



APPRENTICESHIPS

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Scaling Up Registered Apprenticeships at Illinois Community Colleges



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Scaling Up Registered Apprenticeships at Illinois Community Colleges

The United States Department of Labor (DOL) defines apprenticeships as “an arrangement that includes a paid-work component and an educational or instructional component, wherein an individual obtains workplace-relevant knowledge and skills” (DOL, n.d.a.). Apprenticeships serve to provide education and employment to students and adults seeking to compete in today’s economy.

Apprenticeship programs keep pace with advancing technologies and innovations in training and human resource development through the complete involvement of employers in the educational process. While it is used in traditional industries such as construction and manufacturing, apprenticeship is also instrumental for training and development in growing industries, such as healthcare, information technology, transportation and logistics, and energy. (DOL, n.d.a.)

According to ApprenticeshipUSA, there is a 91% retention rate for apprentices completing programs. Varying apprenticeship models offer unique options for interested participants.

There are a few different types of apprenticeships: youth, pre, and registered. Youth apprenticeships consist of academic and technical classroom instruction combined with on-the-job learning experiences for youth ages 16–24. Pre-apprenticeships focus on a specific career path and work readiness through a prior-to-hire education model. Registered apprenticeships provide participants with structured on-the-job training guided by an experienced mentor or journeyman. Other work-based-learning opportunities such as internships, co-ops, and job shadows can also serve as a pathway to the registered apprenticeship (Owens & Welton, 2016).

This earn-and-learn education model is registered with the DOL. Apprentices receive a stipend or wages and are engaged with an employer from day one. At the end of the program participants receive industry recognized credentials and a DOL certificate of completion. Registered apprenticeships may be time-based, competency-based or, a hybrid of both and usually last between one and six years. Upon completion, a fully-proficient employee receives an average salary of \$50,000 – \$60,000 annually and approximately \$300,000 more during their career than non-apprenticeship workers (DOL, n.d.a.). Registering an apprenticeship program provides several benefits from the DOL, such as technical assistance and support, national credentials, quality standards, tax credits, and federal resources (DOL, n.d.a.). These benefits provide the necessary support for apprenticeship program sponsors to start and maintain their programs. The focus of this report is on apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships within community colleges in the state of Illinois.

National Emphasis on Apprenticeships

The [Obama Administration](#) is largely responsible for the heightened national emphasis on increasing workers’ access to apprenticeship opportunities with the launch of [ApprenticeshipUSA](#) in 2014, a DOL initiative to expand apprenticeships nationwide. Also as a call to action, the Obama Administration sponsored the first White House Summit on American Apprenticeships, where leading employers, unions, local workforce boards, and education institutions came together to brainstorm ideas for capacity building and expansion of apprenticeship opportunities for all Americans. As a result, President Obama committed to doubling the number of apprenticeships in five years by releasing an initial \$175 million in American Apprenticeship Grants to 46 public-private partnerships that expand high-quality apprenticeships (White House, 2016).

To further emphasize the importance of job-driven education and training in FY2016 the Obama Administration released another \$90 million to support nationwide expansion of apprenticeship programs. DOL reserved a third of this money to boost industry-led partnerships in high-tech industries like healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing, where apprenticeships are not widely implemented, as well as increase diversity for the most underserved and underrepresented populations, especially [opportunity youth](#), low-income individuals, racial/ethnic minorities, women, and people with disabilities (Belfield, Levin & Rosen, 2015; White House, 2016). Then, two-thirds of this money was released to states via

