



Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio: Youth Apprenticeship in the United States

SUMMARY

In 2020, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the [Employment and Training Administration](#) (ETA) and funded contractor Urban Institute and its partner the Capital Research Corporation to conduct the *Implementation Evaluation of the Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grants (YARG)*. The implementation study aimed to understand how YARG grantees developed and expanded registered apprenticeship programs to support youth apprentices (16 to 24 years old) and which factors are associated with design and implementation. Youth apprenticeship programs are supported by a variety of education and training, employer, and supportive service partners. YARG grantees can coordinate these partners in different ways to serve youth participants.

This report describes the state of youth apprentices in the United States, reviews existing statewide youth apprenticeship systems, and describes the organization and partnerships of the 14 YARG grantees, as well as the planned activities and key features of each grantee. Registered apprenticeship provides an opportunity for youth to learn valuable occupational skills while earning wages and can help reduce the challenges they face when seeking employment. The report draws on existing literature on youth apprenticeship, analysis of the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System, and YARG grant documents. The results of the report provide context and inform the implementation evaluation of YARG programs.

Future reports produced under this evaluation will include findings from analysis of grantee survey and interview data. Interviews will be conducted during virtual site visits and will focus on the perspectives of grant directors, grant staff, partners, and employers.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the annual learning agenda process to determine the DOL's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [employment and training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following key takeaways emerged from the analysis and can inform future efforts:

- Youth apprentices are already relatively common in the registered apprenticeship system, comprising between 30 to 40 percent of all registered apprentices in any given year, although a much smaller share of apprentices are 16 to 18 years old between 1996 and 2021.



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- Most (96.5 percent in 2021) youth apprentices are registered in programs that serve both adults and youth rather than youth apprenticeship programs that exclusively serve youth.
- YARG grantees are working with a variety of different partners, including required education and training, employer, industry, as well as other optional partners. Grantees planning to include smaller numbers of apprentices tend to have fewer partnerships in place and will handle most services and activities themselves. The smallest YARG grantees expect to serve 200 apprentices.

Continued areas of focus in the implementation study include the following:

- **The different training models used by grantees to deliver registered apprenticeship programs to high school youth (ages 16 to 18) compared with older youth, and the prevalence of programs designed exclusively for youth** (as opposed to adult (25 and older) apprenticeship programs that also include younger participants ages 18 to 24)
- **The relationship between registered programs supported by the Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grant program and existing apprenticeship and work-based learning programs.** Youth Apprenticeship Readiness grantees are required to support apprenticeship programs that are registered with the Office of Apprenticeship or a state apprenticeship agency; however, because many youth apprenticeship programs are unregistered, another area of interest will be to understand how grantees formalize and build on existing unregistered programs and training systems.
- **The evolving role of grant partners.** Because previous literature indicates partnerships are often important in registered apprenticeship programs in general and youth apprenticeship programs in particular, the implementation study will track the formation, evolution, and role of grant partners.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

TIMEFRAME: 2020-2024
SUBMITTED BY: Urban Institute
DATE PREPARED: February 2023

PARTNER AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration
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