

Capacity to Launch and Manage Programs



① *State Leadership and Policy*



② *Outreach and Business Engagement*



③ **State Capacity to Develop, Launch, and Manage Programs**



④ *Pipeline of Apprentices and Increased Diversity*



⑤ *Alignment with Career Pathways and Post-secondary Education*

Since fall 2016, states have been using State Apprenticeship Expansion grants from the U.S. Department of Labor to build capacity for Registered Apprenticeship, expand apprenticeships into new industry sectors, and increase participation by diverse populations. This series captures promising practices for state-driven efforts to grow Registered Apprenticeship, with five briefs focused on each of the five key elements of effective apprenticeship expansion. This brief explores Element 3 - Capacity to Develop, Launch, and Manage Programs.

Visit the Apprenticeship State Expansion Grants Community, ase.workforcegps.org, for the full series of promising practice briefs and other resources on the five elements of apprenticeship expansion.

EXPANDING APPRENTICESHIP THROUGH CAPACITY TO LAUNCH AND MANAGE PROGRAMS

In order to develop, launch, and manage Registered Apprenticeship Programs, states

are building staff and organizational capacity by distributing staff members across the state, strengthening collaboration between federal Office of Apprenticeship (OA) staff and state staff, partnering with intermediaries, and using technology to provide access to information. The following examples highlight some of the ways states are increasing apprenticeship capacity. *Italicized states are profiled in greater detail later in this document.*

→ States are clarifying and **STREAMLINING THE PROCESS FOR APPROVING NEW APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS**. Some states for which OA registers programs, such as *Iowa* and *Michigan*, are bringing together OA staff and local business services staff from the workforce system to clarify the business referral process and roles, thereby increasing capacity and making the outreach, development, and approval process quicker and smoother. The Florida State Apprenticeship Agency streamlined its apprenticeship program registration process, reducing the time to register an apprenticeship from 70 to 20 days.

→ Some states are **INCREASING CAPACITY THROUGH STRATEGIC HIRES AND TRAINING INVESTMENTS IN EXISTING STATE STAFF**. For example, *Montana* recruited new apprenticeship team members from Job Service staff, who bring a deep understanding of workforce development, connections with community colleges and other partner programs, and trusted relationships with businesses. *Maryland* used State Apprenticeship Expansion grant and other funds to add multiple new staff members to the apprenticeship team and significantly increase the State's capacity for apprenticeship.

→ States are **USING TECHNOLOGY TO DEMYSTIFY APPRENTICESHIPS AND STREAMLINE THE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**. For instance, *Washington* and *Oregon* publish program standards online so that employers and other stakeholders have easy access to examples

of existing approved occupations. Similarly, *Iowa* maintains a Google Docs file containing apprenticeship standards that all business marketing specialists statewide can access and build on in their work.

→ Some states are also expanding capacity by **BUILDING AND TRAINING A STATEWIDE NETWORK OF SKILLED INDIVIDUALS** who can work with businesses, sponsors, education providers, and other key partners. *South Carolina*, for example, relies on a network of apprenticeship consultants who facilitate the discovery, design, and delivery of new apprenticeships and provide ongoing support for businesses. *Michigan* created a new apprenticeship success coordinator position in each local workforce area, creating a network of specialists that expanded capacity to promote apprenticeship, help businesses develop programs, and bring partners to the table to make apprenticeships successful.

→ Many states are **PARTNERING WITH ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO ACT AS INTERMEDIARIES**. Intermediaries can increase capacity by conducting outreach to employers, coordinating with stakeholders, providing technical assistance in support of program design, and serving as the program sponsor. For instance, *Louisiana* partnered with a technology intermediary to launch the first information technology apprenticeship in the State. *Hawaii* contracted with Kapiolani Community College to develop a statewide healthcare apprenticeship program serving small healthcare employers that lack the staff to launch or maintain their own program.

