

Apprenticeship Partners Guidance Document

The development and expansion of Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) requires coordination among partners across the apprenticeship ecosystem. This guidance document identifies regional apprenticeship stakeholders and stakeholders within Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), describes their role in the development, implementation, sustainability, and expansion of apprenticeship pathways and outlines best practices for engaging new and existing partners.

THE APPRENTICESHIP PARTNER ECOSYSTEM

This section identifies regional partners that play a role in developing RAPs across regions and the State of California. Collectively, these partners contribute distinct expertise, resources, and responsibilities that support RAP implementation and long-term sustainability.

- **Apprentices:** The apprentice is an employee enrolled in an apprenticeship program who receives both on-the-job training (OJT) and Related and Supplemental Instruction (RSI), which culminates in an industry-recognized, nationally portable credential.
- **California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Chancellor's Office):** The Chancellor's Office provides statewide leadership, administers apprenticeship funding programs, and supports apprenticeship expansion and sustainability efforts, such as the California Apprenticeship Initiative (CAI).
- **Community-Based Organizations (CBOs):** CBOs often partner with LEAs and/or employers to provide additional support and wraparound services to apprentices.
- **Chancellor's Office Workforce and Economic Development Regional Consortia:** Facilitate collaboration across colleges and industry, align apprenticeship priorities regionally, and identify sectors and funding opportunities for growth.
- **Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS):** The DAS is the state agency that is responsible for registering and approving apprenticeship standards, maintaining compliance, and partnering with programs to promote strong program management, design, and implementation.
- **Employers:** Employers select and hire apprentices, assign mentors, and provide on-the-job training (OJT). Employers often serve as program sponsors, and early employer engagement supports alignment between program design, workforce demand, and long-term program sustainability.

- **Intermediaries:** An intermediary can serve many functions, including connecting stakeholders, managing apprentice support service networks, engaging employers, monitoring apprentices, developing occupational standards, and supporting registration.
- **Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) - Community Colleges and K-12 Partners:** LEAs, comprised of both California Community Colleges and K-12 partners, develop curriculum, and administer and supervise related and supplemental instruction (RSI). At the K-12 level, this often supports young students by providing access to career exploration programs, pre-apprenticeships, and, in some cases, apprenticeships. Community colleges can also connect apprenticeship programs to certificates and degrees. Alignment across multiple LEA levels can strengthen transitions between career exploration, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and postsecondary credential attainment opportunities.
- **Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB)/Workforce Investment Boards (WIB):** WIBs engage employers, align WIOA and other funding, provide wraparound services to apprentices, and share local labor market data to inform program design.
- **Technical Assistance Providers (TAPs):** TAPs support the development of registered apprenticeship programs by providing tailored support related to program development, funding strategies, credit for prior learning, contract education, grant administration, and implementation planning.

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY INTERNAL APPRENTICESHIP PARTNERS

This section highlights entities within educational institutions that play a role in developing RAPs. While most LEAs have many of these departments, offices, or roles, not all LEAs may have every entity on this list, as apprenticeship responsibilities are frequently distributed across multiple departments and functional areas. Regardless of the combination, coordination among these stakeholders is critical to effective program implementation and long-term sustainability.

- **Apprenticeship/Career Technical Education (CTE) Departments/Staff:** While not all LEAs have a department or staff dedicated to apprenticeship, when available, this allows for focused program coordination, oversight of day-to-day operations, and compliance with the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) and grant requirements.
- **Admissions and Records:** Develop and manage apprenticeship course enrollment processes, apply waivers, and ensure accurate data entry and tracking in coordination with Enrollment Management.

- **Budget and Fiscal Offices:**
 - **Fiscal Management:** Manage coding and reporting for enrollment fee waivers, ensure proper state reimbursement, and support the financial sustainability of apprenticeship programs.
 - **Grant Management:** Identify funding opportunities, support grant writing and management, connect with external partners, and report to the Chancellor's Office via CCFS 320 reporting, CCFS 321 reporting, invoicing requirements, and grant administration activities.
- **Career Services:** Promote apprenticeship pathways, connect students to employers, and prepare students for apprenticeship interviews.
- **Deans and Academic Affairs:** Approve program design, allocate faculty time, and ensure alignment with institutional priorities (including modality, course offerings, and scheduling). Support program coordination, partnerships, and champion apprenticeship efforts on campus.
- **Faculty/Instructors:** Maintain communication with employers to ensure curriculum alignment with current industry needs. Align curriculum with occupational competencies, support the design of on-the-job training (OJT) and related classroom instruction, and contribute to mentorship and assessment. While mentorship is incorporated in apprenticeship OJT, faculty may also serve as additional mentors.
- **Financial Aid Office:** Support student apprentices in reconciling accounts when they receive external financial support (e.g., workforce boards, grants, or contracts). Aid must align with the Student Aid Index (SAI) and adjusted Cost of Attendance (COA), and additional external funding sources may affect financial aid calculations. Additionally, the Financial Aid office is responsible for determining eligibility for aid for coursework and removing tuition and fee requirements from apprentices' student accounts.
- **Institutional Research Data Teams:** Track apprentice progress and program outcomes, ensure reporting compliance (including Chancellor's Office requirements), and evaluate program effectiveness. Support systems to accurately code apprentices and apprenticeship programs across the campus.
- **Legal and Compliance:** Review contracts and interagency agreements, and ensure compliance with Education Codes, DOL/DAS regulations (if serving as a program sponsor), and internal policies.
- **President's Office and Executive Leadership:** Endorse and champion apprenticeship programs at a strategic level to support institutional prioritization and facilitate partnership development and resource alignment.
- **Student Support Services/Counseling/Advising:** Provide and connect students to wraparound supports (e.g., transportation, childcare, tutoring), support program enrollment and completion, and develop comprehensive educational plans for students (only counselors can create official educational plans due to their qualifications).

