



Expanding Apprenticeships in America

I. The Problem: We Must Do More to Help American Workers

The United States must do more to help American workers obtain the education and skills they need to find good, stable jobs, and succeed in the workplace. CEOs consistently report that they cannot find sufficient qualified employees to meet their needs. Some facts include:

- 95% of Business Roundtable CEOs surveyed report that finding talent was problematic.
- 6 million vacant jobs in the United States, the highest level on record.
- Manufacturing, IT and healthcare face particular shortages of skilled workers.
- Too few women and minorities working in STEM fields.

Improving workforce development in the U.S. is critical to increasing labor force participation and GDP growth.

- A highly skilled workforce is essential for America's competitiveness in attracting and retaining business and investment.
- Unemployment is at 4.3%, a 16-year low. Substantial additional growth requires an increase in labor force participation, which requires helping those outside the labor force develop better job skills.

II. An Important Solution: Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship program is an arrangement that includes both a paid work component and an educational component. Apprenticeship programs in other countries (e.g., Germany, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) demonstrate effectiveness in providing an affordable path to good, stable jobs, especially among youth.

In the United States, apprenticeships have languished for decades (except in construction trades, where they have remained strong). Apprenticeships represent only 0.3 percent of the workforce in the United States.

The benefits of apprenticeships are significant and measurable:

- \$60,000+ average starting salary for graduates of certified apprenticeship programs.

- \$300,000 increase in lifetime earnings for graduates of certified apprenticeships, over non-apprentices.
- Apprenticeships allow workers to avoid the burden of student loan debt.

III. Requests

I ask that each Agency head support the Administration's apprenticeship initiative by removing obstacles to apprenticeship growth that may be present in current regulations or practices.

I look forward to working with Secretary DeVos, and with each member of the Cabinet, on apprenticeship initiatives, including the implementation of future Executive actions to promote apprenticeships across America.