This brief describes how states are using State Apprenticeship Expansion grants and leveraging staff, funding, partnerships, and technology to enhance their capacity to launch, manage, and expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

IOWA:

FOSTERING STATE-FEDERAL COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE BUSINESS SERVICES

Leaders from Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), local Iowa WORKS offices, and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship (OA) Iowa office teamed up to revamp the State’s business referral process. The new process, combined with extensive training for local Iowa WORKS business marketing specialists, led to a jump in qualified referrals and new program registrations, as well as approval times as short as 24 hours.

PRACTICE DESCRIPTION

For about half the states in the country, including Iowa, apprenticeship programs are registered by OA, which has staff members in each of these states who develop, review, and approve apprenticeship standards. When staff members from IWD and local Iowa WORKS centers began working with employers to expand Registered Apprenticeship, there was little coordination with the OA staff in Iowa. Business marketing specialists would send soft leads to OA, but they rarely panned out. Some business marketing specialists tried to write standards using OA’s online Standards Builder tool, but they lacked expertise, so program registration took a long time and required a lot of back and forth with OA and the employer. Sometimes business marketing specialists and OA staff would find themselves pursuing the same employers.

In spring 2018, OA came together with IWD leaders and local Iowa WORKS managers to create a business referral process that would work better for everyone. In just two weeks, the group created a [flow chart](#) outlining roles and the handoff process as well as a [24-point referral form](#) that would enable business marketing specialists to send complete information and qualified referrals to OA.

The process charges business marketing specialists with business outreach; providing a high-level introduction to apprenticeship; and, with interested employers, using the referral form to take a deep dive into the competencies, on-the-job learning, and related technical instruction (RTI). The referral form is completed by the business marketing specialists in conversation with the employer—never handed over for employers to complete on their own. This way, the business marketing specialist can

“One of the key struggles was getting business services staff comfortable with the apprenticeship information and knowing they had to include this in their daily role. At first, they didn’t understand why it was their responsibility. We have to make sure staff really know what our role is and how the programs we’re administering—like WIOA—fit into apprenticeship.”

 **Amy Beller**

*Registered Apprenticeship Program
Coordinator, Iowa Workforce
Development*

act as a translator, collecting the information OA needs to develop and approve standards but in terms businesses understand and tailored to their needs.

Once complete, the business marketing specialist sends the form and RTI outline to IWD's Registered Apprenticeship Program Coordinator, who reviews these items for completeness and consistency and then forwards them to OA. OA uses the information to create the program standards, contacts the business for any questions and signatures, and then approves the standards. Each month, OA provides a status report to the Registered Apprenticeship Program Coordinator, who keeps the regions informed through a shared, color-coded performance tracker accessible through Google Docs.

IMPACT AND RESULTS

Once Iowa adopted the new process and referral form, registrations skyrocketed. Referrals are now actionable—whereas OA used to register 20 percent of business marketing specialist referrals, now they register closer to 95 percent. Also, because the standardized referral form ensures that information is complete, OA can create standards very quickly (nearly always within the same quarter, and sometimes within 24 hours). As a result, the partnership and communication among IWD, business marketing specialists, and OA has become much stronger. IWD, business marketing specialists, and OA staff members are excited about their success and more eager to track and share information about which programs are registered.

In addition to faster registration of programs, this process also benefits businesses by improving their comfort level with the process. In the initial stages, they work with their local business marketing specialist, whom they are more likely to know than OA staff. On the back end, because the information on the referral form aligns with the standards, businesses recognize the standards they receive from OA and are more at ease with the handoff.

Interested in Learning More?

