

ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND COMPLETION: SUPPORTIVE SERVICES IN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

Youth apprenticeship is a work-based learning model that allows youth to earn competitive wages while obtaining the relevant training and experience to start their careers, often including the opportunity to earn college credit. The Region 8 Comprehensive Center Network Youth Apprenticeship Series is a set of four mini publications that provide introductory information on Registered Apprenticeships and examine four key areas that are essential to the success of youth apprenticeship.

- 1. The Importance of Quality Mentors in Youth Apprenticeship**
- 2. Bridging the Gap Between Related Technical Instruction & On-the-Job Training in Youth Apprenticeship**
- 3. Addressing Barriers to Access & Completion: Supportive Services in Youth Apprenticeship**
- 4. Work Readiness Skills in Youth Apprenticeship**

Youth apprenticeship continues to gain traction across the United States. However, for youth apprenticeships to meet their potential, the barriers many young people continue to face in accessing and completing a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Program need to be addressed. Supportive services can address such barriers. These are services that are typically needed outside of the workplace and school to help young people function optimally. They include transportation assistance, housing, mental health services, food assistance, and more. While state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) may not be able to offer or fund the range of services their youth apprentices may need, they can understand the importance of these services and build partnerships with providers throughout their state and regions who can help.



Introduction

An apprenticeship is a work-based learning model that combines paid job experience with relevant technical instruction in the classroom. A Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Program is an apprenticeship that is registered by the [U.S. Department of Labor Education & Training Administration's Office of Apprenticeship \(OA\)](#) or a [State Apprenticeship Agency](#) demonstrating the program aligns to [seven key elements](#):

- **Industry Led** – Programs are industry-vetted and approved to ensure alignment with industry standards and that apprentices are trained for highly skilled, high-demand occupations.
- **Paid Job** – Apprenticeships are jobs! Apprentices earn progressive wages as their skills and productivity increase.
- **Structured On-the-Job Learning/Mentorship** – Programs provide structured on-the-job training/learning to prepare for a successful career, which includes instruction from an experienced mentor.
- **Supplemental Education** – Apprentices are provided supplemental classroom education based on the employers' unique training needs to ensure quality and success.
- **Access** – Programs are designed to reflect the communities in which they operate through strong non-discrimination, anti-harassment, and recruitment practices to ensure access, equity, and inclusion.
- **Quality & Safety** – Apprentices are afforded worker protections while receiving rigorous training to equip them with the skills they need to succeed and the proper training and supervision they need to be safe.
- **Credentials** – Apprentices earn a portable, nationally recognized credential within their industry.

OA defines a youth apprenticeship as one designed specifically for in- or out-of-school youth ages 16–24. In this Youth Apprenticeship series of publications, the focus is on [high school students](#) who start apprenticeships during their junior or senior year. A student becomes a registered apprentice through an agreement signed by the student, the employer, and, if under 18 years old, their parent/guardian.

- The work portion of the program is flexible and is completed when school is not in session or through a formal work-study program.
- Students take courses at their high school and/or community and technical college, in addition to their required high school coursework, which count toward high school graduation.
- Students may complete the RA Program during high school or continue after graduation, depending on the program's length. For dual enrollment students, the RA Program continues and is completed at the college.

Perkins V and Registered Apprenticeship

SEAs may use [Perkins V state leadership funds](#) to develop, improve, and support RA programs, and their components and prerequisites. Subrecipients may also use Perkins V funds to develop, coordinate, implement, or improve RA programs and their components and prerequisites provided that these programs are sufficient in “size, scope, and quality to be effective” as determined by the SEA.

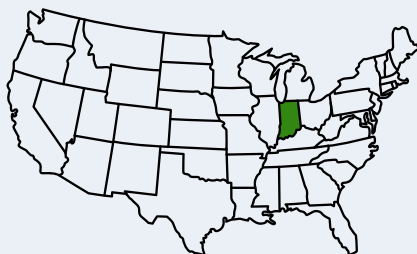
High schools and career and technical education centers can provide the supplemental classroom education portion of apprenticeships and recruit students to participate in RA Programs. This is typically referred to as related technical instruction (RTI). Schools may also operate [pre-apprenticeship programs](#) as feeders to the RA Programs and in some cases can serve as the [RA sponsor](#)—the entity that oversees the operation of the program.

