

Tap into talent. Build your team.

A trusted blueprint for a skilled workforce



MASSACHUSETTS
Registered Apprenticeship



Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Handbook



June 2025

About this Handbook

This *Handbook* is your guide to Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Programs (RPAPs) in Massachusetts. Whether you are just beginning to explore or are ready to launch a program, it covers program benefits, best practices, and the steps to register a RPAP with the Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS).

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About DAS

The Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) within the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) is responsible for the oversight of Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the Commonwealth.



MISSION

Our mission is to promote, develop, and support Registered Apprenticeship Programs. We help create rewarding career pathways for job seekers and empower employers to build a diverse workforce.

VISION

Our vision is that innovative, high-quality Registered Apprenticeship Programs help develop diverse talent and drive a more affordable, competitive, and equitable economy in Massachusetts.

VALUES

- **Innovation** – Creating dynamic and impactful Registered Apprenticeship Programs that adapt to meet the evolving needs of industries.
- **Inclusion** – Building diverse and meaningful Registered Apprenticeship Programs that tap into the talents of underrepresented populations.
- **Collaboration** – Establishing strong partnerships with Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors and Intermediaries to develop best practices and leverage our collective expertise.
- **Customer Service** – Delivering responsive support and guidance to all our stakeholders to ensure their success throughout the Registered Apprenticeship journey.



DAS teams are ready to support every step of your program's success.

Apprenticeship Liaison Team

The Apprenticeship Liaison Team supports organizations, providing them with a comprehensive understanding of the Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Program model and offering technical assistance throughout the registration process for the occupation of interest.

Operations Team

The Operations Team plays a critical role in guiding and supporting apprenticeship processes once a program has been approved. This role includes overseeing the successful implementation and ongoing management of Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs.

Quality Assurance Team

The Quality Assurance Team ensures that programs adhere to established standards and conduct ongoing program reviews to verify compliance with all relevant laws and regulations throughout the duration of the Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Grants Management Team

The Grants Management Team monitors Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship grant recipients to provide technical assistance and ensure compliance with goals and reporting requirements.

What is Registered Pre-Apprenticeship?

A Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Program (RPAP) helps employers build their team and a pipeline of skilled, job-ready talent by preparing individuals to succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) and advance along a career pathway.

RPAPs introduce individuals of all backgrounds and abilities to a specific occupation or industry through classroom instruction and meaningful, hands-on learning. They often include soft skills training in areas such as interpersonal communication, problem solving, and time management. RPAPs can help prepare individuals for careers in every industry sector, from manufacturing to IT, from healthcare to transportation, and more.



Who can be a Pre-Apprentice?

Anyone can be a Pre-Apprentice!

- High school or vocational-technical students
- Community college or four-year college students
- Adults exploring new career paths

Career Pathway that Drives Success

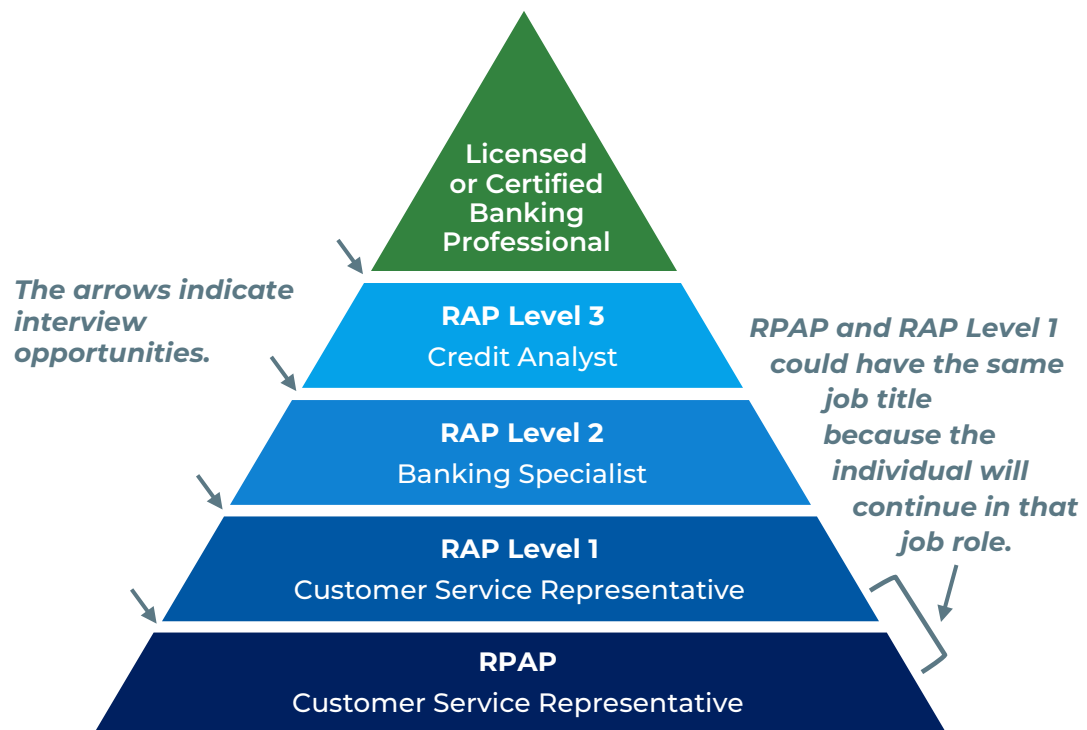
RPAPs provide a proven foundation to prepare talent for RAP success and long-term career growth. RPAPs give individuals the opportunity to explore a career path and determine if it aligns with their skills, abilities, and goals, while giving employers the opportunity to attract, retain, and develop talented, skilled individuals who can advance in a career pathway within their organization.

