offering stipends or other incentives can help to increase supervisor participation in YA programs.

There's a noticeable gap in the availability of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs across different regions. This disparity poses challenges in establishing new apprenticeship initiatives or expanding existing ones within CTE frameworks. Addressing this gap is necessary to promote equal access to CTE opportunities.

Data collection and reporting pose additional challenges due to the lack of a standardized system. Manual data entry, differing timelines across multiple systems, and nuanced requirements further complicate the process. Streamlining data collection methods and implementing a standardized reporting system could help address these challenges effectively.

Successes

MACNY has found success in outreach and engagement efforts in various areas. Schools, guidance counselors, and parents or guardians have reached out to them for information on manufacturing career pathways. They have also been asked to speak about the viability of Registered Apprenticeship, which further increases awareness and understanding. Additionally, existing participants have become recruitment champions, helping to engage new businesses and potential apprentices. Through these targeted outreach efforts, employers are beginning to adopt new mindsets, recognizing the value of developing talent through YA.

Innovative Practices

Collaboration between different systems is key to the success of youth apprenticeship initiatives. For example, MACNY has collaborated with the State University of New York Community Colleges and the New York State Designated Labor Education Agent to align high school class completion with certificates, degrees, and the related instruction requirements needed for YA programs. By promoting alternative pathways, such as taking college courses in high school to fulfill post-high school requirements, students are given more options and a clearer path toward their goals.

Engaging students earlier in their education is important. This can be achieved through immersive career events and adopting career exploration curriculum tailored to middle school and early high school students. These efforts not only introduce students to various career possibilities but also promote equity by providing early engagement opportunities for all students.

There's great potential for creating youth apprenticeship pathways in emerging RA industries like IT, education, and health care. This focus reflects the evolving job landscape and ensures that apprenticeships align with current industry demands and trends.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: HILLSBORO ADVANCED MANUFACTURING YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

In August 2022, JFF supported the design and implementation of the Hillsboro School District launched Oregon's first registered youth apprenticeship program: the Hillsboro Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship. This innovative two-year program provides a pathway for high school students, ages 16-18, to receive hands-on, paid training that prepares them for a career in advanced manufacturing and provides employers with a skilled workforce.

This program is currently open to students at least 16 years old and enrolled in approved CTE Program of Study, in good standing and on track to graduate, (For this program, the Related Technical Instruction coursework is Drafting Tech 2 in junior year (grade 11) and Engineering Prep in senior year (grade 12). Upon successful completion of the program, the youth apprentices will receive accreditation from the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries and will become certified to work anywhere as a manufacturing technician.

Because most youth apprentices will have limited experience in the workplace, incorporating career readiness competencies alongside technical skills is another important aspect of YA. CW includes these employability skills in the apprenticeship training, addressing basic professional skills for youth apprentices, and working with supervisors to address youth-specific needs that may differ from those of adults, even at an entry level.

Utilizing and updating technology systems is necessary for streamlining processes and making resources more accessible. Innovations in technology aim to make systems more user-friendly, such as platforms like the CareerWise Hiring Hub for hiring and apprenticeship management and a Learning Management System (LMS) to deliver instruction. These innovations can enhance the overall experience for both apprentices and program administrators.

Identification and Pre-Implementation Phase

JFF identified two main phases of the development process to design and implement YA programs: (1) Identification and Pre-implementation and (2) Implementation. This section focuses on the Identification and Pre-implementation phase, which includes activities designed to build up to the program's launch. These activities are:

- **Discovery:** The discovery activities usually involve discussions with employers to identify their workforce development needs.
- **Landscape assessment:** The landscape assessment phase includes researching the region to identify existing apprenticeship programs, reviewing Labor Market Information (LMI), and identifying potential apprenticeship partners such as employers, education partners, workforce development boards, and community-based organizations.





- **Secure partnerships:** This phase should include promoting the program among stakeholders, holding meetings with potential partners, and, ideally, a formal partnership agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- **Program design:** The program design phase is where the internal team leading youth apprenticeship will develop the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) curriculum, and on-the-job learning structure is developed.
- **Program registration:** Program registration activities are the completion and approval of the Registered Apprenticeship standards with the [DOL Office of Apprenticeship](#) or a State Apprenticeship Agency.

