



TIPS TO SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICESHIP MENTORING

STEP ONE – STARTING OUT



One of the five core requirements of a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program is mentorship. All apprentices complete on-the-job learning (OJL) under the guidance of designated mentors who are experienced professionals in their occupation.

Whether your organization is launching a new RA program or has successfully run a program for years, supporting your mentors is critical. Below are tips for counseling, coaching, and encouraging new apprentices that will help both experienced and new mentors advise and guide their mentees.

STARTING OUT

- **Share your background** – let them know the career path that led you to serving as an expert in this occupation, what you currently do on the job apart from mentoring, and what you enjoy about working for your organization and in your profession.
- **Get to know them** – ask what attracted them to enter the RA program, whether they have previous experience, and what their professional and personal goals are.
- **Explain your role** – let them know how you as a mentor will be guiding their OJL. For example, describe how you will ensure that they are working through their OJL plan and note that you will be signing off on their work and/or time to certify their achievements toward program requirements.
- **Go over program basics** – make sure that your apprentice knows the details of how the program works.
- **Assess the apprentices' learning styles** – there are four main learning styles:
 - » Visual – learn best by seeing
 - » Auditory – learn best by hearing
 - » Reading and writing – learn best by reading and taking notes
 - » Kinesthetic – learn best through hands-on work

Asking your apprentices how they learn best can help you determine how to convey information in a way that's most likely to connect with them. For example, to introduce a technical process to a visual learner you may want to share a video, whereas if someone is an auditory learner you could simply describe it.

- **Create a meeting schedule** – in addition to providing OJL guidance, you may want to set up time each week to discuss their overall performance and how they're doing in their related instruction coursework, as well as give them an opportunity to ask questions.
- **Ask if they have questions** – in addition to providing valuable technical guidance related to the apprentices' occupation, you can help with basic, informal onboarding to the organization. For example, your apprentices may need to know how to use the online time-keeping system, how to ask for time off, or what to do if equipment is not working.
- **Reinforce their responsibility** – ultimately it's the apprentices' job to successfully complete the program. Make sure that they know you are there to provide training, encouragement, guidance, and direction, but that they are accountable for doing the work.
- **Communicate the next step** – what should your apprentices expect following your first meeting? Are you assigning them specific tasks to complete before your next meeting? Are there items that you'll work on?

Putting these tips into practice will not only help you develop your mentoring skills, but also assure your new apprentices that they have the support they need to complete their apprenticeships successfully.