

*Creating a
Great Future for
our State!*



Arkansas Certified Pre-Apprenticeship Program (ARPAP) Handbook



Office of Skills Development is a
Division of the Arkansas Department of Commerce





ARPAP FRAMEWORK

The Office of Skills Development (OSD), a division of the Arkansas Department of Commerce, strategically invests in all levels of the Arkansas workforce, from students to incumbent workers, by raising education and skill levels, and meeting the needs of companies operating in Arkansas. This strategy of balancing workforce and employer interest, will lead to greater economic achievement for workers and companies.

OSD is the State agency responsible for educating, facilitating, and supporting the expansion of the registered apprenticeship model as a workforce development strategy for employers. OSD offers funding support to offset training costs associated with implementing an approved Arkansas Certified Pre-Apprenticeship Program (ARPAP) and starting new registered apprenticeship programs.

Pre-apprenticeship programs provide instruction and/or training to increase math, literacy, and other vocational and pre-vocational skills needed to gain entry into a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). Pre-apprenticeship programs are not registered with United States Department of Labor (USDOL), and student participants are unpaid during the term of the pre-apprenticeship training.

The purpose of this document?

The intent of this document is to establish a framework consistent with federal guidance on quality pre-apprenticeship programs as a baseline to outline criteria, the application process, reporting requirements, and funding incentive opportunities associated with an ARPAP.

The notable guidelines conveyed within this framework?

The OSD will receive and review for approval all ARPAP applications. The ARPAP applications will be reported to the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coordination Steering Committee (AACSC) as an informational item. If an ARPAP application is aligned with USDOL [Training and Employment Notice \(TEN\) No. 13-12](#) related to quality pre-apprenticeship programs, as well as meets certification criteria outlined by the State, OSD will approve and issue an ARPAP certificate to the applying entity.

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Purpose

The purpose of the ARPAP is to establish a framework that ensures a state recognized standard is in place for qualifying programs to provide work-readiness/preparation training which aligns with a RAP. As a baseline, ARPAP training activities will follow USDOL guidance as specified in the TEN No. 13-12 which defines quality pre-apprenticeship programs, as well as meet certification criteria outlined by the State.

"Through a variety of unique program designs and approaches, pre-apprenticeship programs can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse populations being trained, the various employers and sponsors they serve, and specific opportunities within the local labor market."

Training and Employment Notice No. 13-12

The ARPAP certification is being developed to allow for:

- Participating employers to have an assurance that individuals successfully completing an ARPAP program are equipped with preparatory/work-readiness skills to move into their RAP, enhancing the work-ready talent supply pool.
- Participating trainees (i.e., individuals) to have an assurance that successful completion of an ARPAP will provide an advantage for moving into a full-time employment career pathway by way of RAP and partnering ARPAP employers.

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STATE REQUIREMENTS

State-required key certification criteria:

- The pre-apprenticeship training must be aligned with a RAP and agreed upon by the partnering employer(s), training provider, and RAP sponsor.
- A signed employer partnership agreement must be documented and executed (with signatures) between partnering employer(s), pre-apprenticeship training provider(s), and RAP sponsor(s). The partnering ARPAP employer agrees to provide pre-apprentices with workplace-exposure opportunities as a component of the pre-apprenticeship training experience. Workplace exposure can occur via presentations about the industry, company, or career pathways, as well as hands-on activities applicable to specific operations within the company. The partnering ARPAP employer agrees to provide those who successfully complete ARPAP with preferred consideration for acceptance into their RAP.
- State-approved ARPAP applications are eligible to receive funding support through OSD to offset training costs associated with the program. Also, there may be opportunities to leverage additional funding support through the WIOA system, based on individual participant/apprentice eligibility criteria.
- Those successfully completing the ARPAP will receive credit toward their designated RAP. The amount of credit toward their RAP will be mutually agreed upon by ARPAP participating sponsors and employers.
- It is recommended that those successfully completing the ARPAP enter a RAP at an entry-level wage rate above those entering without the ARPAP experience.
- The approved ARPAP applicant agrees to provide reporting to OSD as required.

Pre-apprenticeships help individuals meet the entry requirements for apprenticeship programs and ensure they are prepared to be successful in their apprenticeships.



DEFINITIONS & FRAMEWORK

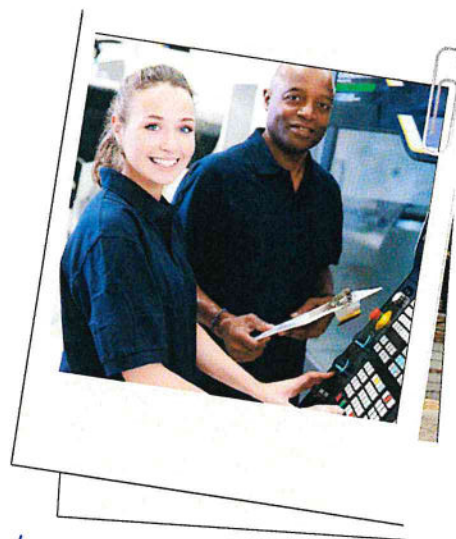
Pre-Apprenticeship Definition and Framework

Pre-apprenticeship programs provide instruction and/or training to increase math, literacy, and other vocational and pre-vocational skills needed to gain entry into a RAP.¹ Pre-apprenticeship programs are not registered with USDOL and are unpaid during the term of the pre-apprenticeship training.

