

Pre-Apprenticeship

Commitment

Role	Commitment
Student	Long-term, substantial commitment
Educator	Regular support and progress monitoring
Employer	Long-term, substantial commitment

Arrangement Information

What

Pre-apprenticeship is a work-based learning (WBL) strategy that is designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) or employment. While the programs vary in design and approach, the U.S. Department of Labor has outlined the elements of a quality pre-apprenticeship program that can place an individual on a potential pathway to a RAP. Those quality principles include the following:

- **Approved curriculum:** training that is based on industry standards and approved by a RAP partner
- **Simulated experience:** hands-on training or volunteer opportunities that do not displace paid employees
- **Facilitated entry:** agreements with RAP sponsors that allow program participants to enter directly into a RAP
- **Increased diversity:** a focus on recruiting and preparing underrepresented populations to be successful in a RAP
- **Supportive services:** wraparound services or referrals to help participants complete the program (e.g., childcare, transportation)
- **Sustainable partnerships:** collaborative promotion of RAPs to other employers

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) administers the [state's Pre-apprenticeship Opportunity Program](#) and pays wages directly to participants. DWS also provides participants with liability coverage and designates them as DWS employees during their participation. Additional information about the program is available in the [DWS pre-apprenticeship policy](#).

When

Pre-apprenticeship programs are focused on serving high school students and young adults.

Time Commitment

Similar to other intensive WBL opportunities, pre-apprenticeship represents a significant time investment from students, educators, and employers. Pre-apprenticeships are structured WBL arrangements, and all partners should be prepared to invest time and resources to ensure a successful experience for everyone.

Benefits

For **students**, a pre-apprenticeship program can provide preparation for future entry into a RAP or employment. Pre-apprenticeship programs can serve as an important bridge to future opportunities by helping students develop the technical skills and career-ready practices needed to succeed in a RAP or other career-entry experiences. These programs provide structured support from employers, training providers, and educators as students prepare for the workforce.

For **educators**, pre-apprenticeships provide opportunities to build deep, meaningful employer partnerships in their areas of expertise.

For **employers**, pre-apprenticeship programs provide prescreened, ready-to-work employees trained in the specific skills employers need. Additionally, employers report increased participant preparation for RAPs, increased employee retention, and a more skilled talent pipeline as a result of pre-apprenticeship programs.