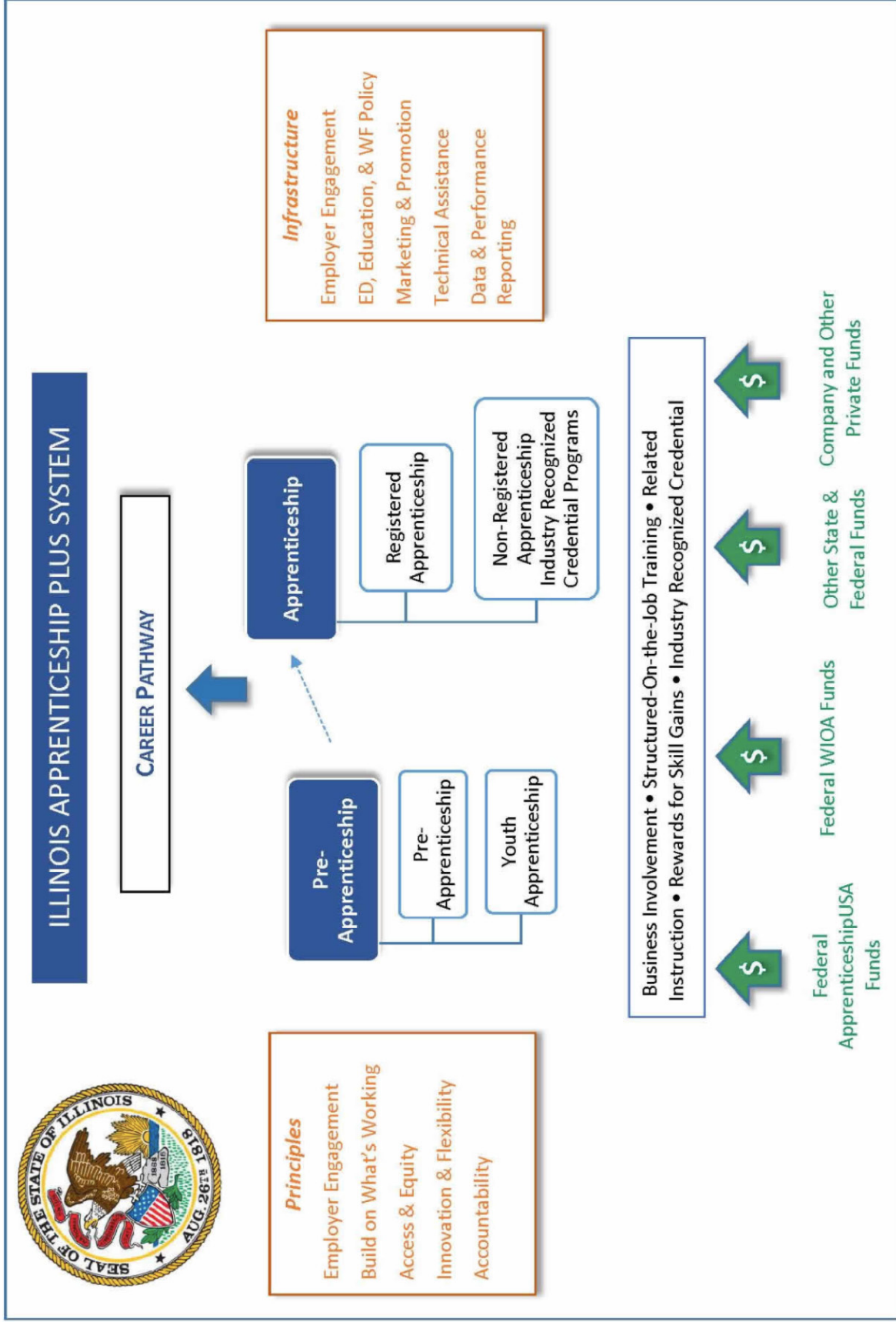
two specific grant programs. First, the ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grant (\$9.5 million) was awarded to states to design strategic plans and cultivate partnerships that advance and diversify apprenticeship offerings regionally and locally. The second funding source, the [ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grants Competition](#) (\$50 million) supports states in the scale-up and expansion of apprenticeships. For this grant, state recipients are tasked with integrating apprenticeships in their education and workforce systems; collaborating with industry, workforce and other key intermediaries to expand apprenticeships to new sectors; building state capacity to support employers in the development of new apprenticeship programs; increasing participation in apprenticeship programs through state innovations, incentives, and system reforms; and, most importantly, developing and applying strategies for diversity and inclusion in apprenticeship programs (DOL, 2016, n.d.b.).

Scaling Up Apprenticeships in Illinois

According to DOL most recent 2016 data there are approximately 13,754 active registered apprentices, 4,844 new apprentices, 201 active apprenticeship programs, and 7 new apprenticeship programs in Illinois. Recently, Illinois received a \$1.3 million ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant from the DOL to aggressively increase registered apprenticeship opportunities across the state, as well as pre-apprenticeship programs that are formally linked to registered apprenticeships. Facilitated by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and in partnership with the [Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Apprenticeship Committee](#), this grant funds the [Illinois Apprenticeship Plus System](#) project, which is a statewide effort to initiate a comprehensive and integrative apprenticeship system in Illinois. In addition to expanding registered apprenticeships throughout the state, this project will host state and regional roundtables to raise awareness and interest in apprenticeships. According to the Apprenticeship Plus Framework (Figure 1) there are four different education and training options that use the apprenticeship model as a career pathway: Registered Apprenticeship, Industry-Recognized Credential Programs, Youth Apprenticeship, and Pre-Apprenticeship. Also, the framework is based on five key elements of apprenticeship:

1. Business Involvement;
2. Structured On-the-Job Training;
3. Related Instruction;
4. Rewards for Skill Gains; and
5. Industry Recognized Credentials. (DCEO, n.d., para. 1)

