

Equity- Centered Components and Effective Practices Guide for CA IACA Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs)

Created by IACA EEO Subcommittee – 8/17/26

The purpose of the IACA-EEO Subcommittee is to expand outreach and opportunities, increase access, and ongoing supports, and enhance participation, retention and completion in registered apprenticeships for under-represented groups of California residents who have historically been failed by multiple systems and left out of California's prosperity.

This effective practices guide is to ensure EEO components are embedded into all aspects of registered IACA apprenticeship programs. The document aims to be consistent with any forthcoming IACA regulations. Hopefully forthcoming regulations incorporate aspects of the below components.

RAP/Apprentice Outreach

- **At a Minimum:**
 - Each RAP should commit to an accessible outreach plan as part of its program design (and ideally submit a general outreach plan as part of RAP application)
 - The outreach plan should have the objective of reaching a diverse pool of prospective applicants, as well as advertising the program to the industry sector and the region(s).
 - Tribal inclusion: Program sponsors should engage Tribal governments and Tribal workforce entities when serving Native communities, respecting Tribal sovereignty and consultation practices where applicable.
- **Desired:**
 - The program's outreach plan design should include a commitment of at least 6- 8 hours focused on community outreach activities (ideally per cohort).
- **Effective Practices:**
 - The program outreach plan should include a community mapping of targeted organizations to reach underrepresented/underserved populations in the area and in the industry (e.g., workforce, youth, Department of Rehabilitation, foster youth programs, county youth services, other community training programs, etc.) and be aligned with existing as well as potential employer organizations and their needs.
 - Program sponsor will communicate programmatic information, including but not limited to program design, rules and regulations and program standards throughout the outreach, recruitment, selection and enrollment process prior to the signing of the formal apprentice agreement. Program sponsor shall review apprenticeship program standards, rules and regulations with prospective apprentice prior to apprentice committing to apprenticeship program

Apprentice Recruitment:

- **At a Minimum:**

- In partnership with employer partners, identify accessible recruitment process and recruitment responsibilities
- Leverage multiple communication and outreach channels to recruit and garner interest in the apprenticeship program
 - Create ongoing outreach and recruitment campaign (potentially including social media and paper collateral) that portray a multiplicity of successful journey level participants. Connect with regional and sector partners as indicated by the program, include regional workforce drivers (such as Workforce Development boards, skill readiness programs, local CBO partners, etc.)
- Recruitment posting sites should reflect the broad variety of workforce populations
- In-person informational and recruitment events should be held during the day, night, and weekends.
- Program requirements for entry, step progression, and completion should be clearly included in the program's registration application.
- **Desired:**
 - Connect with key individuals in workforce related organizations in the recruitment target area
 - Spokespeople/presenters should represent members of the target audiences
- **Effective Practices:**
 - Create recruitment materials that highlight diverse participants' experiences; ensuring accessibility in job ads (e.g., readable formats, ADA-compliant materials, diverse languages with reminders of any language requirements for the position)
 - Ensure that provide clear channels of communication for purposes of clarity and follow up, in case potential applicants have questions.

Application Selection Criteria:

- **At a Minimum:**
 - The selection procedure(s) will be uniformly and consistently applied to all applicants and apprentices.
 - Multiple modalities (online and paper) for application for initial submissions. All in-person application procedures at each step, including interviews and assessments, should include day, night, and weekend appointments. Online applications and processes should be ADA compliant.
 - Onboarding baseline evaluation to help identify apprenticeship participant needs related to industry skills and culture.
 - Add information for applicants to request a reasonable accommodation during the hiring process. Training is encouraged for hiring managers on basics for reasonable accommodation or how to request for HR or EEO support.
 - Disability disclosure, at the applicant's discretion, can occur during any stage of the hiring, training and employment stage.

Effective Practices:

- Program sponsor will communicate programmatic information, including but not limited to program design, rules and regulations and program standards throughout the selection and enrollment process prior to the signing of the formal apprentice agreement. Program sponsor shall review apprenticeship program standards, rules and regulations with prospective apprentice prior to apprentice committing to apprenticeship program
- Offer multiple modalities to submit application and virtual interviews
- Consider accommodations for each in-person application step, such as childcare needs and accessible transportation support (if applicable)
- Regular review of application processes for ADA compliance, implicit bias and systemic barriers that may prevent the program from bringing in all groups of qualified apprentices.
- The employer will determine the selection procedures. This process will be provided to potential applicants and interested parties and will comply with 29 CFR 30.10, Standards of Apprenticeship.

