



Program Sponsor Guide for Businesses/Employers

Congratulations on registering your apprenticeship program with the US Department of Labor! This guide aims to prepare you for the responsibilities of a registered apprenticeship sponsor and equip you with the knowledge to succeed as your apprentices earn and learn.

Section One: RAPIDS

RAPIDS is the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System: the official apprenticeship tracking platform supported by the US Department of Labor.

The functions you'll complete within RAPIDS fall into two categories: **(1) Program Management** and **(2) Apprentice Management**.

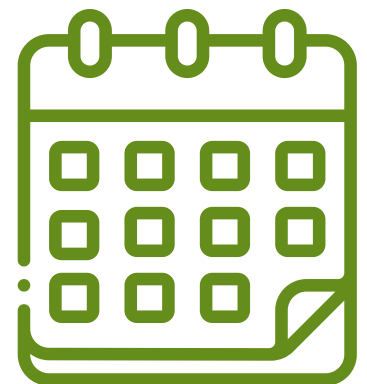


Program Management includes updates to program contact information, changes to your program's progressive wage schedule, adding or removing occupations from your program, adding or updating information for your related instruction providers, and any changes to your program's worksite ratio of journeyworkers to apprentices.

Apprentice Management includes updates to an apprentice's status, such as marking them as suspended, canceled, or complete. You will also document their related instruction, certifications, and compliance in this section.

Every sponsor must log into RAPIDS at least once every 90 days to keep their account access. It is recommended that sponsors log in monthly. If you lose access to your RAPIDS profile due to inactivity, please contact your ATR.

Any changes you make in RAPIDS will be finalized when your ATR and state director approve them.



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Section Two: Onboarding New Apprentices

During an apprentice's first 45 days, you should do the following:

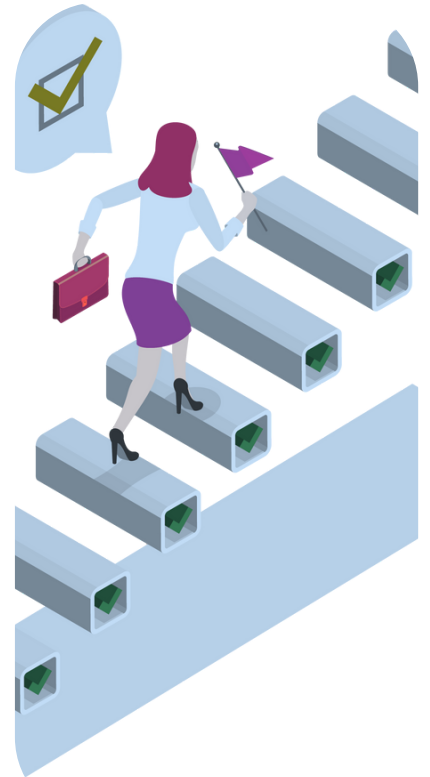
1. Register the apprentice(s) electronically within the RAPIDs platform.
2. If an apprentice is seeking credit for previous work experience, education or apprenticeships, collect documentation that certifies the experience and upload to RAPIDS; this may include payroll summary records or school transcripts.
3. Provide apprentices with a New Hire orientation as you would any other hire, including health and safety trainings and company policies.
4. Provide the apprentice with a copy of your program standards and review the standards with them.
5. Ensure that your apprentices have signed their Appendix B (671 Apprenticeship Agreement)
6. Review and discuss the process for submitting complaints, being sure to indicate the primary complaint contact and who to contact if they are unavailable.
7. Introduce apprentices to their assigned mentors and establish a scheduled progress check-in on a time basis that reflects their occupation, worksite, and day-to-day mentorship needs.
8. Ensure that apprentices are enrolled in the appropriate related instruction as outlined in your program standards.
9. If applicable for your industry/occupations, have apprentices apply for "apprentice licensure" with the appropriate state licensing board.
10. Maintain records related to on-the-job learning progression, related instruction, and any disciplinary actions taken against the apprentice.
11. Maintain records for all trainings received by the apprentices, including anti-harassment, new hire orientation, health and safety trainings, and company policy specific trainings.



Section Three: Monitoring Progress

Sponsors are responsible for monitoring apprentices' progress through their program. This responsibility includes, but is not limited to:

- Monitoring on-the-job learning progress towards competency gains
- Adjusting wages as soon as apprentices have met the established parameters for wage increases
- Updating records as necessary in RAPIDS, including apprentice status in the event of participant suspension, cancellation, or completion.
- In time-based programs, training records should include on-the-job learning hour logs by category and competency, as well as unpaid related instruction hours.
- In all programs, training records should document progress through related instruction (grades, attendance, etc)
- Sponsors should check in with program mentors and apprentices on a monthly or bimonthly basis to stay up-to-date on the mentor-apprentice relationship as well as the apprentices' progress.



Section Four: Mentorship

Strong, effective mentorship is a crucial element in a registered apprenticeship program's success. To ensure that apprentices have a beneficial mentorship experience, the following best practices are encouraged:

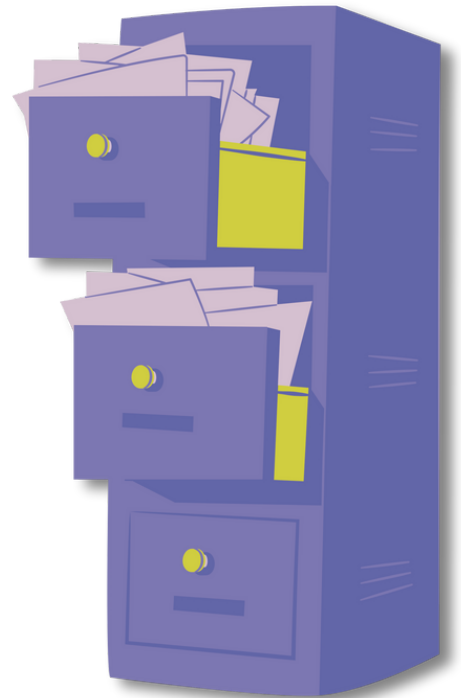
- Select or develop strong program mentors; someone passionate about mentoring, with excellent communication skills
- Balance structure and flexibility; formality is necessary for progress tracking, communication, and safe training, but allowing some flexibility ensures adaptability
- Encourage trust by ensuring that mentors voluntarily participate in the program. Recognition for mentors' contributions also often provides a boost to their engagement.
- Set up a regular mentor-mentee meeting schedule and encourage consistent communication



Section Five: Record Keeping

Program Sponsors are responsible for maintaining the following records:

- Summary of qualifications for each program applicant
- Basis for evaluation and selection/rejection of each applicant including applications, tests, and test results
- Records pertaining to program applicant interviews
- The invitation for each participation to self-identify as an individual with a disability
- Records related to each apprentice's on-the-job learning
- Records related to classroom instruction and progress evaluations
- Records of job assignments including progression based on competency gains
- Records related to each apprentices' promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, wages, and other forms of compensation (as applicable)
- Documentation of supplemental education received; attendance and grades



We are so excited to have you as a new member of the registered apprenticeship ecosystem in Illinois. To get connected with other apprenticeship employers or seek additional partnerships on work-based learning, please visit our website at ApprenticeshipIllinois.com

REMINDER: Code of Federal Regulations, CFR Title 29 Part 29.5 states that an apprentice is a paid employee. A 1099 employee is not an employee. All apprentices **MUST** be W-2 employees.

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