

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 15-20 minutes to complete this guide. Reach out to AFSCME's Job Training and Development Center staff at research@afscme.org with any questions or requests for assistance.

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, LOA or side letter)?	
☐	Will the program be administered by a joint labor-management committee?	
☐	Will the program be a Registered Apprenticeship with the federal or state government? If not, what factors are discouraging government registration?	
☐	Are there established program reporting and evaluation processes with defined formats and frequencies?	
☐	Is the union contributing to the program's design, including skill/competency frameworks, related instruction components and choice of program structure? ¹	
☐	Do you have funds to support this apprenticeship? (specify) 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.

¹ Registered Apprenticeship programs are structured according to time spent training (time-based), competencies demonstrated (competency-based) or a combination of both (hybrid).

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Y/N	Civil Service Rules	Notes
☐	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? <i>or</i>	
☐	Are you creating a new apprentice title or job classification? <i>or</i>	
☐	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 progression 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?	
☐	Does the apprentice position accrue civil service or seniority credit?	
☐	Will the apprentice need to complete an additional probationary period when they progress to the target position?	

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
Apprentice to Mentor

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

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Y/N	Union Access & Coverage
☐	Will the union be involved in apprentice recruitment and selection?
☐	Are incumbent workers eligible for the apprenticeship program? If so, will they be given any preferences, like ... ☐ an early application window? ☐ a scoring bonus or automatic entry? ☐ a set number of slots for union members?
☐	Will union representatives have access to apprentices during: ☐ orientation/onboarding? ☐ on the job?
☐	Will apprentices be eligible for union membership?
☐	Will apprentices have full coverage under your CBA? If not, what aspects will be limited?
☐	Will incumbent workers be allowed to return to their previous position under any specified conditions?

Notes
<i>(Include any additional union access or coverage considerations)</i>

Y/N	Apprentice Compensation
☐	Have you decided on the starting apprentice wage?
☐	Will there be a wage step progression over the course of the apprenticeship program (required for Registered Apprenticeships)? If so, how will you set the amount and frequency of the wage step progression? (See sample below.)
☐	Will incumbent workers entering the apprenticeship be entitled to a red circle rate (if applicable)?
☐	Have you ensured that step increases are awarded based on demonstrated competencies and/or specific periods of time?

☒	RECOMMENDATION
	Apprentice Starting Wage ≥ 50% of Target Position's Starting Wage

Sample Apprentice Wage Progression Calculation															
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