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Apprenticeship Program Review Sponsor's Manual



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
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CAREER AND ADULT EDUCATION

APPRENTICE
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Florida Department of Education

Office of Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship Program Review Sponsor's Manual

The information in this document is intended to provide sponsors of registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) an overview of the apprenticeship program review process. The following instructions are based on requirements contained in Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) part 29, subpart A (titled "Registered Apprenticeship Programs"), Chapter 446, Florida Statutes (F.S.) (titled "Job Training") and Chapter 6A-23, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) (titled "Apprenticeship Programs").

1. Purpose of Program Reviews

Program Reviews are conducted by the Florida Department of Education, Office of Apprenticeship, to evaluate and ensure that all RAPs in Florida operate in full compliance with state and federal regulations. These reviews provide technical assistance while verifying that sponsors maintain quality training aligned with approved Standards of Apprenticeship, deliver and have records of structured On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Related Technical Instruction (RTI), maintain active involvement from participating employers, ensure qualified training personnel and adequate supervision on the job, properly register apprentices and pay wages as required in the standards, apply consistent selection and evaluation methods for all applicants and apprentices and maintain all records required for apprenticeship programs.

2. Why Program Reviews Are Important

Program reviews are required under 29 CFR § 29.5(b) which states "Registration Agencies must evaluate performance of registered apprenticeship programs." Program Reviews are essential to maintaining registration and ensuring quality assurance. Through these reviews the Department confirms that sponsors fulfil their responsibilities as stated in federal and state regulations as well as the standards of apprenticeship by properly training apprentices, ensuring employers fulfill their supervision and training responsibilities and the program maintains records that reflect accurate apprentice progress, wages and ratios.

Benefits to sponsors include maintaining program credibility, identifying areas for improvement and ensuring continued registration and eligibility for state recognition.

3. Scheduling Program Reviews

The Department will contact the sponsor to schedule the program review and verify that a representative will be available during the allotted time for program review. Written notice of the program review period will be provided at least two weeks in advance, this notification will include detailed instructions and a list of the documents required.

4. What to Expect During a Program Review

The review includes 3 essential parts:



Remote and Desk Review (Prior to the on-site visit):

During the desk review, the Department gathers and reviews the RAP's documents and data currently on file or in RAPIDS to get familiar with the information and prepare for the in-person review. The Department may ask the sponsor or sponsor's representative to provide additional information or documentation or to update information in RAPIDS. Please respond to such requests in a timely manner.

The sponsor should ensure that all apprentice email addresses are accurate in RAPIDS and will be asked to provide current employer email contacts. These emails will be used to distribute online surveys evaluating program operations. This is a critical part of the review process and sponsors are expected to notify apprentices and employers of the surveys and encourage their participation.

In addition to the surveys, the Department will send a written notice of review to the sponsor confirming the date and time of the review. The notice will include the following:

- a. The time period covered for the review
- b. The Department will create a secure ShareFile folder dedicated to the program review, where sponsors will upload all requested documents.
- c. List of documents to be uploaded into ShareFile
- d. List of documents to be reviewed during the on-site visit. All required documents should be available during the on-site visit.
- e. If interviews are required, the Department will provide a list of apprentices, instructors and/or employers to be interviewed either in person or virtually. Sponsors must ensure that selected individuals are made available during the on-site portion of the review or as requested by the reviewer.
- f. List of active apprentices as shown in RAPIDS. Verify that the information is accurate prior the on-site visit.

On-site Review:

The on-site visit is conducted either at the sponsor's location, participating employers' worksites and/or related-instruction venues as previously agreed with the sponsor. At the Department's discretion, monitoring may be performed remotely.

The on-site review is designed to provide the Department with a complete picture of a registered apprenticeship program's overall operations and an understanding of the apprentices' experiences within the program. This provides an opportunity for sponsors to ask questions and for the Department to provide technical assistance to help the sponsor comply with state and federal regulations.

During the onsite visit, program operation will be evaluated focusing on the following main areas (these are described in more detail in section 6):

- a. **Program documents:** This includes committee or subcommittee meeting minutes, up-to-date Standards of Apprenticeship and Appendices (including amendments), program policies, procedures, manuals, handbooks, outreach materials, records of prior deficiencies and corrective actions and other relevant documents.
- b. **Apprentice documents:** This includes apprentice files, signed apprenticeship agreements, apprenticeship actions, RTI delivery and attendance records, OJT delivery and training records, evaluation tools used for advancement, documentation of journeyworker supervision, training personnel qualifications, wage records consistent with progression levels and application and selection records.
- c. **Participating Employer documents:** This includes employer agreements, a list of active employers, current journeyworker and apprentice data by employer, apprentice to journeyworker ratio and documentation demonstrating employer involvement and participation in the program.
- d. **Instructor documents:** This includes instructor credentials, experience and documentation confirming compliance with requirements for apprenticeship training.

