

State Apprenticeship Advisory Council (SAAC) Meeting Minutes  
February 14, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. (Eastern Standard Time)  
Tallahassee Community College  
Tallahassee, Florida

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Kevin O’Farrell, Chancellor, Division of Career and Adult Education, Florida Department of Education (FDOE). The Council Members and attendees were welcomed, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and roll call was taken. SAAC Members present at the meeting were: Kirk Barras, David McCraw, Lee Middleton, Karen Nichols, Steve Cona III, Marcelo Dossantos, Natasha Sherwood, Robert Tidwell and the Honorable Kathryn Starkey. Ex-officio members present were Kathryn Wheeler and Chancellor Kevin O’Farrell. A quorum was present.

Chancellor O’Farrell gave the opening remarks to the SAAC and introduced Director Wheeler.

Kathryn Wheeler, Director of Apprenticeship gave the Director’s Report. In 2022-2023 there were 365 registered apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs and 19,605 apprentices and preapprentices trained. Apprenticeship has 303 programs, of which 36 are new programs, and 17,435 registered apprentices. Preapprenticeship has 62 programs, of which 12 are new programs, and 2,170 registered preapprentices. New occupations and industries in apprenticeship include Semi-Conductor (surface mount/circuit board technician), Diesel off-road maintenance technician, Restaurant manager, Electronic utility worker (lightning protection technician), K-12 teacher and Healthcare (nurse, community health worker, paramedic, EMT). The number of apprenticeable occupations increased from 57 in 2018-19 to 120 in 13 career clusters in 2022-23.

Current priorities include:

- Modernization of registered program infrastructure (Florida Standards Builder, Preapprenticeship Data Collection, electronic processing of Agreement Forms and improved access to online information on programs)
- Program reviews
- Updating of State Board Rules
- Registration of new programs and occupations

Expansion efforts include:

- Outreach to other state agencies
- Apprenticeship accelerators in partnership with local CareerSource Florida Boards
- Apprentice Florida outreach campaign
- National Apprenticeship Week events and career fairs
- Presentations to industry groups, Farmworker Career development program, collaboration with vocational rehabilitation

Julie Nichols, Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant (PCOG) Manager presented on the PCOG grant.

PCOG has been the primary program for funding the creation, expansion and operation of preapprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. SB 240 (2023) made changes to the PCOG Program to amend s. 1011.802, F.S., to provide flexibility for the administration of the Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program and includes the following provisions:

- Removes the requirement that the grant be awarded on a competitive basis
- Adds the option of operational funding to establishment and expansion funding
- Prohibits the award from being used for administrative costs
- Prohibits any individual applicant from receiving more than 10% of the total funds and provides potential fiscal incentives for programs to work together to share program resources

The Florida Department of Education ran two PCOG competitions for 2022-23. A \$10 million statewide competition and a \$5 million Space Coast only competition in total over \$16 million was awarded. The PCOG awardees received their funds between November 2022 and January 2023. Fifty PCOG proposals were funded during this period. Unused grant funds from the 2020-21 grant year were used to fund additional projects that otherwise would not have received funding. Occupations for 2022-23 included: Project Manager Supervisor, Paramedic, Mental Health/Substance Abuse Social Worker, Millwrights, Aircraft Mechanics, Solar Thermal/Photovoltaic Installers and Class A/B License Certification (CDL Training). The 2022-23 PCOG projects reported 960 enrollments.

The 2023-24 PCOG award process is still underway. The Florida Department of Education ran two PCOG competitions for 2023-24. The statewide competition which included 10 operating, 36 expanding and 11 new programs and the Grow Your Own Teacher Apprenticeship Program which included 10 'Grow Your Own Teacher' Apprenticeship Programs. Occupations for 2023-24 include: Childcare Development Specialist, Solar Energy Technician, Registered Nurse, Cybersecurity Analyst, Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic and Marine Services Technician.

For the 2022-23 PCOG recipients the percentage of award funding by sponsor was:

- 20% to school districts
- 32% to the Florida College System
- 3% to universities
- 45% to employer and industry sponsors

For 2023-24 the PCOG percentage of overall awarded funding by sponsor was:

- 6% to universities
- 9% to the Florida College System
- 6% to school districts
- 68% awarded to employer and industry sponsors

Dr. Brittany Ross, Director of Research & Evaluation gave the state annual apprenticeship report.

The 2021 session, HB 1507 required additional reporting of retention, completion and wage progression of apprentices. Preapprenticeship data limitations are:

- The Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System (RAPIDS) is the United States Department of Labor case management system for registered Apprenticeship programs
- Serves as the primary platform for managing apprentices, occupations, wages, registrations and other relevant program information for apprenticeship programs, only
- Preapprenticeship data is not managed in RAPIDS and requires separate collection and management by program sponsors and the state

Beginning in 2022-23, the Division of Career and Adult Education (DCAE) implemented the collection of the Preapprenticeship Data Supplemental File using the Preapprenticeship Data Collection template. It is to be completed by the preapprenticeship program sponsor and used to calculate completion and retention rates. 1,264 apprentices completed their program on time. The total number of completers was 2,135 earning an average exit wage of \$25.70/hour or \$53,642/year. 523 preapprentices completed their program during 2022-23. Data sources were the USDOL RAPIDS Database for apprentices and the preapprentice program sponsor via supplemental data collection for preapprentices. For the 22-23 Annual Apprenticeship Report, the cohort is apprentices who were active July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022.

The percentage of apprentices or preapprentices retained or completing a program by the end of fourth quarter after the initial quarter of enrollment in a registered apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program by quartile range is:

- 7% for 0%-25% retention rate,
- 8% for 26%-50% retention rate,
- 26% for 51%-75% retention rate and
- 59% for 76%-100% retention rate.

