

**This is a generic Information Collection to add to
the umbrella Information Collection Request
(ICR) for OMB Control Number 1290 – 0043.**

**Formative Study of Evaluating Registered Apprenticeship
Initiatives**

1290-0043

Supporting Statement

Part A

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Submitted By:

Chief Evaluation Office
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Room S-4307
Washington, DC 20210

Project Officer:

Savi Swick

A1. Necessity for the Data Collection

The Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) seeks approval for conducting interviews with employers by phone or videoconference for a Formative Study for the Registered Apprenticeship Initiatives (ERAI) project. The data collected as part of this Formative Study of ERAI will be used to understand how employers become involved in the apprenticeship system; what benefits and challenges employers experience; how employer experiences differ with Registered Apprenticeships versus other apprenticeship initiatives; what employer experiences are with apprentices and pre-apprentices, and how employers recruit, hire, and promote equity among apprentices.

This proposed information collection meets the following goals of DOL's generic clearance for formative data collections (1290-0043) and will:

- Inform the development of DOL research.
- Maintain a research agenda that is rigorous and relevant.
- Ensure that research products are as current as possible.
- Inform the provision of technical assistance

Study Background

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office (CEO), in collaboration with DOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA), funded the Evaluating Registered Apprenticeship Initiatives (ERAI) project with a goal of understanding the implementation of recent Department investments in apprenticeship. This data collection will provide the Department with current information about how employers perceive apprenticeship and their experiences with the apprenticeship system. The components of the larger research project will be conducted over three years (2024 to 2026).

Legal or Administrative Requirements that Necessitate the Collection

There are no legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. CEO is undertaking the collection at the discretion of the agency.

A2. Purpose of Survey and Data Collection Procedures

Overview of Purpose and Approach

DOL will use the data collected through the employer interviews summarized in this request to gain perspectives on apprenticeship initiatives. Interview data and the study team's analysis will provide DOL with a better understanding of employer engagement in and experiences with apprenticeship initiatives. Employers will be those identified by grantees of the Department's Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) program, primarily in ABA grant categories 1, 2, and 3. Separate interviews of selected grantees' employer partners will be conducted as part of ERAI site visits that will occur in 2024 to document implementation of the ABA grants.

Research Questions

The Formative Study of ERAI will address five research questions:

- 1) Why and how did employers become involved in the apprenticeship system? What, if any, challenges did employers encounter during the development or implementation of their

apprenticeship program(s)? Do employers have suggestions for better involving other employers or employer groups in apprenticeship initiatives?

- 2) What do employers perceive as the benefits to participating in apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship initiatives? What return of investment do employers expect and/or realize as a result of their participation? What, if any downsides, have employers experienced as a result of participating in apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship initiatives? What are employer perceptions around sustaining and maintaining apprenticeship programs?
- 3) How do employer experiences differ with Registered Apprenticeships (RA) versus non-registered apprenticeship initiatives, such as union sponsored apprenticeships, and non-apprenticeship work-based training, such as internships and bootcamps? How do employer experiences differ in established versus emerging apprenticeship industries?
- 4) What are employers' experiences with and perceptions of apprentices or pre-apprentices? Do they have any particular challenges working with youth apprentices?
- 5) How do employers recruit and hire apprentices and/or integrate them into their company's career ladder? What approaches to promoting equity/diversity among apprentices seem promising?

Study Design

To address the research questions, the study team will conduct interviews by phone or videoconference with employers partnering with ABA grantees starting in late summer 2023. We will identify the employers for interviews through existing documents that name each grantee's key employer partners, including ABA grant applications and quarterly narrative reports. We will also conduct email outreach and potentially some clarifying calls to the grantees to collect their feedback on the employers identified for interviews through secondary sources and to request their recommendations for additional employer partners that should be considered for an interview. In this outreach, the study team will also ask the ABA grantees to provide contact information for any employer partners that are identified for interviews.

The study team will conduct 30-minute phone or video interviews with each participating employer, depending on the preferences of the employer. For the 40 employer interviews, we estimate a total of 60 respondents. This assumes that half of the interviews will include two respondents (20 * 2) who are knowledgeable about the employer's engagement and experience with apprenticeship initiatives and the other half will include only one respondent (20 * 1). The interviews will be guided by a semi-structured interview protocol that will be tailored for each employer based on their characteristics and experiences with apprenticeship.

Universe of Data Collection Efforts

Respondents will include employers that are partnering or otherwise working with ABA grantees, primarily in categories 1, 2, and 3. The study team anticipates collecting from grantees the names and relevant background information for approximately 120 employers. From that list, the study team will select 50 employers to interview, with the aim of completing 40 total employer interviews (80 percent completion rate). When selecting which employers to interview, the study team will consider the following employer characteristics to ensure we capture diverse perspectives:

- **Employer size and role.** The study team aims to interview different sized employers representing a variety of roles and number of apprenticeship occupations.
- **Industry representation.** The study team will interview employers representing an array of

industries and occupations, including traditional industries for apprenticeship programs and those in new or emerging industries, such as child care.

- **Apprenticeship experience.** The study team intends to include employers with a range of experience in RA and other apprenticeship initiatives. This will ensure we hear perspectives from employers with pre-apprenticeship experience and those who are newly involved compared to those who have numerous years of experience engaging in apprenticeship programs.
- **Experience with youth apprentices.** The study team will seek to interview at least some employers engaged in apprenticeships or pre-apprenticeships that serve youth ages 16-24 to understand their unique perspectives.

As needed due to employer nonresponse or refusal to participate, we will identify additional employers to interview from the remaining identified employers. To the extent possible, we will select additional employers to maintain the diversity of the initial sample.