Post on-site visit:

After the onsite visit, the Sponsor will be notified in writing if any findings or concerns were identified. Depending on the nature of the findings or concerns the program will be placed either on an "improvement plan" or a "corrective action plan" and the Department will provide the sponsor with a list of corrective actions to remedy the deficiencies. Sponsors will typically have 30 calendar days from the date of the findings letter to submit written documentation of all corrective actions taken. During this period technical assistance from the local ATR and the Department will be provided in an effort to remedy the non-compliance findings.

- i. **Improvement Plan:** Issued for procedural or logistical findings that do not constitute a substantial violation of federal or state regulations but require action to strengthen program operations or improve training quality.
- ii. **Corrective Action Plan:** Issued for more substantial findings that reflect noncompliance with key federal and/or state requirements. Prompt and documented corrective measures are required. Failure to address corrective actions in a timely manner may result in deregistration of the program.

5. Sponsor Responsibilities Before and During the Review

Each sponsor is expected to respond promptly to the Department's notice, provide complete records via the provided ShareFile link and during the on-site visit, ensure key staff are available during the scheduled on-site visit, notify apprentices and employer of the program review surveys and encourage participating, maintain open communication throughout the process and take any corrective action as a result of the program review in a timely manner.

6. Records the Sponsor Must Maintain and Provide

Sponsors must maintain documentation demonstrating compliance in the key areas listed below:

A. Program Documents

- **Apprenticeship Standards and Amendments**

Standards of Apprenticeship must be kept current with the Department. Approved and amended standards of apprenticeship and appendices must be available upon request.

- **Active Training in all Registered Occupations**

Sponsors are required to be actively training apprentices in each registered occupation within one year. Each occupation for which a program sponsor holds registration shall be subject to cancellation or deregistration proceedings if no active training of apprentices has occurred within one (1) year per 29 C.F.R. § 29.6(a) and Rules 6A-23.003(10-11), F.A.C.

- **Committee Meetings and Minutes**

Programs with committees and subcommittees are required to maintain an updated list of members and hold regular meetings as outlined in the standards of apprenticeship. Employer participation and representation is recommended. Meeting minutes must be maintained to reflect decisions and oversight activities.

- **Other Program Documentation**

Sponsor shall provide copies of any policies, procedures, manuals or handbooks used for apprenticeship or promotion of apprenticeship.

- **Outreach Documentation**

The sponsor must provide a copy of announcements used for the promotion of apprenticeship opportunities, application form and application documents used for the selection of apprentices, including any written tests administered to applicants and scoring mechanisms for those tests, forms, checklists, questionnaires or other standardized documents that the sponsor used during interviews of applicants to its apprenticeship program.

- **Prior Deficiencies and Corrections**

The sponsor must provide a copy of prior corrective action and compliance plans and any correspondence relating to correcting the deficiencies found in prior reviews (if any).

B. Apprentice Documents

- **Application Process**

Sponsors must maintain records of all applications received, a list of qualified applicants who meet the minimum requirements outlined in the standards and the selection criteria and procedures used to select apprentices. All applicant files shall include application forms completed by applicants and any application documents used for the selection of apprentices, including any written tests administered to applicants and scoring mechanisms for those tests, forms, checklists, questionnaires or other standardized documents that the sponsor used during interviews of applicants to its apprenticeship program.

- **Apprentice Files**
Each apprentice file must include a fully executed Apprenticeship Agreement, documentation of prior credit (if applicable), wage progression consistent with their level of training, RTI records and completion, OJT logs with signatures and verification, disciplinary actions taken (if applicable) and all apprentice actions including cancelation, extension or completion records submitted to the Department within the 45-day period. Per Rule 23.003(3) and (4), F.A.C., Rule 6A-23.004(2)(c - v), F.A.C., and 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(3).
- **Apprentice Wages**
Sponsors must verify apprentice wages align with the approved standards and are consistent with their level of training, maintain an updated wage schedule and document wage progression and journeyworker rate verification annually as stated in Rule 6A-23.004(2)(e), F.A.C., and 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(5).
- **Credit for Prior Experience**
The granting of advanced standing or credit for demonstrated competency, acquired experience, training or skills for all applicants equally with commensurate wages for any progression step as stated in Rule 6A-23.004(2)(l), F.A.C., and 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(12).

