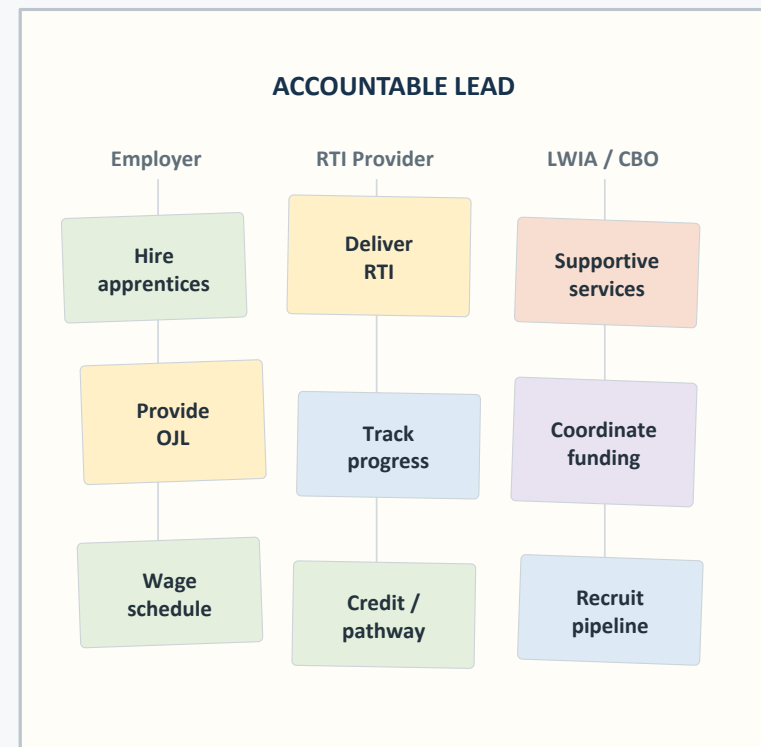


# Who Does What?

## Building Flexible Agreements for High-Performing Apprenticeships

**Start with the work.  
Identify the accountable lead.  
Draft the agreement.**

The goal of the framework is to ensure all ensure all high-impact strategies have a have a clear home and accountable partners.



## Session Learning Outcomes

**1 Identify** the essential functions that must be covered in a high-performing apprenticeship partnership.

**2 Assess** where responsibilities have a home, are duplicated, missing, or better aligned with another partner's capacity.

**3 Apply** a flexible framework for two-, three-, or four-party apprenticeship agreements.

**4 Consider** where statewide role clarity, resources, alignment, and/or funding could improve apprenticeship delivery to the benefit of employers and apprentices.

# Why a Flexible MOU Matters

Apprenticeship works as a system. Agreements make the system visible.

We recommend shifting the question from “Who usually does each function?”

To “Who has the capacity and will be accountable to do it well with this specific industry/occupation?”



## Reduce burden

Employers should experience one coordinated system, not a maze of partners.

## Expose gaps early

Clear ownership makes missing capacity visible before an apprentice feels the impact.

## Align funding to work

Funding and agreements can follow the functions partners actually perform.

# What High-Performing Apprenticeships Include

The activity labels convert the research into concrete functions that someone must own.

|                   |                            |                          |                     |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Build & Partner   | Employer need & occupation | Standards / work process | Partner convening   | Program registration |
| Recruit & Onboard | Candidate pipeline         | Screen / match / hire    | RAPIDS onboarding   | Funding strategy     |
| Deliver & Monitor | RTI delivery               | OJL / supervision        | Mentor support      | Progress tracking    |
| Support & Retain  | Joint progress reviews     | Navigation / coaching    | Supportive services | Issue resolution     |
| Finance & Admin   | Invoices / reimbursements  | Compliance / records     | Completion closeout | Evaluation / ROI     |

## Expansion capacity

Employer technical assistance • pre-apprenticeship / school-to-RA pipelines • college credit / PLA • sustainability & scale • post-completion tracking • cross-department workflow integration

# Seven Sources, One Consistent Message

Effective intermediaries reduce friction by brokering, organizing, supporting, and sustaining the work.

## AFA • 2024

Community colleges can do far more than RTI — including program management, recruitment, placement, funding coordination, OJL advising, and apprentice support.

[luminafoundation.org](https://luminafoundation.org)

## Urban • 2024

Build • Manage • Sustain — employer outreach, standards, RTI, recruitment, mentor training, supports, tracking, evaluation, and scale.

[urban.org](https://urban.org)

## Urban • 2026

Reduce employer burden through role clarity, trusted connections, adaptable frameworks, flexible financing, and shared sponsorship.

[urban.org](https://urban.org)

## New America • 2023

Program delivery + stakeholder engagement + monitoring/support + field building — including mediation, incentives, sustainability, and networks.

[newamerica.org](https://newamerica.org)

## NCAD • 2026

Add job-embedded design, recruitment/retention strategy, mentor frameworks, compliance, financial modeling, ROI, and cross-department workflows.

