

Building a Highly Skilled Broadband Workforce with Registered Apprenticeship



The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program permits States to use broadband funding for workforce development programs. Specifically, the NOFO permits States to use funding for “**Registered Apprenticeships** and pre-apprenticeships, and community college and/or vocational training for broadband-related occupations” to support broadband deployment, maintenance, and upgrades [NOFO pg. 39].



As the National Sponsor of the first and premier Registered Apprenticeship Program for the telecommunications industry, WIA has the expertise to help States improve and expand apprenticeship programs in broadband to build a highly skilled broadband workforce.

Registered Apprenticeship: How It Works

Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally recognized credential.

A **Registered Apprenticeship Program** is a proven model of apprenticeship that has been validated by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

To effectively leverage BEAD funding to expand Registered Apprenticeships for broadband, States will need a partner experienced in defining career pathways in the broadband industry and working with employers to improve their apprenticeship programs.

WIA has the tools and know-how to help States expand Registered Apprenticeships in the broadband industry.



WIA is the National Sponsor of the DOL registered **Telecommunications Industry Registered Apprenticeship Program (TIRAP)**, a competency-based apprenticeship program aimed at growing the productivity and safety of the telecommunications workforce. In this role, WIA defines career paths in a growing number of occupations critical to the deployment of broadband and currently offers 14 DOL-recognized occupations.

WIA is the DOL’s contracted **Industry Intermediary** tasked with working with telecommunications companies to expand Registered Apprenticeships. Through TIRAP, WIA provides companies with the resources, guidance, and support to improve and formalize their training programs, expediting employer adoption of Registered Apprenticeship Programs and enabling them to offer a national credential through the DOL.



As an experienced Industry Intermediary for expanding Registered Apprenticeships in broadband, WIA can partner with States to effectively invest BEAD funding in Registered Apprenticeship Programs and build a strong broadband workforce training pipeline.



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Expanding Registered Apprenticeships: The Industry Intermediary Model

In 2020, WIA was awarded a four-year contract by the DOL to serve as the **Industry Intermediary** tasked with working with telecommunications companies to expand Registered Apprenticeships.

As the DOL's Industry Intermediary, WIA can offer incentive funds to employers in the telecommunications industry that adopt Registered Apprenticeship and serve under-represented communities. WIA partners with employers to provide resources and guidance to help them improve and formalize their existing training, so they can offer a national credential from the DOL.

Partnering with WIA to Expand Registered Apprenticeships at the State Level

WIA can partner with States as a state-level Industry Intermediary to help them effectively invest BEAD funding in expanding Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

As an Industry Intermediary for States, WIA can:



Convene broadband employers—including national companies as well as local contractors—to identify high-demand occupations, validate competencies, and expand Registered Apprenticeships for broadband



Administer incentive funding for employers adopting and expanding the Registered Apprenticeship model for broadband occupations



Provide technical support and resources to help companies establish on-the-job training as well as classroom learning for their apprenticeships



Establish a Broadband Apprenticeship Center of Excellence to bring together existing apprenticeship resources, education stakeholders, and training partners to build a training pipeline and provide the classroom learning component of apprenticeship programs



Build pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs in technical schools and community colleges

TIRAP: A Proven Model for Building the Broadband Workforce

TIRAP
boasts

79

Employer Partners

15

DOL-Recognized Occupations

Over

3,200

Apprentices Registered



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