



## **DISCOVER APPRENTICESHIP: ADVANCING APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Apprenticeship programs promote recruitment and retention of a highly skilled workforce, and recognize the value of attracting a diverse array of candidates, including youth and adults with disabilities. Further, there is evidence that people with disabilities participate and succeed in apprenticeship programs at higher rates when they are provided with opportunities and support.<sup>1</sup> While there is still plenty of room for growth, we have experienced an approximately 550% increase in the number of apprentices who identify as having a disability between 2017 and 2019.<sup>2</sup> Apprentices with disabilities are most concentrated in the occupations of electrician, plumber, construction craft laborer, pipe fitter, and truck driver.

### **THE ROLE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S OFFICES OF APPRENTICESHIP AND DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) supports best practices in equity and expanding opportunities for people with disabilities. Office of Apprenticeship staff work with employers who wish to hire more persons with disabilities to develop programs to meet their goals and connect them with intermediaries, guides, and investment opportunities to reach their intended audiences. The office has substantially increased its investments in apprenticeship in recent years, including programs that target youth and adults with disabilities in apprenticeship, recognizing that building a strong and diverse pipeline of skilled workers is critical for companies to grow their business and compete in the global economy. Visit our website for more information about these investments: [www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship/investment](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship/investment).

The Office of Apprenticeship partners with the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) to promote inclusive apprenticeship program models that meet employer needs by attracting a diverse set of candidates, including people with disabilities. ODEP works to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in apprenticeship programs by influencing national and state policies and sharing effective practices with the public. For more information, visit [www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/topics/apprenticeship](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/topics/apprenticeship).

### **APPRENTICESHIP INCLUSION MODELS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

ODEP awarded a two-year, \$1.9 million Apprenticeship Inclusion Models (AIM) demonstration project through 2020 to research, develop, test, and evaluate innovative approaches to expand inclusive occupational skills training and career pathways for people with disabilities in existing

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/odep/pdf/apprenticeshipreport.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Identification as a person with disabilities is not a required field for apprenticeship reporting in the national system and all statistics are voluntarily provided.

apprenticeship programs.<sup>3</sup> AIM targets high-demand, high-wage industries and occupations in existing apprenticeship programs—including apprenticeship pilots with Amazon, Microsoft, the Healthcare Career Advancement Program, and the Industrial Manufacturing Technician Apprenticeship Program. The project produced a five-part policy and practice series and webinars that explored the apprenticeship pilots, strategies for developing inclusive apprenticeship, modern youth apprenticeship, funding strategies, universal design, and how to foster program resilience during crises. To access these resources and more, visit [www.spra.com/aim/](http://www.spra.com/aim/).

## EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

DOL's equal employment opportunity (EEO) in apprenticeship final rule helps employers reduce barriers for people with disabilities to increase participation in and completion of apprenticeship programs. Key provisions include:



**Nondiscrimination and affirmative action:** Apprenticeship programs may not discriminate against people with disabilities and the program facilities must provide reasonable accommodations. Sponsors with five or more apprentices must maintain affirmative action efforts to recruit, train, and retain a diverse workforce. It also establishes a national utilization goal of 7% for people with disabilities in registered apprenticeship programs, representing the estimated percentage of the civilian labor force that has a disability



**Self-identification:** Sponsors with five or more apprentices must present opportunities for individuals to self-identify as an individual with a disability if they choose to do so. Sponsors are also required to remind their apprentices that they may voluntarily update their disability status. For more information, please visit AskJan.org and see the EARN Resource "Do Ask, Do Tell" at [askearn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/EARN-Self-ID-Fact-Sheet.pdf](http://askearn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/EARN-Self-ID-Fact-Sheet.pdf).



**Filing a complaint:** If an apprentice or an apprenticeship applicant believes that he or she was discriminated against based on his or her disability, that individual may file a written complaint with the agency through which the apprenticeship program is registered. Sponsors must provide written notice to all applicants for apprenticeship and all apprentices of their right to file a discrimination complaint and the contact information and procedures for doing so.

The final rule provides protections from discrimination, harassment, and reprisal, and provides apprentices and career seekers with avenues to assert these rights. If you feel you have been harassed during your apprenticeship or discriminated against during the hiring process, DOL has resources for you: [www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/diversity-and-inclusion-apprenticeship](http://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/diversity-and-inclusion-apprenticeship).

## DISCOVER APPRENTICESHIP TODAY!

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Labor's one-stop source for all things apprenticeship: [www.apprenticeship.gov](http://www.apprenticeship.gov).

Phone: 1-877-872-5627

Speech and Hearing Impaired: 1-877-889-5627

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration promotes registered apprenticeship under the National Apprenticeship Act.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/apprenticeship>