Lessons Learned

Communication and engagement strategies should be tailored to each employer's sector, emphasizing the importance of developing specific messaging. This can include:

- Creating templates for commonly used documents is helpful because it provides structure and ensures partners are not starting from square one when engaging in new processes. For example, creating frameworks with timelines for a backward planning process can help ensure program success.
- Explaining the significance and benefits of apprenticeships to industry partners is key to fostering understanding and support. Communicating the basics and impact of YA involves sharing balanced information about YA fundamentals and their potential effects on the local and state economy, business needs, and the futures of apprentices. It also includes explaining how apprenticeships connect with the broader education and higher education systems, showcasing the holistic benefits of such programs. Recruiting businesses, guiding industry partners



to understand the long-term investment value in YA, and redefining the role of businesses in talent solutions are essential steps.

- Developing collaborative buy-in and alignment among all stakeholders—employers, students, parents, teachers, and counselors—are also vital for program success. This involves ensuring that everyone shares the same vision before moving forward, engaging decision-makers and implementers in design decisions, and having discussions about [DEIA](#) beliefs and practices with partners.
- Focusing on partnering with organizations experienced in apprenticeship programs and open to involving youth. This includes identifying industry partners connected with the organization and interested in youth apprenticeships. Engaging partners active in higher education, K-12 institutions, and employers helps create a robust network of support. Additionally, finding nonprofits and schools where apprenticeship programs can fit within the community's needs strengthens partnerships and expands program reach.

Strategic planning and organization are essential elements in building YA pathways, particularly in industries new to apprenticeship, such as IT and health care. This includes mapping out industry, education, and intermediary partners in the community, designing for larger cohorts to leverage economies of scale, and initiating MOU discussions early on. Starting with strong partners and “warm leads” helps build momentum. Using a [RACI matrix](#) can ensure clear accountability, and defining local design parameters such as state requirements ensures equity, quality, and value in the program. Encouraging industry partners to transition into a training/learning mindset is also important.

Registration can help streamline operations and ensure quality and compliance with regulatory standards.

Collaborating with DOL liaisons can increase the efficiency of

the registration processes. DOL also often provides funding sources that can encourage industry participation.

Celebrating achievements such as registering occupations, setting program standards, and successfully registering youth apprentices across the U.S. is a testament to program success. Expanding partnerships and launching successful programs demonstrate the scalability and impact of apprenticeship initiatives. Creating frameworks for organizations to thrive independently and connect with relevant pathways further strengthens the apprenticeship ecosystem and promotes ongoing success.

Increasing mentorship and leadership capacity within intermediary and sponsor organizations ensures the successful implementation and sustainability of apprenticeship initiatives. Developing a plan for sustainability beyond initial grants secures the longevity and impact of apprenticeship programs.

Program design should be tailored to be flexible, aligning with school schedules and existing initiatives to accommodate participants effectively. Designing spaces for mentoring apprentices and fostering connections with industry partners across various sectors enriches the learning experience and enhances program outcomes.

Challenges

There are challenges related to union support and age restrictions in certain sectors. Concerns arise due to labor laws, insurance requirements, and safety considerations when hiring individuals under age 18 for apprenticeships. Employers may also resist providing on-the-job training to students under 18, posing hurdles to their participation in apprenticeship programs. However, there are often [strategies that can be implemented](#) to allow minors to enter those occupations safely and legally. Communicating to employers that minors can be employed and





the strategies to ensure safety and compliance with regulations is necessary for successful design of a youth apprenticeship program.

Capacity and logistics are significant considerations when launching YA programs. This involves identifying and communicating necessary capacity commitments, executing [MOUs](#) efficiently, and collaborating with K-12 and higher education partners to address logistical aspects and explore academic credit opportunities. Ensuring adequate training for staff managing the YA is also very important.

