

Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Maine's Civic Sector



Apprenticeships enable employers to develop their future workforce through a combination of on-the-job training, related classroom instruction and mentoring. At least four state and local government entities serve as apprenticeship sponsors in Maine. Nationwide, there are over 400 civic sector apprenticeship programs.

What is a Registered Apprenticeship Program?

Registered Apprenticeship Programs, or RAPs, are high-quality, industry-vetted career pathways approved by the [U.S. Department of Labor](#). Individuals participating in RAPs obtain paid work experience, receive progressive wage increases, and earn a nationally recognized and portable credential. State and local government agencies can serve as apprenticeship sponsors, meaning that they administer and operate these programs and employ apprentices to meet their workforce needs.

Apprentices sign an apprenticeship agreement, a formal contract outlining duties and responsibilities. Upon completing

the program, apprentices earn a portable, industry-recognized credential at low or no cost to them.

While RAPs have historically been associated with trade professions, apprenticeship programs have been developed for [more than 1,000 occupations across a range of industries](#), including public administration, information technology, nursing and human resources. RAPs typically last between one to four years.

How do apprenticeships benefit state and local agencies?

Apprenticeships can help state and local agencies address worker shortages caused by an aging workforce and COVID-19. In addition, by sponsoring apprentices, agencies can:



- **Recruit a diverse workforce.** Most apprenticeship programs do not require a bachelor's degree. Instead, they offer training through hands-on experiences and provide their own related classroom instruction. This allows employers to engage with traditionally untapped talent pools.
- **Develop a highly skilled workforce.** Apprentices are paid employees and can begin contributing to the agency from their start date. According to one nationwide study, 91% of employers reported that apprenticeship improved their employee pipeline and 81% reported that apprenticeship played a role in reducing employee turnover.
- **Increase employee retention and productivity.** According to the Office of Apprenticeship, individuals who complete RAPs have a 93% retention rate. On average, employers report that the reduced turnover and employee loyalty from apprenticeships increases productivity by as much as 200%.
- **Provide leadership opportunities to current employees.** Apprentices are partnered with experienced colleagues who provide hands-on instruction and mentorship. Employees who serve as mentors build leadership skills and deepen their engagement in the workplace.

How can state and local governments in Maine engage in RAPs?

State and local government agencies can choose to develop and sponsor their own RAP with assistance from MDOL, or join an existing RAP administered by an [intermediary party](#).

Agencies that sponsor a RAP design, execute and administer their own programs. Major responsibilities for sponsors include outlining job functions and competencies, arranging for related technical instruction, hiring and paying apprentices, providing mentorship opportunities, and registering the program with state or federal apprenticeship agencies.

Agencies can also choose to join an existing program sponsored by an intermediary. As employers, agencies are still responsible for selecting apprentices, paying apprentice wages and benefits, providing mentorship to apprentices, and sharing data with the sponsor to ensure program compliance. However, agencies that join an existing RAP benefit from accelerated program development and fewer administrative costs and responsibilities.

What support is available to help agencies sponsoring apprenticeship programs?

Sponsors can receive support from the [Maine Apprenticeship Program](#) in developing on-the-job training, registering new programs, enrolling apprentices, and ensuring program compliance with all federal and state apprenticeship regulations. Agency sponsors of apprenticeships also have access to free, hands-on technical assistance through

[The Council of State Governments](#) and the [Urban Institute](#).

Sponsors are eligible for state, federal and private sector funding to partially offset the costs of apprentice wages, training and other administrative factors. These funding streams include, but are not limited to:



- A one-time reimbursement of a minimum of **\$500** per apprentice through the Maine Department of Labor [to help cover classroom training costs](#).
- Funding of **\$500,000** statewide to cover 50% of the costs to create or enhance training programs, funded by the [Maine Quality Centers Put ME to Work program](#). Employers must provide a 50% match of total project costs and agree to pay trainees who complete the program at least \$2.50 per hour above minimum wage and pay any incumbent workers at or above the occupation's median wage.
- Funding of **\$1,000** per low-income rural apprentice to offset related instruction and administrative costs, provided through a grant from Ascendium Education Group and administered by CSG and Urban.

This resource was created by The Council of State Governments, in partnership with the Urban Institute. [CSG](#) and [Urban](#) received funding from [Ascendium Education Group](#) to expand civic sector apprenticeship programs focused on low-income rural learners. CSG and Urban will provide resources, guidance, technical assistance and incentive funding to support state and local agencies in developing apprenticeships to meet their workforce needs, and in recruiting, enrolling and supporting low-income rural apprentices.

For questions, please contact [Mary Wurtz](#).



The Council
of State
Governments

Ascendium®