Program Design -- Related Instruction

- ***At a Minimum:***
 - Program curriculum should closely align with industry standards and needs.
 - All instructors should be proficient and meet national standards or possess certifications for the skills they are responsible for teaching.
 - Instructors, apprenticeship coordinators/directors should be able to apply teaching techniques and/or provide access to resources for diverse and inclusive audiences and learning styles.
- ***Desired:***
 - Program Design includes plan for continuous upskilling for instructors in subject matter and teaching techniques (including reaching a multiplicity of audiences and recognizing implicit bias), as well as regular review of curriculum materials for industry and audience relevance.
- ***Effective Practices:***
 - Program curriculum and training materials should be contextualized and culturally responsive to meet the learning needs of the participants.
 - Instructor pool reflects the diversity of potential program participants
 - Program partners with employers and appropriate pools of skilled journey level practitioners to increase the apprentice's exposure to a wide representation of field practitioners.

Program Design – Dedicated Program Staff/Instructor – Related Instruction

- ***At a Minimum:*** An instructor should be required to meet the national standard for instructors in the craft or occupation they teach, with apprentice skills emphasis.

- a. If the instructor is training in a specialized area or component of the apprentice's program, then that instructor should meet the national standard or equivalent in that specific skill area.
- b. An instructor that teaches a program that leads to a certification, or license should already have been awarded that certification or license.
- c. Instructors should satisfy a regular professional upgrade training requirement relevant to their field and their teaching skills.
- d. Instructors should receive regular training in complying with (or the California equivalent) of 29 CFR § 30 the national EEO apprenticeship standard. Instructors should receive regular training in recognizing and remediating unconscious bias, inclusive and equitable instruction practices, and power dynamics

Program Requirements – Wages, Benefits, Scheduling, Work Culture: Wages

- ***At a Minimum:***
 - The apprentice should expect that upon graduation from the apprenticeship that they have entered, they should be competitive for a “sustainable wage.”
 - We recommend determination be made based upon the last step before graduation in the proposed apprenticeship program.
- ***Desired:***
 - Adopt the following sustainable wage provision: IACA Regulations should adopt language on wages and suitable occupations that require a prospective sponsor to demonstrate that the wage profile for that occupation by the last stage of the apprenticeship prior to completion pays a living wage based on local living standards, defined as 200% of the federal poverty level for California for a family of three.
- ***Effective Practices:***
 - Program sponsor will create partnerships to form an integrated pathway—within one apprenticeship program—that will allow an apprentice graduate to exit with a wage that meets or exceeds 200% of the federal poverty level for a family of three.
 - Wage progressions should be clearly defined for all program standards including any competency-based program. A program must offer both the opportunity and the award of “advanced placement” through competency testing to all participants, including an end point assessment to indicate the successful completion of the Apprenticeship Program.
 - Any assessment provided should be determined by a meaningful, fair and objective process that demonstrates apprentice competency.

Benefits

- ***At a Minimum:*** Apprentices should accrue benefits including paid time off, personal leave, and vacation at the same rate as journey level employees to ensure fair treatment and consistency within the workforce.
- ***Desired:***
 - The apprentice benefits should match that of the Employer's journey level worker's benefit package, especially with respect to total Pension and the total health care

contribution and accrue at the same rate. Any deficiency with respect to these standards should be paid directly to the apprentice, in addition to the basic apprentice wage rates.

- Employer pays all retirement program expenses and makes a minimum contribution on the part of the apprentice.
- Apprentices should accrue paid time off (sick, holiday, vacation, personal leave) at the same rate as their journey level classification.
- **Effective Practices:** Employer pays all 401k program expenses and makes a minimum contribution on the part of the apprentice at 3% hourly with a match opportunity of up to 7%. Health care package includes vision, dental and provides coverage for the family.

Scheduling

- **At a Minimum:**
 - Work and Class Schedule expectations should be transparent and declared in the apprentice agreement. (The apprentice should have a complete copy of the agreement and at least 3 days to review the agreement before being asked to sign.)
- **Desired:**
 - Work should be scheduled to allow apprentices to attend all scheduled instruction hours. (Employers cannot take adverse actions against an apprentice when their class schedule conflicts with their work shift.)
 - Special accommodations to work or class schedules should be made on an objective basis and applicable equally to all apprentices. Excused absences should have some method for the apprentice to make up for the minimum hours.
- **Effective Practices:** Program sponsors should have policies, rules and regulations in place that transparently outlines the expectations around On-Job-Training (OJT) and Related Instruction (RI) attendance and scheduling. Apprentices should be protected from retaliation if they exercise their scheduling accommodations under state law. If family leave accommodations are offered to non-apprentice employees, those accommodations should be offered to apprentices as well.

