TRANSCRIPT OF WEBCAST

WHAT IS REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP?
A PRIMER FOR WORKFORCE SYSTEM STAFF TO SUPPORT WIOA IMPLEMENTATION
Hello! and WELCOME to this recorded webinar on Registered Apprenticeship, a primer for workforce system staff to support WIOA implementation.

Today’s learning objectives are outlined on your slide. First, it’s important that we clarify what the national system IS and how it’s organized. Second – and this is absolutely critical – we will talk about the differences between registered and non-registered apprenticeship, which are substantive. We’ll also discuss the core components of EVERY registered apprenticeship program, in addition to the key players and roles in each program. …there are also numerous myths around registered apprenticeship, and it’s important that we dispel those myths and present the facts. We will cover two key components of something called a “work process schedule.” …and finally, you will know where to go for additional information and support, and we’ve provided a number of helpful websites in that regard.

The national SYSTEM is called APPRENTICESHIPUSA, and what you’re looking at is our brand and our promotional picture of the United States covered with apprenticeship-related verbiage. You’ll be seeing more and more of the ApprenticeshipUSA logo and brand, as well as our promotional picture. PART of the reason for that is because registered apprenticeship has been on the move!

That INCLUDES unprecedented investments to support ApprenticeshipUSA. In 2015, we announced 41 grantees for a historic $175 million dollar investment to expand registered apprenticeship and – in 2016 – we saw the first programmatic funding APPROPRIATED for registered apprenticeship. That in itself is historic, and we’re hoping to see an apprenticeship appropriation as a regular part of the annual federal budget.

The Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium or “RACC” is another “piece” of ApprenticeshipUSA, representing a partnership between the Department of Education and the Department of Labor where Registered Apprenticeship completion certificates count towards a post-secondary degree. In other words, the Completion Certificate is recognized as a substantive and quality assessment of proficiency, and that proficiency will translate into college credits at numerous educational institutions, with the number of institutions growing every week. Of course, we’d like every college and university to join the RACC but it is voluntary.

ApprenticeshipUSA also has performance metrics and numerical goals or targets just like the WIOA core programs. They’re not the same metrics, but they are definitely mutually supportive. In other words, engaging with registered apprenticeship will not just support the goals of ApprenticeshipUSA – which you can see are rather ambitious – but it will enhance workforce system outcomes as well.

As you can see from the slide, by the end of the second quarter of FY 16 – or by March 31, 2016 – we had roughly 488,000 active apprentices in the United States, which is close to achieving our Annual Goal of 500,000 active apprentices. Our longer term target is 750,000 active apprentices by the end of Fiscal Year 2019.
Let’s briefly mention some national statistics and study results pertaining to registered apprenticeship.

As noted on the slide, 87% of apprentices are employed after completing their programs, and with an average starting wage of approximately $50,000 per year. The return on investment or ROI is also rather impressive. [The first ROI study for employers was conducted by the Canadian government; the Canadian apprenticeship system is similar to that in the United States. However, that study was recently replicated by Houston Community College (in 2016), and the results were replicated, i.e., for every $1 spent by employers, there was a $1.50 return.]

As for the second ROI study referenced, this was a 2012 study conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

Today, we have over a thousand apprenticeable occupations in the United States. We have occupations from arson investigator, to animal trainer, to artificial glass eye maker, to beekeeper, to the more well-known occupations such as bricklayer, cabinetmaker, barber, pipefitter, carpenter, and the like.

As you can see from the slide, there are four required attributes of an occupation or trade in order for it to be determined “apprenticeable.” These four items are regulatory. First, the occupation must involve skills that can be learned in a practical way through structured and supervised on the job learning – at least 2,000 hours. That's our translation of a year – 2,000 hours. The occupation must also be recognized by the industry itself – we don’t make up occupations in our office. We listen to industry. The occupation must also include an academic component, and we recommend at least 144 hours for each year of the program.

ApprenticeshipUSA is ONE NATIONAL SYSTEM. In this national system that we call ApprenticeshipUSA, there are two different ways to register programs... Programs can be registered by the US Department of Labor or by State Apprenticeship Agencies that are recognized by the Department of Labor. As you can see, there’s a relatively even split between states where registration occurs by federal staff and where registration occurs by state staff.

Again, ApprenticeshipUSA is one system, although we have the distinction of OA States and SAA States. Most of the latter belong to NASTAD...

NASTAD and the Office of Apprenticeship work very closely together in support of ApprenticeshipUSA. In addition to what’s on your slide, we also have joint workgroups working on various items and improvement opportunities.

