



Regional Specialist Process

CONTACT AND
PROGRAM
REGISTRATION



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Initial Employer Contact

1

GOAL: Acquire Basic Employer Details, Potential Occupations

Where is the employer located?

Search Engines can be helpful here, but correspondence is sometimes necessary to determine the area of business for a specific facility, particularly when working with a larger firm. If the employer is located outside of your region, refer them to their area's Apprenticeship Specialist and Regional Manager (Kelly Lapetino, Annie Dorr, or Bryan Ellis).

Note: if there is no Apprenticeship Specialist in their area, refer them to Candace Dickerson. When referring, give the Specialist and manager all of the information you have and ask them to follow up with the employer (do not ask the employer to reach out).

Were you referred by a third party partner?

If you received an employer referral from an IBST partner, IWIB board member, or additional third party, include them on your initial email as well as any important updates.

Questions for Getting Started — Ask the initial questions in this email:

- Where is your business primarily located, or where are you interested in implementing an apprenticeship program?
- Which occupation(s) are you interested in developing an apprenticeship for?
- Do you have existing job descriptions or postings anywhere? If so, can you send a link to your postings, or a document with the position descriptions?
- Do you have a preferred training provider?
- What dates/times would work best for you to meet remotely and discuss?

Potential Variations/Complications

If the employer is developing a program that has been previously registered in another area by the same employer or an industry group, they may initially reach out with existing Work Process Schedules; this makes program registration easier, but the employer will likely still need a talk-through about what exactly an apprenticeship is. Similarly, training providers may vary based on region, and their preferred industry training provider may lack Illinois accreditation.

If an organization is looking to develop and register a program on behalf of one or more employers, they may be looking to offer their program across multiple LWIAs. Include all relevant specialists, Regional Managers, and intermediary partners in the conversation.

Employer Meeting: Preparation & Execution

2

GOALS: Identify Occupation(s) and Training options, Educate employer on RAPs

Once the Employer provides their occupation or job descriptions, the next step is to find an existing apprenticeship template (or “Work Process Schedule”) that can be used as the basis for their program and educate the employer on what exactly a registered apprenticeship program is.

Locate existing Work Process Schedules:

Primary Locations: Apprenticeship.gov, Urban Institute

If having difficult identifying the occupation initially, use the ONET occupation finder and refer to the existing TA resource for the process of locating a Work Process Schedule.

Whenever possible, invite an intermediary representative from the training provider to the initial employer meeting to discuss the available curriculum and potential for customized training.

Find training provider and identify curriculum:

- Pull up the [ICCB region map](#) and see if a community college offers specific courses to meet RTI.
- Search the [Eligible Training Provider List](#).
- If no CC/ETPL options available, search for training providers in the area or online.
- Look into flexible/online scheduling options.
- If available, download cost sheets or program one-pagers to share with employers.

Consult with Integrated Business Service Team:

To ensure consistent messaging and prevent working at cross-purposes, notify the core partners of your Integrated Business Service Team that you are working with the employer and ask if any of your partner organizations have an existing relationship or on-going project/program with them.

Employer Meeting: Preparation & Execution (continued)

Meeting Agenda

Zoom or meet in-person with the employer to present them the occupation, competencies, and training options, cost sheets (if applicable), tax credit.

Listen/Allow the employer to discuss their workforce needs and provide background on roles they are struggling to fill.

Present to employer on DOL's "Seven Components" of Registered Apprenticeship.

Communicate the three primary pieces of information needed for program registration: competencies, coursework, compensation (wage schedule).

Present WPS documents and available training programs to employer.

- Emphasize that (A) These documents make up approx. 75% of the paperwork required to register with DOL and (B) They can revise the WPS competencies to customize them for their site.
- Whenever possible, present the employer with multiple options to choose from; this may mean multiple Work Process Schedules, multiple options for training programs/credentials, etc.

Present available WIOA programs and other incentives

- DCEO Tax Credit, \$1.50/Dollar ROI, 92-96% retention rate, convenience of navigator services.

Following Up

- If the employer is receptive and enthusiastic, screen-share or physically present the Work Process Documents to quickly view the competencies and determine if they seem to accurately reflect the role as they conceive it.
- If they are willing and the meeting has not run too long at this point, ask if they would be willing to do a line-by-line reading of the competencies and revise them at this point. If the meeting is over its time limit, this can be done via email or follow-up meeting.
- At this time, schedule a follow-up meeting with the employer for a date/time within the next two weeks; do not allow the meeting to end without a follow-up scheduled.
- If the employer was referred to you by a third party, IWIB board member, or IBST partner, be sure to follow up with them at this point to keep them in the loop.

Confirm Program Details

3

GOALS: Finalize Competencies, Coursework, and Compensation; Prepare for Program Registration with DOL

Once you have met with the employer and explained the basics of registered apprenticeship to them along with presenting potential Work Process Documents and training options, the next step is working with the employer via email and follow-up conversations to solidify (and ideally, to finalize) the structure of their program.

The three main components needed to register a program are:

1. **Competencies** (A Revised Work Process Schedule)
2. **Coursework** (Outline for Training at a Community College/Third-Party Provider)
3. **Compensation** (Wage Schedule - Time-Based, Competency, or Hybrid Model)

- Competency revisions can be done independently on the employer end or completed during a follow-up call.
- Coursework selection should happen in conversation with the employer's selected education provider to ensure that schedules, costs, and curriculum align with the employer's vision.
- Wage Schedules are often the trickiest piece of a program to confirm with an employer for a number of reasons. To ensure that the wage schedule does not become the sole reason for a program's stagnation, the following best practices are recommended:

Best Practices for Program Development:

- **Have an awareness** of the average local, regional, and national pay scales for the roles you are developing a program for. ONET has this data and is a good resource for workforce partners as well as employers wondering if their pay is competitive within their local market.
- In the event an employer's pay is so sub-standard that it seems to render the program itself useless as a means of retention, **do not hesitate to send the employer ONET data about local salaries**, and speak frankly about your concerns. At the end of the day, the employer wants and needs talent—they deserve to know if they will be driving it away to save a marginal amount of money on labor costs.

Best Practices for Program Development: (continued)

- **Be aware that employers may struggle with formatting or determining** the exact competency/time requirements of their wage schedule. While a wage schedule can be as simple as a starting and ending wage for the program, wage increases that reflect real-time skill increases are a greater incentive for apprentice retention and should be encouraged.
- **Once an employer has chosen which model** (competency-based, time-based, or hybrid) that they would like to utilize for their program, ask them how many incremental increases they would like to build into the pay schedule in-between the starting and ending wage. DOL Standards Builder can automatically generate the number of hours or competencies for each step of the pay schedule so long as you know the wage range and number of increases.

Getting Ready to Register!

In addition to the primary three components of competencies, coursework, and compensation, you will need the following pieces of information to register the employer's program with DOL:

1. The ratio of journeymen/veteran employees to apprentices that will be maintained on the jobsite.
2. The hiring requirements and recruitment process the employer will be utilizing.
3. Contact information for the individual who will handle complaints or EEO concerns for the program.
4. Whether or not the employer will provide credit to apprentices with previous experience.
5. Length of program's probationary period (oftentimes automatically set at 25% of the program length).

Lastly, before registering the employer's program, **notify the organization or individual who referred the employer to you that the program is moving forward**; this ensures future referrals and helps to keep all of our partners in the loop!



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