- ➔ Visit Iowa's apprenticeship website at www.earnandlearniowa.gov
- ➔ Visit apprenticeship.workforcegops.org/resources/2019/02/11/21/47/SAE-Grant-Administration-Peer-Resources to check out Iowa's [Business Services to Registered Apprenticeship Flow Chart](#) and [Business Referral Form](#)
- ➔ Contact Amy Beller, Registered Apprenticeship Program Coordinator, Iowa Workforce Development at amy.beller@iwd.iowa.gov

DRIVERS OF SUCCESS

- ✓ **TRAIN AND EQUIP STAFF TO BE SUCCESSFUL.** None of this could have happened without giving business marketing specialists a much deeper understanding of apprenticeship, apprenticeship standards, how to talk about apprenticeship in terms business leaders understand, and expectations around the new process and referral form. IWD accomplished this training and preparation in a variety of ways, including formal training sessions, refreshers at 30 and 90 days out, bimonthly check-in calls, and quality reviews and feedback from the IWD Registered Apprenticeship Program Coordinator on every referral. The State also created a shared “one stop” apprenticeship file folder in Google Docs that brings together all resources in one easy-to-find place.
- ✓ **GET BUY-IN FROM ALL PARTNERS ON A SHARED GOAL.** The partners—OA, IWD, and business marketing specialists—agreed to revamp the referral process because they all knew it was not working and something had to change. That shared purpose spurred them to come to the table willing to listen so they could design a mutually beneficial process that would best utilize each partner’s strengths. The new referral form and process relied heavily on business marketing specialists, making buy-in from every business marketing specialist essential too. Consistent messaging from the Governor and other state officials on the importance of apprenticeship to Iowa’s economic vitality helped. Statewide apprenticeship training provided information on the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship, and the training also helped staff members internalize this information by providing time to work in small groups to articulate for themselves the benefits of apprenticeship to “their” programs.

Greater Staff and Organizational Capacity Accelerates Apprenticeship Growth

Some states have recognized that to meet apprenticeship expansion goals they need to increase the staff and organizational capacity to develop, launch, and manage Registered Apprenticeship Programs. For example, Maryland added additional staff to the [Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program](#) (MATP) to support the State’s goals of growing and diversifying apprenticeship programs in traditional and nontraditional industries.

MATP is housed in the Maryland Department of Labor’s Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL). Prior to receiving the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, MATP had a staff of three individuals (two full-time and one part-time) who supported every aspect of apprenticeship in the State, from business engagement and partnership development to program registration and oversight and more. This staffing level only allowed for MATP to be in a maintenance mode. New funding provided by the grant led DWDAL to bring on five additional staff members to MATP to serve as

apprenticeship navigators who perform business engagement and partnership development activities and some of the traditional functions of an apprenticeship training representative, such as assisting prospective sponsors with submitting standards for approval. The Maryland Department of Labor also found ways to leverage other state resources to increase the number staff members. A part-time employee was hired through the Senior Community Service Employment Program who performs data management and administrative support for MATP. Additionally, two youth apprenticeship navigators were added to the team.

With a significantly larger team dedicated to apprenticeship in the State, MATP was able to undertake new program expansion activities. This infusion of staff capacity allowed for a significantly heightened level of customer service for existing sponsors, inactive sponsors, and businesses new to apprenticeship. For example, in 2017, MATP launched an effort to contact every sponsor in the State with an inactive apprenticeship to reengage them in apprenticeship activity, which resulted in 27 program reactivations. The increased capacity also enabled MATP to engage with important new stakeholders—such as Maryland’s 12 local workforce areas, the Maryland State Department of Education’s Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Maryland Department of Commerce, local economic development agencies, and local chambers of commerce—very early in their expansion work and have the resources to implement strategies that focus on building infrastructure.

MATP was able to use new staff to recruit new Registered Apprenticeship Program sponsors and expand existing programs at rates between three and five times larger than projected. This focus on organizational capacity has proved to be a valuable investment and helped propel the growth of apprenticeships in Maryland. The State reached over 10,700 apprentices in 2019. Maryland also achieved its highest participation levels since 2011, with 3,820 businesses and 158 program sponsors actively participating in the State’s Registered Apprenticeship Program as of November 2019.

SOUTH CAROLINA: EXPANDING CAPACITY THROUGH APPRENTICESHIP CONSULTANTS

Apprenticeship Carolina is the one-stop shop for everything apprenticeship-related in South Carolina. As a division of the South Carolina Technical College System, the Apprenticeship Carolina team is fully integrated with and supported by the 16 colleges across the State. The team includes six state-funded apprenticeship consultants, each responsible for different colleges and specifically tasked with sustained business engagement. The apprenticeship consultants facilitate the “discovery, design, and delivery” of new Registered Apprenticeship Programs and provide ongoing support for employers to promote continual expansion of apprenticeship.

