



## **Advancing Apprenticeship:** A Report on Rhode Island's Effort to Develop New and Innovative Apprenticeship Models

Governor's Workforce Board • Department of Labor and Training • State Apprenticeship Council

January 2020

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
Governor Gina M. Raimondo

## Executive Summary

Rhode Island has made significant progress in expanding new and innovative Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs. As of the end of 2019, a quarter of all active apprentices in the state are in non-trade occupations (618 out of 2,334), which represents dramatic growth from just two years ago, when there were fewer than 50 active, non-trade apprentices.

Importantly, a supportive ecosystem is being established to bring this work to the next level. Apprenticeship Rhode Island, a strategic initiative of the RI Department of Labor & Training (RIDLT) and Building Futures, continues to engage businesses and provide employers with essential technical assistance to help them maximize apprenticeship as a critical resource for talent development and retention.

Further, investments through the Governor's Workforce Board's Non-Trade Apprenticeship Development Grant have made it even more feasible for industries and businesses new to apprenticeship to consider how the proven training model can meet their workforce needs.

In his 2017 report "Room to Grow: Identifying New Frontiers for Apprenticeship," Joseph B. Fuller, co-director of the "Managing the Future of Work Project," a multiyear initiative at Harvard Business School argues "There is significant, unrealized potential in the apprenticeship field across many occupations in the U.S. economy."<sup>1</sup>

Fuller emphasizes apprenticeship is an effective means for industries and companies that continue to struggle with a 'skills gap' to ensure workers are trained to the employers' specifications. By partnering with local educators, these employers can create a curriculum and on-the-job training program that perfectly aligns with employer needs. At the same time creating new and effective pathways into employment for job seekers.

Despite strong gains in expanding registered apprenticeship over the past two years, there remains much work to do to realize the full potential of Registered Apprenticeship. In addition to providing a progress update, this report offers five recommendations for the continued investment in, and expansion of, Registered Apprenticeship in new industries and occupations:

- Commit additional resources to employer-driven workforce development, including Registered Apprenticeship;
- Enhance pre-apprenticeship programs to expand access to Registered Apprenticeship;
- Further integrate Registered Apprenticeship and RI's public institutions of higher education;
- Leverage federal WIOA programs and resources to make registered apprenticeship accessible; and
- Continue to develop RI's youth apprenticeship model.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hbs.edu/managing-the-future-of-work/Documents/room-to-grow.pdf>

# Current State: Investing in Apprenticeship

## Developing New Apprenticeships

Rhode Island has taken several strategic steps in recent years to promote the expansion of apprenticeship. In particular, the Governor’s Workforce Board and its partners has made available resources – financial and otherwise – to support employers with designing, coordinating, registering and leveraging apprenticeships to meet their talent needs. To ensure businesses have the financial support, technical assistance and strategic partnerships necessary to create new apprenticeships, the following initiatives are in place:

- The Non-Trade Apprenticeship Development Program
- Apprenticeship RI
- The Non-Trade Apprenticeship Incentive

Rhode Island’s efforts to date reflect some of the best and leading practices nationally to encourage and expand apprenticeships into nontraditional occupations and industries.

### ***Non-Trade Apprenticeship Development Program***

The Governor’s Workforce Board provides developmental funds to organizations throughout the state to create new and innovative apprenticeship models outside of the traditional trades.

This grant program provides up to \$25,000 to cover costs such as curriculum development, supplies, consultants, meetings, and other expenses associated with developing apprenticeships in high-growth, high-demand fields. Considered to be outside of the skilled construction trades, *non-trade* apprenticeships are increasingly being recognized as an effective pathway toward family-sustaining middle skilled careers.

