

CONCLUSION

Until recently, apprenticeship has been a specialized field used mostly by the skilled trades and construction. DOL funding to states has resulted in an unfolding of new activity during the past year in which the concept of apprenticeship is being applied in new occupations and industry sectors that, until recently, were unfamiliar with apprenticeship. Much new activity is occurring in information technology, health care, and advanced manufacturing. There is considerable creativity and experimentation in this new round of activity. At the same time, foundations, state governments, educators, and policymakers are expressing a growing interest in apprenticeship. Many are intrigued by the possibility of simultaneously addressing employers' talent recruitment and development needs and providing a structured pathway to employment with industry-recognized credentials for people who would normally not have these opportunities.

Employers or other sponsors that start new RA programs often build upon existing partnerships with workforce development corporations, community colleges, nonprofit and other training providers, and high school vocational–technical or career and technical education programs.

Employers interested in apprenticeship may want to talk to other employers that have operated apprenticeship programs. Interested employers will also want to talk with state apprenticeship agency staff in Pennsylvania and Delaware and with DOL apprenticeship specialists in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The experience of gathering information in the three states for this guide suggests that communication and information-sharing among RA programs are limited within states and across state lines. Especially given the latest round of new activity, it may be valuable if employers and sponsors of both longstanding and new programs find a way to share their experience and lessons learned, including with employers and sponsors that are interested in starting new programs. This could become a “community of practice” for ongoing learning.