



ApprenticeshipUSA

FACTSHEET

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Employers and Program Sponsors

New Tools and Resources for Employers and Program Sponsors to build a Diverse Apprentice Workforce

Registered Apprenticeship is a powerful tool for employers to develop a top-notch, state-of-the-art workforce to stay competitive. This tool works best when apprenticeship programs include Americans from all backgrounds.

The Department's rules have long provided that employers cannot discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin and sex, in addition to requiring sponsors to take affirmative action efforts to ensure equal opportunity in apprenticeships, but the previous Apprenticeship EEO regulations had not been updated since 1978. In that time, both the realities of the workforce and the landscape of EEO law changed substantially. Through the final rule, OA is modernizing and streamlining the regulations in an effort to make it easier for apprenticeship sponsors to comply with them and to improve the size and quality of the applicant pool and thus of the apprenticeship programs.

Sponsors will benefit from these proactive efforts to lower barriers to participation and increase access to a broader range of applicants. Through these advancements, program sponsors will be able to make use of new talent pools, and apprenticeship program quality will improve. Apprenticeships are essential to building tomorrow's workforce and strengthening the middle class. By adapting and transforming the model to 21st century realities – we can make this tool more effective than ever. And when it comes to apprenticeships, diversity pays for all involved.

In updating its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) regulations, the Office of Apprenticeship offers assistance to employers and other apprenticeship sponsors to increase access to a diverse applicant pool.



Key Provisions of the Final Rule to Support Employers and Other Sponsors in Attracting Diverse Talent:

The final rule provides several opportunities to increase employer and other sponsors' engagement in attracting a diverse pool of talent. The final rule:

- **Allows new program sponsors additional time to establish affirmative action programs (AAP)** - For those new program sponsors that are required to establish an AAP (generally, those that have five or more apprentices in their program), the final rule provides up to two years for preparing and initiating their AAP. During this time, Registration Agencies will also be able to provide technical assistance to help sponsors comply.
- **Streamlines the process for goal-setting.** The final rule states that just two factors need to be considered when determining the availability of individuals for apprenticeships rather than the five listed in the previous regulations. In addition, the rule explains in clear terms the steps required to determine whether women, a particular minority group, or people with disabilities are underutilized and provides clear directions for establishing goals.
- **Simplifies procedures.** This final rule simplifies the regulatory structure currently governing selection procedures, providing sponsors greater flexibility in selecting apprentices for their programs.
- **Adds disability, age (40 or older), sexual orientation, and genetic information to protected groups for nondiscrimination purposes.** This change will ensure that the EEO regulations for registered apprenticeship are consistent with other Federal EEO laws developed since 1978. The sections of this final rule regarding nondiscrimination for individuals with disabilities are consistent with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's final rule implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008. This consistency will allow sponsors to harmonize compliance with the apprenticeship EEO rules with their existing EEO compliance measures under other laws.

Technical Assistance to Sponsors

Under this final rule, the U.S. Department of Labor commits to meeting the technical assistance needs of employers and other sponsors to promote equal opportunity. Measures reflecting this commitment will include the following:

- A sample written affirmative action plan that can be utilized by a broad range of sponsors across a variety of industries.
- Identification of relevant recruitment sources, either through publication on our website or through more targeted communication.
- Assistance and guidance for sponsors to help with their anti-harassment training. The Department plans to provide anti-harassment training materials that can be adapted for sponsors' and SAAs' use, and we will promote and encourage effective anti-harassment training among employers and apprenticeship sponsors.
- Continuing assistance to sponsors in conducting their availability and utilization analyses by helping sponsors to derive the appropriate availability figures for their programs and providing tools in support of these efforts.
- Model language for sponsors to use when offering opportunities for individuals with disabilities to voluntarily self-identify.

The Department has additionally provided tools and resources to diversify apprenticeship through the 2015 American Apprenticeship Initiative grant program, which supports programs that have a focus on including underrepresented populations, including women, people of color, and individuals with disabilities. Visit: <https://www.dol.gov/featured/apprenticeship/grants>.