SEAs can support youth RA Programs by developing statewide RA Program and pre-apprenticeship [frameworks](#) or take on a larger coordinating role, such as helping to develop and [register programs](#) and facilitate relationships with employers, the workforce development system, and other partners. SEA support for youth apprenticeship is important for many reasons. As reported in [Models of Youth Registered Apprenticeship Expansion: Evidence from the Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grants](#), some of the common barriers to secondary school-based RA models include insufficient funding, alignment of the apprenticeship requirements to high school curriculum, and scheduling challenges for students to participate in work-based learning. These barriers could potentially be mitigated at the state level through braided funding, curriculum frameworks, and policy development, which can in turn improve the quality and efficiency of youth RA Programs in local school districts.

Youth Apprentices Enrolled in RA Programs¹

*Source: [Apprentices by State Dashboard | Apprenticeship.gov](#) (as of July 10, 2024)

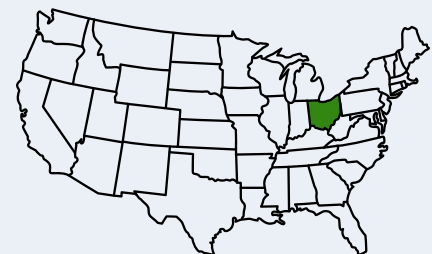
Indiana: 9,140



Michigan: 8,410



Ohio: 9,960



¹Data do not differentiate youth ages 16–18 and 18–24 or those who are in school vs. out of school.

The Need for Supportive Services by Youth Apprentices

The apprenticeship literature talks about the need for supportive services in youth apprenticeship. These services impact youth apprentices' ability to access programs, sustain their momentum, and successfully complete an RA Program.

- The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy's [Funding Inclusive Apprenticeships: Strategies for Braiding, Blending, and Aligning Resources \(dol.gov\)](#) states that supportive services are a necessary component for ensuring that their programs are inclusive of all participants, including those with disabilities.
- According to Urban Institute's [Fact Sheet: How Organizations Can Better Serve Young People in Apprenticeships](#), to expand the opportunities and benefits of RA Programs to more young people, youth-serving organizations have an important role to play in connecting young people to programs and ensuring they have the supports they need.
- Urban Institute's [Rural Apprenticeships for Young People: Challenges and Strategies for Success](#) found significant obstacles in rural youth apprenticeship programs since they can require apprentices to travel considerable distances between their homes, job sites, and related training sites, typically without reliable public transit options. Travel can serve as a major obstacle for apprentice participation, as this distance can translate into scheduling challenges. In addition, youth apprentices may not yet own their own vehicles, or if they do, the cost to maintain and repair them to travel these distances may be prohibitive.
- The Project on Workforce at Harvard Summer Fellowship Series [Expanding Youth Apprenticeships: Recommendations to DOL](#) identified the top program design and delivery barriers in youth apprenticeship as transportation and the provision of wraparound supports, including healthcare, child care, and caregiver assistance.

Types of Supportive Services Youth Apprentices May Require

Below is a list of the most common supportive services to which youth apprentices may need access.

- Career coaching
- Case management
- Childcare and caregiver support
- Employment or certification testing
- Tools, equipment, work clothing, and uniforms
- Food
- Housing
- Transportation
- Tuition assistance (for dual enrollment programs)
- Tutoring
- Mental health services
- Workplace accommodations

The good news is that supportive services are [positively associated with apprenticeship completion](#).

Who Can Fund & Provide Supportive Services to Youth Apprentices

Through a range of partners, supportive services can be extended to youth apprentices in various ways, including offering the service itself, providing vouchers for the service, or issuing stipends to the apprentice. The table below aligns the supportive service to the potential partners, though this will vary by state. It is important for youth apprentices to [receive case management](#) to coordinate partners to ensure their needs are met and there is no duplication of services. Many of the agencies listed below provide case management. School social workers might also provide this service.

