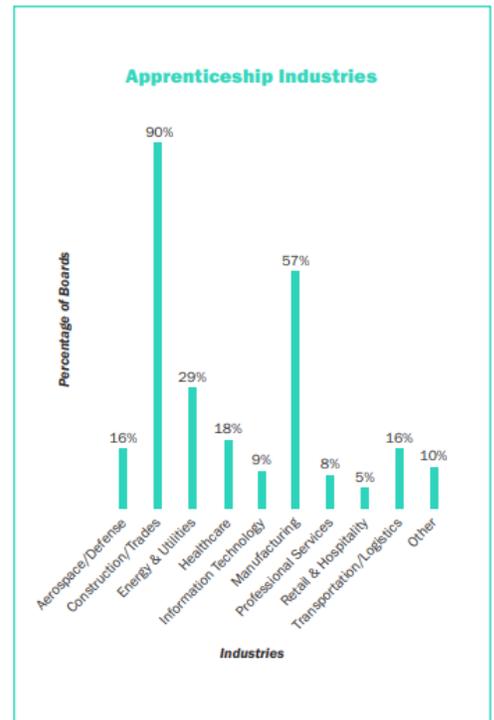


STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING APPRENTICESHIP PARTNERSHIPS

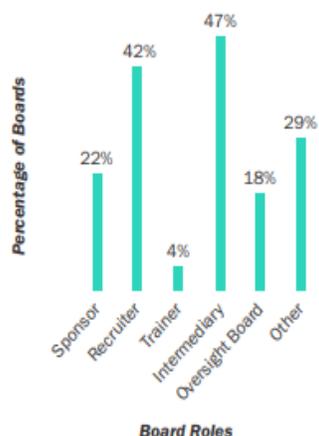
Workforce boards, the apprenticeship system, and community colleges all share the same fundamental goals: connecting workers to economic opportunity while meeting the skill needs of employers in high-demand industries. The ways in which these entities interact is not always clearly defined, but when the interactions are consistent, the result for the job seeker and employer is always better.

To highlight areas of collaboration it helps to understand how apprenticeship programs are developed and implemented. The first step is identifying a sponsor. These can be, but are not limited to, employers, educational institutions, workforce boards, community-based organizations, and third party sponsors. These groups can also be looked upon when identifying potential partners. Once the sponsor is established, the program should be created based on the information provided through local, state and, regional economic development plans. In order to develop apprenticeship programs that are responsive to local needs, programs must align with employer needs in the area. The results of a survey conducted by NAWB and JFF in 2017 provides insight into how industries and local workforce boards engage in apprenticeships. A broad range of industries can benefit from an apprenticeship training model. These programs should be designed so they are valuable to both job seekers and employers. Sponsors also work with the Department of Labor or the State Apprenticeship Agency to register their program.



It is important that apprenticeships result in the identification and development of skills and competencies that make a job seeker work-ready upon the completion of the program. There are three different ways apprenticeships are designed to achieve this outcome: time-based, competency-based, and a hybrid of both. It is essential that the needs of the partners are integrated into the framework of the apprenticeship. Different sector partnerships will require different modes of training that are most adept in preparing their specific workforce.

Board Apprenticeship Roles



With the framework of apprenticeships established, it is now important to look at how partnerships can provide the most engaging and effective training. This section examines the three major partners previously listed: local workforce boards, community colleges, and employers. It is first important to note that by themselves each of these entities can provide a full range of services to a job seeker as shown by the graph to the left. While this may be true, it is also necessary to recognize that each of these entities functions best in their specialty areas. Local workforce boards function best as a recruiter, connecting job seekers to training services and employers. Community colleges are known as the highest standard of education and job training services. Business is the crux of it all, as they provide the outline of required standards and competencies as well as employment opportunities to the apprentice upon the completion of the apprenticeship program.

Local Workforce Boards

Local workforce boards are an integral part of any successful apprenticeship program. While the specific role of local boards may vary between communities, they effectively provide strong regional partnerships. Local boards bring stakeholders and educators to the table to drive collaboration amongst potential apprenticeship partners. In conjunction with the development of the apprenticeship programs and partners, local boards serve as a promotion tool for the apprenticeship programs once they are established, through the board website and local media outlets. Local boards also serve as a recruiter of talent into apprenticeship programs, as they are often the first entity the job seeker makes contact with. Workforce professionals at American Job Centers can assess and place prospective employees to ensure that those entering the apprenticeship programs are equipped to find gainful employment.

Community Colleges

Educational institutions such as community colleges are the most frequent providers of the related instruction required in apprenticeship programs. They are the administrators of the curriculum that allows a prospective employee to upskill into a full-time worker. While the programs administered at these locations often prepare this individual for a career with a specific employer, they also play the important role of providing skills and credentialing that will make it possible for the individual to move around within similar industries. Through the regional partnerships formed with others involved, it is possible for the training provided by these institutions to be pertinent to more than one specific career path. Just like local boards, community colleges can also take the lead as a convener of regional partners for apprenticeship systems. Community colleges are not only a necessary part of the system for instruction of relevant training programs, but they are also essential in developing the curriculum. The expertise that they are able to bring to apprenticeship partnerships combines traditional, on the job, and hybrid learning to ensure that the job seeker is able to receive the most out of their time in the training program to lead a more economically stable life.



Businesses and Employers

The aim of any apprenticeship program is to place the job seeker in a job. Local businesses act as intermediaries to provide the other stakeholders in the apprenticeship program with the information necessary to be responsive to the sectors that will provide the job seeker with employment. The most essential piece of any apprenticeship program

is employers that are actively engaged with all other partners to ensure the individual can be effective as soon as they enter their specific sector of the labor force. These employers must also collaborate amongst themselves, especially in the cases of smaller companies, to ensure the apprenticeship model can be similarly effective across all interests in a community.

When the apprenticeship system is working at full capacity, the job seeker can visit their local one stop center, operated by the workforce board, to begin their apprenticeship journey. The local board can draw on existing partnerships with the community college to function as an intermediary and place the prospective apprentice with the appropriate training provider, usually a community college. The community college implements curriculum that is developed in conjunction with the industry and regional employers who are in need of a skilled workforce. This process of partnership provides the job seeker with not only the best program, but also the information needed for the decision-making process when choosing a new career.



The economic backbone of a region is comprised of local workforce boards, community colleges, and employers. The importance of the partnership between these entities cannot be overstated. Looking past even the obvious benefits in employee training and job placement, a working relationship between these groups is essential when compiling labor market data throughout a region. This data is the most essential piece in determining what the local economy needs to thrive and what demands and struggles the area might encounter. This is the process that makes strategic partnerships amongst key stakeholders an invaluable asset to local economies across the nation. The promotion and further integration of these partnerships and apprenticeship programs will equip the nation's workforce as globally competitive for years to come.

NAWB and AACC have partnered to highlight these engagements through a series of papers to be distributed over the next few years. In this first installment we found it important to highlight strategies for building partnerships, a macro-level view of how the apprenticeship system, workforce boards, and community colleges collaborate.
