

WORKING TOGETHER: APPRENTICESHIP & FINANCIAL SERVICES

This document summarizes a June 2020 call for ASE & SAE grantees. The call featured speakers from The Hartford and Aon. Speakers discussed resources and promising practices in using Registered Apprenticeship in the financial services sector.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

- The Hartford is a Fortune 500 company and a leading investment and insurance company. The Hartford uses apprenticeship to attract and keep talent, as well as to ensure more diversity among its job candidates. For more information, email Vice President of Claims Learning Mark Wagner at Mark.Wagner@thehartford.com or Claims Apprenticeship/ Internship Manager Cindy Angelini at Cindy.Angelini@thehartford.com.
- Aon is a professional services firm with 50,000 employees in 120 countries and an apprenticeship program in Illinois. Aon played a vital role in creating the Chicago Apprenticeship Network, which brings local businesses together and sets long-term workforce strategies that are mutually beneficial to the region and its workers. To learn more, email Dan Serota, Aon's Manager of U.S. Public Affairs, at Dan.Serota@aon.com.

WHY APPRENTICESHIP WORKS IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Hartford and Aon rely on their apprenticeship programs to address three key recruitment challenges faced in the insurance sector: an aging workforce, a low retention rate, and a lack of diversity among applicants. Apprenticeship allows these businesses to provide their own training, making up for the little to no post-secondary education on the insurance industry available. In addition, they can recruit individuals who are qualified but do not have the formal undergraduate experience normally required for these positions. Before establishing U.S. apprenticeships, Aon had United Kingdom-based apprenticeship programs, which increased retention rates, so it began to emulate those programs in the United States.

A LOOK AT APPRENTICESHIP IN FINANCIAL SERVICES TODAY

According to data collected by the U.S. Department of Labor, out of the approximately 8,800 active apprenticeship programs in the United States in 2019, only 19 were in the finance and insurance sector, and those programs had 206 active apprentices, out of a sector-wide workforce of more than 8 million. While the financial sector makes up 5.3 percent of overall employment in the United States, it only represents 0.7 percent of active apprentices, though there is anticipated apprenticeship growth in this sector, especially in such occupations as claims adjuster, insurance underwriter, and bank teller.

Both The Hartford and Aon have time-based programs, though The Hartford makes allowances for individuals who already have certain competencies.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Partnering with colleges can be crucial in financial service sector apprenticeships. Both Aon and The Hartford have partnered with local colleges, which has enabled them to continuously improve training, as colleges have proven to be nimble with adjusting curricula as needed, and that dexterity has proven equally valuable when having to move to a virtual setting due to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. Both companies have also found ways for apprentices to earn college credits as they progress through the programs, and Aon requires that apprentices fulfill the requisites to graduate from their partner community college with an associate's degree.

Developing partnerships with other employers in the financial services sector can help increase diversity. The Chicago Apprenticeship Network (CAN) has put out the [Chicago Apprenticeship Playbook](#) to help companies address skill and training gaps and provide underrepresented groups access to professional jobs. With more than 40 companies within CAN, employers are able to create a talented and diverse ecosystem that enhances the job market for all, regardless of being in competition. More companies are joining, largely due to having Chicago's city colleges working closely with the private sector to create highly targeted apprenticeships. Currently, there are 41 employers and more than 700 apprentices in the network.

Incorporating technology into apprenticeship programs ensures your labor force is ready for the future. In The Hartford's Workforce for the Future initiative, employers are developing proprietary technologies that are embedded into the company's apprenticeship programs, which helps apprentices attain the specialized skills they will need as employees. Aon has been hosting virtual events with the goal of informing both employers and potential apprentices about apprenticeship. One strategy Aon uses is virtual "speed dating" to find good matches and expose employers and apprentices to each other. Virtual events also sometimes allow more apprentices to join than in-person events would allow.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Apprenticeship.gov's Financial Services](#) page links to a toolkit, competency models, apprenticeship standards in high-demand financial services occupations, and more.
- The [Apprenticeship in Financial Services](#) page on Workforce GPS offers program examples, outreach materials, and other resources to help expand apprenticeship in the financial services sector.
- [The Hartford's website](#) provides details on their apprenticeship programs.
- [The Apprentices at Aon website](#) offers information on their Illinois-based apprenticeship program.
- Chicago Apprenticeship Network's [Apprenticeship 2020](#) initiative is working to address employer barriers in launching apprenticeships.