Originally, only Board-approved ‘Industry Sector Partners’ could apply for these funds. In FY 2017 that was changed to allow any entity (employer, academic institution, nonprofit, etc.) to apply:

Fiscal Year **2014** – Funded at \$150,000

- Three Industry Partners applied
- Two proposals were funded
- One apprenticeship model was approved

Fiscal Year **2017**- Funded at \$100,000

- Five organizations applied
- Four proposals were funded
- Four apprenticeship models were approved

Fiscal Year **2018** – Funded at \$125,000

- Seven organizations applied
- Six proposals were funded
- Five apprenticeship models were approved

Fiscal Year **2019**- Funded at \$75,000

- Eight organizations applied
- Four proposals were funded
- Two apprenticeship models were approved. One additional is pending approval (December 2019)

To date, twelve new non-trade apprenticeship models have been successfully developed through the grant program, with one pending approval (as of December 2019):

- CNC Machinist • Licensed Practical Nurse • Community Health Worker • Construction Manager
- Professional Land Care Specialist • Composite Tool and Pattern Maker • Cook • Marine Technician • Healthcare Computer Support Specialist • Rehabilitation Counselor • Retail Manager • Student Resource Counselor

***Apprenticeship Rhode Island***

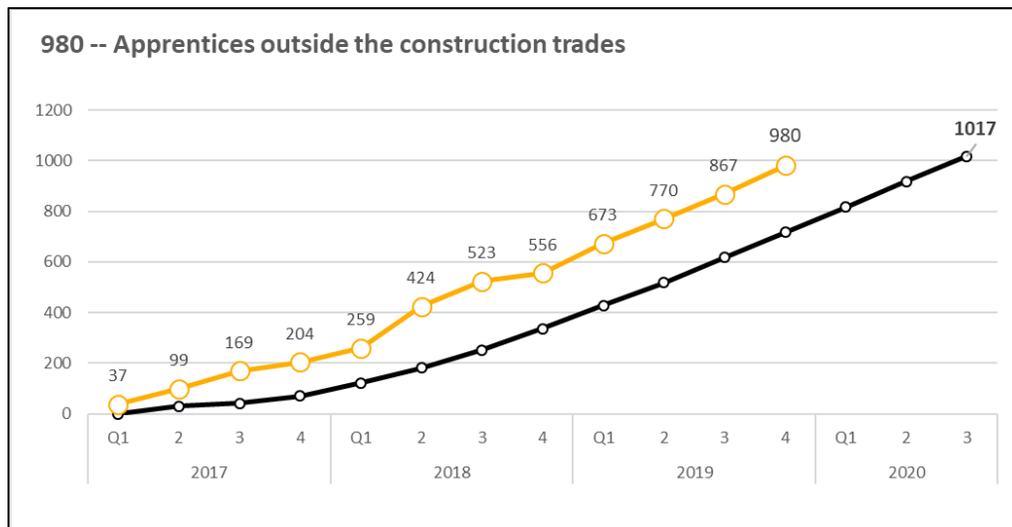
Apprenticeship Rhode Island is an effort funded through an American Apprenticeship Initiative grant of the U.S. Department of Labor. Designed in partnership with the RI Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT) and Building Futures, Apprenticeship Rhode Island is tasked with redefining the apprenticeship model across multiple industries. To support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship, Apprenticeship Rhode Island provides a ‘free consultancy’ service and technical assistance, including:

- Assisting with apprenticeship program design
- Registering apprenticeship standards with the State Apprenticeship Council
- Maximizing state and federal financial benefits
- Connecting with other employer and higher education partners
- Leveraging national apprenticeship initiatives

In 2019, Apprenticeship Rhode Island worked with 34 non-trade apprenticeship program sponsors, with 70 employers participating.

As of November 2019, Rhode Island has 2,334 active apprentices, and 26% (618) of all active apprentices are in non-trade occupations.

As a result of Apprenticeship Rhode Island’s work, the number of apprentices outside of the construction trades has grown dramatically in just the last few years, and nearly half (47%) of those apprentices are from specific, target populations, including veterans, women and non-white jobseekers.



(source: Apprenticeship Rhode Island, 2019)

New employers from diverse sectors have been attracted to apprenticeship as a talent development and retention tool. In total, since the launch of Apprenticeship Rhode Island, the state has added 35 non-trade occupations with sponsored apprenticeship programs.