The [state projects](#) it will serve over 3,030 individuals participating in apprenticeship opportunities in the next four years, which includes increasing participation from women, persons with disabilities, communities of color, opportunity youth, individuals transitioning from incarceration, and low-income individuals in fields such as manufacturing, healthcare, and transportation, distribution and logistics. In early 2017, the state announced two separate Apprenticeship Plus grant competitions, one focused on serving youth and the other adults. Also, the [Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth](#) (Children's Cabinet) has made Illinois Apprenticeship Plus one of the cabinet's three inaugural projects to develop a framework for best practice models in youth apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and other workplace learning programs that can be implemented statewide (Illinois.gov, n.d.). Thus far, the Children's Cabinet has partnered with the organization [Young Invincibles](#), who recently released a report about a series of roundtables they conducted across the state of Illinois with 125 young adults and service providers to gather feedback on how the state should design youth apprenticeship programs (Steva, 2017).



Note: Reprinted from [Apprenticeship Plus](#), by Illinois workNet Center, n.d., Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

Figure 1. Illinois Apprenticeship Plus Model

CTE Registered Apprenticeship Study

This study began with an initial survey to gather general information regarding registered apprenticeship programs in the state of Illinois. The survey was hosted via Survey Monkey and sent to 50 community college leaders, garnering a 46% response rate (23 participants). We then asked survey participants if they would be interested in participating in an in-depth interview of approximately 45–60 minutes. These interviews sought to gather detailed information on each institution's registered apprenticeship program, such as admission requirements, programmatic resources and supports, employment and demographic data, and partnerships. From the 23 survey participants, eight agreed to participate in an in-depth interview. Four of the interviewees are deans of career and technical education, two are assistant deans in computer business technology, and two are director/assistant director of academic affairs and career pathways. Survey participants indicated varying roles in relation to registered apprenticeship programs. Ten participants were directly involved in supporting apprenticeship opportunities, eight assist in the implementation of apprenticeship opportunities, and eight collaborate with program staff and faculty on directing apprenticeship programs (see Figure 2).

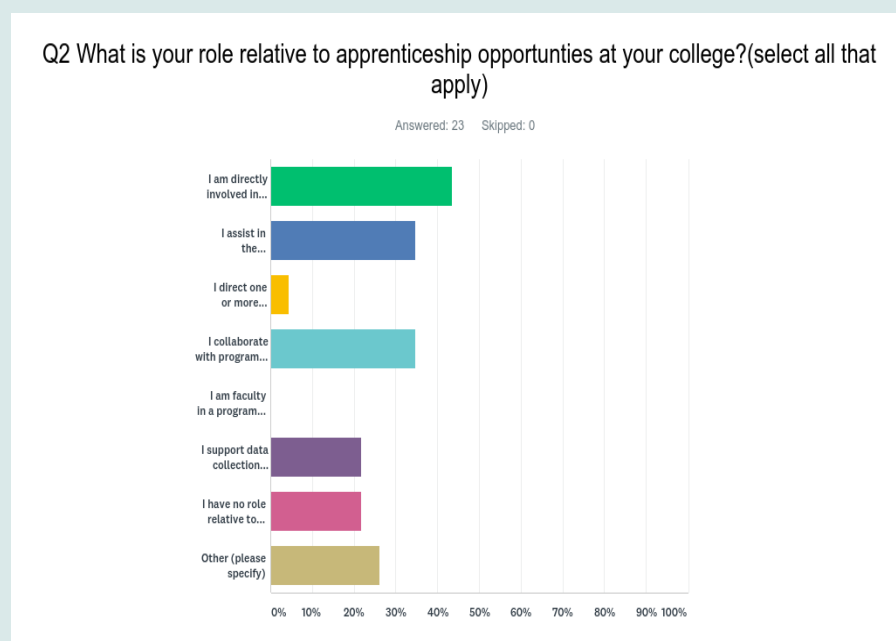


Figure 2. Participants' Involvement with Apprenticeships

Community Colleges are Still Learning and Developing

According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) [18](#) out of 48 community colleges in the state provide some form of apprenticeship training or curricula, and [16](#) are members of the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC) with the DOL. However, contrary to popular assumptions, most Illinois community colleges are still learning and developing registered apprenticeship programs. One interviewee shared,

We end up having an employer who took a class and really liked it. Then goes back to the shop and says we have three or four guys who would really benefit from taking this class, so it is a mixed bag of sometimes independent study or being enrolled in a course that is about to run. So the reason why I am saying this is because now we are looking at developing some type of structure for our apprenticeship programs, because right now it doesn't have any structure; we really are doing these one offs, if you will, as independent studies.