BEST PRACTICES FOR PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Identifying potential partners and understanding the regional landscape are important first steps, but effective partnerships do not develop automatically. Developing and sustaining partner relationships and maximizing their value for program development are all complex processes. Below are some best practices identified in the field for establishing and expanding partnerships at the institutional and regional levels.

- **Establish Long-Term Employer Engagement Strategies:** Begin conversations with employers early and often to build an understanding of apprenticeship and foster a foundational relationship. Employer engagement should be early, consistent, and involve more than just initial outreach. Many employers who are not ready to start an apprenticeship program may be open to participating in career fairs, hosting job shadowing, serving as clinical sites, or contributing in other advisory capacities. It is critical to understand employers' hiring needs and challenges and to seek ways to address them, rather than focusing solely on helping employers understand apprenticeship. Engaging with employers in this way fortifies the long-term relationships that lead to sustainable apprenticeship programs grounded in meeting employer needs.
- **Know the regional landscape and engage regional entities:** There are numerous entities across systems and sectors operating within the region in which an LEA is situated, and it is important to understand who they are, what resources exist, and where potential challenges and opportunities lie. Be strategic about who needs to be involved to support your programs and who has the capacity to do so. Consider connecting with other LEAs to collaborate on apprenticeship development and sustainability. Working together to expand existing programs or develop new ones enables support across multiple areas and offers the opportunity to bring new partners to the table. This includes knowing and accessing the technical assistance providers available in the region to help build capacity and coordinate aligned partners toward a shared goal.
- **Leverage existing partnerships:** While developing partnerships is an ongoing goal, most LEAs already have a number of partners on- and off-campus with whom they are connected. Consider how these partners are or may be supportive in the apprenticeship space and/or how they may create peer-to-peer connections with other entities. Existing relationships may provide a foundation for future apprenticeship development activities.
- **Identify and engage champions:** Developing RAPs requires individuals with the vision to see how stakeholders can leverage resources and infrastructure, as well as the capacity to engage other partners to join the effort. These champions are key to building buy-in and collaboration for scaling programs. On a campus, this might start with one particular faculty member or administrator, but forming a task force or working group can ensure that this responsibility does not fall on a single individual or entity and can leverage multiple networks.

- **Consider how partnerships are mutually beneficial:** Speaking the language of the partner you are engaging with can help acknowledge organizational priorities and objectives. RAPs can often benefit all parties, so it is helpful to identify how this partnership meets everyone's objectives. Validating the work and longevity of all parties can support trust, engagement, and long-term collaboration.
- **Conduct regular convenings and check-ins:** It is important to make time for partners to come together to discuss progress, challenges, opportunities, and next steps to keep the work moving forward. This should be done at a regular cadence, when possible. These working sessions allow for a dedicated space for collaboration and program development.
- **Leverage an intermediary:** Apprenticeship intermediaries convene and support partners. Having an intermediary organization as the coordinating entity for apprenticeship activities can ensure that shared goals remain the focus, that there are clear channels for convening, communication, and collaboration, and that there is fidelity to the planning and implementation processes.
- **Utilize shared tools and practices:** Technical Assistance Providers, the Chancellor's Office, and many of the partners included on this list have developed resources and practices based on their experience in the field of apprenticeship development. LEAs are encouraged to utilize existing resources, tools, and practices developed across the apprenticeship ecosystem, to make the impact of your combined work even stronger.

As apprenticeship programs continue to grow across California, collaboration remains one of the most valuable tools for advancing equity, increasing access to career opportunities, and creating sustainable RAPs. LEAs are encouraged to build upon existing partnerships, engage new stakeholders, and utilize available technical assistance and resources to support program success.

RESOURCES

[College Campus Guide: Engaging Apprenticeship Stakeholders](#)

[Grow Apprenticeship California 3.0 Regional Apprenticeship Playbook 2026](#)

[Resource Compendium](#)

[From Silos to Synergy](#)