Navigating registration and approval processes presents its own set of challenges. This includes dealing with a lack of standardization across different states with varying registration requirements. YA often requires registration and approval of the program one year in advance of student participation to allow for recruitment and school scheduling. Delays in standards registration can impact program launch. Additionally, demonstrating the value of Registered Apprenticeships to unfamiliar or opposed employers and understanding the broader implications beyond paperwork are valuable in overcoming registration and approval hurdles.

Successes

Strategic mapping and action planning are essential steps in developing a comprehensive strategy. The Delaware Youth Apprenticeship program, for example, employed a three-phase asset mapping process. This involved mapping various elements like employers, communities, programs of study, participants, policies, and learning aspects to understand the ecosystem's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Based on these mapping processes, a strategic action plan was developed to guide future initiatives and improvements.

MACNY outreach resulted in the establishment of an employer partner advisory committee for the Syracuse City School

District (SCSD) program. This group offered valuable guidance that helped to ensure that the curriculum addressed employer needs and New York State Education standards, leading to certification of the standards in 2021. They continue to serve as primary sources for career exploration activities, such as career coaching, site visits, job shadows, internships, and part-time employment. The members of this committee who are MACNY signatories have also expanded their rosters of trades to include the Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT) trade, the ideal segue from high school CTE programs to Registered Apprenticeship. The success of the Corcoran Pre-Apprenticeship Program led to a conversation and launch within the Liverpool Central School District.

Innovative Practices

Utilizing technology and frameworks is a must for efficient program management. Tools like [Salesforce](#) can be leveraged to track prospective partner engagement and identify collaboration opportunities effectively. Frameworks such as “[The Five Principles of Youth Apprenticeship](#)” and the CW [Community Readiness Framework](#) are available to guide program launch and ensure the necessary conditions for success are in place.

Educational initiatives and curriculum development are focused on preparing students for youth apprenticeship experiences from an early stage. This includes designing career readiness curriculum for students in middle school and grades 9 and 10, and incorporating registration components into the earliest phases of program design for smooth implementation. For example, New York’s CRMYA ([Career Readiness & Modern Youth Apprenticeship](#)) initiative, in collaboration with the New York City Department of Education, designed grades 9 and 10 curriculum for all students at 60 piloting schools to engage with career readiness and exposure activities. By embedding this within the K12 space, NY is ensuring that all students have access

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The state of Delaware’s work on its Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grant in partnership with JFF on the YAI Contract represents a promising practice of blending and braiding funding streams together to ensure young people are supported in their training. Due to this partnership, Delaware has served almost 900 youth apprentices over four years.

These results were possible because of intentional and critical partnerships in the region which provided the foundational trust necessary to move work forward on a project starting in the middle of the pandemic. These partners in the Delaware ecosystem were between the Delaware Departments of Education and Labor, the co-location of the secondary CTE districts and the Adult Education Districts (AED) which provide over 60% of the RTI for RA for the state.

Over the past four years there have been some key activities that have been essential to the success of the program. First was an asset mapping process conducted over several months that laid the groundwork for the second activity, the development of a Strategic Plan for Youth Apprenticeship. The Strategic Plan for Youth Apprenticeship was developed through a year-long planning process by a consortium of stakeholders including the DE DOE and DOL, the CTE/AED districts, and several statewide employer associations.



to foundational work based learning opportunities, better preparing students for a future youth apprenticeship experience.

Successful program models play a significant role in apprenticeship initiatives' effectiveness. For example, IAA has found success using the summer institute model with employers such as [Husky Technologies](#), [Hypertherm](#), and [Lindt](#) where students increase on-the-job learning while on break from school has been successful in enabling apprentices to complete their high school education while gaining valuable hands-on experience.

Implementation Phase

The second phase of the youth apprenticeship development process is the implementation phase and includes activities that support the program from launch through alumni engagement. These activities are:

- **Launch:** The launch phase is when the youth apprenticeship has been registered, employers recruit apprentices, and the program officially begins.
- **Apprentice experience:** The apprentice experience phase includes all the aspects of the training that contribute to the training and mentorship, support services, wages, and scheduling of the apprentices.
- **Alumni engagement:** Alumni engagement activities are those that involve apprentices after they complete the program to serve as ambassadors, mentors, or on program advisory committees.