There was one community college in particular that called their program an apprenticeship, but it was more of a paid internship. According to one participant, their paid internship is “not income a student can rely on while going to school.” Several interviewees described programs that were formal internship programs that they hoped to turn into apprenticeships.

We created a program a year or so later that is a subsidized internship program where we are getting funds from them to sponsor students to participate in the Goldman Sachs small business program and/or second stage companies that are creating growth plans that are trying to capitalize on new markets.

There are a few colleges that have registered apprenticeship programs; however most are in development, with the exception of [William Rainey Harper College’s](#) (Harper College) well-established and federally funded programs. Harper College and Illinois Central College are also [ApprenticeshipUSA LEADERS](#) that work with the DOL to offer their expertise in expanding registered apprenticeships across the state and the nation.

Per survey data, eight participating colleges indicated that they have registered apprenticeship programs, while eleven do not have any, and two are unsure. Based on our survey data, the chart below (see Figure 3) depicts the number of schools with registered apprenticeships in each cluster.

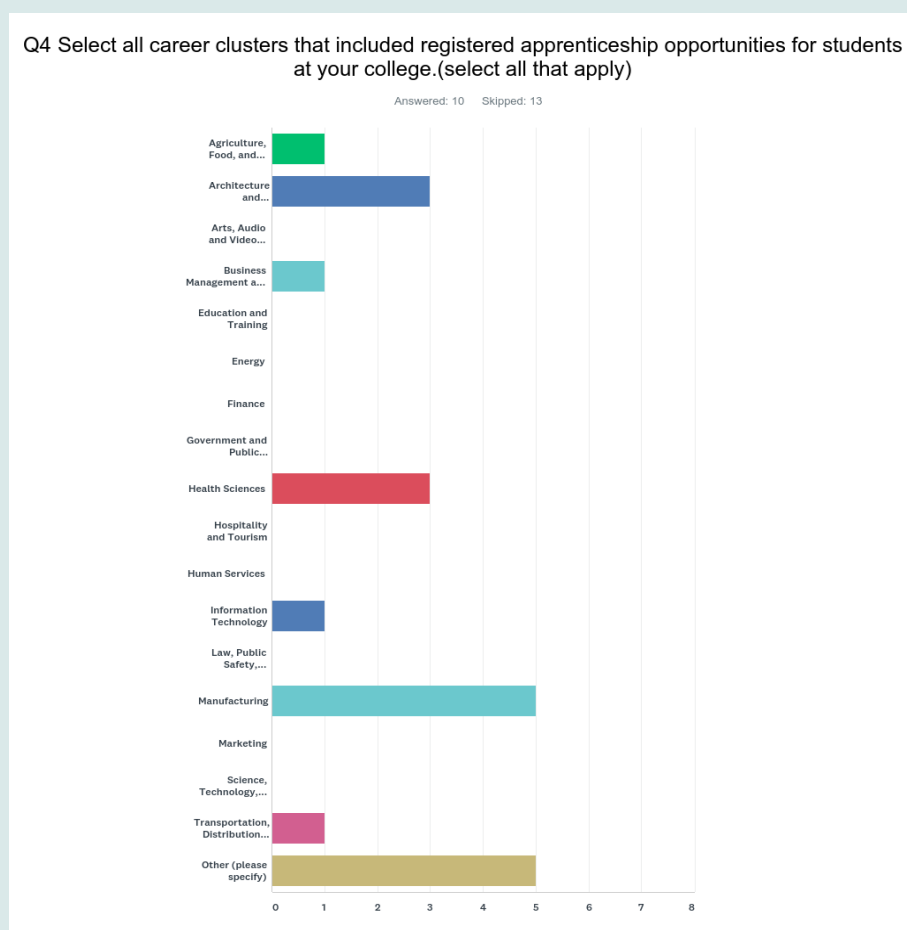


Figure 3. Registered Apprenticeships by Career Cluster

Of the 23 survey participants, only 10 answered the question regarding career clusters. The specific programs offered are: Construction Trades, Highway Construction Careers, Insurance, Certified Nursing Assistant, Associate in Applied Science Management, Industrial Maintenance, Industrial Maintenance Mechanic and Precision Machining, Precision Machining, Engineering Technology, Supply Chain Management, and Electrical. Two participating colleges indicated that they hoped to begin programs in the near future in Certified Nursing Assistant, Manufacturing, and Automotive Mechatronics. When asked to list the specific programs within each cluster only seven of the 23 participants chose to or were able to answer the question.

For many apprenticeship programs, interested students must complete various admission requirements or tests in order to qualify. Sometimes these requirements are through the school and other times they are from the employers. One participant explains,

The other one we have there's a GPA requirement along with other qualifications. So the students take 15 credit hours of technical content in which they need to have a 2.8 or higher GPA. Then we send them over for a number of assessments, which include an interview with an HR person, a personality test, some physical capability, and a couple of technical like electric mechanical proprietary tests.