The Department must be advised of any credit granted and the wage rate to which the apprentice has advanced. The granting of credit for previous experience must be uniformly applied to all apprentices. It is highly recommended that no more than fifty percent (50%) of the apprenticeship program duration is awarded, unless the apprentice is transferring from another registered apprenticeship program in the same occupation. All credit granted of more than 1000 hours of OJT will require an evaluation method.

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT)**
Sponsors must track OJT according to the work process schedule outlined in the standards, ensure journeyworker verification of apprentice advancement in the apprenticeship and maintain OJT records in accordance with the training approach as described in Rule 6A-23.004(2)(b), F.A.C. Records must show structured and supervised training by qualified journeyworkers and alignment with standards of apprenticeship as stated in Rule 6A-23.004(2)(c), F.A.C., and 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(3).
- **Related Technical Instruction (RTI)**
Sponsors must ensure apprentices receive required RTI hours as approved in the RTI outline in the standards of apprenticeship, maintain attendance records and employ qualified instructors for RTI delivery as stated Rule 6A-23.004(2)(d), F.A.C., and 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(4). A minimum of 144 hours for each year of apprenticeship is recommended.

C. Employer Documents

- **Ratios**
Sponsors must monitor and document ratio compliance at all employer sites, verifying proper supervision and training quality. Sponsor must ensure that the allowable ratio of apprentices to journeyworkers is consistently maintained by each participating employer on the job as established in Rule 6A-23.004(2)(c) and (g), F.A.C., and 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(7).

- **Participating Employers**

Sponsors must maintain signed employer agreements for all participating employers or employer must be signatory to a collective bargaining agreement prior to training apprentices per rules 6A-23.002(19) and 6A-23.004(2)(w), F.A.C. Upon request, sponsor shall provide journeyworker and apprentice data per employer, including a list of active participating employers, journeyworker wages, apprentices working for each employer and apprentice-to-journeyworker ratios.

- **Well-Rounded OJT Training**

Participating employers must provide comprehensive, structured and supervised work experience across all work processes defined in the program's standards, and sponsors should maintain documentation of the training provided and completed by each apprentice per Rule 6A-23.004(2)(c), F.A.C., and 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(3).

D. Instructor Documents

- **Qualified Training Personnel**

Sponsors must provide assurance of qualified training personnel for RTI delivery and adequate supervision on the job. Every apprenticeship instructor must meet the Department's requirements for a career and technical instructor per Section 1012.55, F.S., or be a subject matter expert, which is an individual who is recognized within an industry as having expertise in a specific occupation, as demonstrated by being a journeyworker or by holding the licensure or certification required in the given occupation per Rule 6A-23.004(2)(n), F.A.C.

- **Adult Learning Styles**

Sponsor must ensure instructors have training in teaching techniques and adult learning styles, which must occur before or after the apprenticeship instructor has started to provide the related technical instruction per Rule 6A-23.004(2)(n), F.A.C.

7. Best Practices for Maintaining Compliance Year-Round

Sponsors should conduct recurring internal audits, maintain accurate and updated standards of apprenticeship and appendices, ensure apprentice and employer information in RAPIDS is accurate, maintain communication with employers, provide training for instructors, employers and committee members to ensure compliance, ensure apprentices understand program structure, ensure proper OJT and RTI delivery, ensure wages are properly paid to apprentices and keep all records organized and accessible.

8. Program Review Closing

If the on-site visit does not identify any findings, the sponsor will receive a Full Compliance Letter. If findings are identified, the sponsor will typically have **30 calendar days** from the date the Findings Letter is issued to submit a written response outlining the corrective actions taken to address each violation, finding or concern using form "APR Finding Report" shown below along with any supporting documentation. The APR Finding Report will be prefilled with program information and the findings found during the program review.

Florida Department of Education Office of Apprenticeship Apprenticeship Program Review Finding Report		
Program Name		
Program Number		
Review Date		
Findings Letter Date		
Corrective action Deadline		
Status		
APR Finding	Corrective Action by Sponsor	Completion Date
Finding # 1		
Finding # 2		
Finding # 3		
Finding # 4		
Finding # 5		

Once the reviewer receives the written response, they will evaluate the corrective actions submitted. If clarification is needed, the reviewer may schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss any outstanding questions. If no additional actions are required and the reviewer determines that the program is in full compliance, the sponsor will receive a Full Compliance Letter.

If compliance is not achieved within the required timeframe, or if the Department is not properly notified of corrective actions, the Department may take enforcement measures. These actions may include suspending the sponsor’s authority to register new apprentices or recommending deregistration in accordance with 29 C.F.R. part 29 and Rule 6A-23, F.A.C.