Lessons Learned

Understand and support the under-18 demographic in apprenticeships. This involves acknowledging their



unpredictability while emphasizing the long-term value of engaging youth apprentices for employers. Even if immediate returns may not be apparent, maintaining continuous engagement and fostering positive experiences for apprentices is crucial.

Program adjustments and optimization are key for enhancing apprenticeship experiences. This includes using data to inform adjustments and improvements, enhancing apprentice orientation with employability skills training and communication strategies, and simplifying steps for employers in the apprenticeship process to enhance satisfaction. Interdepartmental job shadow experiences provide career exposure for apprentices, and their participation in evaluations and regular reflection cycles strengthens their sense of belonging.

Engagement and support strategies are critical to apprentice success. Engaging school counselor intervention and support helps create a more successful student/apprentice schedule. Student site visits before choosing an employer can ensure apprentices find a strong fit and prepare employers for apprenticeship responsibilities. Additionally, engaging with apprentice families before the program starts ensures they understand the value and benefits of apprenticeship opportunities. The YAI team has found that near peer relationships are particularly valuable, especially with immigrant families, in fostering acceptance and equity regarding youth apprenticeship opportunities.

Strategic planning with an individualized approach is essential. Developing programmatic strategic plans helps prioritize projects and goals in youth apprenticeship. Tailoring apprenticeship models to meet the unique needs and interests of each school district is important, while also incorporating [DEIA](#) considerations into meetings and program design.

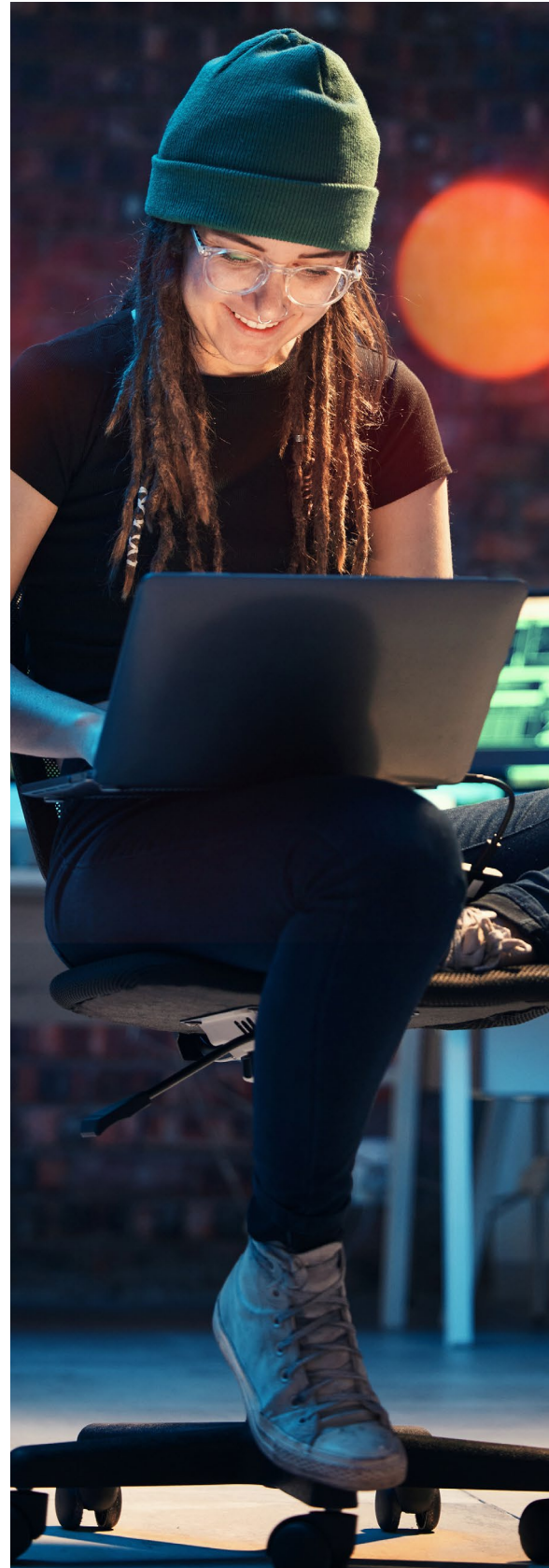
Feedback and continuous improvement are encouraged throughout the apprenticeship program. Gathering feedback from students and supervisors helps iterate and improve the program. Pulse checks maintain consistent connections with apprentices, and creating flexibility in work schedules accommodates their needs. Alumni experiences and feedback are seen as powerful tools for program improvement and promotion. Providing ongoing support and guidance for alumni apprentices in their post-program engagement and contributions further enhances the program's success.