Work Culture

- **At a Minimum:** Apprentices have a right to a Safe, Healthy, Respectful Work environment as well as a Safe, Healthy, Respectful learning environment.
- **Desired:**

The apprenticeship Program should include the following to support these rights:

 - Apprenticeship programs must have a mechanism in place to ensure physical safety in the classroom environment, including pre-task plans and mitigation of risks for physical tasks. Journey level and other supervisors on the jobsite should be encouraged to the same standard.
 - Apprenticeship programs should have a policy and practice in place to respond to any apprentice that feels unsafe on the job or in the program and that policy should include a designated party in the RAP program. When the Program is made aware of

an unsafe situation either by the apprentice or a third party, the RAP program should take steps to investigate allegation and mitigate as indicated.

- Apprenticeship programs should take care that no apprentice or third-party face retaliation or any negative consequence for bringing a perceived unsafe situation to the attention of the program.
- Apprentices should have a process or mechanism that allows for the apprentice to take steps to gain relief from mental or psychological abuse in addition to physically unsafe situations.

- **Effective Practices:**

- Apprenticeship Programs should have regular communications with all employers to ensure best environments for the apprentices on site. This can include Coordinators making regular on-site visits and participating in Employer Association Meetings to touch base with a broader number of employers in addition to Apprenticeship Trust meetings. Employers, Apprenticeship programs and, where appropriate Unions, should adopt and support Respectful Workplace programs to improve the work site experience for all their employees.

Apprentice Programs should provide training and resources for addressing trauma informed situations and individuals and they should encourage their industry partners to provide similar resources.

Apprentice Ratio:

- **At a Minimum:** Quality on- the- job training must be a meaningful component of any apprentice program and be consistent with the proper safety, health, supervision, and training of the apprentice. Setting minimum Apprentice-Journey ratio for on-the-job supervision will be a classification by classification, as well as a program-by-program conversation, based on industry and apprentice need(s).
- **Desired:**
 - All apprentices should have direct supervision on the jobsite such that each apprentice receives direct training interactions on a daily basis.
 - Apprentice ratios should also be subject to the capacity of journey level supervisor.
 - Journey level supervisors should be qualified for performing the work of the program graduate.
 - Temporary exceptions to exceed the minimum ratios should be defined in the program standards and should be very limited in duration.
 - Programs that do not include meaningful on-the- job training in their structure should be referred to another agency for implementation and oversight.
- **Effective Practices:**
 - Apprentice to journey level employee ratio should be determined by industry standards, apprentices and program needs, and be required in any hazardous work environment classification or where the work product is of a critical nature to the product consumer.

Readiness Supports and Supportive Services

This area requires DAS IACA support, as many programs will not have independent funding for the variety of bridge programs and supportive services recommended below. DAS should explore sector and regional readiness support resources as well as create connectors for soft skills and basic hard skill readiness for underserved populations including pre-apprenticeship programs, tutoring, and others. DAS can be key to providing regional or sector resources for support services as well as doing legwork to facilitate connections with resources that the programs or the apprentices can utilize.

- **At a Minimum:**
 - RAPs should utilize resource lists provided DAS and other groups, including lists of Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and California Community Colleges (CCCs) regionally as resources.
 - Connect apprentices with counseling (including benefits counseling), childcare, transportation, housing, and emergency financial resources through state, regional and/or local networks .
 - All programs should provide financial literacy training as part of their curriculum, bringing in special workshop presenters as an alternative.
- **Desired:**
 - RAPs have access to fund/partner with community based workforce readiness and/or pre-apprenticeship programs that include work readiness, general skills trainings as well as introductory skills for that career sector.
 - RAPs provide informational presentations to the students in programs mentioned above. These events are mutually beneficial – programs meet potential employees and can also provide feedback to the readiness programs – students meet employer representatives, get additional information about the potential career pathways, and gain some inspiration to continue in these programs and to further develop their skills.
 - Direct connections to supportive resources.
- **Effective Practices:**
 - Resource Connector (program or sector paid position) to connect prospective and program apprentices with appropriate supportive resources.
 - Funded, supportive services and resources provided to apprentices.
 - Provide evaluation of need and resource support during apprenticeship onboarding. Collaborate with local service providers to provide resources to support each apprentice's physical, mental and fiscal health.