The occupations/trades with retention rates above 90% were Addictions Counselor, Application Developer, Building Inspector, Director Support Specialist, Field Service Engineer, Information Assurance Specialist, Instrumentation & Controls Tech, Power-Plant Operator, Refrigeration Mechanic, Elevator Constructor, Fire Medic, Painter (Decorator) and Gas Utility Technician.

The percentage of apprentices or preapprentices completing the registered apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program within one (1) year after the expected program length identified in the program standards with completion rates that fall within completion rate quartiles/bands is:

- 32% for 0%-25% completion rate,
- 32% for 26%-50% completion rate,
- 21% for 51%-75% completion rate and
- 15% for 76%-100% completion rate.

The occupations/trades with completion rates above 90% were Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Driver, Instrumentation and Controls Technician, Medical Coder, Pipefitter, Switchboard

Operator, Tool and Die Maker, Application Developer, Gas Utility Technician and Truss Design Technician.

Wage Progression will be calculated by registered program sponsor and occupation for the following periods:

- Starting wage as identified in the current program standards
- Exit wage as identified by the wage scale for the last year in the current program standards
- Post-apprenticeship completion wages calculated at one (1) and five (5) years after program exit based upon annual cohorts of program completers who are tracked using administrative records of employment and wages that are available to the Department

RAPIDS is the main source of data used to calculate apprenticeship program outcomes. Program sponsors must ensure that apprenticeship program profiles in RAPIDS are accurate and up to date. Changes to start and completion dates of apprentices greatly impact the calculation of completion and retention rates. Additional guidance will be relayed in the future.

Future Developments include

- Data dashboard
- Expansion of outcomes reported for apprenticeship programs with a Florida College System institution as an LEA partner

Tara Goodman, Vice Chancellor provided the Legislative update.

Session is scheduled to end March 8, 2024. All bill-related information is publicly available on the House and Senate websites. The Governor's Budget Request for:

- Pathways to Career Opportunities Funding is \$20 million with \$5 million set aside for Grow Your Own Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program Expansion,
- State Apprenticeship System Building and Modernization is \$1,000,000 in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education and
- Teacher Apprenticeship Program and Mentor Bonus - \$4 million plus Back of the Bill revert and reappropriate

Susan Bosse, Director of CareerSource Florida gave an update including goals to increase the prosperity of workers and employers, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet employer needs and enhance productivity and competitiveness.

CareerSource Florida has 24 locations throughout the state. Each region has an apprenticeship navigator. Apprenticeship Navigators support RAP Expansion Efforts, connect employers to existing programs and assist with apprentice recruitment and WIOA Funding.

For employers with immediate hiring needs CareerSource Florida can assist with job postings to Employ Florida, recruitment events at employer's location, local workforce development board

or virtual and pre-screening services to send only qualified candidates to the employer. Employers who provide On-the-Job Training for up to six (6) months are reimbursed by the local workforce development board. Existing employees are being upskilled and staff are being promoted and backfilled. Long-term talent development is supported by apprenticeships providing the ability to earn while learning.

WIOA funding can be utilized to pay for the Related Instruction for a WIOA qualified apprentice. These funds can pay for:

- Tuition
- Training Fees
- Testing Fees
- Books
- Classroom Materials

An employer who hires or employs a WIOA QUALIFIED individual, may be able to receive WIOA funding support for:

- On the job training – reimbursement for 50% of the employee’s wages for up to six months
- Customized Training – can include new hires, training designed to meet specific requirements of employer. Employer must pay a significant cost of the training
- Incumbent Worker Training –type of Customized Training that can be used to increase the skills level of employees so they can be promoted. Employers must pay a significant cost of the training.
- WIOA funding may directly support the apprentice by providing them with supportive services.

All registered apprenticeship programs, whether they register in Florida or with DOL are automatically eligible to be added to the Florida Eligible Training Providers (ETPL) list. This is currently done by connecting with local workforce development boards, providing them with the standards of apprenticeship and asking to be added to the state-wide list. The sponsor MUST Opt-In to be included on this list. A local board may support a WIOA qualified apprentice, but they are not required to, even if the registered apprentice (RAP) is on the ETPL.

WIOA funding mechanisms are based on the local workforce development board’s policies and procedures, each board may handle funding for RAP’s a little differently. It’s very important to develop relationships with the local board long before anticipating a need for their services. Funding mentioned here may be combined to best support the apprentice and the employer’s needs.

Apprentice Florida is the outreach campaign launched in 2019 as a collaborative effort between CareerSource Florida, The Department of Education and the Department of Economic Opportunity.

- It was created to expand registered apprenticeships to create fortified talent pipelines in targeted sectors.
- The Apprentice Florida website provides employers and apprentices with many tools and resources meant to help them better understand how RAP's can benefit their workforce development strategy.
- There are partner tools kits, designed to assist employers, the CareerSource Florida Network and Educators to better understand and explain the benefits of RAPs.

Chancellor O'Farrell opened the floor for public comment. The following attendees provided public comment:

- Bryan Kamm (Space Coast Consortium Apprentice Program) commented on the growth of advanced manufacturing apprenticeships.
- Liliana Lloveda (Structural Composites) commented on preapprentice programs.
- Sean McCoy (Florida Masonry Apprentice and Education Foundation) commented on transportation and trucking.
- Daniel Van Sickle (Electrical Training Alliance of Jacksonville) expressed concerns related to PCOG.
- Dennis Braun (Northwest Florida State College) raised concerns about reimbursement to colleges for tuition exemptions for apprentices.

SAAC members made closing comments.

Chancellor O'Farrell adjourned the meeting.