
To: Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
From: Sarah Buxton, State Director of Workforce Development, Vermont Department of Labor
Hugh Bradshaw, Assistant Director of Workforce Development, Vermont Department of Labor
Re: 2020 Registered Apprenticeship Update and Proposals
Date: January 24, 2020

OVERVIEW

Registered Apprenticeships are federally recognized workforce education and training programs that combine hands-on learning with related technical instruction. Hands-on training is provided under the supervision of a registered apprenticeship sponsor, while technical instruction is typically provided by a training provider or educational institution. Registered apprenticeships require a minimum of 2,000 hours of work experience and recommend 144 hours of related classroom instruction, with a few higher-level occupations requiring as many as 10,000 hours for completion. Wage increases linked to mastering of competencies, mentoring, and simultaneous employment with a sponsor employer are also key components of a registered apprenticeship. At the completion of a registered apprenticeship program, the participant gains a nationally-recognized, portable certificate and career pathway advancement with their sponsor employer.

Roughly half of the States administer the federal registered apprenticeship programs as State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAA) while the others leave administration and oversight to the federal Office of Apprenticeship (OA) in the US DOL. Vermont is an SAA, serving as the administrative and regulatory entity that approves program standards, monitors programs, maintains records – including apprenticeship contracts, certifies program completion, and issues the registered apprenticeship credential. State and federal rules guide these processes, along with an advisory State Apprenticeship Council.

The federal government does not provide funding for the State’s administration of the registered apprenticeship program. There is some indication, however, that future federal formula funding may be on the horizon. In the meantime, the state provides approximately \$780,000 to administer, oversee and promoting apprenticeships in Vermont.

Program Staffing: The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) is the designated Apprenticeship Agency for the State of Vermont. VDOL has three full-time staff dedicated to administering and overseeing the State Apprenticeship Program. Additionally, Workforce Development Division leadership, administrative staff, performance management staff, ADS, and VDOL business office staff also spend time supporting the program.

Federal Apprenticeship Funding: Until 2019, US DOL funded Registered Apprenticeship initiatives in a competitive, project-based basis. Vermont has three active federal grants that support specific initiatives:

American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI): Began in 2015, ends this year. Subgrantee VT HiTEC continues to fund apprenticeship cohorts with health care, business services, and manufacturing employers. (Approximately 200k remaining)

State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant (SAE): Began in 2016, ends this year with possible extension. Two rounds of funding supported continued apprenticeship expansion similar to AAI (above) through subgrantee VT HiTEC, and subsequent Registered Apprenticeship program development and specific expansion of six apprenticeship programs in partnership with subgrantees Vermont Technical College (VTC) and Community College of Vermont). (Approximately 500k remaining)

Apprenticeship Expansion in States (ASE): Awarded in 2019, ends in 2022. VDOL gained approval to spend in January 2020. This funding supports activities of the Department to promote and expand Registered Apprenticeships, including targeted support for under-represented populations, infrastructure, and outreach.

VDOL hopes for an announcement from US DOL that the ASE funding of 2019 becomes block or “formula” funding in 2020, creating a more predictable framework for funding and performance management going forward.

