

Guiding Questions in Developing a Public Sector Apprenticeship Program

Instructions:

Use this list of questions to guide you through the foundations, key considerations and decision points of starting an apprenticeship in the public sector. You can find definitions of apprenticeship terms by clicking on the links or referencing the definition page in the apprenticeship section of the workforce development toolkit. Plan 10-15 minutes to complete this guide and reach out to our Center staff at research@afscme.org with any questions or requests for customized guidance.

Y/N	Groundwork for Collaboration	Notes
☐	Have the union and employer met to discuss the apprenticeship?	
☐	Have the union and employer developed a written agreement (e.g., an MOU or side letter)?	
☐	Will the proposed program be a Registered Apprenticeship with the federal or state government?	
☐	Will the program be administered by the employer, a joint labor-management committee or an external organization?	
☐	Will the program be time-based, competency-based or a hybrid of both types?	
☐	To what extent will the union contribute to the program's design, including the work progression and related instruction components?	
☐	Do you have funds to support this apprenticeship? (specify below) Internal funding source(s): External funding source(s):	
	Who will deliver the required related instruction? (mark all that apply) ☐ Union ☐ Employer ☐ External education provider	
☐	Will you include labor and/or AFSCME history in the related instruction?	

☒ **RECOMMENDATION**
 Explore adapting an existing training curriculum or partnering with a college to utilize their courses, especially ones that count toward a degree.

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Y/N	Union Equity and Access
☐	Will union representatives have access to apprentices during their orientation/on-boarding as well as on the job?
☐	Will apprentices be eligible for union membership?
☐	Will incumbent workers be given the opportunity to apply for the apprenticeship program? If so...
☐	Will their application be given preference?
☐	Will they be allowed to return to their previous position under specified conditions?

Notes

Y/N	Civil Service Rules
☐	Have you reviewed your civil service rules to make sure they accommodate an apprenticeship program or made the changes needed to do so?
☐	Are you using an existing apprentice title or job classification? or
☐	Are you creating a new apprentice title or job classification? or
☐	Are you repurposing an existing trainee title or job classification?
☐	Are you reclassifying a position at a lower grade as an apprentice?
☐	Will the apprentice's promotion into the target position be a direct hire or a non-compete position?
☐	Will the apprentice's minimum eligibility and qualification standards align with those for the target position to ensure a seamless transition upon apprenticeship completion?
☐	If a civil service exam is required for the target position will the apprentice be required to take it?
☐	Can successful apprenticeship completion be recognized as equivalent to passing the exam?
☐	Will the apprentice need to complete an additional probationary period when they are promoted to the target position?

Notes

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Y/N	Mentoring On-the-Job
☐	Have you decided on the ratio of apprentices to mentors on the job?
☐	Have you developed a process to identify and recruit mentors?
☐	Will you offer and/or require training for mentors?
☐	Have you considered whether reduced workloads may be needed for mentors to effectively guide their assigned apprentices?
☐	Have you considered offering mentors a wage differential as both an incentive for volunteering and compensation for their additional work?



RECOMMENDATION

1:1 Ratio

RECOMMENDATION

**Use or adapt AFSCME's
Job Training & Development
Center Mentor Training**

Y/N	Compensation
☐	Have you decided on the starting apprentice wage?
☐	Will apprentices be eligible for union membership?
☐	Have you decided on the amount and frequency of the wage step progression over the course of the apprenticeship program?
☐	Have you ensured that step increases are awarded based on demonstrated competencies and/or specific periods of time?
☐	Will the apprentice position be entitled to the same benefits as the other positions in your bargaining unit?



RECOMMENDATION

**Apprentice Starting Wage
≥ 50% of Target Position's
Starting Wage**

Sample Apprentice Wage Progression Calculation

Hourly Starting Wage

Target Position \$40
Apprentice \$40 x 50% = \$20



Additional Factors

Program Duration 24 months
Training Milestones 4 (6-month intervals)
Step Increase Amount (\$40 - \$20) ÷ 4 = \$5 per step

Step 1

\$20

Step 2

\$25

Step 3

\$30

Step 4

\$35