For other schools there are no set requirements besides being college ready, because the employer determines apprenticeship qualifications.

Per survey and interview data, Illinois community colleges either do not have registered apprenticeship programs or are in the beginning stages of implementing them. To lighten their already overwhelming load, some colleges have sought out partnerships with various organizations and intermediaries such as the [German American Chamber of Commerce \(GACC\)](#) who specialize in developing registered programs. One interviewee concludes,

Our biggest partnership is with the GACC, and most of our employers are German companies, because they are used to the European model of apprenticeship. It's been a bit of a challenge to get American employers interested in apprenticeships. They're going, "well I can just hire somebody off the street." And while that might be true, what they end up doing is getting into a bidding war with all of their competitors for the same people.

Partnerships are imperative in order for the apprenticeship model to work effectively. Community colleges wishing to create sustainable programs need to cultivate long-lasting, reciprocal community partnerships.

Partnerships

Survey results indicate that the majority of partnerships are with industry and non-profits. The chart below (Figure 4) depicts the number of partnerships within each category. Each partnership will be unique to that specific organization; therefore it is important for community colleges to have clear and open lines of communication and a shared understanding of expectations.

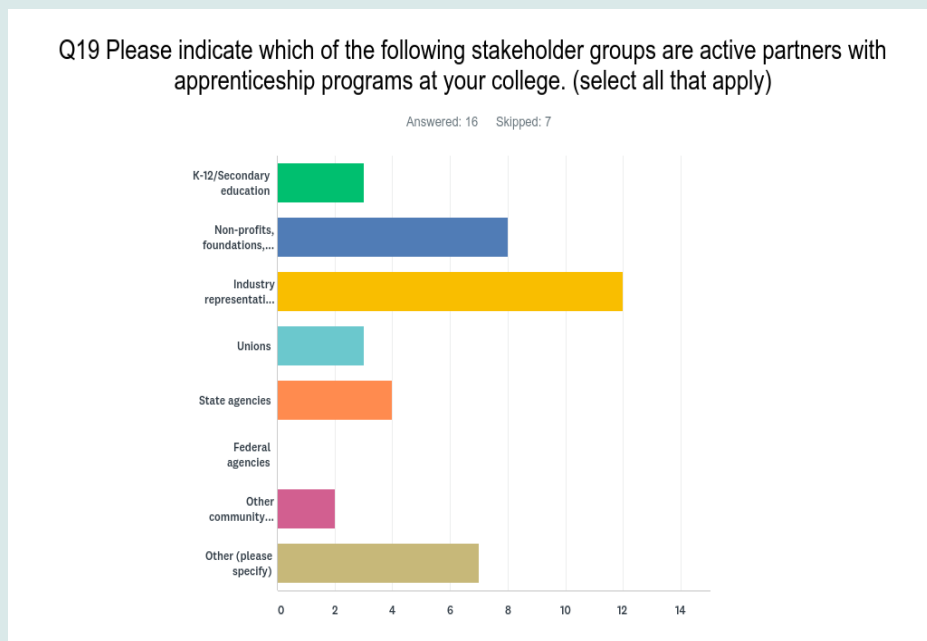


Figure 4. Stakeholder Groups and Partnerships

Interview data shows that there are several different types of partners, such as unions, intermediaries, and high schools. Intermediaries include the [GACC's Industry Consortium for Advanced Technical Training \(ICATT\)](#), [Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium \(RACC\)](#), and [National Institute for Women in Trades, Technology and Science \(IWITTS\)](#). The survey data shows that nine of the 23 participants offer pre-apprenticeships, and one of 23 offers youth apprenticeship. The pre-apprenticeship programs are in Industrial Maintenance Technology, Precision Machining, Automotive, Construction Management, Electronics (Computers: Forensics/Networking/Cyber Security), Heating and Air, Business/Accounting, and Welding. The youth apprenticeship is in manufacturing. One interviewee's institution hosts an event for high school girls to spark their interest in STEM but still struggle to enroll these students in their apprenticeship program. A few community colleges have worked with one another to build out their programs or collaborate on a shared program.

Interview participants expressed variances in the roles and responsibilities within their partnerships. Some community colleges have a less hands-on approach but feel they should do a better job of engaging with and checking in with these students. A participant laments,

We keep in touch with these students but we aren't tracking them as closely or advising them as closely as we do many of our other students because they are primarily off site. I'll say that is something that we could do better with these students. We aren't doing a great job following up with these students.

