AFA E-Digest: October 8th, 2024

Join Our Upcoming Webinar: Exploring Tech Tools for Apprenticeships

We're excited to announce that **Sarah Oldmixon**, a leading independent workforce development consultant, will be moderating a special **Apprenticeships for America (AFA)** webinar on **Wednesday, October 16th at 2:00 PM ET**. This one-hour Zoom event will explore cutting-edge tech tools designed to help apprentices, intermediaries, and employers connect more effectively.

The webinar will feature live product demos and an interactive Q&A session with leaders from three innovative companies:

- **Patrick Cushing** from WorkHands
- **Tim Johnson** from GoEducate
- **Joel Goldberg** from Apprenticeship.com

Please note: AFA Membership is free but required to attend. If you're not yet a member, you can easily join our network at no cost.

AFA Member Registration: Become a Member

Register for the Webinar: Webinar Registration Link

Event: 2024 CAEL Annual Conference

The AFA team is thrilled to be attending the the 2024 CAEL Annual Conference. The event will bring together leaders from education, workforce development, and industry to explore ways to align learning and work for adult economic advancement. If you will be in New Orleans, let us know.

Date: October 30 - November 1, 2024
Location: New Orleans, LA (In-person and virtual options available)
Register: Click here.

Event: An Introduction to the Natcast Workforce Center of Excellence.

Join this webinar to learn about a new workforce partnership and funding mechanism for workforce development connected to the CHIPS Act. This first webinar will be led by WCoE's newly appointed Executive Director John D. Ratliff and Sr. Manager of Workforce Programs Michael Barnes, who will give an overview of the mission and program areas of the WCoE, as well as the first anticipated awardees under the Workforce Partner Alliance program.

Date: October 10 at 2:00pm ET
Register: Click here.

Upcoming AFA Summit: Call for Session Proposals

The AFA Summit is fast approaching! Join us on February 5-6 at the Kellogg Conference Hotel in Washington, DC, and share your expertise by submitting a session proposal. We're looking for field-generated sessions that highlight innovative practices, policy priorities, skills development, or relevant research. We welcome proposals in various formats, including panel discussions, presentations, workshops, or TED-style talks. You can submit your session ideas via this google form.

Session proposal requirements: A session description, target audience, and session format

Proposal submission deadline: October 15th

Keep an eye out for the full Summit agenda, registration details, and room booking information coming in early November.

The Presidential Race and Apprenticeship

The presidential race between Vice President Kamala Harris and Donald Trump has sparked debate over their approaches to apprenticeship programs. With Election Day approaching and neither candidate leading in the polls, the outcome may influence the future direction of apprenticeship models in the U.S. Here are a couple of resources to track the debate:

Vice President Kamala Harris has proposed doubling the number of registered apprenticeships and eliminating college degree requirements for 500,000 federal jobs if she wins the election. This initiative aims to provide more pathways to high-paying jobs for Americans who choose not to pursue a college degree, reflecting the growing trend of skepticism toward traditional higher education. Harris's plan emphasizes skills development and would align with recent moves at state levels to reduce degree requirements in favor of apprenticeships and other career-focused programs.

Donald Trump's Project 2025 includes plans to revive the Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program (IRAP), which critics argue weakens

worker protections and reduces oversight of apprenticeship programs. The proposal shifts control away from the Department of Labor to third-party industry groups, prioritizing corporate interests over workers. By undermining the existing registered apprenticeship system, Project 2025 could erode quality standards, making it harder for apprentices to access middle-class career pathways.

Apprenticeships in the News

In the States

The California Labor and Workforce Development Agency has announced the availability of funds for the Opportunity Youth Adult Career Pathway Program (OYACPP) for the 2024-25 program year. This funding will **prioritize expanding registered apprenticeships** and work-based learning opportunities, especially in collaboration with community colleges. The goal is to prepare opportunity youth for quality employment in growing industries that provide living wages, benefits, and opportunities for career advancement.

Industry-Specific Apprenticeship Developments

The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) has expanded its Registered Apprenticeship offerings with two new occupations approved by the U.S. Department of Labor: Assistant Kitchen Manager and Assistant Restaurant Manager. These roles complement existing apprenticeships for Line Cook, Kitchen Manager, and Restaurant Manager, providing accredited, no-cost training and support to restaurant operators and their employees. This initiative aims to equip apprentices with essential skills, contributing to the success and growth of restaurant operations.