9. Common Findings

Program Documents

- Outdated Standards of Apprenticeship and/or appendices
- Lack of training within 1 year as required for all apprenticeship programs
- Inactive occupations with no active apprentices for more than 1 year
- Outdated apprenticeship committee and subcommittee member’s roster
- Failure to hold committee meetings or maintain meeting minutes

Apprentice Documents

- Failure to maintain application documents showing verification of applicants’ minimum qualifications as outlined in the occupational appendices and Standards of Apprenticeship
- Failure to follow selection procedures as approved in the Standards of Apprenticeship
- Missing signed apprenticeship agreements
- Failure to maintain accurate OJT according to time, competency or hybrid models
- Lack of proper supervision on the job
- Failure to provide well-rounded training as stated in the Standards of Apprenticeship
- Failure to track RTI attendance and ensure the minimum hours are provided
- Failure to track apprentice wage progression as approved in the Standards of Apprenticeship
- Apprentices not being paid according to the approved wage schedule

- Failure to maintain apprentice-to-journeyworker ratios as approved in the Standards of Apprenticeship
- Failure to maintain records of previous experience and credit documentation (if applicable)

Instructor Documents

- Lack of instructor training in Adult Learning Styles
- Instructors without proper qualifications

Participating Employers

- Registered occupations with no active employers training apprentices
- Employers not providing well-rounded training as stated in the Standards of Apprenticeship
- Missing signed participating employer agreements

10. Department Contact Information

Florida Department of Education – Office of Apprenticeship

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Apprenticeship Program Review (APR) Sponsor Checklist

1. Program Documents

- Ensure Standards of Apprenticeship and all Appendices are current and up-to-date.
- Maintain documentation of active training in each registered occupation. Each occupation must be actively training within the past 12 months.
- Maintain updated committee/subcommittee member roster.
- Hold regular committee meetings and maintain meeting minutes.
- Have policies, procedures, manuals and handbooks available.
- Maintain any outreach and application documentation, such as application forms, tests, interview, scoring methods, etc.
- Maintain copies of prior deficiencies and corrective action plans.

2. Apprentice Documentation

- Maintain records of all applications received and selection procedures.
- Ensure fully executed Apprenticeship Agreements are on file.
- Include documentation of prior credit evaluations (if credit is granted).
- Maintain apprentice wage records consistent with approved wage schedule.
- Track and document wage progression for each apprentice.
- Maintain OJT logs with work process tracking and journeyworker verification.
- Maintain RTI attendance, completion records and required minimum hours.
- Ensure all apprentice actions (cancellations, completions, extensions) are submitted within 45 days of occurrence.

3. OJT Requirements

- Track OJT by competency, hours or hybrid model as stated in the Standards of Apprenticeship.
- Ensure journeyworker supervision is documented.
- Verify employers provide well-rounded training as approved in the Standards of Apprenticeship.
- Ensure ratios are met at each employer site and documented.

4. RTI Requirements

- Maintain RTI schedules, attendance records and completion documentation.
- Ensure instructors meet qualifications per rule.
- Maintain documentation of instructor training in Adult Learning Styles.

5. Employer Requirements

- Maintain signed employer agreements for all participating employers.
- Maintain list of active employers and verify accuracy in RAPIDS.
- Maintain journeyworker wage rate and updated apprentice wage schedules.
- Verify OJT training aligns with Standards of Apprenticeship.
- Verify and document ratio compliance during OJT.

6. Instructor Documentation

- Maintain evidence of instructor credentials.
- Maintain documentation of instructor training in Adult Learning Styles.
- Verify instructor qualifications meet Rule 6A-23.004(2)(n), F.A.C.

7. RAPIDS Accuracy

- Verify active apprentices' emails.
- Verify employers listed in RAPIDS are current.
- Verify all RAPIDS apprenticeship records align to your internal records.
- Ensure accurate employer–apprentice linkage for each apprentice.

8. Before the Program Review

- Respond to Department scheduling and confirmation request.
- Upload required documents to the secure ShareFile link within the provided timeframe.
- Verify apprentice and employer contact information for surveys to be sent.
- Notify apprentices and employers of surveys and encourage participation as part of the review.
- Ensure key staff are available during on-site review.
- Prepare physical or digital records for on-site inspection.

9. During the Program Review

- Ensure access to all physical and electronic files.
- Make apprentices, employers and instructors available for interviews (if applicable).
- Provide access to RTI platform and tracking systems.
- Provide access to OJT logs and employer materials.

10. After the Program Review

- Review the Findings Letter issued by the Department.
- Submit corrective actions within the timeframe provided in the Finding Letter.
- Maintain documentation of corrective actions for future review.
- Cooperate with ATR for follow-up technical assistance.

Thank you for your cooperation and for your commitment to maintaining high-quality training across Florida's apprenticeship programs!