The community college referenced above seems to have a more employer-led apprenticeship program. The union approached this institution wanting to offer their employees an avenue to further their academic credentials. Other institutions have a more hands-on approach where they are directly involved in the day-to-day operations of their apprenticeship programs. For one institution, faculty have proven to be vital in the success of their apprenticeship programs. An interviewee shares,

One of the things we do in those programs is a lot of one on one mentoring with students. My engineering tech faculty are really good about pulling students aside and giving them a little bit of a "hey what's going on? What can we do? We really need to get you here. You know your employer is paying you to be here. We need to make sure that you're doing what you're supposed to be doing." . . . As the programs grow I anticipate us adding some additional personnel that would help with some of these things. As of right now we don't have any. The faculty and I work with the GACC, who works with the employers, and that's our structure.

Faculty's strong relationships with industry partners have built a solid trust factor. There are many issues that could arise in any type of business relationship.

Interview participants shared several strengths and weaknesses of their partnerships. Here, this participant discusses their institution's partnership with a union.

I would say one strength is that they have a very robust and well-developed curriculum to achieve the skills that they need those students to achieve. It's obviously rooted in the fact that they've [the union] been doing this for longer than just consulting with us. The students leave the program when they complete, very well versed and very well on a path to a high-paying job and stable employment for years to come if they choose to continue in the career field.

Conversely, another interviewee details the challenges they face with the smaller of their two apprenticeship programs due to industry and employer inconsistencies as well as lack of accountability.

With the smaller one it is demanding. The GPA can be a challenge. The discontinuity on the financial support is a challenge. Meaning that they earn a good pay for the eight weeks of work, but it comes after at least one semester of work and then it's not steady. It's not income a student can rely on while going to school. Also the industry doesn't have, I won't say a good reputation, but it's manufacturing in a particular industry that still has some

stigma as not being as clean as other career opportunities. It's hard to recruit students for that opportunity. There's also all these requirements that have presented challenges.

Structure and admission requirements are not the only challenges these institutions face. One interesting issue regards the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and how much information institutions can share with employers about students' academic progress in the programs. Legally colleges are forbidden from sharing this information however, employers are invested, oftentimes financially, and want to know if their apprentices are meeting academic expectations.

I mean the FERPA law is one of the things that we've come across, because in the apprenticeship program employers want to know how students are doing, and FERPA does get in the way because the students have to sign away their rights to their employer being able to get access to their records and for us to talk to their employers about how the students are doing.

Although many of the interview participants cited strong partnerships, some felt that additional partnerships would be helpful in scaling up their programs. For instance, an interview participant stated,

One of the areas I've tried to reach out to is some of the unions. . . . Some of the Unions are very interested in working with us; some are not. One Union basically said you give the students credit and we teach the classes. You don't do anything else and you can't compete with us. And I said, well no, that's not exactly a model I'm interested in using. Some of the other unions have been, we haven't really developed much with them, but they've been interested in working with us because they are seeing that they're not getting the people coming into the trades the way they used to.

Another interviewee would like to create DOL apprenticeship programs at their institution but is struggling to find employers. Community colleges are prepared to provide the curriculum for registered apprenticeships; however, "it's more the lack of companies in the area that are comfortable with the concept so that we can collaborate and identify candidates for these programs." In addition to more diverse partnerships, community colleges are lacking the necessary foundation and assistance to grow and maintain their programs.

Resources and Capacity to Support Apprenticeships

One major barrier to scaling up registered apprenticeship programs that community college leaders we spoke to mentioned is the lack of resources and capacity to sustain their programs. The maintenance and sustainability of a registered apprenticeship program largely depends on the level of employer commitment to the program. Some community college leaders discussed how their apprenticeship programs were either very small "niche" programs, or established organically if and when an employer approached them to enroll in some Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses for additional skill development. This piecemeal approach to developing an apprenticeship program for most community colleges consisted of low-enrollment independent study courses of three to five students that generated little revenue. Thus, for these community colleges, the resources they received to operate their apprenticeship programs were very employer dependent.

Only one community college received DOL grant funds to support the development of their registered apprenticeship programs, whereas, most community colleges surveyed reported that they did not receive external funds such as grants and admittedly struggled to find the funding needed to keep their registered apprenticeship programs going. One leader admitted that, "we haven't explored any funding sources yet, [but] we have had conversations with the Dean to see if there are funding sources out there to get the administrative support necessary to get the work done."

One positive resource was an employer who highly "championed" other work-based learning opportunities that are a pathway to the registered apprenticeship, such as funding for paid internships and special events to get students interested in their industry. Other examples of industry/employer investment included funding to support a full-time position working specifically with high schools to promote ca-

reer opportunities. One industry partner even had a county-level intergovernmental affairs person who introduced county-level legislation to support the development of registered apprenticeship programs. Also, most community colleges in our study claimed they had limited human capital in the form of faculty and staff to scale up and sustain registered apprenticeship programs. As one participant described,

Administration is a challenge, how do we make sure we have all the manpower to ensure our students are completing the program and get the credential that comes with it—we have to deliver on our product—and that is where funding source comes into play.