A3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden

The study team will conduct interviews by telephone or video conference, whichever mode is preferred by the employer. In advance of the interview, participating employers will be provided both a dial-in phone number to access the meeting by phone and a link to access the interview through a video conferencing platform (WebEx or Zoom).

A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

This project will not involve collecting information that is available from other sources. The study team will ensure that employers are only interviewed once for the phase of the ERAI project covered under this generic clearance. Select employers may be involved in future data collection efforts in fall 2024 carried out during ERAI site visits, but the site visit interviews will focus primarily on employer experiences with the implementation of the ABA grant; therefore, the information collected will not be duplicative. For any employers that participate in both an interview in this phase and the later site visit, the study team will review the notes from the initial interview in advance and appropriately tailor the site visit interview protocol to avoid duplication.

A5. Involvement of Small Organizations

Employer partners will participate in phone or virtual interviews. Some of these employers may be small businesses. To minimize burden on any small businesses that participate, we will request only information required for the intended use of the data collected. We will also be flexible to employers' schedules when scheduling the discussions. As with all data collection activities, we will remind participants that their participation is completely voluntary.

A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

This is a one-time data collection with employers for the phase of the ERAI study covered under this generic clearance.

A7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances for the proposed data collection efforts.

A8. Federal Register Notice and Consultation

No public comments are requested for this information collection.

Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study

Outside of DOL and the study team, we have consulted with the following experts:

- Pamela Holcomb, Principal Researcher, Mathematica.
- Zach Boren, Senior Policy Program Manager, former director of apprenticeship policy at Department of Labor

A9. Incentives for Respondents

No incentives for respondents are proposed for this information collection.

A10. Privacy of Respondents

Information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Respondents will be informed of all planned uses of data, that their participation is voluntary, and that their information will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.

As specified in the contract, the Contractor will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. The Contractor has developed a Data Safety and Monitoring Plan that assesses all protections of respondents' personally identifiable information and has been approved by our Institutional Review Board. The Contractor shall ensure that all of its employees, subcontractors (at all tiers), and employees of each subcontractor, who perform work under this contract/subcontract, are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements. All researchers involved in this data collection have signed DOL's contractor confidentiality/non-disclosure agreement.

A11. Sensitive Questions

There are no sensitive questions in this data collection.

A12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden

Total Annual Cost

Table A.1. includes assumptions about the annual number of respondents expected; the number of responses per respondent; the average hours of burden per response; the annual burden hours estimated; the time value assumed for respondents; and the total annualized monetary burden hours for the employer interviews. The data collection activity this request covers takes place in one year, so the costs listed are the annual cost.

Table A.1. Total Burden Requested Under this Information Collection

Instrument	Annual Number of Respondents ¹	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Responses	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage ¹	Total Annual Cost ¹
Employer interview protocol	60	1	60	.5 hours	30	\$70.07	\$2,102
Estimated Annual Burden Total	60		60		30		\$2,102

Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number for the columns “Average hourly wage” and “Total annual cost” columns.

¹Hourly cost is the 2022 mean wage for Human Resources Managers (\$70.07) from [May 2022 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/wageestimates.t01.htm).

We estimate that the study team will successfully interview 60 respondents (employer partner staff) representing a total of 40 employer partners. We estimate that half of the employers will choose to include two respondents in the interview (20 interview * 2 respondents) and half will include only one respondent (20 interviews * 1 respondent) for a total of 60 respondents (40 + 20).

We estimate interviews will take about 30 minutes to complete. The annualized burden is approximately 30 hours. Using the mean wage for Human Resources Managers of \$70.07, we estimate the annual cost to be \$2,102.

A13. Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers

There are no additional costs to respondents.

A14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government

The total cost to the Federal government for the data collection activities under this current request will be \$196,364. Costs result from the following two categories:

- The annualized cost to the federal government for the evaluation contractor, the Urban Institute and its partners Mathematica and Social Policy Associates (Contract Number:

¹ Annualized over the three-year period of the umbrella generic. Estimates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

DOL #1605DC-18-A-0032/1605C2-21-F-00029), to carry out this task of the evaluation is \$190,000.

- b. The annualized cost for federal technical staff to oversee the evaluation is \$6,343. This is calculated by the following: an annual level of effort of 200 hours for one Washington, DC-based Federal GS-14 step 1 employee earning \$63.43 per hour. (See Office of Personnel Management 2023 Hourly Salary Table at https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2023/DCB_h.pdf . This study will take one-half of a year, therefore, the annualized cost is 100 hours X \$63.43= \$6,343.

The total annualized cost to the federal government is \$196,343 (\$190,000 + \$6,343).

A15. Change in Burden

This is for a new individual information collection under the umbrella formative generic clearance for DOL research (1290-0043).

A16. Plan and Time Schedule for Information Collection, Tabulation and Publication

The interviews with employers will begin in late summer 2023, followed by analysis of the data.

Analysis Plan

Analysis of employer interviews will involve coding. The study team will begin by writing up detailed notes from the interviews using a standardized summary template that is aligned with the research questions and topics of interest. To code the qualitative data for key themes and topics, a coding scheme that aligns with the summary template will be developed. The study team will then code the data using qualitative analysis software. These data will be used to explore key research questions and better understand themes that emerged during interviews.

Publications

Findings from the Formative Study of ERAI will inform DOL about employer engagement in and experiences with apprenticeships and apprentices. The findings from this data collection will be used in developing new research but also in informing providers, program administrators, and other interested parties about employer engagement in apprenticeship. For this reason, the findings will likely be provided in public-facing briefs, though such publication is not the primary purpose of the data collection.

A17. Reasons Not to Display OMB Expiration Date

All instruments will display the expiration date for OMB approval.

A18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.