Whether you are a job seeker looking to enter a new field or an employer seeking future talent, pre-apprenticeship is a smart, strategic investment. RPAPs are more than just preparation — they are a proven pathway to meaningful, sustainable careers and direct entry into a RAP.

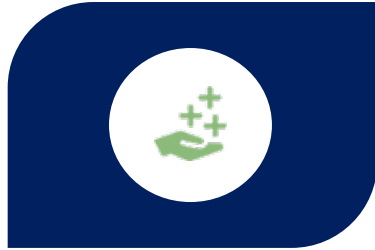
The example below highlights a career pathway in banking that utilizes an RPAP as an entry point. At DAS, we encourage Sponsors to plan beyond entry-level roles, focusing on advancement opportunities that naturally promote employee retention, growth, and alignment with evolving business needs.

Example of a Career Pathway in Banking

The RPAP exists as an introduction, and the RAP is the actual job role with additional classroom instruction.



RPAP Key Components



Industry Partner Engagement

Engagement with employers and labor unions is critical. Employers and labor unions who are passionate about creating talent pipelines will see that an RPAP is the first step in a successful pathway to progress.



Related Technical Instruction (RTI)

Also known as classroom instruction, RTI can include soft-skills training, on-the-job shadowing, or even prerequisite courses or certifications needed before someone enters a RAP. For an RPAP, 150 hours of RTI are suggested.



Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Roles and responsibilities of the RPAP Sponsor and the RAP Sponsor should be outlined in the *MOU*, including whether the RPAP is paying or non-paying and if any credit hours are earned toward the required RTI hours for the RAP.



DAS Certificate of Completion

A *Certificate of Completion* will be awarded to Pre-Apprentices who complete their program, upon request by the Sponsor. They will also have an interview opportunity with the RAP Sponsor for an opening in their program, and this should also be outlined in the *MOU*.

Benefits of Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Programs



Benefits for Pre-Apprentices

- **Career exploration** before fully committing.
- **Real-world exposure** to build confidence and develop industry-specific and soft skills.
- **Support for individuals** from diverse backgrounds to reduce barriers.
- **Access to supportive services**, such as career coaching or childcare.
- **Opportunity to earn** industry-recognized credentials or certificates (e.g., OSHA, CompTIA).
- **Job readiness** to successfully enter a RAP.



Benefits for Employers & Sponsors

- **Build a skilled talent pipeline** to prepare for the workforce needs of the future.
- **Save time and resources** by accessing a pool of motivated, pre-trained candidates and reducing turnover.
- **Shape the training curriculum** to ensure it aligns with your business needs.
- **Demonstrate your company's commitment** to workforce development and community engagement.
- **Hire candidates** who are pre-screened and job-ready.

Best Practices from Current Pre-Apprenticeship Programs



We would like to thank our RPAP partners who shared their value-added program insights and activities to include in this handbook.



Industry Partner Engagement

- Involve employers early in program design and curriculum development.
- Invite employers to participate in mock interviews, provide job shadowing opportunities, and offer guest speaker sessions and site tours.
- Host regular advisory meetings with employers to align training with industry needs.