NuPaths has partnered with the Telecommunications Industry Registered Apprenticeship Program (TIRAP) and the Wireless Infrastructure Association (WIA) to connect pre-apprenticeship graduates to careers in the wireless and broadband industries. This partnership provides graduates with direct access to TIRAP-sponsored apprenticeships, enabling a streamlined entry into well-paying telecommunications jobs, supported by training through NuPaths' programs and employer connections facilitated by WIA.

The U.S. Climate Alliance has launched the Governors' Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative, aiming to train one million new registered apprentices

by 2035 in clean energy and climate-related fields. This effort will focus on high-demand jobs in areas like clean energy, climate resilience, and natural climate solutions, providing diverse career pathways through registered apprenticeship programs across participating states and territories. The initiative builds on federal and state actions to expand workforce opportunities in climate-critical industries while promoting diversity and job quality.

Other Stories

A recent report from the Senate Joint Economic Committee Democrats highlights a 49% wage increase for workers completing registered apprenticeship programs. These programs also provide pathways to unionized positions and support gender diversity by helping women enter male-dominated industries. However, challenges such as pay disparities and barriers for women in accessing the programs remain. The report suggests that expanding apprenticeships into industries like healthcare and education could address significant workforce shortages.

A new white paper from the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity (FREOPP) outlines several policy actions that could reshape federal support for postsecondary education in 2025. Notably, the paper advocates for expanding federal funding to support high-quality alternatives to traditional colleges, including apprenticeships and short-term workforce programs. These alternatives would receive more equitable access to federal aid through pilot programs and potential legislative reforms, aiming to provide students with more diverse and valuable educational pathways.

Members and AFA in the News

AFA member **Wisconsin Regional Training Program-Big Step**, joined other Milwaukee-area regional training organizations for a visit for President Biden today. In the White House Fact Sheet on the event, registered apprenticeship was described as "the gold-standard model for training a new generation of workers in the skilled trades and provide pathways to high-quality jobs for women and other historically underrepresented groups." WRTP, which serves over 1,000 people every year, will also receive new funding to expand its pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship readiness programming.

Apprenticeships for America (AFA) has released a new report highlighting the role of community colleges in scaling apprenticeships across the U.S. Out of 541 community and technical colleges registered as apprenticeship sponsors in 2023, only 208 had active apprentices, signaling untapped potential. The report examines strategies used by 18 successful colleges acting as intermediaries, while addressing key challenges such as sustainable funding and employer engagement. AFA also outlines recommendations to overcome these barriers and further expand apprenticeship programs nationwide.

In his recent piece, *U.S. Funding of Apprenticeship Is Death by a Thousand Grants*, AFA board member **Ryan Craig** examines the U.S.

Department of Labor's $244M apprenticeship grant program. He points out that only 19% of the funding was allocated to organizations with direct experience in creating or hiring apprentices, suggesting that the current grant-heavy model may not be the most effective approach. Craig discusses the potential benefits of shifting towards outcome-based funding to support the expansion of apprenticeship programs.

In recent Forbes article, AFA member **Bruno Mano** explores two recent reports that highlight the critical role community colleges can play in expanding apprenticeship opportunities across the U.S. workforce. The first report, Toward a Potential Grand Bargain for the Nation, focuses on boosting economic mobility by increasing employer-connected apprenticeships. The second report, from Apprenticeships for America, outlines how community colleges can scale apprenticeships through a four-part framework involving employer partnerships and federal funding reforms. Together, these reports emphasize the potential of community colleges to create accessible earn-and-learn pathways for economic growth and social mobility.

The **AICPA** & **CIMA** launched a new Registered Apprenticeship for Accounting and Finance Associates, offering an "earn and learn" model aimed at entry-level talent. Apprentices in the program will receive on-the-job training, mentorship, and instruction through the CGMA Finance Leadership Program. This initiative is designed to enhance recruitment and upskill entry-level workers, addressing the growing demand for skilled finance professionals. The apprenticeship can lead to further opportunities through existing programs like the Finance Business Partners Apprenticeship.