Most participants interviewed mentioned capacity issues as a major barrier to scaling up their registered apprenticeships. One problem expressed was that registered apprenticeships have not “gained enough momentum” because community colleges are “trying to do a lot of different things and serve a lot of different needs.” It was suggested that more resources, especially in terms of funding and personnel, are needed to make building registered apprenticeship programs a priority. One participant felt that their faculty and staff would not be “opposed to it [registered apprenticeships];” however,

I think that there would be, particularly in some of our career fields, a lot of receptivity to doing apprenticeships. I just don’t think our faculty think they have the capacity to do the foundational work to build the process, to build what policies would be in place to support it. What would be required from the employers? What would be required from the students? And I know the Department of Labor and other entities have sort of structured processes about what apprenticeships could look like and how they would be tracked and monitored, and it just seems like a lot of paperwork to take on and paperwork for the administrative function to take on. And I know the faculty don’t feel like they have the capacity for that. So we would need someone to embrace it fully and say yes. More like a directive from our leadership team to say we’re going to go all in on apprenticeships and this is how we’re going to do it with either additional resources or directed time that staff are pulled off one focus and on to this.

Ultimately, this participant suggested that leadership is key to getting the institutional-wide buy-in needed to make registered apprenticeship programs a priority.

Demographic Data, Equity, and Diversity

Only four community colleges out of the 23 survey participants reported that they collect demographic and employment data on their registered apprenticeship programs, two said they did not know, and 16 skipped the question. Of the participants we interviewed, most said that their data is primarily anecdotal, or if they do collect demographic data it is not necessarily quantifiable because the number of students participating in registered apprenticeships is small. As one participant pointed out,

We are very early in the evolution of this. Obviously we are very aware of the demographics of our group, but we just have the one cohort that just started. We only have single data points at this point. Certainly, we would be interested in knowing gender, ethnicity, and academic performance, and then job performance.

Two participants we interviewed admitted that they are not sure whether data is collected on their registered apprenticeship, and the reason for this could be that the apprenticeship is registered with the employer, and the community college merely provides curricular supports.

One participant commended their faculty on the amount of effort they put into gathering data on their students, which is student self-reported with very low response rates. He found that if “we want to know a year after graduation who is employed in the industry. . . we are going to send to the last known email address, so they may no longer use that email account or just not respond, so we have really low survey responses.” So faculty were then resourceful by using social media like Facebook and LinkedIn to reach out to their students. As a result, their response rate went from 13% to 70%, giving them a better snapshot of employment data for their graduates. However, gathering this information,

was weeks and months of doing that work (on the survey) to try and chase all that down. So I am looking forward to a better data system that would actually let us find that information without depending on student self-report.

When we asked what groups were underrepresented in their apprenticeship programs, most participants referred to gender equity issues, especially in STEM careers. Due to the nature of the work, the subject/industry areas as well as beliefs in “traditional” gender roles; apprenticeship programs have a hard time recruiting women. A participant discussed the struggle to get women involved in engineering, as well as their automotive program, despite recruitment efforts:

I think it’s the same problem we have across all colleges and universities. There just really is not, I mean we try very hard to reach out to women in engineering technology and automotive. We go out and meet with the high schools that are our feeder schools, when we meet with the students...we really try to focus on increasing the diversity but it’s been a challenge. These are jobs that are traditionally male jobs and despite our best efforts that’s socio mindset is hard to overcome. It’s just really tough to get women to automotive and to engineering. I know this is even something universities struggle with. It’s improving, it’s getting better because we don’t do the things in society that we did years ago with gender stereotyping. It still is a very slow process.

When this institution did recruit female students into STEM fields, they were mostly white women, which he found to be an equity concern because his community college is a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI). This participant expressed that, “I don’t really see that diversity that I’d love to see. I’d really love to see us be able to improve that. It’s a national problem.” Another institution boasted of having an all-female faculty in their information technology (IT) program and even worked with the national women’s organization IWITTS to recruit more female students in IT. Yet, these efforts did not increase female student enrollment. However, one institution did report some increase in female student enrollment in their electronics program, due to significant outreach to involve female student engagement in the curriculum. On another note, one participant did admit that students with disabilities were underrepresented in the industrial maintenance apprenticeship because a physical test is required to qualify for the program. Applicants in this program have to be able to lift a heavy sandbag to qualify, “So if someone had a physical disability they would not be able to perform the related work.”