Soft Skills & Professional Development

- Integrate soft-skills training throughout the RPAP, such as punctuality, teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, professionalism, and communication.
- Provide career coaching, financial literacy, and interview preparation for participants.



Assessments & Progress Tracking

- Conduct readiness assessments (Math and English) with support services as needed.
- Use ongoing evaluations and exit interviews to gather participant feedback.
- Implement badging or credentialing to track skill development.



Supportive Services

- Provide case management and connect participants with transportation, childcare, and technology resources.
- Partner with community organizations to offer additional wraparound services, such as mental health counseling, interview attire closets or stipends, and food assistance.



Flexibility & Recruiting

- Offer flexible scheduling and hybrid learning options for participants.
- Use recruitment strategies to target homegrown talent.



Industry Partner Recruitment & Program Expansion

- Simplify onboarding for new employer partners and offer clear support.
- Promote RPAP success stories to attract new employers and Sponsors.



Follow-Up & Continuous Improvement

- Implement periodic check-ins with graduates; track post-program employment, education, and credential outcomes; and gather employer feedback.
- Adjust curriculum and services based on evolving workforce needs.

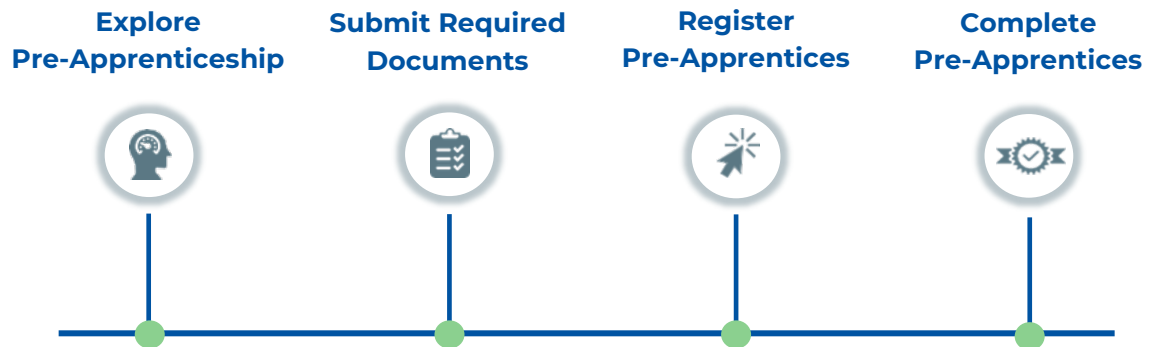


Mentorship & Alumni Networks

- Establish mentorship opportunities with employers and alumni.
- Use alumni to support outreach and recruitment and provide peer support.

Ready to Begin?

DAS looks forward to helping you stand up your RPAP. The graphic below outlines key parts of the process for starting and registering a program. If you have any questions throughout the process, please reach out to apprenticeship@mass.gov and a DAS Apprenticeship Liaison will assist you!



Explore Pre-Apprenticeship

- **Attend the Introduction to Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Sponsorship** training session. Use the QR code or sign up [at this link](#).
- **Set up a Discovery Call with a DAS Apprenticeship Liaison** to talk about your business structure and needs for the program.
- **Work alongside a DAS Apprenticeship Liaison** to create and register your RPAP.





Submit Required Documents

To register your RPAP, you will need to ensure you have the required documents ready for DAS to review prior to the application walk-through. Below are the documents you will need:



DAS offers sample templates to assist with program development. Contact us to receive these templates.

Signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The *MOU* outlines the clear roles and expectations of both the RPAP Sponsor and the RAP Sponsor.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

*Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Program
(RPAP) Sponsor &
Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) Sponsor*

Purpose of the Memorandum

Describe what benefits will be achieved by both parties (e.g., EEO outreach for the RAP and career opportunities for the RPAP).

Term of the Agreement

An expiration date is not required, but the MOU should state the conditions by which either party may sever their relationship.

Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) Sponsor Partner(s) Information

Include each partner's address and contact information.

Copy of the Curriculum

454 CMR 26 recommends 150 hours per year as a guideline for Pre-Apprenticeship program hours. The curriculum needs to be approved by the RAP and included with this memorandum for review by DAS. The RAP Sponsor needs to approve the RPAP Sponsor's curriculum or help the RPAP develop an agreed upon lesson plan to determine the amount of articulated credit.