PRACTICE DESCRIPTION

Apprenticeship Carolina’s consultants generally come to their roles with experience in education, workforce development, and program management. Perhaps most importantly, they are eager to engage with their communities, create new partnerships among diverse stakeholders, and educate people about the Registered Apprenticeship model. New hires do not necessarily have prior apprenticeship experience, but they are trained and brought up to speed quickly.

For the apprenticeship consultants, program discovery starts with partnership development. Key partners for business engagement include employer associations, such as the Manufacturers Alliance, South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association, the South Carolina Biotechnology Innovation Organization, and others in various industries. As trusted representatives of their members, these groups play a key role in convening employers and making the introduction to the apprenticeship system. The Apprenticeship Carolina team participates in many of their conferences and events to talk with employers, learn about their workforce needs, and engage in discussions about whether apprenticeship might be a solution. The consultants’ direct business engagement efforts are supplemented by an active multi-channel media presence, including frequent updates on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, as well as a dedicated YouTube channel.

When an employer decides to move forward to create a program, the consultants are prepared to walk them through the process step by step and at no cost. Depending on the region where the employer is located, one of the consultants is assigned to take the lead in designing the program. The consultant convenes the employer with an apprenticeship support team at the appropriate technical college. This support team, which includes a dean, vice president, or director-level official, as well as an apprenticeship coordinator or similar position, manages the education component of the apprenticeship, coordinates the classes, and may help recruit students. If a different education provider is needed, the consultant coordinates with that organization or will work with the employer’s in-house training program.

As the process moves forward, the consultant helps the employer understand the Registered Apprenticeship requirements, identify existing models for their occupations of interest, and draft the program standards. The consultant also facilitates connections with additional resources to support the program, such as Apprenticeship Carolina’s network of more than 50 community-based organizations, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs, or state tax credits for companies that hire apprentices.

The apprenticeship consultants play a key role in maintaining regular communication between federal and state apprenticeship officials. When the program standards are complete, the consultant facilitates review and approval by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (OA) officials in South Carolina.

“Companies feel a lot of ownership in their programs and have a lot of support from us to make it successful.”



Amy Firestone

*Vice President,
Apprenticeship Carolina*

Once approved by OA, each employer receives a welcome packet, a launch event, a photo shoot, and support in publicizing and promoting the new program. Support for employers does not end when the program is registered and launched, and Apprenticeship Carolina receives daily inquiries from employers seeking support for their programs. The consultants provide employers with any support needed to sustain their programs, such as help with RAPIDS, connections to new partners, or assistance when there is turnover of administrative personnel at the company.

IMPACT AND RESULTS

When Apprenticeship Carolina was created in 2007, there were 90 employer sponsors and fewer than 800 apprentices in the State. Apprenticeship in South Carolina has now grown to more than 1,000 programs and 33,000 apprentices. Notable companies like Samsung, BMW, Volvo, Michelin Tires, and Nephron Pharmaceuticals have recently started new apprenticeships or expanded existing programs to new occupations. By supporting and accelerating program development, registration, launch, and sustainability, Apprenticeship Carolina's team of apprenticeship consultants and their comprehensive customer service for employers have been major drivers of rapid apprenticeship expansion in the State.

Interested in Learning More?