Pre-apprenticeship programs are not federally vetted, but a high-quality ARPAP will have a strong relationship with at least one RAP (i.e., employer and sponsor), feature training and curriculum that aligns with that program, and include support services designed specifically to help participants succeed. The ARPAP will provide a career entry-point opportunity for high school students, veterans, underserved populations, individuals with barriers to employment, unemployed individuals, dislocated workers, and job seekers to increase their employability skills through the successful completion of an ARPAP.

ARPAP will follow USDOL guidance for defining quality pre-apprenticeship programs as outlined in TEN No. 13-12.²

- **Approved Training and Curriculum** – Training and curriculum based on industry standards and approved by the documented RAP partner(s) that will prepare individuals with the skills and competencies needed to enter one or more RAP;
- **Strategies for Long-Term Success** – Strategies that increase RAP opportunities for under-represented, disadvantaged, or low-skilled individuals, such that, upon completion, they will meet entry requirements, gain consideration, and be prepared for success in one or more RAP;
- **Access to Appropriate Support Services** – Facilitates access to appropriate support services, during the pre-apprenticeship program and a significant portion of the RAP;
- **Promotes Greater Use of Registered Apprenticeship to Increase Future Opportunities** – To support the ongoing sustainability of the partnership between pre-apprenticeship providers and RAP sponsors, these efforts should collaboratively promote the use of registered apprenticeship as a preferred means for employers to develop a skilled workforce and to create career opportunities for individuals;
- **Meaningful Hands-on Training that does not Displace Paid Employees** – Provides hands-on training to individuals in a simulated lab experience or, when possible, through volunteer opportunities, neither of which supplants a paid employee but accurately simulates the industry and occupational conditions of partnering RAP sponsor(s) while observing proper supervision and safety protocols; and
- **Facilitated Entry and/or Articulation** – When possible, formalized agreements exist with RAP sponsors that enable individuals who have successfully completed the pre-apprenticeship program to enter directly into an RAP. Articulation agreements should be in place so ARPAP graduates can earn advanced credit/placement for skills and competencies already acquired.



CERTIFICATION

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All pre-apprenticeship programs seeking to become state certified under ARPAP will submit applications to OSD. Applications are accepted throughout the year. The ARPAP application will contain the following required data fields (at a minimum):

- Organization Name
- Applicant Contact Name, Email Address, and Phone Number
- Description of proposed pre-apprenticeship training identifying the training provider
- Description of pre-apprenticeship candidate pool
- Description of Employer Participation in pre-apprenticeship training (i.e., How is the employer involved?)
- Identification of alignment with a RAP
- Description of opportunities to access supportive services
- Cost of Training (total amount and per pre-apprentice estimate)
- Copy of Fully Executed Employer Partnership Agreement

The following entities are eligible to apply for state certification consideration:

- Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors
- Industry Intermediaries and Associations
- Employers
- Community Colleges
- Third Party Training Providers
- Local Workforce Development Boards
- Other applying entities will be considered, provided both federal and state requirements are met

You can access the:
Application
&
Employer Partnership Agreement

Certification Process

OSD will accept application submissions and report out to the AACSC as an informational item. OSD will be the approving authority for ARPAP applications:

1. If the requirements are met, State Certification will be awarded to the applying entity as notified by OSD. (NOTE: All approved/awarded ARPAP applicants are required to report performance outcomes to OSD.)
2. If the requirements are not met, the applicant will be notified of the status by OSD and provided an opportunity and deadline for re-submission. If the re-submission is not received by the deadline, the application will not be accepted.

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Monitoring Process

To comply with TEN No. 13-12 criteria and maintain certification standards, OSD will monitor ARPAP activities. This monitoring will allow OSD to track progress on those who complete the program, hiring dates, and the utilization of funding. The monitoring will be designed to obtain programmatic and financial information to confirm project outcomes meet expectations.

Reporting Process

All awarded/certified ARPAP applicants are required to provide reporting to OSD as specified in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will be issued to formalize the project. The reporting will provide aggregate performance outcome information (e.g., number enrolled, number of graduates, other dispositions, etc.,) as well as individual pre-apprentice tracking information (e.g., individual enrollee demographic information).



NOTES:

¹Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 13-16, Guidance on Registered Apprenticeship Provisions and Opportunities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), (United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, dated January 12, 2017).

²Training and Employment Notice No.13-12, Defining a Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program and Related Tools and Resources, (United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, dated November 30, 2012).



Office of Skills Development



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