



COMMUNITY COLLEGES: KEY PARTNERS IN REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

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Community colleges are key providers of education and skills training for recent high school graduates and current workers looking to improve their skills. Some 5.6 million students are enrolled in community colleges nationally, and over 260,000 of them are enrolled in one of Oregon's seventeen institutions.

Community colleges also provide companies with a wide range of business support services including customized workforce training, testing, and certification. Their ability to design and deliver relevant skills training – especially training delivered in the workplace – makes them well-positioned to serve as key partners in Registered Apprenticeship.

Colleges participating in apprenticeship have developed a range of approaches for engaging and supporting employer and industry partners and apprenticeship programs. This document provides an overview of Registered Apprenticeship and describes the roles Oregon Community Colleges play in different communities and contexts. Three community college profiles accompany this document. They describe the context and evolution of Registered Apprenticeship at Blue Mountain Community College, Clackamas Community College, and Mt. Hood Community College and are available on the [Oregon Apprenticeship website](#).

An Overview of Registered Apprenticeship in Oregon

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) is a training model that combines paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction. Apprenticeship programs offer highly structured, workplace-centered training through which apprentices learn the skills required for specific occupations and acquire the workplace and industry-level knowledge and professional networks they need to build careers in their respective fields. Programs are employer-driven and can be implemented by individual businesses or by groups of companies working together.

In Oregon, apprentices are required to complete a minimum of 2000 hours of paid, on-the-job training (OJT) and an additional minimum of 144 hours each year in Related Training (RT), in the classroom or online.

Key Stakeholders in Registered Apprenticeship

In Oregon, Registered Apprenticeship is administered and overseen by the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). Employers, community colleges, and Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), are among the other key partners in Registered Apprenticeship.

- **BOLI** is Oregon's State Apprenticeship Agency responsible for overseeing the registration and regulation of apprenticeship programs. BOLI staff work with business, labor, and education partners from across the state to ensure compliance

with apprenticeship administrative requirements, assist with program design, recruitment and retention, and ensure equitable access to apprenticeship programs for underrepresented populations.

- **Employers** identify needed competencies and skills; design, register, and oversee programs; and employ apprentices and provide them with paid on-the-job training.
- **Community Colleges** assist in designing Registered Apprenticeship programs, provide or accredit Related Training, recruit and support apprentices through their programs, and often facilitate Registered Apprenticeship administration and management.
- As part of its mission to ensure pathways to postsecondary education success for Oregonians, **HECC** works with state-level partners to align workforce and education policies—including apprenticeship and work-based learning—at the postsecondary level: HECC’s **Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD)** provides coordination, leadership, and resources to Oregon’s 17 community colleges and approves courses, certificates, and degrees associated with apprenticeship across the community college network; and the **Office of Workforce Investment** supports planning, partnerships and coordination of federal and state workforce partners, including those charged with workforce training and apprenticeship.

Additional partners who play roles in developing and administering apprenticeship in different contexts are included in Appendix A: **Partners in Registered Apprenticeship**.

Community College Participation in Registered Apprenticeship

Community colleges in Oregon partner with Registered Apprenticeship programs in the areas of program design, training, student support, and program administration—often in combination. Because apprenticeship is employer-driven, colleges with apprenticeship programs work closely with employers to deliver all apprenticeship-related services.

Related Training

Many types of training providers can deliver the Related Training (RT) that apprenticeship programs require. Most often, community colleges or union training centers play this role using nationally certified curricula. Where existing curricula are not available, colleges may work with employers to design curricula and materials for specific programs. Instruction may be provided by the creator of the curricula and content (a trainer or training institution) or by a different RT provider. Related training must be approved by the local community college with courses, certificates and degree approval by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

In addition to the training content, instruction, and materials, colleges also provide access to classrooms, labs, equipment, and online learning technology to support training. This

infrastructure can be critical for group-based apprenticeship programs with smaller employers who do not have training facilities at the workplace or where apprentices are required to earn certifications prior to applying skills in the workplace (e.g., licensed healthcare occupations). Colleges also support testing for apprentices and professional development for instructors, trainers, and mentors.

Credentialing

In Oregon, when apprentices complete Registered Apprenticeship programs, they earn a national credential, often called a Journeyworker card. They may also earn one of six statewide Certificates of Completion or one of three state-recognized Career Pathway Certificates. The credits earned for these certificates count toward an Associate of Applied Science degree at any college in the state that also offers the same statewide degree.

Apprentices Can Earn the Following Credentials:

3 Associate of Applied Science Degrees

Construction Trades
Electrician Technologies
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology

6 Certificates of Completion

Construction Trades (2)
Electrical Trades (2)
Industrial Trades (2)

3 Career Pathway Certificates

Construction Trades
Electrical Trades
Industrial Trades

Student Support

Community colleges also provide value to Registered Apprenticeship programs by making their existing student support services available to enrolled student apprentices who need them. These services can boost program persistence and completion for apprentices.