...But let’s move on to discuss more of the “nuts and bolts” of registered apprenticeship...

When it comes to “apprenticeship,” don’t believe everything you think!
For one thing, there are many MYTHS that surround registered apprenticeship and, to be quite honest, these myths are part of the “image challenge” we’re trying to address through ApprenticeshipUSA.

By way of example, registered apprenticeship is not just construction! The construction and building trades remain our bread and butter type of occupations, so to speak, but we have programs across industry sectors – including programs in health care, information technology, communications, transportation and logistics, and energy in addition to the building and construction trades.

Registered Apprenticeship is NOT just a second chance system. Simply put, it’s a pathway to the middle class and it could be the start of a long, fruitful and robust career, as some of the bullets on this slide indicate. It’s also not inconsistent with a college degree. Many completers go on to get their Associates or Bachelors – for instance, by working with colleges and universities that are part of the RACC.

And, whereas one of the myths or stereotypes is that registered apprenticeship programs are always union-based, that’s actually not true. Most registered apprenticeship programs in the United States today are non-union programs. (Most apprentices in the United States are with union programs, but most of the programs are non-union.)

Lastly, programs are NOT just time-based any longer. We now have competency based programs, and we have combination or “hybrid” programs that combine competency-based and time-based. When thinking about competency-based programs, think about the opportunities there for special populations who perhaps need additional time to attain proficiency in an area.

Let’s take a look at some of those myths and stereotypes in the context of a real person. This is Doug Posey. Like many students at that age, he didn’t like high school and was a solid D student. By the time Doug went to college, however, he was an A student. What happened in between was Registered Apprenticeship, which Doug himself describes as the best education he ever received. He started out as a pipefitter and today he has a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering. He’s also the Director of Apprenticeship at Houston Community College in Houston, TX – which, by the way, is one of the 41 grantees that received an American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant. As the slide indicates: Make no mistake! Registered Apprenticeship changes lives.

Okay, let’s move on to the DEFINITION of registered apprenticeship...

This is the OFFICIAL definition of Registered Apprenticeship. Two key pieces noted in the definition are OJT and related instruction.

Also note the difference between the previous “brand” and the current.

That was the official definition, but here’s another take on that official definition.
Re: the last bullet came from Secretary of Labor Tom Perez.
It’s also college without the debt. Instead of “train and pray,” it’s “earn while you learn.”

Does it matter if we’re talking about registered apprenticeship programs versus programs that are not registered?? You bet it does! In fact, as the slide indicates, it makes all the difference in the world. Think of registered apprenticeship as the JD Powers and Associates type of apprenticeship, or the type of apprenticeship that has the Good Housekeeping seal of approval. Registered apprenticeship means QUALITY. It means STANDARDS. And, as a testimony to its standards and quality attributes, veterans can only use their GI Bill benefits to pay for registered apprenticeship programs – not non-registered programs. In addition, only registered apprenticeship programs have the automatic distinction of being an Eligible Training Provider under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Every REGISTERED apprenticeship programs consists of these five components. These five components are part of every registered apprenticeship program, whether it’s a mom and pop operation with one or two apprentices, or whether it’s a Fortune 100 organization with hundreds of apprentices.

The first component is ALWAYS the employer. You cannot have a registered apprenticeship program without an employer. They provide the foundation for the program and they are also the provider of the OJT which, as indicated previously, is expected to be at least 2000 hours or one year. The related instruction component – which we call RTI – is basically the curriculum associated with the occupation, which we recommend is at least 144 hours per year. Also, every program has AT LEAST ONE progressive wage increase that demonstrates an increase in proficiency. And, at the completion of a registered apprenticeship program, there is a stackable, portable, Registered Apprenticeship Completion Certificate, which is a recognized post-secondary credential under WIOA that is signed by the Secretary of Labor.

When we look at the difference between REGISTERED apprenticeship programs and non-registered programs, it’s all about QUALITY and STANDARDS. For instance, non-registered programs will likely NOT have all five of the components that are part of every registered program – such as the RTI or classroom component. There may also be compromises in safety and quality standards, whereas every registered program undergoes a rather intensive performance evaluation consistent with our regulations – which is also the reason why WIOA Operating Guidance specifies that registered programs “go through a detailed application and vetting procedure”).

