



National Lieutenant Governors Association

NLGA Consensus Resolution Promoting Apprenticeships to Strengthen Workforce Participation of People with Disabilities

1 **WHEREAS**, registered apprenticeship is a time-tested, earn-and-learn model that combines paid on-
2 the-job training with related classroom instruction, producing highly skilled workers who meet
3 industry standards; and

4 **WHEREAS**, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, over 593,000 apprentices were enrolled in
5 more than 27,000 registered apprenticeship programs nationwide in Fiscal Year 2021, with over
6 240,000 new apprentices entering the system that year;ⁱ and

7 **WHEREAS**, apprenticeships have been shown to provide strong returns on investment, increasing
8 both employment and earnings of apprentices,ⁱⁱ and to provide strong returns on investment for
9 employers through increased productivity and reduced costs;ⁱⁱⁱ and

10 **WHEREAS**, individuals with disabilities remain significantly underrepresented in the workforce,
11 with a 2024 labor force participation rate of only 24.5 percent, compared to 68.1 percent for
12 individuals without disabilities, and an employment-population rate of only 22.7 percent, compared
13 to 65.5 percent of individuals without disabilities;^{iv} and

14 **WHEREAS**, apprenticeships can expand access to high-quality career pathways for individuals with
15 disabilities, providing opportunities to earn competitive wages, gain credentials, and reduce long-
16 term reliance on public benefits; and

17 **WHEREAS**, hiring practices which empower discouraged workers to access high demand jobs—
18 such as targeted recruitment strategies, reasonable accommodations, and supportive training
19 environments — can be effective strategies for increasing participation of people with disabilities;^v
20 and

21 **WHEREAS**, apprenticeship programs that include individuals with disabilities expand the talent pool
22 available to employers, strengthens state economies, and promotes innovation and resilience in the
23 workforce; and

24 **WHEREAS**, states and territories can promote apprenticeships by partnering with employers,
25 workforce development boards, educational institutions, disability service providers, and
26 community organizations.

27 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA)
28 recognizes apprenticeship programs as a strategy for building a skilled workforce and advancing
29 economic opportunity.
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32 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that recruitment, training, and workplace practices can be important
33 tools to ensure that apprenticeship opportunities are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

34 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NLGA encourages states and territories to explore policies that
35 may strengthen and expand apprenticeship programs as a means to foster economic growth,
36 employer competitiveness, and empowerment of all workers, including individuals with disabilities.

37 ADOPTED, this day, the 6th of December, 2025.

38 Co-Sponsors: *Colorado Lt. Governor Dianne Primavera*

39 *Proposed for the docket by: SEED, NLGA Partner*

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ⁱ U.S. Department of Labor, *FY 2021 Data and Statistics*,

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship/about/statistics/2021>.

ⁱⁱ Mathematica Policy Research, *An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 States* (2012), https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/publications/ETAOP_2012_10.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Labor, *Do Employers Earn Positive Returns to Investments in Apprenticeship? Evidence from Registered Programs under the American Apprenticeship Initiative* (2022), https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/AAI/AAI_ROI_Final_Report_508_9-2022.pdf; JFF, *The Next-Gen IMT Apprenticeship, A Return on Investment Study*, https://www.jff.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/IMT_ROI_Study_-_08-12-2020.pdf.

^{iv} U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics Summary, 2025*, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm>.

^v Urban Institute, *Practices to Increase Employer Adoption of Inclusive Apprenticeship* (2024), https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/Practices_to_Increase_Employer_Adoption_of_Inclusive_Apprenticeship_508.pdf.