In Ohio, the strong correlation between pre-apprenticeship training, Registered Apprenticeship programs, and career pathways is an important one for all stakeholders – students, educators, and businesses alike. Pre-apprenticeship training is valued as an important part of the talent pipeline that feeds Registered Apprenticeships.

Pre-apprenticeships are not subject, however, to the regulations and requirements that apply to Registered Apprenticeship programs. The lack of standards or assurance of quality in pre-apprenticeships motivated the Ohio State Apprenticeship Council (OSAC), which oversees Ohio’s Registered Apprenticeship system, to develop a Pre-Apprenticeship Policy that lays out standards and quality assurance practices. Ohio’s recognized pre-apprenticeship training model is uniquely structured nationally.

In developing the Policy on Pre-Apprenticeship, one of OSAC’s primary goals was to provide distinction for quality pre-apprenticeship programs that prepare students for post-secondary education, Registered Apprenticeship, and a career pathway. They knew that by creating a true talent pipeline it would be mutually beneficial to each stakeholder:

- While in high school, students could pre-apprentice, learning basic technical and job-readiness skills for a designated apprentice occupation or sector that would earn them college credit and prepare them for a formal Registered Apprenticeship program.
- Educators would meet their goals of graduating students that are college- and career-bound with a promising future of a career pathway and sustainable wages.
- Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors could offset some related instruction costs, while having the opportunity to get to know students over time and find the right match for their company.

The recognized pre-apprenticeship credential with the Ohio Department of Education will further solidify the pipeline from secondary to post-secondary education. It will incentivize secondary education providers to formalize more partnerships with Registered Apprenticeship programs.

- Patrick Reardon, Executive Administrator
  ApprenticeOhio

The Pre-Apprenticeship Policy created by OSAC establishes common definitions for recognized pre-apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship activities that are used across the board – by the state, the workforce system, the education system, and businesses. The policy also defines seven required criteria a pre-apprenticeship provider must include in its operating plan to gain OSAC recognition as a quality training program:

1. EEO: an equal opportunity pledge;
2. Enrollment: criteria for eligibility, and a description of the application, selection, and enrollment procedures;
3. Instructional content: an operational plan that describes the details of training;

4. Participant status: procedures for reporting regarding pre-apprentices;

5. Safety and welfare: occupation-appropriate safety practices, and assurance of adequate and safe equipment and facilities;

6. Program administration: who is responsible for administration of the program; and

7. Linkage: ongoing collaboration between the program and Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors.

To ensure sustainability, in 2014 the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and OSAC worked with the state legislature to pass legislation that embeds the Policy on Pre-Apprenticeship in Ohio state code. At the same time, the role of education in Registered Apprenticeship was strengthened by requiring all sponsors to have classroom instruction provided by or in conjunction with the university system of Ohio. This served to increase dual college enrollment and allows participants to receive college credit for their classroom instruction.

By linking pre-apprenticeships with Registered Apprenticeship programs, secondary schools are collaborating with businesses and other sponsors, and now have a better understanding of how to prepare their students to successfully enter into the Registered Apprenticeship system. While apprenticeship has always been a post-secondary model, with the addition of recognized pre-apprenticeships, Ohio has built a “full circle model,” taking students from secondary to post-secondary and ultimately on to a career pathway.

To create a clear pathway from pre-apprenticeship to Registered Apprenticeship, there is a “direct entry” option for recognized pre-apprentice program completers. Individuals who successfully complete their pre-apprenticeships do not need to re-apply; they can advance into a Registered Apprenticeship program.

ADVICE TO OTHER STATES

• **Look for a Natural Fit.** Registered Apprenticeships and internships in Ohio are an integral part of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Career-Technical Programs Work-Based Learning, and ODE already had the infrastructure in place to administer these programs. Folding secondary students in pre-apprenticeship training into that system just made sense. The lesson learned is that if organizational capacity already exists and can align with the work they’re currently conducting to the benefit of stakeholders, it will be a cost and time savings, and a catalyst towards ongoing collaboration.

• **Garner Support from State Leaders.** The Ohio Governor has a strong interest in workforce and economic development, and in expanding the state’s talent pipeline in areas of critical need. In 2015, the Governor issued an Executive Order to coordinate and align workforce policies, programs, and resources across state government to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability. With this support, the Office of Workforce Transformation, established by the governor and headed by a director that reports directly to the governor, was pivotal in bringing partners to the table and encouraging cooperation and collaboration to establish a recognized pre-apprentice program.
CONSIDERATIONS FOR REPLICATION

- **Constantly Promote Apprenticeship.** Registered Apprenticeship isn’t something everyone knows about or understands, and if they do, their ideas may be outdated. Take advantage of every opportunity to promote Registered Apprenticeship, and pre-apprenticeship, as important pipeline strategies. The ODJFS staff work diligently to engage potential sponsors. They work with Career Tech Centers to target their employers – especially in occupations where no Registered Apprenticeship programs exist.

- **Leverage Federal Guidance.** Ohio used the U.S. Department of Labor’s directive on Defining a Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program (TEN 13-10) to bolster support for its recognized pre-apprenticeship training model. Although the directive was fashioned largely after the model created by Ohio, having it reinforced in federal guidance elevated its relevance and importance to educators.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

- In summer 2017, ODE approved a secondary education-led submission to award a certificate of completion of a recognized pre-apprenticeship program. With the ODE designation, there is incentive for secondary education providers statewide to formalize partnerships with Registered Apprenticeship programs, and expectations are high that most schools will soon be offering recognized pre-apprenticeship programs.

- **Build a Foundation.** It took many years of relationship-building with both secondary and post-secondary partners to establish policies, procedures, and regulations for how the ODE and Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) connect to Registered Apprenticeship. It was that foundation that smoothed the way for the OSAC to draft a Policy on Pre-apprenticeship and gain buy-in from both educational institutions. It sounds like the policy was a long time in coming, but it was really a natural progression of the work stakeholders had invested.

Once this is fully implemented, for students who complete pre-apprenticeship programs, a recognized ODE credential will mean the maximum number of points towards high school graduation requirements. A recognized program with OSAC designation can make all the difference in a student’s future. Unlike other school-to-work programs, recognized pre-apprenticeship programs are tied to Registered Apprenticeships and career pathways, providing students with life-long learning options and career advancement opportunities and the assurance of a quality education.

To learn more about ApprenticeOhio, visit: [http://apprentice.ohio.gov/index.stm](http://apprentice.ohio.gov/index.stm)

To read the Ohio Policy on Pre-Apprenticeship, visit: [jfs.ohio.gov/apprenticeship/pre_app_policy_10_02.pdf](http://jfs.ohio.gov/apprenticeship/pre_app_policy_10_02.pdf)


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