- ➔ Visit the Apprenticeship Carolina website at www.apprenticeshipcarolina.com
- ➔ Contact Amy Firestone, Vice President, Apprenticeship Carolina at firestonea@sctechsystem.edu

DRIVERS OF SUCCESS

- ✓ **BUILD AN EXTENSIVE NETWORK AS THE FOUNDATION FOR APPRENTICESHIP GROWTH.** The apprenticeship consultants have built an extensive network of partner organizations across the State. Maintaining and enhancing those partnerships involves a multi-channel communications effort, as well as an investment in person-to-person relationships.
- ✓ **IDENTIFY AND COMMUNICATE CLEAR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.** Apprenticeship Carolina coordinates its own team of consultants and program specialists; support teams at each of the State's 16 technical colleges; and a network of associations, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders. Each partner understands its role in supporting talent development for employers and expanding apprenticeship.
- ✓ **TAKE A TRULY EMPLOYER-FOCUSED APPROACH.** The apprenticeship consultants make sure that industry is not just represented but is the driving force behind everything that Apprenticeship Carolina does. They bring industry's perspective to Apprenticeship Carolina's approach to engagement with new industries, strategic communication, and program administration.

Intermediary Partnerships Increase Capacity for Apprenticeship Growth

As a strategy to expand Registered Apprenticeship into new industries and occupations, many states are looking to partner with intermediary organizations, such as industry associations that bring strong networks, relationships with businesses, and expertise in target sectors. For example, the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) needed a strategy to address the workforce needs of the State's growth industries in a coordinated way, and to find ways to leverage the resources of partners to supplement its small apprenticeship staff. By working with intermediaries, LWC can pool expertise and capabilities from a network of partners and build a scalable talent pipeline for multiple employers through Registered Apprenticeship.

While Louisiana's technology sector has grown considerably over the past decade, the number of graduating students from four-year colleges has been insufficient to meet the need. New graduates are being lured to other states, and large companies are poaching from smaller employers. LWC recognized there was an opportunity to introduce apprenticeship as a viable workforce solution but was not well connected with the technology industry. NexusLA was well positioned for the role of apprenticeship intermediary, particularly to mediate the relationship between the state government and technology companies. NexusLA is a subsidiary of Research Park Corporation, which operates Louisiana Technology Park, a business incubator located in Baton Rouge for high-potential technology startups. The NexusLA project team also had experience working with LWC on previous workforce development initiatives.

In 2019, NexusLA became an affiliate of Apprenti, a national industry intermediary focused on apprenticeship in information technology (IT) occupations. With technical assistance from both LWC and Apprenti, NexusLA registered Louisiana's first IT apprenticeship program for cybersecurity specialists. LWC also contributed State Apprenticeship Expansion grant funds to support the cost of training. The program has also leveraged other funding—grant support from the Delta Regional Authority, which was created by Congress to make strategic investments into the physical and human infrastructure of Louisiana's Delta communities.

The first cohort of 10 cybersecurity specialists completed training in spring 2020. NexusLA serves as the program sponsor and recruited five employers for this first cohort of apprentices. The effort is continuing to scale up and includes a new large employer, the State of Louisiana's Office of Technology Services, and a second apprenticeship for IT support professionals. For NexusLA, adopting the apprenticeship model was a natural fit and a clear benefit that they could offer to employer stakeholders. By having an intermediary take the lead in convening the partnerships and creating the program elements, LWC demonstrated that the program is truly industry led and responsive to the needs of both large and small employers.

MICHIGAN:

CREATING A NETWORK OF LOCAL APPRENTICESHIP COORDINATORS

In early 2017, Michigan created a new position in each of the 16 local workforce development areas—apprenticeship success coordinator (ASC). ASCs serve as local Registered Apprenticeship specialists. They promote apprenticeship, help businesses understand the model and develop programs, bring partners and resources to the table to make apprenticeships successful, and track outcomes in coordination with the State. ASCs have been instrumental to Michigan’s success with expanding apprenticeship capacity in the State and integrating apprenticeship into the workforce system.

PRACTICE DESCRIPTION

In 2014, Michigan’s State Workforce Board set a goal to better integrate apprenticeship into the workforce system. They began by surveying employers, who told them they didn’t understand the Registered Apprenticeship model, wanted help with costs, perceived the regulatory and paperwork requirements as burdensome, and lacked capacity to develop and manage programs. In response, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) consulted with a wide range of apprenticeship partners to develop a three-part strategy, rolling it out in early 2017. First, LEO funded a network of ASCs to serve as local apprenticeship specialists and expansion facilitators. Simultaneously, LEO launched an Apprenticeship Learning Network (ALN) training series to raise the level of understanding of apprenticeship among all workforce partners, but in particular to equip ASCs to do their work. Lastly, LEO established competitive grants that could be used to offset a portion of employer training costs.