<p><b>Manufacturing</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CNC Machinist</li> <li>2. Electronics Technician</li> <li>3. Composite Technician</li> <li>4. General Manufacturing Worker</li> <li>5. Heat Treater</li> <li>6. Production Technician</li> <li>7. Safety Professional</li> <li>8. Tool &amp; Die Maker</li> </ol> <p><b>Marine Trades</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marina and Boat Yard Technician</li> <li>2. Marine Support Services Manager</li> <li>3. Maritime Pipefitter &amp; Pipe Welder</li> <li>4. Maritime Steel Shipfitter &amp; Welder</li> <li>5. Oyster Farm Worker</li> <li>6. Commercial Fisher</li> </ol>	<p><b>Healthcare</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Biomedical Equipment Tech</li> <li>2. Community Health Worker</li> <li>3. Home Health Nurse</li> <li>4. In-Patient Nurse</li> <li>5. Licensed Practical Nurse</li> <li>6. Medical Assistant</li> <li>7. Medical Interpreter</li> <li>8. Pharmacy Technician</li> <li>9. Recovery Coach</li> <li>10. Ultrasound Technician</li> </ol> <p><b>Information Technology</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Desktop/Application Analysts</li> <li>2. Health Information Management</li> <li>3. IT Network Technician</li> <li>4. IT Project Manager</li> </ol>	<p><b>Plant-Based Industries</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arborist / Arborist Crew Leader</li> <li>2. Horticultural Technician</li> </ol> <p><b>Other Sectors</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Child Care Specialist</li> <li>2. Cook</li> <li>3. String Music Instructor</li> <li>4. Police Officer</li> <li>5. Renovation Project Coordinator</li> </ol>
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(source: Apprenticeship Rhode Island, 2019)

### ***Non-Trade Apprenticeship Incentive***

Rhode Island’s non-trade apprenticeship incentive offers \$1,000 per registered non-trade apprentice, payable after the apprentice has completed the probationary period. Small incentives are being utilized in other leading states to jumpstart new apprenticeship programs, such as South Carolina.<sup>2</sup> Employers are eligible for up to \$5,000 within any 12-month period. Unlike other states where the incentive is structured as a tax credit, Rhode Island’s non-trade apprenticeship incentive is in the form of a grant payment from the Governor’s Workforce Board. The payment provides direct resources to help offset the cost of sponsoring an apprentice and is designed to encourage “early adopters” of such models. To date - 130 incentive payments have been issued to forty-four different employers.

### **Additional Areas of Investment & Alignment**

Beyond the three initiatives designed to incentivize and support the development of new, non-trade apprenticeships, Rhode Island continues to advance apprenticeships through greater alignment throughout the workforce development network.

### ***Apprenticeship Solutions for Real Jobs RI Partnerships***

Real Jobs RI is the state’s demand-driven, sector-based workforce development initiative that enables business-led industry partnerships to design and implement workforce solutions to meet their unique talent needs. Among the 44 Real Jobs RI partnerships across 16 industries, several have focused on the expansion of traditional apprenticeships, including pre-apprenticeship programs for plumbing and pipefitting, as well as developing nontraditional apprenticeships for occupations such as biomedical equipment technicians and data scientists.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2016/02/09/130750/how-states-are-expanding-apprenticeship/>

### ***Alignment with Community of College Rhode Island***

The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) has a long history delivering technical training for Electrician Apprenticeships and offering a path through the IBEW's Registered Apprenticeship to an Associate's Degree. More recently, CCRI has drawn on existing academic programs to customize related technical instruction for non-trade apprenticeship for Data Scientists, Biomedical Equipment Technicians, Construction Management, and Licensed Practical Nurses.

### ***Streamlined Processes & Policies***

The Rhode Island Apprenticeship Council, in collaboration with RIDLT, conducted a systematic review of policies and practices related to apprenticeship, identifying ways to improve and streamline the system. For example, recent changes in policies and forms ensure that rules specific to apprenticeships in licensed construction trades do not inadvertently apply to new sponsors of nontraditional apprenticeships. Registration fees were a barrier for new employers and individuals to participate in the voluntary Registered Apprenticeship system and furthermore, fees collected were not directly supporting the program administration. With the passage of FY2018 budget, registration fees for programs and apprentices were removed.