Here are the routine questions our office and our staff receive all the time: What does the OJT look like?!?! What does the RTI look like?!?! How long is the program?!?! …and the answer is that it depends. It all depends on the occupation. Let’s take some examples.
For the occupation of police officer – and we have many registered apprenticeship programs for police, including in Edmond, OK – and the OK Highway Patrol also utilizes registered apprenticeship. So if you’re in OK and you’re pulled over by a highway patrol officer, yes, that officer went through a registered apprenticeship program. Now, would it make sense to give a
prospective police officer a firearm and a squad car and tell them to go forth and “protect and serve?” No. That would be ridiculous. So it makes sense that, for that particular occupation, the related instruction is up front. We call that front-loaded RTI and, for police departments, that means the Academy. When they complete their Academy instruction, they move on to the OJT portion of the program.

For the occupation of carpenter, the RTI is usually parallel with the OJT – and this is the type of schedule most people are familiar with, where the individual works during the day and goes to school at night or on the weekends.

For the occupation of drilling rig operator, or roustabout, the RTI is segmented around the OJT. For instance, apprentices might have to spend one or more weeks per year on OSHA training or HAZMAT training.

So you see how flexibility is absolutely critical to meet the needs of various employers and various occupations.

The OJT portion and RTI portion of a registered apprenticeship program are two key pieces of what we call THE WORK PROCESS SCHEDULE. This schedule resides in the Standards of Apprenticeship, which every single registered apprenticeship program has. That document contains all the details, including the details around OJT and RTI.
Let’s look at an example....

This is the OJT schedule for the occupation of MEDICAL ASSISTANT. Notice that it’s 4000 hours of on the job training, meaning it’s a two-year program. All of the required activities and the related number of hours are clearly listed and defined.

This is the RTI schedule for the same occupation. And remember that the RTI is basically the academic component, or the classroom training component. Like the OJT schedule, everything that must be learned in order to be proficient on the job is listed here along with the number of hours (since this is a time-based program). Also, as you can see with this two-year program, there are at least 144 hours of related instruction for each of the two years of the program because the total number of RTI hours is 310.

Here is the progressive wage schedule that’s also part of the Work Process Schedule, which is part of the Standards of Apprenticeship. As you can see, there are TWO progressive wage increases in this schedule with the dollar amount specified.

Here is another sample wage schedule, where we see five incremental increases that are based on a percentage of the journeyworker wage, not a specified amount. Here, a fully proficient worker earns $38 an hour and, as is typically the case, a new apprentice will earn 50% of the journeyworker rate.
Again, whether the progressive wage schedule is based on dollars or a percent, this highlights the flexibility in designing registered apprenticeship programs.

Let’s move on to the roles and players that are involved in every registered apprenticeship program. Every registered apprenticeship program must have a SPONSOR. This is the entity that administers the program, and they are responsible for the paperwork. Sponsors can be employers, community colleges, or even workforce development boards and other workforce intermediaries.

Of course, we can’t have a registered apprenticeship program without having an employer who represents the foundation of the program and who provides the on-the-job learning component. We could have one employer, several employers, or an employer association. Remember that “related instruction” is a core component of every registered apprenticeship program and there must be a provider of that RTI. The provider could be the employer, a community college, or other entity.

Think about what we’ve said thus far about this slide. We can be talking about three different entities – a program sponsor, employer, and RTI provider – or we could be talking about two entities, or we could be talking about one entity meaning the employer. Again, flexibility is critical in our work. Yes, we have regulations governing what we do, but flexibility is inherent because it’s necessary.

As for the workforce system, there are opportunities for partnership with respect to current apprentices and prospective apprentices. This is part of the cultural change we are trying to catalyze with ApprenticeshipUSA – a more robust engagement with the public workforce system.

There are NUMEROUS benefits to employers who have registered apprenticeship programs. First off, and as we’ve said repeatedly, this is a flexible training strategy that can be customized to meet the needs of any business. Apprentices can be new hires or current employees. Some of the documented benefits of registered apprenticeship include reduced turnover, increased productivity and safety, lower costs for recruitment, increased diversity, and the creation of a mentor pool and career pathways – something emphasized in WIOA.

We have a number of tools and resources to support employers wanting to launch a registered apprenticeship program (our Quick Start Toolkit), a guidebook containing funding possibilities from six federal agencies, guidance and a publication on pre-apprenticeship, and information for colleges and universities interested in joining the RACC. There are a multitude of resources and tools on our website, which is dol.gov/apprenticeship.

That concludes this recorded session. Thank you for your time and thank you for your support of Registered Apprenticeship and ApprenticeshipUSA!