

**Attachment B**

**Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio**

**State Apprenticeship Systems Capacity Assessment Semi-Structured Interview  
Protocol for State Staff**

# Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio State Apprenticeship Systems Capacity Assessment

## State Staff Discussion Guide

### INTRODUCTION

I am/we are researchers with The Urban Institute/Mathematica, private research organizations based in the Washington, DC area that conduct policy-related research on a variety of social welfare and economic issues. This project is being conducted under a contract to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Our interview today is part of the Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio project, a national study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. The purpose of the project is to learn how apprenticeship programs can help improve the skills and employment outcomes of American workers. One component of the overall project is a study of state apprenticeship systems and partnerships that support Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship. During this interview, we want to better understand how your state apprenticeship system works and learn more about how your state supports [\[add in topics of focus for this interview/state\]](#). We will also be interviewing other state staff and representatives of local organizations and employers who are engaged in apprenticeship activities.

**Privacy Statement:** We expect the interview to take approximately two hours. I/we know that you are busy and we will be as focused as possible and will only ask questions that are relevant to your experience. We have many questions and will be talking to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may choose not to answer some or any of our questions. We will do everything we can to secure the privacy of the information you provide, but the technical limitations with Zoom and other internet platforms mean that we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of what is said. Also, we ask that you consider using headphones or finding a private space to talk so that other people cannot hear or see this conversation. We believe the risks of participating in this study are minimal.

While there may be no direct benefits to you, we believe your participation in the study that the findings from this study will benefit DOL and the broader apprenticeship field by providing research insights on how apprenticeship programs can be strengthened to benefit workers and industry.

My colleague and I will be taking notes in order to document what we hear during our discussion, and we may record this discussion. We do not share these notes with anyone outside of our research team, including Department of Labor, and we will destroy these notes after the end of our project. When we compile our reports, the names of individual respondents will not be included. If we choose to quote you, you will only be identified by your title. You will not be quoted directly by name in any of our reports. While it is possible that you might be identified by your title, we will do our best to minimize the chance of that occurring.

Finally, to help us accurately capture the information you share, we would like to record this interview. The recording is just a back-up for our notes and will be kept within our small research team. The interview recording will be deleted once we have developed a full set of notes from the interview.

**OMB Burden Statement:** According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX. The time required to complete this collection of information is estimated to average two hours, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to [Chiefevaluationoffice@DOL.gov](mailto:Chiefevaluationoffice@DOL.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number XXXX-ONEW.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

[If we decide to record the interview] Are you okay with us recording the interview to improve the accuracy of our notes?

Do I have your permission to begin the interview? [\[BEGIN INTERVIEW IF CONSENT GRANTED\]](#)

## **I. Respondent/State Background**

1. Information about the respondent(s):
  - a. Name, title, agency, role in apprenticeship activities in state
  - b. Length of involvement with the organization and with apprenticeship
2. Information on the state:
  - a. Description of how registered apprenticeships (including pre-apprenticeship) are currently organized in the state/changes in the last 5 years
  - b. Role of agency
  - c. Other state agencies involved/roles
  - d. Estimate of how many state employees work on apprenticeship

## **II. State Apprenticeship Goals**

1. Description of goals
  - a. Target industries
  - b. Employers/sponsors
  - c. Recruitment of apprentices/diversity
  - d. Regions/rural areas
  - e. Partnerships
  - f. Funding/policy changes
  - g. Data infrastructure/performance measurement
  - h. Other

2. Interaction with apprenticeship goals and larger state workforce strategies (e.g. WIOA, community colleges)
3. State capacity to achieve goals
  - a. Changes over time

### **III. State Context - Economic, Policy and Funding for Apprenticeship**

1. Economic Context [[Review available industry and labor market information prior to interview.](#)]
  - a. Worker shortages
  - b. Workforce characteristics
  - c. Major/growing industries
  - d. How it has shaped apprenticeship strategies
2. Policy Context [[Review state legislation/policy guidance prior to interview.](#)]
  - a. Legislation proposed/passed in past 5 years related to apprenticeship
  - b. Governor or agency-led initiatives related to apprenticeship
  - c. Policy guidance developed/issued related to apprenticeship
  - d. How new or expanded policy has shaped apprenticeship strategies
3. Funding Context [[Review available information on state budget and grants awarded to state, which could be a federal or foundation source, and information on DOL grants.](#)]
  - a. State budget (amount, specific line items, permanent/time-limited)
  - b. Federal grants to state (use for expansion, strategies, industries)
  - c. Foundation grants to state (use for expansion, strategies, industries)
  - d. How funding deployed
  - e. Added value of funding/measuring return on investment

