

## Resource Review

# Review of *Building and Growing Apprenticeship with Equity in Mind: An Equitable Apprenticeships Toolkit*

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*Building and Growing Apprenticeship with Equity in Mind: An Equitable Apprenticeships Toolkit*, released in September 2021, is a great resource to support programs in the work they do to help adults access promising career opportunities. Over the

last decade, more and more industries are embracing the apprenticeship model, which allows individuals to “earn while they learn.”

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2021), there are currently over 25,000 registered apprenticeships in the United States. Occupations such as certified nurse aide, truck driver, pharmacy technician, corrections officer, and telecommunications technician are just some of the top 30 apprenticeships offered in 2021. However, 2021 Program Year Data and Statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor (2021), revealed that most enrollees in registered apprenticeship

programs were White males. The current lack of diversity highlights why the *Equitable Apprenticeship Toolkit* is such a valuable resource. It provides resources and tools to guide teams involved in

designing or delivering an apprenticeship and/or a pre-apprenticeship program to create a more diverse workforce through providing an equitable apprenticeship framework as well as a set of action tools.

Although there are many resources available to help adult education programs better understand apprenticeship programming, this resource is unique in offering an equity and diversity lens to apprenticeships and

pre-apprenticeships. Furthermore, this toolkit is appropriate for any individual or team that is part of apprentice or pre-apprentice program planning and implementation. This resource is



Mollica, J. & Simon, P. (2021). *Building and Growing Apprenticeship with Equity in Mind: An Equitable Apprenticeships Toolkit*. High Road Alliance and the Apprenticeship Support Network. 49 pages. PDF. <https://growapprenticeshipca.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/GAC-Equitable-Apprenticeship-Toolkit-final-1.pdf>

intended for individuals and teams, including adult education partners, that contribute to designing an apprenticeship program, recruiting for such programs, supporting individuals to prepare and transition into a program, and delivering apprenticeship training. The 48-page toolkit, created by High Road Alliance and the Apprenticeship Support Network, uses simple terminology and concrete examples, and provides tools and resources that can easily be used by small and large teams. The toolkit is divided into six parts and is designed in a way that adult education programs and partners can strategically evaluate current apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programming or explore future opportunities that are equitable and diverse.

The toolkit begins with an overview of how pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships are defined in the United States and provides a five-element framework on how an apprenticeship program can be equitable, industry-driven, worker-centered, and community-oriented. Next, it provides guidance on using the toolkit, including who should use the toolkit and when to use it. Finally, the toolkit provides both information gathering tools and action tools.

I feel most adult education programs might find the information gathering tools section the most useful part of the toolkit. For example, the industry employment requirements tool provides guiding questions, key considerations, reflection questions, and an additional tool for collecting data. The data collection tool could support adult education programs to gather details about the English language, math, digital skills, industry knowledge, and credential requirements required for a target occupation within the apprenticeship pipeline. Additionally, this data gathering tool provides space for determining if barriers may exist for individuals with physical limitations or

criminal justice system involvement. Additional tools are provided to then support apprenticeship planning teams to explore solutions to address the barriers or obstacles for individuals with disabilities or criminal justice system involvement.

Although the toolkit is not designed specifically for adult education instructors, it does have some tools that adult educators may find beneficial. For example, adult educators often strive to find resources that can help make learning relevant and meaningful for adult learners. Action Tool #4: Designing a Pre-Apprenticeship Program includes resources that may help adult educators prepare and deliver instruction that directly aligns to a registered apprenticeship program instead of teaching reading, writing, and math concepts in isolation. This contextualized approach will likely make the learning more relevant to adult learners. Additionally, it is clear that adult learners have many life roles and responsibilities and often need assistance with addressing barriers to be able to complete education and training programs and transition along a career pathway. Action Tool #5: Removing Barriers and Supporting Transition to Apprenticeship provides an action planning template to help instructors, support staff, and transition teams identify potential barriers and inequities and develop actions to address those challenges.

As adult education programs continue to navigate their local career pathway and workforce education initiatives, it is important to ensure all adult learners have multiple career options and equitable support to pursue those options. The *Equitable Apprenticeship Toolkit* is one resource that can provide support to both adult education programs and their workforce partners to help adult learners explore and navigate pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programming in an equitable and diverse manner.

## References

U.S. Department of Labor. (2021). *FY 2021 data and statistics*.  
[https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship/  
about/statistics/2021](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship/about/statistics/2021)