

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2001, Emily Stover DeRocco, Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) determined that the National Apprenticeship System was underutilized – especially in high growth industries. The Advancing Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) was set in motion. The primary focus of the Initiative was to promote and expand apprenticeship as a proven training strategy to new and emerging industries. The desired results were to increase the number and types of industries, as well as the number and types of employer participation in the Registered Apprenticeship System.

The Office of Apprenticeship (OA) Administrator named five teams to develop and implement the Initiative. A person from OA co-chaired each team along with a co-chair from the National Association of State and Territorial Apprenticeship Directors (NASTAD). The teams worked collaboratively with contractor personnel to implement the Advancing Apprenticeship strategy shown in Figure 1, below.

The Advancing Apprenticeship Initiative was implemented in three phases: (1) Data Gathering, (2) Implementation, and (3) Evaluation.

This report provides a summary of activities under each phase as well as an analysis of results and recommendations on how the Office of Apprenticeship (OA) can further these efforts.

PHASE 1 - DATA GATHERING

During Phase 1 of the Initiative, industry data were collected and analyzed. High growth industries and occupations were identified for the period of 2000-2010. Focus groups were conducted with employers in High Growth industries and forums were held with existing stakeholders in the Registered Apprenticeship System. As a result of the focus groups and forums, a comprehensive plan for advancing apprenticeship in the 21st Century was prepared.

The focus groups revealed that employers in high growth industries had a strong need for skilled workers to fill a variety of occupations. While employers were open and receptive to new and different ways to meet their skill needs, they were not familiar with the Registered Apprenticeship training model. Forums with existing stakeholders revealed the need to improve the image of Registered Apprenticeship and promote the career ladder as an important component. Based on these findings, as well as the High Growth industry research, an implementation plan was prepared.

The implementation plan addressed the following objectives:

1. Educate and inform target populations about the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship as a training strategy.

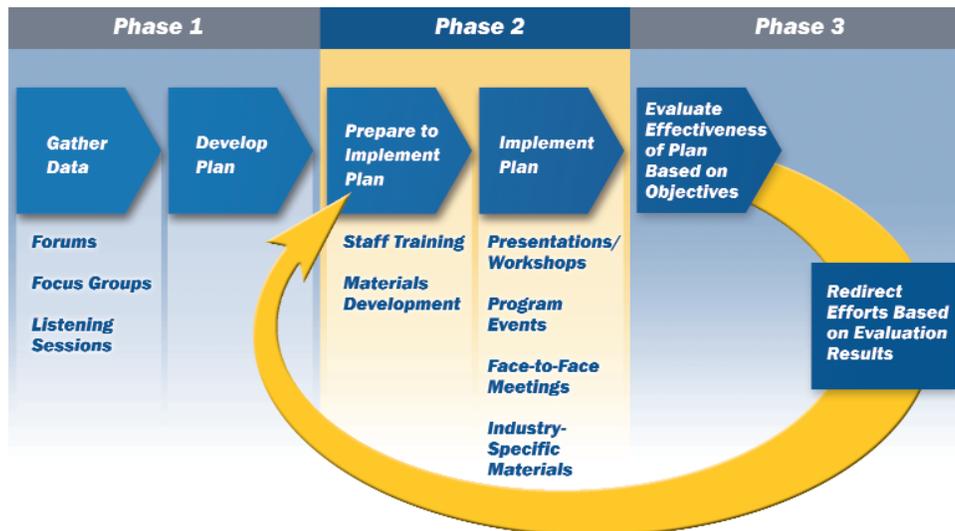
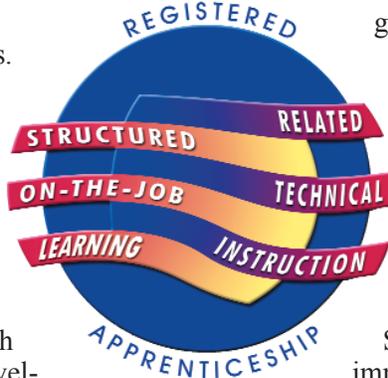


Figure 1. Advancing Apprenticeship Strategy

2. Increase the number of new apprenticeship employer sponsors.
3. Expand the number of new apprenticeship programs.
4. Increase the number of new apprenticeship programs in High Growth industries.



The outreach effort focused on High Growth industry employers and developing new apprenticeship programs.

PHASE 2 - IMPLEMENTATION

During Phase 2 of the initiative, tasks included:

- Developing and providing staff and managers' training on consultative/solutions sales techniques;
- Designing, developing, and producing promotional materials about Registered Apprenticeship;
- Providing administrative support to the Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (ACA);
- Preparing a directory of Registered Apprenticeship programs in High Growth industries; and
- Providing support to the OA teams, as needed.

To equip apprenticeship field staff and managers in advancing Registered Apprenticeship, OA sponsored training sessions on consultative/solutions sales techniques. Feedback from the sessions indicated that staff and managers benefited from the training. Participants expressed some concerns about applying the skills and requested additional resources, such as information on High Growth industries, occupations and target audiences.

Informal feedback about the usefulness of early outreach materials, produced in 2000 and 2001, prompted OA to develop additional materials. A plan was submitted for developing an assortment of outreach materials. Under guidance from OA, a

generic brochure, six industry-specific fact sheets, table-top exhibits, and banners were developed, designed, produced and distributed to the six regions.

The ACA committees/work-groups presented the Secretary of Labor with their recommendations for advancing apprenticeship. Some of the recommendations were implemented, based on feasibility and resource priorities. In particular, competency-based career lattice apprenticeships were developed as a result of five ETA grants, in health care, information technology (IT), high-tech manufacturing (metalworking), geospatial, and child care.