Coordination is essential for the successful implementation of a YA. This involves engaging with administrative staff within school systems to coordinate all parties involved in the program effectively. Regular meetings with employers before apprenticeships start help guide and plan the program, ensuring all aspects are in place. Supervisor training and apprentice orientation should be completed well before the first working day to set a solid foundation for success.

Challenges

Marketing and outreach for YA requires targeted strategies. It's important to tailor marketing efforts to appeal to both youth apprentices and their parents or guardians, aligning messaging with their respective demographics. Collaborating with schools for delivering RTI can be beneficial, but challenges can arise with curriculum approval. Additionally, there may be political push-back on hiring youth due to expanding labor allowances and navigating age-related equipment operation requirements.

Retention and support are ongoing challenges in apprenticeship programs. Apprentices may change career paths, requiring continuous support and mentoring. Providing additional mentoring for apprentices without prior work experience, focusing on soft skills needed in a professional environment, is also important. Addressing potential instability in the lives





of youth apprentices may necessitate additional support mechanisms. For example, transportation support and remote programs can help ease transportation issues for apprentices, offering more flexibility and accessibility. Aligning school schedules with business hiring cycles is another logistical challenge. Competing priorities for apprentices, such as extracurricular activities or high school requirements, can also impact their participation.

Supervisors face challenges in their roles and responsibilities, which include mentorship, manager training, and ensuring apprentice retention and completion. Supporting them through intermediary services can help to ease some of the lift. Forecasting financials for multiple rounds of apprentice cohort hiring cycles and defining success beyond completion of the apprenticeship are strategic challenges.

Post-apprenticeship challenges include limited strategies for alumni engagement, which can lead to burnout and difficulties in data collection. Tracking the qualitative impact of apprentices and maintaining long-term relationships with sponsors or intermediaries are additional considerations that require ongoing attention and effort.

Successes

CW found that adopting a cohort approach for apprenticeships, at least two apprentices per employer, offers multiple advantages in terms of efficiency and quality. Offering a scaffolded approach where apprentices are given highly supported learning opportunities during program launch leads to trusted and independent work later in the journey. Introducing postsecondary conversations between supervisors and the company before high school graduation prepares apprentices for their next steps. Completion events celebrate apprentice accomplishments and acknowledge their achievements and connecting apprentice graduates with industry partners gathers

valuable feedback to improve the apprenticeship experience. Having apprentice completers mentor new apprentices can build trust and equity within the program.

In June 2024, MACNY and the Syracuse City School District Corcoran Manufacturing Technology Pre-Apprenticeship Program will be graduating its first cohort of seniors who have been in the program since their grade 9 year of school. These students persisted through COVID-19 and in the past two years have been able to fully engage with the true intentions of the program, including in-person site visits, job shadows, and employer engagement.

MACNY's experience with the Syracuse City School District led to an inquiry from another school district, the Liverpool Central School District, in 2023. They asked MACNY to advise them on how to design their Manufacturing CTE program curriculum. MACNY provided guidance on the program, how to align it with employers' needs and the requirements of an Industrial Manufacturing Technician trade and is coordinating their career exploration with local manufacturing employers, further scaling the program design. MACNY's education arm, Partners for Education in Business, is working with school districts across upstate New York to implement these practices to create pathways to Registered Apprenticeship.

