

MASSACHUSETTS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

# MassWorkforce Issuance

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Policy  Information

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**To:** Chief Elected Officials  
Workforce Development Board Chairs  
Workforce Development Board Directors  
Title I Administrators  
Career Center Directors  
Title I Fiscal Officers  
DCS Operations Managers

**cc:** WIOA State Partners

**From:** Alice Sweeney, Director  
Department of Career Services

**Date:** February 17, 2017

**Subject:** **Guidance on Registered Apprenticeship Provisions and Opportunities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

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**Purpose:** To notify Local Workforce Development Boards, One-Stop Career Center Operators and other local workforce partners of the Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Training and Guidance Letter ([TEGL](#)) No. 13-16, Guidance on Registered Apprenticeship Provisions and Opportunities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This TEGL informs the public workforce system and partners of the new provisions for Registered Apprenticeship in WIOA, including the status of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors as Eligible Training Providers, mandatory representation of apprenticeship on State and Local Workforce Boards, the use of WIOA funding to support Registered Apprenticeship, reporting on Registered Apprenticeship Activity, and suggestions about how to coordinate with the Registered Apprenticeship system.

**Background:** The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) became law on July 22, 2014. WIOA supersedes title I and II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, and amends the Wagner-Peyser Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Departments of Labor and Education published the Final Rule in the Federal Register on August 19, 2016. The Final Rule was effective October 18, 2016.

The provisions in WIOA present a landmark opportunity for expansion of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) as a workforce solution which offers job-seekers greater employment opportunities while providing employers a strategic approach to talent development. Increased engagement with employers, institutions of higher education, and policy makers in the development of RA programs will support the goal of doubling the number of apprentices across the United States.

Development of RA as a workforce strategy can help advance the goals of WIOA in multiple ways including promotion of industry sector strategies and regional competitiveness, strengthening partnerships, emphasizing work-based training strategies, increasing access to education and training, increasing and creating career paths with credentials for workers, and meeting the needs of out-of-school youth. Additionally, the outcomes attained by apprentices and graduates of RA programs can lead to strong WIOA performance results. (See TEGL 13-16 Attachment III: How to Count Registered Apprenticeship in the Workforce System)

With the significant expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs in high-demand fields, DOL/ETA encourages the workforce system to utilize WIOA Title I funds, in addition to other sources of public and private funds, in support RA in the following ways:

- **Individual Training Accounts (ITA)**
  - RA sponsors are able to use ITA funds to support the educational portion/related instruction for eligible apprentices.
  - Individuals in receipt of ITAs may also receive supportive services to enable them to participate in the training.
- **Contracted Classes for Training Cohorts for Related Instruction**
  - In certain circumstances a LWDB may determine that a contract with an ETP to train a cohort of potential apprentices in in-demand industry sectors or occupations may be developed instead of an ITA.
  - All transactions with contractors must adhere to procurement standards.
- **Youth Occupational Skills Training**
  - Youth occupational skills training is a required program element under WIOA that includes RA as a viable training option for youth 16-24.
- **Supportive Services**
  - WIOA funds can be used for a variety of supportive services for apprentices such as books, supplies, child care, transportation, tools and uniforms.
- **Customized Training**
  - State and Local WDBs can support RA program sponsors and apprentices through customized training agreements.
- **On-the-Job Training**

- In certain circumstances, up to 75% of the apprentices' wages may be reimbursed by public workforce contributions if employers meet criteria for a designated period of time.
- **Incumbent Worker Training**
  - Local WDBs may use up to 20% of their adult and dislocated worker funds to pay the Federal share of the cost of incumbent worker training.

DOL identifies the following additional sources of funding for RA:

- **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**
- **State Funds**
- **Discretionary Grants from ETA**
- **ApprenticeshipUSA Expansion Grants and Contracts**
- **US Department of Education**
  - Federal Pell Grants and Federal Work Study
- **US Department of Veteran's Affairs**
  - GI Bill
  - Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) Apprenticeships
  - **Special Employer Incentive (SEI)**
- **US Department of Agriculture**
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Employment and Training Programs (SNAP E&T)
- **US Department of Transportation**
  - Grant Funding
  - Highway Workforce Funding
  - Regional Workforce Centers
- **US Department of Housing and Urban Development**
  - Section 3 Covered Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Financial Assistance Programs

Registered Apprenticeship is employment and registered apprentices earn a wage from day one. It allows employers to develop and apply industry standards to training programs thereby increasing productivity and improving the quality of the workforce. Despite numerous studies showing significant return on investment, utilization of RA as a workforce development strategy is correspondingly low; less than 1% of WIOA participants are in RA programs. States and LWDBs are encouraged to set goals with consideration of the multiple opportunities to demonstrate successful engagement with ApprenticeshipUSA in measurable ways.

#### **Action**

**Requested:** Please share with managers, staff and partners as appropriate.