Support Services	Partners	Relevant Organizations *local agencies can typically be found by starting with the state agency website
Accommodations	State and local vocational rehabilitation agencies Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Michigan Rehabilitation Services ● Indiana Family & Social Services Administration, Rehabilitation & Employment ● Ohio Vocational Rehabilitation
Career coaching	State and local workforce agencies Community-based organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indiana Department of Workforce Development ● Michigan Bureau of Labor & Economic Opportunity, Employment and Training ● Ohio Office of Workforce Development <p>Examples of community-based organization networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indiana United Ways ● Michigan Community Resources ● Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies
Case management	State and local workforce agencies State and local social/family services agencies State and local vocational rehabilitation agencies Community and faith-based organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indiana Family & Social Services Administration ● Michigan Department of Health & Human Services ● Ohio Department of Job & Family Services ● Indiana Community Action Agencies ● Michigan DHHS Community and Faith-based Programs ● Ohio Faith-based Community Initiatives

Childcare and caregiver support	State and local workforce agencies State and local social/family services agencies Community and faith-based organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indiana Childcare & Development Fund ● Indiana Family Caregiver Support ● Michigan Child Care Assistance ● Ohio Department of Job & Family Services ● Ohio Caregiver Support
Employment related—tools, equipment, work clothing, uniforms, and testing	State and local workforce agencies Community and faith-based organizations Employers	See Childcare and Caregiver Support
Food	State and local social/family services agencies Community-based organizations Other: Feeding America and Target Hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indiana Food Assistance Availability Map ● Food Bank Council of Michigan ● Ohio Association of Food Banks
Healthcare	State and local social/family services agencies State and local health and human services agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Healthy Indiana Plan ● Indiana Health Centers ● Michigan Healthcare Coverage ● Free & Charitable Clinics of Michigan ● Ohio – Get Health Insurance ● Ohio Department of Health Free Clinics
Mental health services	State and local social/family services agencies State and local health and human services agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indiana Department of Mental Health & Addiction, Mental Health Services ● State of Michigan Community Mental Health Services ● Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
Tuition assistance (for dual enrollment programs)	State departments of education State and local workforce agencies State and local vocational rehabilitation agencies Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indiana State Financial Aid Overview ● MI Student Aid ● Ohio Department of Education Financial Aid
Tutoring	State and local workforce agencies State and local vocational rehabilitation agencies Community and faith-based organizations	See Tuition Assistance

Supportive Services Funding in Federal Grants: Apprenticeship Building America

Federal apprenticeship grants can serve as a source of funding for supportive services for youth apprentices. For example, the Department of Labor Education & Training Administration's Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) 39 grantees are encouraged to utilize evidence-based strategies that are associated with RA Program success including ensuring apprentices have access to supportive services. The ABA Funding Opportunity Announcement specifies that grantees may use grant funds (up to 20% of the total grant) "to provide supportive services to individuals who are participating in education and training activities provided through the grant when 1) they are unable to obtain such services through other programs, and 2) such services are necessary to enable individuals to participate in education and training activities under the grant."

*Note: Grants have not been awarded in every state. See the [list of active apprenticeship grants](#).

How State Educational Agencies & Local Districts Can Ensure All Youth Apprentices Have Access to Supportive Services

- Through Perkins V, states can use some of their allocated funding to disburse to local education agencies [to pay for out-of-pocket expenses](#) associated with participating in an RA, such as books, tools, childcare, and transportation for students who are members of special populations, such as individuals from economically disadvantaged families and single parents.
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Funding is a [comprehensive youth employment program designed to support youth ages 14-21](#) who are low-income and have at least one other additional barrier to education, employment, and training. While out-of-school youth are highest priority, this funding can pay for transportation, housing, food, education testing, accommodations, referrals to healthcare, work-related attire and tools, and employment testing for in-school youth who have one or more barriers to employment (provisions vary by locality).
- SEAs and LEAs can provide leadership through instituting partnerships with the state and local departments of workforce development, vocational rehabilitation, and other agencies.
- SEAs and LEAs can develop a resource guide for their staff to help locate and secure partnerships with organizations that can provide support services. Or they may want to facilitate a community asset mapping workshop for their local school districts. See [this presentation](#) from Region 15 of the CC Network.

Resources

[The Federal Resources Playbook for Registered Apprenticeship](#)

[Investments, Tax Credits, and Tuition Support | Apprenticeship.gov](#)

[Models of Youth Registered Apprenticeship Expansion](#)

[Youth Apprenticeship Playbook: How to Build Successful High School Sponsored Programs](#)

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