Outreach, Advising, and Tutoring

Colleges offer academic support to apprentices—from outreach and recruitment through graduation. College staff and faculty often recruit apprentices through presentations at local high schools and job fairs and by hosting pre-apprenticeship programs. Once students are enrolled, colleges advise students about the logistics of their apprenticeship program, course credits, and additional certifications they might need, and provide academic tutoring and other support to help them progress.

Other Student Services

Colleges also provide assistance with financial aid or scholarships to students in need, as well as specialized support including learning and testing accommodations and access to supportive services (i.e. transportation, childcare, workforce services, etc.). Student apprentices also have student ID cards that provide access to campus resources such as the gym and library.

Program Administration and Partnerships

Registered Apprenticeship programs are industry-driven and state-regulated. Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees (JATCs), called Local Committees in Oregon, are responsible for overseeing local programs and building the partnerships required to successfully implement them. Oregon community colleges support Local Committees in carrying out these responsibilities.

Oversight and Compliance

Local Committees are responsible for the creation, administration, and oversight of apprenticeship programs, including ensuring that both training providers and apprentices adhere to program requirements, employment laws, and other legal and program requirements. Most Local Committees partner with intermediaries such as labor unions or industry associations to fulfill these responsibilities. Increasingly, community colleges are playing these intermediary roles—helping Local Committees host, facilitate, and document meetings, complete and file compliance documents, and ensure programs adapt to new training needs or employer demand.

Participating in Community Education, Workforce, and Economic Development Partnerships

Apprenticeship programs typically partner with education, workforce, and other community partners on broader talent development efforts, such as engaging underrepresented populations in high-demand occupations and careers. Community colleges are often at the heart of such efforts.

In some cases, community colleges act as apprenticeship intermediaries, representing Local Committees and programs they support in broader workforce partnerships with chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, workforce boards, universities, and other regional stakeholders. In other cases, colleges may act as conveners. In this role, they can leverage resources and expertise from across the workforce and education system, connecting students to higher education and employment opportunities, employers to new sources of talent, and programs to resources that help them grow—through Registered Apprenticeship.

How Registered Apprenticeship Benefits Community Colleges

College participation in Registered Apprenticeship benefits student apprentices and their host employers. It can also benefit the colleges themselves.

Advancing the Mission

The mission of a community college involves providing opportunity and value to students, employers, and the community. When colleges offer access to a paid work and learning

experience through apprenticeship to students, they make higher education more accessible—with less debt. By offering training programs designed around the specific needs and occupations of employer partners, colleges both enhance employer competitiveness and grow talent within the local workforce. Both of these activities advance broader community goals including good jobs, family wages, and a skilled workforce, making colleges key partners in their community's economic success.

Boosting Enrollment

Apprentices participating in college-supported programs are both workers and students. As students, they are enrolled in participating colleges and often take courses alongside students who are not apprentices. This increases overall student enrollment as well as the number of faculty instructors and the range of courses and programs colleges can offer.

Generating Revenue

Working closely with employers on Registered Apprenticeship can help industry learn about the range of services colleges offer—education, professional development, counseling and advising, customized training and certification, compliance and safety training, accessibility and equity support, recruiting assistance and more. Employer partners in Registered Apprenticeship often become customers of other college services over time, and vice versa. Many of these services generate revenue to sustain college operations. All of them enhance the college's reputation as a valuable employer partner.

Strengthening Partnerships

In supporting Registered Apprenticeship, colleges often partner with not only participating companies, but also workforce boards and employment and training providers, community-based organizations, and school-based career and technical education programs. These broader partnerships make colleges more competitive in their efforts to secure grants and contracts, and support community initiatives that open opportunities for underrepresented students, leaders, and business owners.

Conclusion

Colleges in Oregon have been participating in Registered Apprenticeship for decades. Many have cultivated long-term employer partnerships and grown new programs over time. In conjunction with this overview of Registered Apprenticeship, we have profiled three community colleges:

- Blue Mountain Community College
- Clackamas Community College
- Mt. Hood Community College

Each profile offers a view of the local context and a description of how the programs are structured, the roles the colleges play, and their aspirations going forward. Nationally and in Oregon, community college participation in Registered Apprenticeship is increasing. There are considerable opportunities for new kinds of partnerships that meet the needs of employers, apprentices, colleges, and communities today and into the future.

Connect to Registered Apprenticeship:

For contact information of Oregon Community College Apprenticeship Consortium members:

https://www.oregonednet.org/sites/default/files/attachments/consortium_contact_list_publish-updated_7-24-17_publicoktopublish.pdf

To learn more about Registered Apprenticeship in Oregon

Bureau of Labor and Industries Contact Page

https://www.oregon.gov/boli/Pages/contact_us.aspx

Oregon Apprenticeship:

<https://oregonapprenticeship.org/>

Higher Education Coordinating Committee:

<https://www.oregon.gov/highered/institutions-programs/ccwd/Pages/ccwd-HECC-coordinating-role.aspx>