



2025 Apprentice Ambassador Cohort Employer Information

Employer FAQs

"Why should I participate in the Apprentice Ambassador Program?"

- Employers who sponsor an Apprentice Ambassador are featured on the Apprenticeship Illinois website (www.ApprenticeshipIllinois.com), the apprenticeship bulletin, and other events.
- Ambassadors are often showcased in interviews, public speaking events, and other promotional opportunities and have multiple opportunities to highlight how their company has supported their apprenticeship journey.
- Participation is a tangible sign to the community that your company takes employee growth seriously and provides opportunities for leadership development and personal growth.
- Provides employees with valuable leadership training and practical experiences to apply this training.

"What will the ambassador get out of this program?"

- All ambassadors will receive professional development on skills such as public speaking, social media footprint, professional networking, media interviews, the Illinois workforce development system, and the Apprenticeship Illinois Committee of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB)
- Ambassadors will have multiple opportunities to speak at public events on apprenticeship, engage with business leaders, and continue to refine their soft skills.
- Ambassadors will also be assigned a mentor to meet with them regularly to provide support and connect them to relevant opportunities.

"What is required from the employer?"

- We ask employers to allow time off for mandatory ambassador events listed on the application documents.
- We ask that the company designate a point of contact who can respond to program requests or facilitate reaching out to the ambassador if needed.
- We encourage employers to sponsor ambassador activities and travel as work-related costs to make the ambassador's experience more seamless.
- We invite you to participate in events with the ambassador if your schedule permits.

Description of the Apprentice Ambassador Program:

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Apprenticeship Committee is continuing the Apprentice Ambassador Program in 2025 to expand the visibility of apprenticeship and adoption by companies to create a diverse network of apprentices of all ages and backgrounds, economic development regions within the state and from industries. Apprentice Ambassadors will be the “face” of Apprenticeship in Illinois and represent the IWIB Apprenticeship Committee at various events throughout the year, in-person and virtually. The committee would like ambassadors from different geographic and industry areas across the state to represent the many possibilities apprenticeships can offer.

Ambassador Requirements:

Apprentice Ambassadors will share their experiences as apprentices with the committee, advocate for apprenticeships to potential apprentices, non-profits, and businesses, and mentor current and future apprentice ambassadors. They will do this through projects, professional development, webinars, and in-person activities. Ambassadors will be expected to attend all the mandatory events listed in the calendar below.

* **NOTE:** We will only accept **one candidate per business/organization**, please choose one apprentice candidate to sponsor for the application. Please ensure the sponsored candidate is identified on the employer application form.

Employer Requirements:

The IWIB Apprenticeship Committee asks each employer to:

1. Identify apprentices who have performed successfully in their program for at least six months and show the ability and willingness to grow their interpersonal skills. The apprenticeship programs must meet the following criteria:
 - a. The program employs and pays the apprentice for full-time work with a structured on-the-job learning plan.
 - b. The program is at least one year in length.
 - c. The program provides the apprentice with a mentor.
 - d. The program has supplemental coursework or training in addition to the on-the-job learning.
2. Alumni of apprentice programs are eligible to participate in the Ambassador program if they have successfully completed an apprenticeship program within the last 365 days.
3. Support the Ambassador in their responsibilities, **at a minimum:**
 - a. Leave (paid or unpaid) to attend all required Ambassador events as outlined in the calendar below, which may include travel.
 - b. Designate a supervisor as the point of contact for the apprentice for any questions or concerns.
 - i. Supervisors/company contacts affiliated with an apprenticeship program may be asked to join Ambassador activities or be contacted for interviews from the employer's perspective. These activities *are not required for the supervisor* and will be at the discretion of the employer and staff availability.

To advocate for access to professional development opportunities and ensure all candidates have equal opportunity to participate in the Apprentice Ambassador program, the Apprenticeship Illinois Committee recommends that employers also **consider the following:**

1. Paid leave for any missed work hours due to participation in Ambassador program events.
2. To count hours spent at Ambassador program events as regularly scheduled work hours, not requiring Ambassadors to “make up” for lost time.

Employers can see the proposed schedule of events for the 2025 cohort below. Please email jtjohns@ilstu.edu with questions or concerns.

Deadline to apply is **OCTOBER 15, 2024.**

Apprentice Ambassador Calendar of Events				
Date	Event	Location	Notes	Attendees
Early November 2024	Initial Onboarding Meeting	Zoom	Cover program details and expectations Cover travel submission process Cover ambassador and employer questions	Ambassador (Required) Employer (Required)
November 17 - 23	National Apprenticeship Week	Online	Will introduce 2025 ambassadors on social media as part of marketing for National Apprenticeship Week.	Ambassador (No attendance required)
December 12	Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Meeting	Zoom or In-Person	Graduation ceremony for 2024 Ambassador cohort and introduction of 2025 cohort to IWIB	Ambassador (required) Employer (optional)
January	Short 1-on-1 meeting with committee leadership.	Zoom	Discuss Ambassador goals during program and background with apprenticeship.	Ambassador (Required)
March	Ambassador Program Kickoff	In-person (Location TBD)	All-day workshop w/training on: IL Workforce System/IWIB Public Speaking Online Footprint	Ambassador (required) Employer (optional)
March	Spring IWIB Apprenticeship Illinois Committee (AIC)	In-person (Location TBD)	Will take place the day after the Ambassador Program Kickoff	Ambassador (optional) Employer (optional)
April	Quarterly Check-In	Zoom	Will meet once every 3 months	Ambassador (Required)
April	Workforce Summit	In-Person (Location TBD)	Ambassadors will be given an opportunity to speak at a special session on the Apprentice Ambassador program. Up to 3 ambassadors will be selected for this event.	Ambassador (up to 3 will be selected, others not required.)
June	Professional Development & Summer AIC Meeting	In-person (Location TBD)	Continued professional development on: Public presentation & media training Apprenticeship policy process	Ambassador (required) Employer (optional)
July	Quarterly Check-In	Zoom	Will meet once every 3 months	Ambassador (Required)
September	Fall AIC meeting	In-Person (Location TBD) & Zoom		Ambassador (optional) Employer (optional)
October	Online Professional Development	Zoom	Continued professional development and coaching. Topics TBD	Ambassador (Required)
October	Quarterly Check-In	Zoom	Will meet once every 3 months	Ambassador (Required)
November	National Apprenticeship Week (NAW)	In-Person (Location TBD)	Will be asked to attend a regional (NAW) event or webinar if able. Committee will provide direction on suitable events.	Ambassador (required) Employer (optional)
December	Winter IWIB & AIC Meetings	In-Person (Location TBD)	Recognition for participating and end of year celebration with IWIB and AIC.	Ambassador (required) Employer (optional)

For additional information on Apprenticeship Illinois and the activities of the Committee, please visit www.ApprenticeshipIllinois.com.

***Note:** The Apprentice Ambassador program is limited to current or graduated apprentices in the State of Illinois only. **Additionally, only one apprentice application per employer will be accepted.**