Training Supports

- **At a Minimum:**
 - Access to assistive technology as requested by apprentice (to meet reasonable accommodations)
 - Access to laptops, tablets, internet access for any program with remote training requirements
 - Phone app modules to ensure all apprentices have equal access to the training materials.

- Easy to use training for the online training platforms.
- **Desired:**
 - Stipends for increased data costs if phone/computer platforms are required of apprentices and the training materials are data dense.
- **Effective practices:**
 - Stipends, access to laptops or tablets and additional self-directed learning supports or supplements
 - Phone help lines for apprentices in programs with remote training modules.
 - Curriculum design that accommodates a diversity of learning styles (e.g. auditory, visual, kinesthetic, more.)

Mentorship

- **At a Minimum:**
 - Detailed mentorship checklist and implementation guide (which includes mentoring benefits as well as multiple approaches)
 - Regular mentor-mentee check-ins
- **Desired:**
 - Provide apprentices with expanded opportunities for additional career support from other skilled practitioners in the program sector that give the apprentices a chance to meet mentors and role models. Assist in providing these opportunities both formally and informally.
- **Effective Practices:**
 - Sponsor mentoring events to assist interested mentors and mentees to find pairings.
 - Sponsor formal mentor-mentee programs in addition to the journey level-apprenticeship relationship where the work is structured to support and sustain a formal mentorships program. Define the nature of mentorship, inclusive strategies to address cultural competency, cultural and generational differences that may exist in mentor mentee relationships to ensure respect. Consider matching that needs apprentice needs and background.
 - Regular mentor-mentee check-ins.
 - Survey and evaluate mentor-mentee pairings as well as the overarching structure on a regular basis, and course correct as needed.

Training

- **At a Minimum:**
 - Under the mentorship of a journey person, apprenticeship training should develop and deepen the apprentice's ability to recognize, interpret, and respond appropriately to workplace environments in alignment with apprenticeship programs expectations, standards, and professional norms.
 - Within the first 30 days of apprenticeship training, the employer shall provide "human skill development" training to improve apprentice situational awareness and essential workplace physical and psychological safety. In action this training can include communication styles, conflict resolution, time management, and feedback reception.

- In the spirit of transparency, the training provider shall explicitly train and communicate worksite expectations at the start of the training program.
- **Desired:**
 - Contextualized/Applied Learning Model: To ensure quality skill transfer to apprentices, training will incorporate relevant contextual and applicable work simulations/problem-based learning to ensure learning is contextualized to the occupation.
 - Diverse Training Modalities: Deliver training in multiple modalities (visual, auditory, hands-on) to accommodate different learning styles and abilities. Provide appropriate mapping to worksite expectations, including related training exercises.
 - The training provider will cultivate an environment of clear communication, by offering varying channels of communication with apprentices. This can include utilizing cellphone applications (google voice, what's app), periodic email newsletter highlighting program updates, or class platforms (Canvas, etc.).
- **Effective Practices:**
 - Culturally competent and sensitive trainers, position cultural inclusive training methodologies, and additional tutoring or remedial supports for those that may need support (please review above sections on trainer competency, training supports needed and ratio recommendations)
 - Culturally competent and sensitive trainers use universal design to train and tutor people of all abilities.
 - To ensure continuous quality improvement and program design iteration, training providers shall incorporate apprentice voice and feedback in training design decisions.

Retention

- **Minimum:**
 - Regular review of retention processes for implicit bias and systemic barriers that may prevent the program from progressing all groups of qualified apprentices.
 - Drive belonging and inclusivity through creating opportunities for cohort and peer learning.
 - A review of worksite and program staff behavior to ensure safe, respectful work site; and ability for apprentice to formally and confidentially share concerns and follow up.
 - Program should be proactive in outreach to apprentice (48-72 hours), when a concern of significance comes to light (attendance, discrimination, etc.)
 - Establish multiple reporting channels (anonymous, digital, third-party) and clearly communicate protection from retaliation. Follow-up timelines should be transparent and enforced.
- **Desired:**
 - Accommodation for childcare needs for in-person obligations that extend beyond typical workday
 - Program design review to ensure that maintains fidelity, yet agile to ensure apprentice is supported for the duration of program and progression to the next level.
- **Effective Practices:**

