



# Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio: State Apprenticeship Capacity Assessment

## SUMMARY

In 2020, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the Office of Apprenticeship (OA) and the Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR) within the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and funded contractors Urban Institute and Mathematica to conduct the *State Apprenticeship Capacity Assessment* as part of the existing *Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio*. The qualitative study aims to conduct a methodical review and assessment of the capacity of state systems and their partnerships to design and deliver Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) and services (including pre-apprenticeship services). The findings will be presented in a series of briefs.

This initial brief analyzes and describes information from DOL's Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS), the 2020 State Apprenticeship Survey, the DOL study of 37 State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) grantees, and existing literature and will inform the selection of states for further study.

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

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **DOL has invested millions of dollars in apprenticeships.** Since 2016, DOL has invested more than \$960 million in apprenticeship systems and programs through grants and contracts. DOL also oversees and funds state activities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and WIOA was reported to be the most common source of financial support for states' Registered Apprenticeship efforts among the SAE grantees, including funding for individual training accounts and on-the-job learning.
- **Employer engagement is a major challenge for state apprenticeship systems.** States that received federal State Apprenticeship Expansion grants implemented a variety of approaches to directly engage employers to help address the challenge; these approaches include hosting convenings to bolster recruitment, providing one-on-one interaction with employers to facilitate program development and increase buy-in, and focusing efforts on directly addressing employer misconceptions through outreach.
- **The racial and gender diversity of apprentices did not increase between 2015 and 2019.** Although the high percentage of missing data in RAPIDS complicates an analysis of racial diversity (including many participants' refusal to identify their race),



# Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio: State Apprenticeship Capacity Assessment

the racial and gender diversity of apprentices has not changed a great deal nationally from 2015 to 2019, based on the data available.

- **The share of youth apprentices among registered apprentices did not change between 2015 and 2019.** Despite continued investment in youth apprenticeship programs, the percentage of youth apprentices in the 2019 RAPIDS data was consistent with the percentage in the 2015 RAPIDS data (36 percent), though the number of youth apprentices did increase by more than 50,000 in that time.
- **States are expanding apprenticeships to meet the needs of rural areas and communities impacted by the opioid crisis.** Data indicate that some states focused apprenticeship expansion in rural areas on increasing the supply of health care workers, as well as closing skill gaps in the health care industry. In addition to a focus on rural areas, states have also sought ways to address the opioid crisis through economic policies, such as the use of federal and state grants to establish targeted apprenticeship programs, including those for community health workers, as well as the use of Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselors.
- **Financial incentives to offset the employer costs associated with apprenticeship were reported to be more widely available in SAA states than in OA states.** Fifty percent of SAA states reported the availability of tax credits or other tax savings, compared to only 23 percent of OA states. Similarly, 18 percent of SAA states reported the availability of local wage subsidies, compared to only 4 percent of OA states.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

**TIMEFRAME:** 2019-2023  
**SUBMITTED BY:** Urban Institute  
**DATE PREPARED:** January 2023

**PARTNER AGENCY:** Employment and Training Administration  
**SPONSOR:** Chief Evaluation Office  
**CEO CONTACT:** [ChiefEvaluationOffice@dol.gov](mailto:ChiefEvaluationOffice@dol.gov)

*The Department of Labor's (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) sponsors independent evaluations and research, primarily conducted by external, third-party contractors in accordance with the [Department of Labor Evaluation Policy](#). CEO's [research development process](#) includes extensive technical review at the design, data collection and analysis stage, including: external contractor review and OMB review and approval of data collection methods and instruments per the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), Institutional Review Board (IRB) review to ensure studies adhere to the highest ethical standards, review by academic peers (e.g., Technical Working Groups), and inputs from relevant DOL agency and program officials and CEO technical staff. Final reports undergo an additional independent expert technical review and a review for Section 508 compliance prior to publication. The resulting reports represent findings from this independent research and do not represent DOL positions or policies.*