Articulated Credit

This agreement must state what, if any, the transferable credit from the RPAP to the RAP that will be applied to the apprentices' record once they have been accepted. As an example, the credit can be in related classroom hours, OJT hours, direct entry, or advanced standing on the list or any combination.

Licensed occupations must follow the regulations of the associated licensing entity.

Acknowledgment of Restrictions

All parties recognize that there are **no** fees associated with pre-apprenticeship so pre-apprentices will not receive an apprentice ID card. If the pre-apprentice works in a construction trade, they cannot work as an apprentice on a public works project where an apprentice photo ID card is required by law.

Agreement to Register Pre-apprentices

The RPAP must agree to register pre-apprentices at the beginning of the program and complete them by submitting graduates' names at the conclusion of the program. The Division of Apprentice Standards will then award completion certificates for program graduates.

Related Technical Instruction (RTI) Curriculum. The *RTI Curriculum* outlines the classroom instruction the Pre-Apprentices will receive in the program. Be sure to include any soft-skills training here if you have any!

SAMPLE Pre-Apprenticeship Classroom Instruction Curriculum			
SPONSOR INFORMATION			
RPAP SPONSOR:			
RAP SPONSOR:			
RAP SPON-PFL Record ID:			
Occupation/Industry			
CORE OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	Expected Outcome/Proficiency	Hours	RAP Recognized Hours*
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Classroom Activity/Subject	(Description)		
Total Core Occupation Skills Hours		0.00	0.00

i Offering internal RTI? Email DAS at apprenticeship@mass.gov for more details!



Register Your Pre-Apprentices

We encourage you to register your Pre-Apprentices before the program begins to ensure a seamless process from start to finish. To register your Pre-Apprentices, you will use the Massachusetts Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor Portal. The portal is secure, and Sponsor and Pre-Apprentice information can only be viewed by authorized users from DAS as well as the approved Pre-Apprentice Sponsor contact.

Zoom in to view the screenshot details



Start by logging in to the Massachusetts Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor Portal.

Once you are in the portal, **click on the “My Programs” tab** and then **click on “Add Pre-Apprentices.”**

Enter your Pre-Apprentice’s information in the portal. Keep in mind that if the Pre-Apprentice is 18 years or older a Social Security Number is required.

The portal will then generate the *Pre-Apprentice Agreement* and prompt signatures from you and the Pre-Apprentice using DocuSign. If a Pre-Apprentice is under the age of 18, then a parent or guardian must also sign the *Agreement*.

Once the signatures are provided through DocuSign, you, the Pre-Apprentice, and the parent/guardian (if applicable) will **receive a confirmation email with the completed *Pre-Apprentice Agreement*.**



Cancellations

You will need to cancel a Pre-Apprentice if the individual decides to exit the program at any point. Pre-Apprentice cancellations are done through the Massachusetts Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor Portal. You will need to provide the cancellation date for the Pre-Apprentice.



Complete Your Pre-Apprentices

We encourage you to **complete your Pre-Apprentices (prior to any graduation or ceremony)** to ensure completion certifications arrive in time. Pre-Apprenticeship completions are done through the Massachusetts Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor Portal.

Zoom in to view the screenshot details



The screenshot shows the 'Update Stage' modal for an apprenticeship enrollment. The modal is titled 'Update Stage' and has a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains the following fields and options:

- *Select which action you would like to take on this Apprenticeship Enrollment:
 - ☐ Cancel
 - ☒ Completed
 - ☐ Extend
 - ☐ Place on leave of Absence
- *Date of Completion: Jun 10, 2025
- ☒ I attest the Apprentice has completed all OJT and RTI requirements.
- Please upload the remaining documentation below:
 - RTI Documentation: Upload Files Or drop files
 - OJT Documentation: Upload Files Or drop files
- Submit button

The background of the screenshot shows the 'Enrollment' details for Johnny Versa, including Enrollment Date (3/20/2025), Stage (Active), Start Date (3/20/2025), Enrollment Date (3/20/2025), Enrollment Expiration Date (3/20/2026), Stage (Active), Current Step, and Term of Pre-Apprenticeship (Hours) (155).

You will need to **provide the completion date and the total number of RTI hours completed**, which must equal or exceed the total required for the program.

Completion certificates will be mailed to you within 10 business days.



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mass.gov/apprenticeship

apprenticeship@mass.gov

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