



Statement for the Record

On behalf of
National Conference of State Legislatures

Hearing on
“The Power of Apprenticeships: Faster, Better
Paths to Prosperous Jobs and Less Waste in Higher
Education”

Provided to
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

Oct. 25, 2023

Brian Patrick Kennedy

Speaker Pro Tempore
Rhode Island General
Assembly
President, NCSL

Sabrina N. Lewellen

Deputy Director - Senate
Assistant Secretary of the
Senate
Arkansas General
Assembly
Staff Chair, NCSL

Tim Storey

Chief Executive Officer
NCSL



The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) is a bipartisan organization representing the legislatures of the nation's 50 states, five territories and Washington, D.C. NCSL's mission is to strengthen the institution of the legislatures, provide connections between the states and serve as the voice of state legislatures in the federal system of government. NCSL also serves as an important resource for states and the federal government on apprenticeship programs and would be happy to work with members of this subcommittee as it delves into this type of career path. NCSL is pleased to provide the subcommittee with the following statement for the record on state trends regarding apprenticeship programs in states.

Background

Apprenticeship refers to work-based learning programs completed under the supervision of a master or senior worker that include both paid work and educational components. In times of economic upheaval, apprenticeship programs are particularly desirable because they provide workers with job opportunities, allowing them to immediately begin collecting wages while receiving classroom instruction and training. Additionally, apprenticeship programs are designed to culminate in the completion of a skilled labor certification or even a four-year degree, providing workers with valuable credentials and skills to land well-paying jobs. Many states understand the benefits of apprenticeship programs and are actively introducing and passing legislation incentivizing participants and promoting sound practices in this space. States also recognize that in some areas of apprenticeship program implementation, a state-federal partnership is beneficial to a program's success.

Recent State Trends

In response to the worker shortages and rising costs of higher education, many states have passed legislation and promoted the use of apprenticeships and community technical



colleges as a more affordable and more easily attainable alternative to a four-year degree.

Apprenticeships are being used to provide students with “earn and learn” opportunities to meet in-demand professions. Apprenticeship programs have expanded into non-traditional industries such as cybersecurity, nursing and IT while maintaining traditional apprenticeship programs such as bricklaying, construction and plumbing. A recent state trend has also emerged—states are looking to use apprenticeships to train public sector workers. For example, Washington passed [SB 5600](#) in 2022 tasking its state human resources managers to develop public sector apprenticeship programs. Other states such as [Colorado](#), [California](#), [Tennessee](#), and [Kentucky](#) are working in this area as well.

In 2001, [Tennessee](#) was the first state to be approved by the Department of Labor for a teaching apprenticeship program. Other states have quickly followed suit. There are now at least 23 states with apprenticeship programs for teachers.

In addition to public sector apprenticeships, some states, like Maryland, have established goals for youth apprenticeship. Under the [More Jobs for Marylanders Act](#), the legislature put in place a metric that 45% of all high school students will have completed a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, earn an industry-recognized credential, or participate in a registered youth or other apprenticeship program by 2025.

Finally, states have increasingly created their own State Apprenticeship Agencies. These agencies oversee and register apprenticeship programs in their state. They give states more control over the goals for their registered apprenticeship systems as well. This year, Iowa joins the other 30 states with their own [State Apprenticeship Agencies](#).

Select Apprenticeship Legislation

Many states have taken innovative approaches to their apprenticeship programs and provided opportunities for their citizens and businesses that participate. For example, [Iowa](#) allows business sponsors of apprenticeship programs to receive financial assistance



if they meet certain conditions. [IA HF 559](#), and [New Jersey](#) established a peer-to-peer statewide apprenticeship mentoring program for underrepresented communities, such as women, minorities and those with disabilities. [NJ SB 973](#). [California sought to make loans taken out for an apprenticeship program tax-deductible](#) and [Vermont](#) has worked to create a new, comprehensive framework for the approval, operation and regulation of apprenticeship programs through the Vermont Department of Labor. Although we do not advocate for one approach to establish and maintain an apprenticeship program in the states, we recognize their importance and share and support creative and effective ways to implement these programs pursuant to state needs and prerogatives.

NCSL's Labor and Economic Development Committee Apprenticeship Policy

NCSL's Labor and Economic Development Committee has a [policy resolution](#) on apprenticeship that supports federal initiatives and funding to expand state registered apprenticeship programs into non-traditional occupations and careers, considering best practices and policies found in other countries.

Given recent state interest, examples, and successes with apprenticeship—which are emphasized in NCSL's policy resolution, there is immense potential for strong state-federal partnerships in this increasingly popular career path. Apprenticeships remain a suitable alternative to a four-year degree and a commendable option for those entering the workforce, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the country.

Appendix

[MD HB 1029](#) (2020): Allows apprenticeship and training programs to receive funds from the Clean Energy Workforce Account.



[CA AB 340](#) (2021): Makes loans taken out for an apprenticeship program tax-deductible.

[CO HB 1007](#) (2021): Establishes a state office of apprenticeship.

[NJ SB 973](#) (2021): Establishes a peer-to-peer statewide apprenticeship mentoring program for underrepresented communities, such as women, minorities and those with disabilities.

[IA HF 559](#) (2021): Allows business sponsors of apprenticeship programs to receive financial assistance if they meet certain conditions.

[IL SB 2408](#) (2021): Appropriates money to the energy transition fund, some of which goes to fund pre-apprenticeship programs.

[NJ SB 525](#) (2022): Creates a school-to-apprenticeship program designed to encourage completion of high school and pair education with lucrative careers.

ME Sec. [3201](#) et seq.: Establishes Maine 's apprenticeship program.

[VA SB 661](#) and [HB 718](#) (2022): Provides recommendations for a state apprenticeship office.

[IA SB 318](#) (2023): Establishes an Iowa office of apprenticeship.

[VT HB 452](#) (2023): Creates a new, comprehensive framework for the approval, operation and regulation of apprenticeship programs through the Vermont Department of Labor.

NCSL takes no position on state legislation or laws mentioned in linked material, nor does NCSL endorse any third-party publications. Resources are cited for informational purposes only.

NCSL Contacts:

Deanna Ross, associate legislative director-LED, State Federal Affairs
(deanna.ross@ncsl.org)

Landon Jacquinot, policy associate, Employment, Labor, and Retirement
(landon.jacquinot@ncsl.org)