Innovative Practices

Youth apprenticeship program development and integration strategies focus on creating supportive environments for apprentices. The innovative practice of onboarding apprentices in cohorts allows for mutual support and collaboration, enhancing the learning experience. MACNY found that Integrating the Industrial Manufacturing Technician Trade Outline with dual enrollment curriculum enriches apprenticeship education. Implementing a strategic plan for employer-hosted site visits and interactive presentations at different grade levels helps students understand and engage with apprenticeship opportunities effectively.



Partnerships and support services play a pivotal role in the success of apprenticeship programs. Working closely with [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) and [DOL](#) staff ensures access to necessary supportive services. Companies providing transportation options for apprentices, such as ride-sharing credits or public transit reimbursement, remove barriers to participation. Pre-interviewing apprentice candidates and offering support sessions for individual applicants streamlines the recruitment process. Hosting employer nights and job fairs showcases apprenticeship programs and engages families in the process. Partnerships with local community colleges support related training and education for apprentices, enhancing their skill development.

Supervisor training and support are essential components for a successful YA. Creating asynchronous supervisor trainings for upskilling opportunities ensures training is accessible and supervisors are equipped with necessary skills. [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility \(DEIA\)](#) supervisor training, both online and in-person, fosters inclusive environments. Hosting supervisor peer learning events within companies encourages continuous learning and collaboration among supervisors. Ongoing evaluation and feedback training helps supervisors improve their mentorship skills. Senior apprentices mentoring new hires adds a peer-learning dynamic to the program and can build trust.

Youth apprenticeship advocacy and alumni engagement initiatives empower apprentices to take leadership roles. Apprentice-led initiatives like “Coffee Chats” with employer leadership foster communication and understanding. Establishing a Youth Apprentice Advisory Council that includes current apprentices and alumni in program improvement discussions can help improve apprentice experiences and outcomes. Connecting alumni youth apprentices to advocate for policy changes strengthens the program’s impact. In programs like [CareerWise Elkhart County](#) young people are learning skills to advocate for job satisfaction and a dynamic work culture, contributing to positive workplace environments.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: REAL LIFE ROSIES PRE- APPRENTICESHIP

Due to New York State’s child labor laws and employer hesitations, MACNY: The Manufacturer’s Association found more success in creating pre-apprenticeship opportunities that feed into Registered Apprenticeship programs. [Pre-apprenticeship](#) programs prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a RA or other high-quality apprenticeship program, and ultimately a career.

The [Real Life Rosies](#) women in manufacturing is a direct entry program at Utica’s Proctor High School. Students are enrolled in a pre-apprenticeship program during their senior year, which takes place after school, twice a week. Participants are given opportunities to learn about manufacturing, to tour local manufacturing companies, and will be offered interviews when the program concludes at partnering Registered Apprenticeship programs. Participants will leave with OSHA-10 certification and the option of taking the CMfgA (Certified Manufacturing Associate) Certification exam through Tooling U.

Communication and celebration are integral to program success. District newsletters and industry partner newsletters celebrate apprentice achievements and explain program details to the community. Regular check-ins with leadership ensure the project remains a priority and addresses any challenges promptly. Creating opportunities for employers to see other businesses supporting apprenticeship programs encourages collaboration and growth. Hosting apprentice rising events and celebrations acknowledges apprentice accomplishments and motivates continued success.

Conclusion

The journey of developing and implementing YA programs is a testament to the power of strategic planning, collaboration, and innovation in workforce development. Through lessons learned, challenges overcome, successes achieved, and innovations embraced, the YAI team, including partners Institute for American Apprenticeships, MACNY: The Manufacturers Association and CareerWise, has made significant strides in expanding and improving YA opportunities.

