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Combined Apprenticeship Rule – Executive Summary

The proposed Arkansas Office of Skills Development (the “OSD”) rule replaces OSD’s four existing apprenticeship rules into a single, modernized rule. The rule streamlines the apprenticeship program requirements, updates statutory references and requirements, and eliminates overlapping administrative requirements. The proposed rule change imposes no additional costs to the state or taxpayers.

Arkansas’ registered apprenticeship programs are currently spread across four different rules¹, with the oldest dating back to 1999. The current rules partially overlap in their requirements, are ambiguous with respect to the role OSD plays in regulating certain portions of apprenticeship programs, and contain outdated statutory and committee references. The proposed rule modernizes and combines the existing apprenticeship rules into a single rule, modernizes the rule requirements and statutory references, and clarifies OSD’s responsibilities in handling all aspects of apprenticeship in Arkansas.

With rising college costs and an increase in demand for the skilled trades, apprenticeship programs are an increasingly attractive career path for Arkansas youth, and OSD has seen a significant increase in registered apprenticeship activity over the past seven years as a result. The proposed rule streamlines the requirements for apprenticeship programs and clarifies existing requirements at no additional cost to the state or taxpayers, further boosting these programs.

¹ Rules and Regulations for the Construction Industry Craft Training Education Program Rules and Regulations for Electrician Apprenticeship Programs, Rules and Regulations for Plumbing Apprenticeship Programs, and Rules and Regulations for Arkansas’ Registered Apprenticeship