[ncad.org](https://ncad.org)

## Strada • 2026

Five employer-intermediary functions — engagement, solutions design, brokering, implementation support, and administrative support.

[strada.org](https://strada.org)

## DOL / Apprenticeship.gov

Federal guidance emphasizes outreach, technical assistance, partnerships, curriculum/competency models, recruitment/retention, access, and cost offsets.

[apprenticeship.gov](https://apprenticeship.gov)

# Activity Directions

Build the operating model first. The agreement will document it.

- 1 Choose an industry / occupation**  
 Pick a realistic apprenticeship your group could imagine building in your region.
- 2 Name the parties**  
 Decide which organizations are at the table — employer, RTI Provider, LWIA, CBO, K–12, or others. Star the sponsor.
- 3 Place the CORE labels**  
 For every core function, place the label under the organization that will have the capacity and will be accountable for making it happen.
- 4 Resolve gaps + duplication**  
 If two parties claim the same function, name the lead. If no one can own it, flag the gap instead of hiding it.
- 5 Add EXPANSION labels if useful**  
 Use the expansion sheet to add scale, pathway, employer-support, continuity, and post-completion functions relevant to your model.

| CORE LABELS       |                                                                         |                                                                                    |                                                                                                   |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Build & Partner   | Identify the employer workforce need and apprenticeship occupation      | Recruit and engage employer partners                                               | Convene partners and assign one accountable lead for each function                                |
|                   | Develop and validate program standards and the Work Process Schedule    | Align RTI curriculum with OJL competencies and employer skill needs                | Register the program or standards and maintain sponsor compliance                                 |
| Recruit & Onboard | Build a sustainable funding and cost-sharing strategy                   | Market apprenticeship opportunities to prospective apprentices                     | Recruit a diverse candidate pipeline                                                              |
|                   | Screen and assess candidate readiness and eligibility                   | Match and place candidates with apprenticeship employers                           | Select and hire apprentices                                                                       |
|                   | Register apprentices in RAPIDS and other required systems               | Orient apprentices to program expectations, supports, rights, and contacts         | Establish and administer the progressive wage schedule                                            |
| Deliver & Monitor | Deliver or coordinate Related Training Instruction (RTI)                | Provide structured On-the-Job Learning (OJL/OJT)                                   | Coordinate work schedules, RTI schedules, and release time                                        |
|                   | Select, train, and support qualified workplace mentors and supervisors  | Track OJL hours and workplace competency attainment                                | Monitor RTI attendance, academic performance, and credential progress                             |
| Support & Retain  | Conduct joint RTI/OJL progress reviews and close the feedback loop      | Provide proactive academic and career coaching/navigation                          | Assess barriers and coordinate supportive services                                                |
| Finance & Admin   | Lead issue resolution, dispute mediation, and retention interventions   | Ensure EEO, nondiscrimination, accessibility, accommodations, and                  | Administer invoices, reimbursements, incentives, and partner payments (state tax credit and WIOA) |
|                   | Maintain records, data sharing, compliance reporting, and documentation | Verify completion, final competencies, final wage, credential, and RAPIDS closeout | Evaluate outcomes, employer ROI, apprentice experience, and continuous improvement                |

**Identify who owns what.**  
 You are designing accountability — not defending current practice.

# Design Principle: Assign the Work to Capacity and Accountability

This flexible agreement framework can be adapted to two, three, or four parties while maintaining explicit accountability.

1

## One accountable lead

Each function has one organization ultimately responsible for making sure it happens.

2

## Many can contribute

Partners may support, fund, refer, teach, or share data — without blurring ownership.

3

## No unassigned functions

If no one can own a critical activity, the gap is a design problem to solve before launch.

4

## Funding follows function

Resources should align with the work partners are actually expected to perform.

Example ownership map

| Employer           | RTI<br>Provider | LWIA                      |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Recruit candidates |                 |                           |
| Select & hire      |                 |                           |
| Deliver RTI        |                 |                           |
|                    |                 | Supportive<br>services    |
| Track OJT progress |                 |                           |
|                    |                 | Training<br>reimbursement |

*Identify an accountable lead for shared activities.  
Decide who has final accountability.*

## Debrief: What Did the Agreement Reveal?

Start with the functions. Build around capacity and accountability.  
Document the decisions.



<https://tinyurl.com/shnjb954>

1

### Where did ownership shift?

Which functions landed somewhere different than your current practice would suggest?

**Flexible agreements.**

2

### What capacity is missing?

Which functions were hard to place because no partner currently has the time, expertise, authority, or funding?

**Clear accountability.**

3

### What could be shared statewide?

Where could shared tools, role clarity, funding alignment, or standard agreements reduce friction for employers and apprentices?

**Improved experience.**

## References

- 1 AFA / Lumina Foundation (2024): <https://www.luminafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/How-Community-Colleges-Can-Help-Scale-US-Apprenticeships.pdf>
- 2 Urban Institute (2024): <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/how-intermediaries-can-promote-youth-apprenticeship>
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- 4 New America (2023): <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/community-colleges-and-apprenticeship-the-promise-the-challenge/>
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