# Opportunities to Expand Apprenticeship

Below we provide five priority strategies to expand the adoption of Registered Apprenticeship in Rhode Island.

## **1. Commit New Apprenticeship Development Resources**

More than 80% of the Apprenticeship Development Grants issued in recent years successfully lead to the approval of a new apprenticeship model (or are pending approval as of December 2019). Industry sector partnerships through the Real Jobs RI program and employers assisted through Apprenticeship Rhode Island have also successfully created and registered dozens more apprenticeship models. Nonetheless, resources for apprenticeship development work remain limited. Increasing the General Revenue investment in workforce and apprenticeship development, above the Governor's budget request, would enhance the State's capacity to support employers interested in leveraging Registered Apprenticeship. Importantly, these additional resources would have an impact that long outlasts the initial investment; as more and more industry-driven apprenticeship pathways into employment are made permanent fixture of the workforce development ecosystem.

## **2. Expand & Enhance Pre-Apprenticeship Program Models**

Quality pre-apprenticeship programs represent an exceptional strategy to increase access to, and extend the impact of, new registered apprenticeship programs.<sup>3</sup> Unlike traditional job training programs, which are designed to fully prepare the individual for direct employment, pre-apprenticeship programs prepare the individual for further training, offering the required foundational skills and knowledge to be ready to learn, while relying on the apprenticeship itself to provide additional instruction and mastery.

With leadership from the Rhode Island Apprenticeship Council, Rhode Island should further define the role of high-quality pre-apprenticeship programs, and work to embed such programs, where appropriate, within pathways to registered apprenticeships and in-demand careers.

## **3. Improve integration of RA with the Community College of RI and Institutions of Higher Education**

A differentiator cited by the Center for American Progress in expanding apprenticeship is access to the State Community /Technical College System.<sup>4</sup>

In South Carolina, Apprenticeship South Carolina is operated out of the Community College system and state workforce development funds flow directly to the college to provide training for employers. Harper College, a Chicago Area Community College seeks out employers to

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<sup>3</sup> USDOLETA Training Employment Notice 13-12 provides a definition of pre-apprenticeship programs and establishing a quality framework for programs. This and additional resources at: <https://doleta.gov/oa/preapp/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2016/02/09/130750/how-states-are-expanding-apprenticeship/>

develop apprenticeship programs to drive enrollment, increase completion, and serve their students better.

Rhode Island's public institutions of higher education have been active players in the state's apprenticeship development activities – serving as the related instruction provider, or the lead entity, on several non-trade apprenticeship development proposals. However, the linkages between apprenticeship and higher education could be expanded dramatically. Collaboration with the Office of Postsecondary Commissioner can greatly expand the number of articulation agreements that allow apprenticeship training—both in the classroom and on the job—to count toward degree requirements. Such agreements will allow individuals to advance their academic, as well as professional, career and can likely increase the appeal of apprenticeship training to employers and workers alike.

#### **4. Improve Coordination with One-Stop Career Centers (NetWORKri)**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the primary federal law governing employment, education, training, and support services for job seekers. WIOA was passed by bipartisan majorities in both houses of Congress and signed into law on July 22, 2014. The law supersedes the previous Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and looks to more fully integrate states' workforce and talent development systems to better serve employers and job seekers. Under WIOA, Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors are automatically eligible for placement on the state-approved 'Eligible Training Provider List' (the list of approved vendors where WIOA-funded training assistance can be spent). Registered Apprenticeship programs are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements as other providers because they have already gone through the vetting process to become a Registered Apprenticeship program.

The WIOA-funded One-Stop Career Centers, which offer a range of career counseling and employment services to job seekers, should take full advantage of this opportunity and provide workers with information and resources about apprenticeships. As the placement of Registered Apprenticeships on the ETPL is a relatively new requirement, information about apprenticeships is not easily accessible at many centers. As the number of apprenticeship opportunities grows, technical assistance and training should be provided to One-Stop Career Center staff on how and when to connect with RA programs.