LEO issued a state policy outlining expectations for the ASCs and provided funding for each local board to encourage them to create the position. The policy also detailed local targets for growth in the number of apprentices, number of apprentices from underrepresented populations (women, youth, veterans, and persons of color), and number of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participants in apprenticeship programs. Every local board accepted the funds and responsibilities, many matching funds to make the ASCs full-time positions.

Each ASC has the same broad goal—promoting and supporting apprenticeship expansion in the region—though the way they approach their work varies. For example, the ASC in the Northwest Michigan Works! region has a focus on researching and putting together creative training curricula for small businesses in rural counties where there are not a lot of community college options. The Northwest Michigan Works! board also

“We talk about turf. In reality, we’re all apprenticeship stakeholders, and we’re all aiming for that goal line of expanding apprenticeship. So it’s not about what lane you’re in but the complementary services everybody is able to perform.”



Kevin Chau

*Apprenticeship Specialist,
Michigan Department of Labor
and Economic Opportunity*

makes apprenticeship easy for its employers by acting as the program sponsor and handling all paperwork and reporting. The ASC in Michigan’s “thumb” area spends a lot of time building knowledge and systems for her colleagues, such as the business services staff who do the initial outreach and have built the most trusted connections with employers and the career coaches who have interested customers but need apprenticeship opportunities for which they can screen and refer participants. While the methods vary, all ASCs are working to cultivate new Registered Apprenticeship Programs by making the process as clear, quick, and easy as possible for companies—and addressing employer concerns about the apprenticeship model.

IMPACT AND RESULTS

Michigan has cultivated over 1,200 new Registered Apprenticeship Programs within the first two years of implementing this strategy. The numbers for the Northwest Michigan Works! region drive home the difference an ASC can make: in 2017, the board was sponsoring 1 program with 2 apprentices; now in early 2020, they have over 40 apprentices in 19 occupations with 21 different employers. The investment in the ASCs enabled Michigan to increase the State’s capacity to develop and launch apprenticeships and align state apprenticeship expansion activities with local board priorities and strategic plans—precisely the sort of systemic change they envisioned six years ago that should produce benefits over the long term.

Interested in Learning More?

- ➔ Visit Michigan’s apprenticeship website at www.miapprenticeship.org
- ➔ Explore Michigan’s ASC Policy Issuances—[17-02](#), [17-02 Change 1](#), and [19-16](#)
- ➔ Contact Scott Jedele, Apprenticeship Expansion Manager, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity at jedeles@michigan.gov

DRIVERS OF SUCCESS

- ✓ **PROVIDE SEED MONEY TO GET STARTED.** The State provided \$37,500 to each local workforce board in 2017 to encourage them to create the ASC position and provide the resources to make it feasible, and then provided an additional formula-based allocation in 2019. Funding came from Michigan’s State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, Apprenticeship Accelerator grant, WIOA discretionary dollars, and Unemployment Insurance penalty and interest funds. The State does not provide full funding for the positions, knowing that “skin in the game” usually brings greater commitment to success. Though future funding is uncertain, the boards are seeing that the ASC position adds value and enhances their ability to provide solutions for employers.
- ✓ **FOCUS ON TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION.** LEO worked closely with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (OA) to train the ASCs. The ALN training series kicked off in 2017 with foundational sessions on the basics of apprenticeship, engaging underrepresented populations, and employer engagement, and then in 2019, the series offered a close look at the process of developing standards in coordination with OA. LEO learned that building understanding comes before commitment and action, and that states should expect the training process to take time and incorporate lots of opportunities to ask questions, test things out, and learn from peers. To this end, LEO hosts a call every other month with the ASCs and OA staff so they can discuss questions, challenges, and what is working.