- Adopt a “no-fail policy” approach to attrition, including the development of an “attrition plan”. This plan includes a protocol for addressing attendance issues, academic struggles, or disengagement early. Proactive outreach within 48–72 hours of concern significantly improve retention.
- Ongoing touch points (monthly, quarterly?) with trusted staff (ideally neutral third party, or if ongoing staff- with clear power dynamics named...) to check in formally with apprentice that training needs and supportive services are being met
- Ensure exit interviews for all apprentices taken, and results reviewed to understand retention and improve training, supports and apprentice needs in ongoing manner to improve retention
- Develop retention strategies based on regularly analyzed attrition/retention data such as gender, age, and other demographics to identify disparities and target interventions

Progression

- ***At a Minimum:***
 - Employers conduct a workforce analysis to determine current workforce needs and potential opportunities for apprentices to fill vacancies.
 - Identify apprentice transitional pathways to advanced training or full-time roles.
- ***Desired:***
 - Employer Asset Mapping: Determine community/industry workforce needs and develop partnerships with local employers for job placement or career placement.
 - Track placement and employment outcomes, including income data (starting, mid, completion wage), retention in employment, etc.
- ***Effective Practices:***
 - Audit process for equity, identify where candidates and participants may fall out of the program or applicant process, continuous improvement culture and process

Pre-Completion Professional Supports (2-4 months before complete RAP)

- ***At a Minimum:***
 - Prior to the completion of the apprenticeship program; apprentices will receive workforce and education planning assistance to ensure a post program plan is in place.
- ***Desired:***
 - Provide continuous learning and professional development opportunities post apprenticeship
 - Create cohort groups and contact lists, Alumni networks, continuous access to training resources and/or opportunities
- ***Effective Practices:***
 - Prior to the completion of the program, apprentices will meet with program coordinators to determine occupational growth plan (e.g. – education requirements, noncredit bearing training opportunities, advance degrees).
 - Maintain an accessible online portal curated with industry aligned training materials, job postings, and professional development resources.

Completion

- **At a Minimum:**
 - Prior to program completion, revisit apprenticeship standards completion requirement to assess readiness to leave program. Support in final stages will include final meeting with mentor for evaluation/competency review, academic counselor or RI advisor, and apprenticeship program administrator.
- **Desired:**
 - Transition planning via noncredit bearing trainings, such as resume-building workshops, mock interview opportunities, social media (LinkedIn) development and network building activities. celebratory and recognition event to publicize their completion and success
- **Effective Practices:**
 - At the culmination of the program, program administrators will host a recognition ceremony/apprenticeship program graduation to celebrate apprentices becoming journeypersons. This will include completion certificates from DAS and/or DOL.
 - At program completion, gather contact information from the apprentices to collect post program data and build repository of potential mentors of future cohorts.

Evaluation and Data/Impact Measurement:

DAS has an important role in both program oversight and sector data synthesis

- **At a Minimum:**
 - Assess program effectiveness through quantitative and qualitative feedback from participants and employers.
 - Programs should utilize measurement templates and initiate some level of periodic and exit survey data collection.
 - Implement regular internal processes to review apprentice progress, flag issues and evaluate program level deficiencies; gather and analyze regular apprentice feedback directly to apprenticeship program; make improvements to program and process annually based on all feedback
 - Assessment tools used to evaluate the satisfactory completion of the apprenticeship program shall be based, to the extent practicable, on established industry standards and a summary of instruction and on-the-job skills included in the apprenticeship curriculum.
 - Exit interviews for all apprentices leaving the program; Phone and/or in person exit interviews for all apprentices leaving the program in addition to a survey format.
 - All apprenticeship evaluations should be transparent to the Apprentice, conveyed within a set time period (10 days or less) and with the opportunity for apprenticeship response.
- **Desired:**

- Regular end of semester survey evaluations and/or focus groups for both classes and employers. For competency only based programs, these should be at each step raise.
- Probationary period: monthly evaluations, transparent to the apprentice, apprentice to submit surveys on a periodic basis directly to apprenticeship leadership with privacy commitment from employer.
- Periodic review of retention figures. Results should be reviewed for program improvement.
- **Effective Practices:**
 - Audit process for equity, identify where candidates and participants may fall out of the program or applicant process, continuous improvement culture and process.
 - DAS should support sector and more periodic reviews of both graduation rates and step increases earned and share that data to each sector as well as to each program.
 - Reviews should include evaluation of data for any particularly impacted group.
 - Follow up data for apprenticeship completers on 1 and 3 years out.
 - Recommended components of Data and evaluation of the program, regularly conducted: DAS evaluation, Apprentice evaluation of the program, Employer's evaluation of the apprentice, General evaluation of curriculum for relevance to employer skills required, alignment with Sector basics