#### **5. Continue to Develop a Youth Apprenticeship Model**

As noted in recent federal guidance, there is growing federal and state support for the expansion of youth employment and training programs to meet the demands of businesses. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) places increased emphasis on this issue; at least twenty percent of WIOA youth formula funds allocated to local areas must be used to provide youth with paid and unpaid work experiences, including pre-apprenticeship and other

types of on-the-job training. Additionally, local WIOA formula funds may be used to support apprentices participating in a RA program.”<sup>5</sup>

States have approached the issue of youth apprenticeship differently, but there are emerging – and mature – models of best practice in Youth Apprenticeship Programs. For example, in Wisconsin the Youth Apprenticeship Program has over 3,500 active youth apprentices and has been operating since the 90’s.<sup>6</sup>

In 2019, Rhode Island designed the Prepare RI Youth Apprenticeship (PRIYA) pilot, the State’s first youth apprenticeship model. Currently, the PRIYA pilot includes one Registered Apprenticeship – Horticulture & Landscape Technician. Additional occupational tracks include: medical assistant, pharmacy technician and process technologist. Each of these tracks includes core components of an apprenticeship, including relevant course work, on-the-job training and wages, however, there is still work to be done to meet the rigorous standards of a Registered Apprenticeship.

The PRIYA pilot offers Rhode Island an opportunity to strengthen links between the k-12 education system, higher education and Registered Apprenticeship, and the effort to put youth directly on a path to Registered Apprenticeship is worth continuing.

### *In Conclusion*

Rhode Island has done much to expand new and innovative registered apprenticeship programs and work continues to bring these efforts to maximum scale and impact. As evident from the five recommendation areas above, there is more to explore.

The Governor’s Workforce Board and the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training look forward to working with the Legislature to further assist the state’s employers to develop new models of registered apprenticeship and to integrate, align and leverage these programs within our education and workforce development systems.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN\\_31-16.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN_31-16.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/106/11/13>

# Appendix A: About Apprenticeship

## Defining a ‘Registered Apprenticeship’

Registered Apprenticeships are high-quality work-based learning and post-secondary earn-and-learn models that meet national standards for registration with the U.S. Department of Labor, RIDLT is the federally recognized State Apprenticeship Agency. Sometimes, ‘apprenticeship’ is used as a generic term to describe any work-based experiential learning where one person learns from another person with more experience. However, a “Registered Apprenticeship” is part of the National Apprenticeship System and has five core components:<sup>7</sup>

### **Business Involvement**

Employers are the foundation of every apprenticeship program and play an active role in designing and delivering the program. Employers frequently work together through joint apprenticeship training councils, industry associations, or other partnerships to share the administrative tasks involved in operating and maintaining a high-quality registered apprenticeship program.

### **Structured On-the-Job Training**

Apprenticeships always include an on-the-job learning (OJL) component. Apprentices receive hands-on training from an experienced mentor at the job site. The structure of OJL focuses on the skills and knowledge an apprentice must learn during the program to be fully proficient on the job. This training is based on national industry standards – and further customized to the needs of the particular employer.

### **Related Instruction**

Apprenticeships combine on-the-job learning with related instruction on the technical and academic competencies that apply to the job. Education partners collaborate with business to develop the curriculum, which often incorporates established national-level skill standards. The related instruction may be provided by community colleges, technical schools, or apprenticeship training schools – or by the business itself. It can be delivered at a school, online, or at the job site.

### **Nationally-Recognized Credential**

A Certificate of Apprenticeship Completion is a nationally recognized credential. Increasingly apprenticeships also include industry certifications and college credit toward a degree.

### **Rewards for Skill Gains**

Apprentices receive wages when they begin work, and pay increases as they meet benchmarks for skill attainment. The benchmarks for skill attainment can be customized to the employer needs. Wage steps can be based on competency attainment, hours/experience on the job, or a combination of both. Competency-based models of apprenticeship are an option, where candidates progress at their own pace and validate competency and skills gains through demonstration and assessments. The “hybrid” program model, combining time and competency models, have increased in popularity.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/toolkit/toolkitfaq.htm>

# The Benefits of ‘Registered Apprenticeship’



## To Employers

The primary benefit of Apprenticeship to the employer community is that it is one of the most effective models available to help develop a highly-skilled workforce. Apprenticeship has been proven to reduce turnover rates, increase productivity, and lower recruitment costs. It combines a proven ‘off the shelf’ training model that is still customizable to the needs of the individual business as well as industry standards.