2019 PROGRESS REPORT

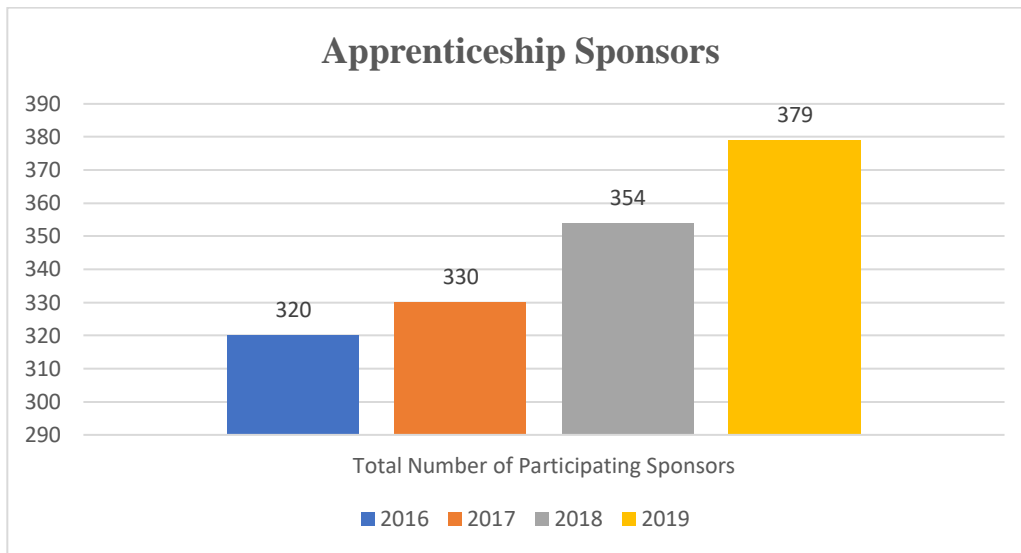
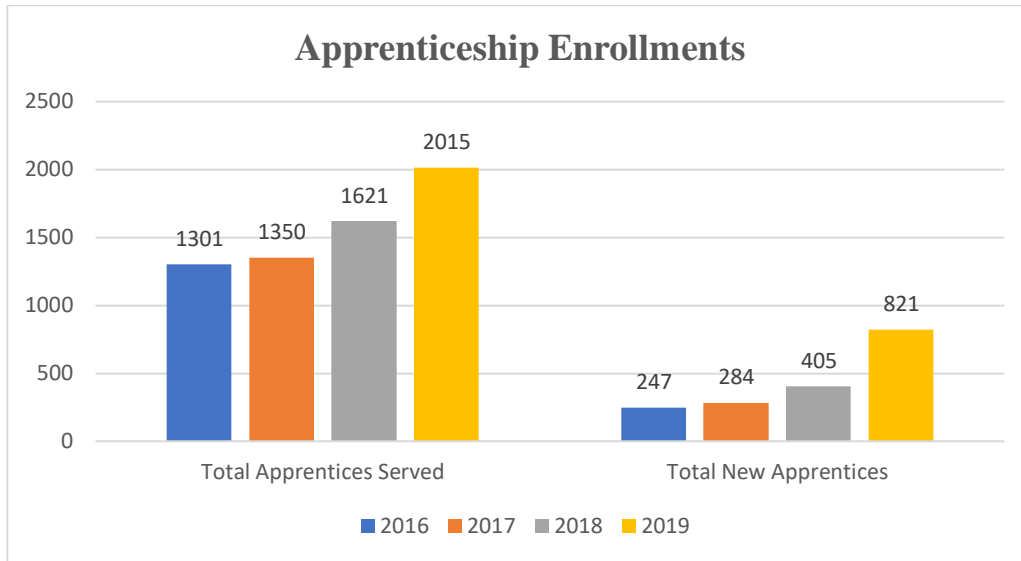
In 2019, VDOL applied for additional funds to support the continued development, outreach, and organization of Registered Apprenticeship programs in Vermont. A portion of this funding will be dedicated to increasing the number of individuals with disabilities, New Americans, and individuals exiting the correctional system who are enrolled in a Registered Apprenticeship program.

In 2019, due to our expansion efforts and very robust plumbing and electrical enrollments, we saw a significant increase in the number of new Apprentices, going from 405 in 2018 to 821 in 2019. With a strong economy and more and more employers realizing that they must “grow their own” employees, we see tremendous opportunity for expansion of the registered apprenticeship program into more and more industry sectors, with a growing range of approved occupational titles over time.

Performance Metric	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Apprentices Enrolled	1301	1350	1621	2015
Total New Apprentices Enrolled	247	284	405	821
Registered Apprenticeship Certificates Issued	111	290	128	304
Total Active Apprenticeship Sponsors	320	330	354	379
Total Approved Occupational Titles	209	213	215	220
Total Active Occupational Titles	24	34	30	35

Apprenticeship Team: To support and coordinate the State’s apprenticeship expansion efforts, VDOL has established an Apprenticeship Team comprised of members from Vermont Technical College, Community College of Vermont, Agency of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. The Team is working to create new Registered Apprenticeships in occupations that are in high demand here in Vermont. In just the first year, the Team has supported the

development of several new registered apprenticeships including Pharmacy Technician, Medical Assistant and an innovative pre-apprenticeship to registered apprenticeship track for LPN certification.



State Apprenticeship Council: Each SAA operated a State Apprenticeship Council (SAC) that acts in an advisory capacity to the leadership of the State Apprenticeship Program. The role of the SAC is to provide guidance, support and recommendations to the Commissioner of the Department of Labor related to the Registered Apprenticeship program, including recommendations to the Commissioner related to approval of new apprenticeable occupations. VDOL is presently reconstituting the SAC with new members from key constituencies including employers in the health care sector, the trades, public safety, business representatives, individuals who have been apprentices, training providers, union members and members of the public. VDOL plans to hold the first meeting of the newly reconstituted SAC by mid-February.

2020 PROPOSAL

Apprenticeship Expansion: The Department of Labor will work to double the number of registered pre-apprentices and apprentices enrolled in a federally-recognized registered apprenticeship program by 2023.

The Department of Labor will work to double the number of active registered apprenticeship programs in the next five years.

Apprenticeship Pathways: In partnership with the Vermont State Colleges, the Department of Labor will work to increase the delivery of related instruction associated with a registered apprenticeship through the state college system so that student apprentices may earn some college credits while completing an apprenticeship.

By 2021, the Department of Labor will establish a system for registering and recognizing pre-apprenticeship programs delivered at career and technical education centers, high schools, the Vermont State Colleges, and other occupational training providers, in alignment with federal law and guidance.

In consultation with the Agency of Education, the Department of Labor will explore feasibility of establishing statewide matriculation agreements between secondary programs and registered apprenticeship programs.