The key takeaways from this project are the importance of:

- **Strategic planning and adaptability.** YA programs require careful planning, considering factors like industry demands, regional differences, and policy landscapes. The ability to pivot and adjust strategies in response to challenges, such as the impact of unforeseen events like the pandemic, is key to program success.
- **Communication and collaboration.** Engaging stakeholders, including employers, educators, parents, and apprentices themselves, through targeted communication and outreach efforts is essential for generating awareness, dispelling myths, and fostering support for YA initiatives. Strong partnerships and collaboration between schools,

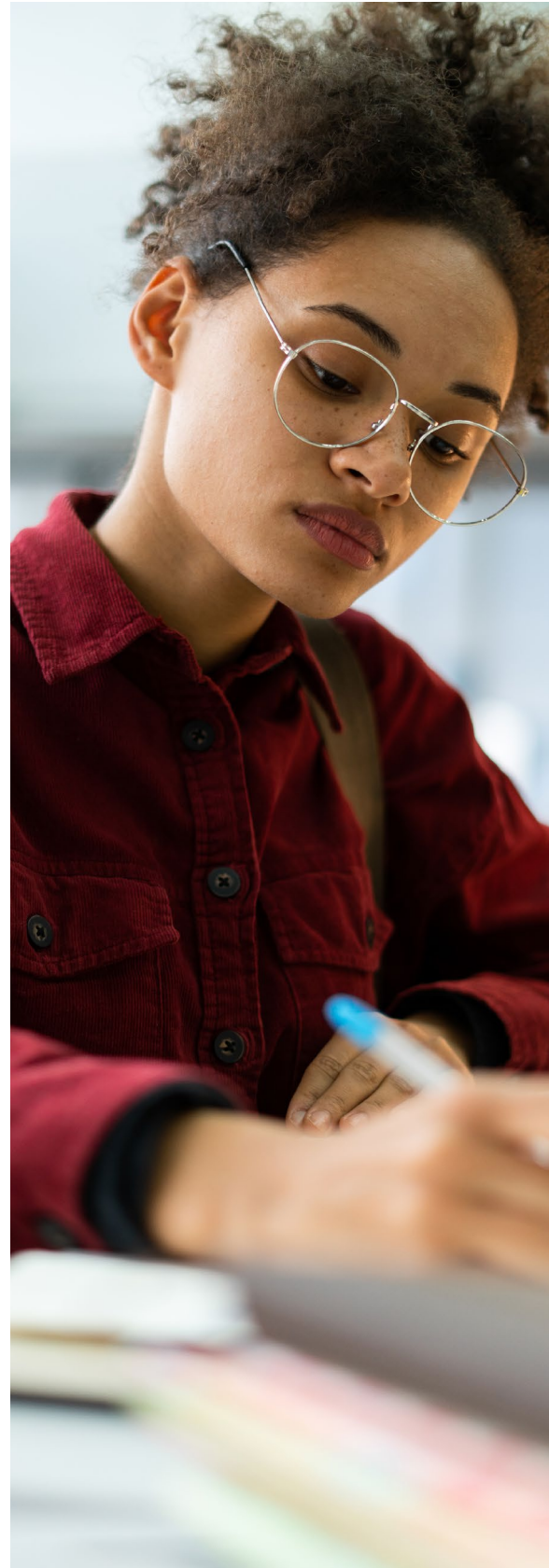


community partners, intermediaries, and employers are fundamental to the effective implementation of YA programs.

- **Continuous learning and innovation in program design, technology integration, and outreach strategies.**
Leveraging technology for streamlined processes, creating supportive environments for apprentices, and engaging alumni in advocacy efforts are among the innovative approaches to enhance the YA experience and ensure program success.

The success stories shared highlight the transformative impact of YA on apprentices, businesses, and communities. From providing real-world work experience and career pathways for youth to addressing talent shortages and fostering innovation in industries, YA programs are creating meaningful opportunities and driving positive change.

While challenges such as misconceptions, logistical hurdles, and retention issues persist, the resilience and determination demonstrated by the JFF team, and its partners offer valuable insights for the future of youth apprenticeship. By continuing to learn, adapt, and collaborate, the YA movement is poised to make even greater strides in preparing the next generation of skilled workers and fostering economic growth and prosperity.





Building a Future
That Works
For Everyone