Two participants interviewed worked at HSIs, and two identified as a minority-serving institution (MSI). These institutions made some effort, such as a taskforce or committees, devoted to understanding what institutional changes are needed to support demographic shifts in diversity. As one participant explained,

We are largely a MSI. About 40% of our students are Hispanic, 20% are African American and 40% are [White] and/or other. Most of our student body is traditionally minority, and a lot of the students face societal barriers for getting into a good job. It’s gotten better. I have seen tremendous change in my lifetime, but we’ve got to change further to overcome some of the barriers and really be able to have the diverse workforce we need for the future. I think that is one of the most critical components of organizational success in the future.

Although institutions are beginning to have conversations about what groups are underrepresented in their CTE and apprenticeships programs, they acknowledged that they need to be pushed to do more.

Regional Location

A few participants discussed how their regional location impacted institutional access to employers needed to establish a registered apprenticeship program. For instance, one institution had a very well established registered apprenticeship program because their region was a major manufacturing hub with lots of opportunities to partner with employers; whereas another institution found it difficult to sustain registered apprenticeships because they do not “have a tremendous number of large employers” but “instead have more medium and small size employers. They’re not really willing to take on ten apprentices; they’re looking to take on one or two.” Similarly, one participant found that rural employers were con-

cerned about losing their employees to a more urban/suburban area because once they “invest in training somebody and then they earn the resident apprenticeship journeyman status” they can leave and find employment where there are more opportunities available. For institutions that were not located near a major industry, most apprenticeship opportunities are geographically away from their district, and “it’s more like almost recruiting away our students instead of actually presenting us with an apprenticeship opportunity for our students.” As a result, a lack of viable local industry means that,

We don’t have any DOL–fashioned apprenticeships right now. I really would like to have some of those, but we have not been able to identify such companies. Of course we are in a position to teach the technical content. It’s more the lack of companies in the area that they are comfortable with the concept so that we can collaborate and identify candidates for these programs. Any calls we’ve received for those, typically they are geographically away from our district.

As this participant explained, students leave their community for apprenticeship opportunities elsewhere, which could lead to a brain drain for their region.

Recommendations

The findings from this study suggest that community colleges do recognize the importance of registered apprenticeships to developing a more skilled workforce, providing employment opportunities that lead to economic mobility and prosperity, and increasing equity and access for groups largely underrepresented in growth industries. The community college leaders we surveyed and interviewed want to be advocates for and eventual leaders in registered apprenticeships, but most institutions admit that they need further guidance, support, and resources to help them build and develop their programs. Therefore, the following is a list of recommendations for community colleges and any related intermediaries and partners to consider when scaling up their registered apprenticeship programs.

Raise Awareness

- Participants expressed that their students often have misconceptions of particular industries, and that more efforts need to be made to raise awareness and educate their community about the opportunities that certain growth industries have to offer. We call on industry to play a larger role in raising awareness about their specific fields. However, challenging misconceptions about specific industries might need to occur even earlier than postsecondary, by beginning to pique student interest as early as elementary, and of course in middle and high school when students are focused on transitioning to college and career.

Funding

- Lack of funding and resources was the most widely mentioned challenge to scaling up registered apprenticeships at community colleges. State–wide workshops, professional development, and network meetings that focus on helping community colleges in developing funding proposals and also make connections with potential funders is needed.

Regional Expansion

- Most community colleges with registered apprenticeship opportunities are located in larger metropolitan areas or near a major industry hub. Community colleges downstate and in more rural regions of Illinois need more supports and resources to develop registered apprenticeship programs. This is indeed an equity concern as apprenticeships could bring skill, talent, and further economic development to their their regions. Currently, most community colleges that are leaders in apprenticeship development are located upstate. Thus, efforts should be made to build capacity of community colleges downstate to become leaders in supporting other colleges in the development of their apprenticeship programs. Also, resources should, be provided for small and mid-sized employers that encourage them to make more apprenticeship opportunities available.

Get Started!

- When we asked one participant whose community college is a leading expert in registered apprenticeship any recommendation or advise they may have, they responded with, "Just get started!" They agreed that one setback to the scaling up of registered apprenticeships is institutional hesistancy, and one way to resolve this would be to just jump right in the planning and development. Another source of support in this process would be to rely on other intermediaries, parnters, and gain advice from other community colleges who have been successful in developing their registered apprenticeship programs.

A Framework for Community Colleges

- The U.S. DOL and Illinois Apprenticeship Plus provide frameworks for developing quality registered apprenticeship programs. One participant suggested that a similar state-wide framework also be developed that is specific to community colleges' role in developing registered apprenticeship programs. The findings from this report suggest that community colleges need guidance on how to go about building their apprenticeship programs, and a framework that is specific to their needs might be useful.

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