ACA members stressed the importance of forming partnerships with employers, educational institutions, and the workforce development system, especially One-Stop centers. They made several recommendations including:

- Assessing the benefits of initial staff training to determine additional training needs;
- Evaluating outreach tactics to determine their effectiveness and modifying them accordingly;
- Developing new outreach materials and continuing to advance apprenticeship into High Growth industries;
- Targeting new audiences, such as counselors, parents, and students and changing the image of Registered Apprenticeship to a highly desirable career path; and
- Holding focus groups with successful program sponsors to determine best practices.

A directory of sponsors of Registered Apprenticeship programs was developed for eight High Growth industries: health care, IT, social services, security, transportation, energy, geospatial, and aerospace.

PHASE 3 - EVALUATION

To measure the outcomes of the Initiative, a plan was prepared for the evaluation of all phases between the 2001-2006 period, including capacity building efforts, implementation and outputs, and expected outcomes. The plan was submitted on November 25, 2003, but was never approved for implementation. However, several components of the Initiative were evaluated, including initial staff training, selected outreach materials, and an assessment of the value of Registered Apprenticeship in six selected industries.

Staff reactions to the training were evaluated at the time each training session was held. As indicated earlier, staff and managers benefited from the training and requested additional types of training.

To improve Registered Apprenticeship outreach materials, staff feedback was gathered on the usefulness of the generic brochure and fact sheets. The majority of apprenticeship staff said the materials were effective in communicating Registered Apprenticeship to their audiences. They requested additional industry- and state-specific materials.

In the fall of 2004, an assessment was conducted on the value of Registered Apprenticeship in six industries, with particular focus on how it addressed employer needs for a skilled workforce. Although the industries examined had just begun to integrate the Registered Apprenticeship model into their training strategies, data gathered showed that the training model met a number of workforce needs including:

- Retention of employees;
- Continuous skills development;
- High productivity and quality of services;
- Effective partnerships with educational institutions;
- Capacity building through collaborations with apprenticeship stakeholders; and
- Workforce diversity.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The Office of Apprenticeship (OA) and its contractors implemented most of the strategies proposed in the Advancing Apprenticeship implementation plan and were successful in advancing Registered Apprenticeship into high growth industries. To continue responding to the evolving economy and the changing needs of employers, OA continues to expand Registered Apprenticeship into other High Growth industries.

Data gathered revealed the need to educate target industries and audiences, as well as raise awareness about Registered Apprenticeship. Data also showed the need to improve the image of apprenticeship and promote career ladders as a valuable component of the system.

To educate employers and the general public, it was necessary to equip apprenticeship staff with tools and tactics for effective outreach. Field staff received training in sales techniques, while apprenticeship managers received additional training in managing the process of advancing apprenticeship. It is essential to continually reinforce the consultative and management skills learned by field staff and managers respectively, to ensure their use and effectiveness. OA would benefit from institutionalizing the training process.

It would also be helpful for OA to evaluate and measure the extent to which apprenticeship staff members have applied the learned skills and how the outreach methods used have resulted in increased apprenticeship programs and employer sponsors. The findings would form the basis for additional training or resources needed.

Apprenticeship staff reported that the outreach materials produced were effective in communicating the message of Registered Apprenticeship to their target audiences. They requested additional industry- and state-specific materials. Feedback also revealed that certain field staff had not received all the materials produced. It would be helpful to establish an effective distribution system.

In addition to gaining feedback from apprenticeship field staff on the usefulness of the outreach materials, it is important to measure their quality and effectiveness in communicating the value of

Registered Apprenticeship to the target audiences. This would determine what additional products would be helpful in reaching stakeholders and potential sponsors.

The assessment report on the effectiveness of Registered Apprenticeship in six selected industries was well received. The report, which was produced in industry-specific booklets, may also be used as a promotional piece. It would be helpful to OA to sponsor similar studies in other High Growth industries, to determine best practices. The information gathered will be shared with potential sponsors within the same industries or with other industries.

Throughout the duration of the Initiative, the Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (ACA) subcommittees/workgroups made several recommendations to the Secretary of Labor on advancing Registered Apprenticeship. Their recommendations were in line with the research and focus group findings and reflect industry demands and workforce needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on data gathered during the three phases of the Advancing Apprenticeship Initiative, the following recommendations were offered:

Recommendation #1: Education and Outreach
Continue to support field staff in educating target industries and audiences, and raising awareness of the viability of Registered Apprenticeship in meeting skill shortages and workforce needs. Support should include resources and training to better understand specific industries and their need for skilled workers. It should also include updating the information on employment trends in High Growth industries.

Recommendation #2: Staff Training

Evaluate the extent in which OA field staff and managers apply the Consultative/Solutions Sales skills learned and the extent to which the outreach tactics used have resulted in increased apprenticeship programs and employer sponsors. Modify the tactics according to the findings. Provide additional training on specific industries and occupations. Reinforce consultative and managers' skills training on a regular basis.

Recommendation #3: Outreach Materials

Evaluate the effectiveness of outreach materials in communicating the value of Registered Apprenticeship to target audiences. Design, develop, and produce additional materials, based on data gathered. Establish a distribution system to ensure all field staff receive adequate supplies of the outreach materials.

Recommendation #4: Best Practices

Gather data from successfully implemented Registered Apprenticeship programs on best practices and effective strategies in advancing apprenticeship. Use the data to modify outreach tactics and to design, develop, and produce outreach materials to be shared with potential sponsors within the same industries or with other industries. Sponsor studies similar to the assessment of six selected industries.

Recommendation #5: Partnerships

Focus on forming linkages with employers, educational institutions, and the workforce development system (One-Stop Centers). Hold focus groups to gain input on marketing Registered Apprenticeship to the educational community and One-Stop Centers.