On average, 91% of apprentices that complete their apprenticeship remain employed with their sponsor nine months later. Furthermore, employers are able to develop a tiered pay structure that only grows as the individual’s value to the company grows. Lastly, sponsoring employers may be eligible for both federal and state-based tax credits and other incentives outlined herein that can help reduce the cost of their investment. From business perspective, a demonstrated 50% return on investment provides a strong case for registered apprenticeship.<sup>8</sup>



## To Workers

From day one of their apprenticeship, a worker is receiving a paycheck that is guaranteed to increase as their training progresses. They also receive both hands-on and classroom based training (which may be assigned college credit). At the conclusion of their apprenticeship, the worker has earned a nationally portable credential that is recognized by industries throughout the country and they have firmly entered into a career ladder at a competitive salary - all while taking on little if any educational debt.



## To Taxpayers

Apprenticeship is one of the most cost-effective workforce training models available. According to frequently-cited analysis conducted for Washington State’s Workforce Board, the state nets almost three times what it spends on apprenticeships within two and a half years of the program’s completion.<sup>9</sup> Benefits to taxpayers total about five times the costs. By the time the apprentice completes his or her career, projections indicate that the public has received \$23 for every \$1 spent on apprenticeship. This same study found that CTE programs received the second highest yield for the public, at \$9 return for every \$1 spent. Importantly, CTE programs can be effectively aligned with registered apprenticeship programs to amplify the impacts of each.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.esa.doc.gov/reports/benefits-and-costs-apprenticeships-business-perspective>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/2\\_Apprenticeship\\_2012-withES2011dollars.pdf](http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/2_Apprenticeship_2012-withES2011dollars.pdf)

# Appendix B - Senate Resolution 2019 – S 0711

2019 -- S 0711

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LC001813

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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**  
**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019**

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**SENATE RESOLUTION**

**RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD TO WORK WITH THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND TRAINING TO DEVELOP A REPORT ON THE FEASIBILITY OF EXPANDING NON-TRADE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS IN RHODE ISLAND**

**Introduced By:** Senators Lawson, Nesselbush, Metts, Murray, and Valverde

**Date Introduced:** March 21, 2019

**Referred To:** Senate Labor

WHEREAS, An apprenticeship is a system of training a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with a combination of on-the-job learning and related classroom instruction; and

WHEREAS, Apprenticeships provide workers with practical and theoretical skills and expand their opportunities in sectors where employers cannot find the workers they need; and

WHEREAS, Employers realize the financial benefits associated with apprenticeship programs, gaining on average one dollar and forty seven cents per dollar invested in an apprentice; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island currently has traditional apprenticeship programs with over one thousand four hundred apprentices primarily in construction and has begun expansion into nontraditional apprenticeship programs; and

WHEREAS, Non-trade apprenticeships are models that fall outside the traditional trades such as plumbing and carpentry and into new areas such as information technology and healthcare; and

WHEREAS, The Governor's Workforce Board has begun awarding development grants

to organizations throughout the state that will develop new and innovative apprenticeship models;  
and

WHEREAS, An apprenticeship is an effective workforce development tool that is increasingly gaining recognition as a way to meet employer demands for skilled workers while building pathways into the middle class for Rhode Islanders: and

WHEREAS, Opportunities and challenges exist to continue to expand such programs to meet the needs of our workers and employers and to maximize the return on investment; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations hereby respectfully requests the Governor's Workforce Board to work with the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training to develop a report on the feasibility of expanding and enhancing the Governor's Workforce Board's state grant program for non-trade registered apprenticeship programs in Rhode Island; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that a progress report on the status and expansion of non-trade registered apprenticeship programs in Rhode Island be submitted to the Senate President and Senate Majority Leader on or before January 1, 2020; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Executive Director and Chairperson of the Governor's Work Force Board, and to the Director of the Department of Labor and Training.



# Governor's Workforce Board

RHODE ISLAND

*train for success · connect for growth*