### **IV. State and Local Partnerships**

1. State-level partnerships (goals, role, resources, strategies)
  - a. Other state agencies/state workforce development board
  - b. Industry associations
  - c. Unions or other labor organizations
  - d. Other
2. Partnerships with local institutions/organizations (goals, role, resources, strategies)
  - a. Workforce development boards/American Job Centers
  - b. Employer/industry
  - c. Community colleges and other training providers
  - d. Non-profit/community organizations
  - e. School districts, career-technical high schools

- f. Other
- 3. Resources/funding to support partnerships
- 4. Outcomes
- 5. Successes and challenges of partnerships
- 6. Sustainability of partnerships
- 7. Added value of partnerships

**V. The COVID-19 Pandemic and Apprenticeship**

- 1. Effect of COVID on apprenticeship in state
  - a. Expansion
  - b. Program operations
  - c. Recruitment of apprentices
  - d. Recruitment of employer sponsors
  - e. Outcomes for apprentices (completion, retention in jobs)
  - f. Other
- 2. Strategies to address challenges
  - a. Virtual delivery of on-the-job training and related instruction
  - b. Virtual delivery of supports (e.g., mentoring)
  - c. New/enhanced partnerships
  - d. Changes to resources/funding
  - e. Changes to deployment of resources
  - f. Changes to policy and regulations
  - g. Other
- 3. Successes and challenges
- 4. Strategies that will last beyond pandemic

**VI. Apprenticeship Expansion in Rural Areas and to Combat the Opioid Crisis**

- 1. Rural apprenticeship
  - i. Goals for rural expansion
  - ii. Industries
  - iii. Structure and funding
  - iv. Partnerships
  - v. Recruitment of employers/sponsors
  - vi. Target populations
  - vii. Outcomes
  - viii. Sustainability and future plans
  - ix. Successes and challenges
  - x. Added value/return on investment

2. Apprenticeship to combat the opioid crisis
  - i. Goals for expansion to combat the opioid crisis
  - ii. Structure and funding
  - iii. Recruitment/engagement of healthcare employers
  - iv. Occupations of interest (e.g., counselors, community health workers)
  - v. Partnerships
  - vi. Target populations
  - vii. Outcomes
  - viii. Sustainability and future plans
  - ix. Successes and challenges
  - x. Added value/return on investment

**VII. Financial Incentives to Expand Apprenticeship**

1. Goals for financial incentives
2. Structure and types of incentives
3. How targeted
4. Resources/funding
5. Deployment
6. Use of incentives
7. Outcomes
8. Sustainability and future plans
9. Successes and challenges
10. Added value/return on investment

**VIII. Efforts to Increase Diversity in Apprenticeship**

1. Goals for increasing diversity (racial, gender, etc.)
2. Targeted populations (women, youth, incumbent workers, etc.)
3. Resources/funding
4. Partners
5. Strategies for recruitment, placement, and retention
6. Outcomes
7. Successes and challenges
8. Sustainability and future plans
9. Added value/return on investment

**IX. State Support for Apprenticeships and Role of Federal Grants**

1. Description of federal grants to state [[Review grant applications/synopses prior to interview.](#)]

2. Reasons/goals for pursuing them/gaps to fill (connections to larger state apprenticeship strategy)
3. Industries of focus
4. Target populations
5. Strategies developed (grant-specific, cross-cutting)
6. Partnerships (grant-specific, cross-cutting)
7. Leveraged funding/resources
  - a. Staffing
  - b. Other DOL grants to non-state government entities
  - c. Foundation or other federal grants
8. Tracking of grant outputs/outcomes across grants/data infrastructure
9. Successes and challenges
10. Sustainability once grants ends

**X. Employer Recruitment**

1. Goals for recruitment (numbers, industries, regions)
2. Resources/funding
3. Marketing/communications strategies
4. Role of financial incentives
5. Partners, including workforce system
6. Strategies for rural employers or small businesses
7. Recruitment in nontraditional industries
8. Successes and challenges
9. Sustainability and future plans
10. Added value/return on investment

**XI. Registration of Apprenticeship Programs** [Note: tease out differences between SAA and OA states]

1. Steps in registration process
2. Length of time from start to finish
3. Resources/funding
4. Sponsor/employer support and satisfaction with process
5. Challenges/"pinch" points during process
6. Changes/improvements to process over time
7. Successes
8. Future plans

**XII. Data Infrastructure and Performance Measurement for Apprenticeship**

1. Goals/measures of state apprenticeship performance

2. Description of data system
  - a. Data collected/data not collected but would like to
  - b. Capacity of system to support data entry/collection
    - i. Resources/staffing
    - ii. Technology
  - c. Upgrades/changes over time
  - d. Links to other data systems
  - e. RAPIDS
  - f. Advantages/challenges with system
3. Use of data
  - a. Tracking and monitoring
  - b. Outcomes reporting and evaluation of programs/strategies
  - c. Dissemination of apprenticeship performance
  - d. Use for decisionmaking
    - i. Changes to existing strategies, policies, or program components
    - ii. Informing new strategies, policies, or program components
  - e. Successes and challenges