



# AFA E-Digest: Youth Apprenticeship Week Edition

## AFA Leaders Address Youth Apprenticeship at Urban Institute



AFA Board Chair, Robert Lerman, offered remarks and facilitation this week at a conference sponsored by the Urban Institute which reviewed progress on youth apprenticeship. Secretary-Treasurer, Jim Rosapape gave a state policy perspective. And Executive Director John Colborn discussed apprenticeships and opportunity youth populations.

The conference comes as the country celebrates Youth Apprenticeship Week and is part of over 400 events and 100 proclamations of support for youth apprenticeship. Distinctly, apprenticeships in the United States skew older than apprenticeship in other countries. Though one-third of all apprentices are in the 16-24 year old range, only about 1% are less than 18 years of age. The week of events is intended to shine a spotlight on the opportunity to strength apprenticeship efforts targeting young people.

Discussing Maryland’s embrace of apprenticeship, Jim Rosapepe noted that “Training without work is dead.” He noted that advancing youth apprenticeship has been widely embraced in the state and encouraged the consideration of School to Work apprenticeship models that begin related instruction and summer and part-time work experiences while students are in high school and culminate with full-time hiring and continuing instruction and on-the-job training upon graduation.



## From the College Campus to the Apprenticeship Campus

As we celebrate National Youth Apprenticeship Week, the evolving landscape of education and employment underscores the shifting attitudes towards traditional college education. [This Forbes article](#) by Bruno Manno highlights an increasing recognition of apprenticeships as a valuable alternative to college, particularly among young Americans. This alternative pathway merges practical, on-the-job training with classroom instruction, effectively bridging the gap between education and career readiness. With data showing that apprenticeships bolster employability more significantly than conventional college degrees, it's clear that these programs not only offer immediate benefits but also align closely with the current demands of the job market. This recognition is vital as we continue to advocate for diversified and accessible educational pathways that meet the needs of today's learners and tomorrow's workforce.

## Governors Continue Exploring Innovative Methods to Scale Youth Apprenticeships

Governors across the United States are leveraging youth apprenticeship programs as a strategic response to the tight labor market and the pressing need for skilled workers, as detailed in a recent [National Governors Association publication](#). These programs, combining paid, on-the-job learning with classroom instruction, are increasingly seen as a critical tool in preparing young people for substantive careers. Noteworthy efforts in states like Utah, California, and Indiana exemplify this trend, with initiatives tailored to meet the unique economic and educational needs of their regions. Such state-level innovations, supported by federal openness to new models of apprenticeship, underscore a national movement towards integrating more youth into the workforce through structured, credible pathways that also offer postsecondary credit and industry-recognized credentials. Governors' proactive approaches reflect a broader commitment to enhancing workforce readiness among young residents, positioning youth apprenticeships as a pivotal element of state economic and educational strategies.

## Youth Apprenticeship in the News



### Sector News

[In a significant move to address the talent needs in high-tech sectors](#), Exiger, a leader in AI-enabled risk management, in partnership with the Institute for American Apprenticeship (IAA), has launched a Department of Labor-registered apprenticeship program. This pioneering initiative is designed to train the next generation of professionals in supply chain and third-party risk analysis, integrating advanced AI techniques. Announced during a signing ceremony attended by key figures from both organizations and the Department of Labor, this program represents a first in officially registering the risk and compliance researcher role. Apprentices in this program will undergo comprehensive training, including 200 hours focused on AI-enabled research and risk analysis,

ultimately earning a nationally-recognized credential. This initiative not only caters to the immediate needs of the industry but also strategically prepares young professionals for future challenges, showcasing a progressive approach to talent development in specialized fields.

## In the States

[The Department of Labor has allocated \\$98 million in grants](#) to bolster apprenticeships and employment training for young people across 30 states and Guam. These grants, part of the YouthBuild Program, aim to prepare individuals aged 16-24, who are not currently enrolled in school or employed, for high-demand careers such as construction, healthcare, and IT. This initiative aligns with the Biden-Harris administration's Investing in America agenda, focusing on integrating training with local infrastructure projects. Each grant, ranging from \$700,000 to \$1.5 million, will support pre-apprenticeships that not only offer skills training and employment services but also contribute to community improvement projects like affordable housing. This comprehensive approach ensures that disadvantaged youth gain both educational qualifications and practical experience, preparing them for sustainable careers and contributing positively to their communities



[Governor Brian Kemp of Georgia has signed several legislative measures](#), notably HB 982, which is set to enhance the state's workforce by targeting young, skilled talent. This bill directs the State Workforce Development Board to create a unified list of high-demand careers, improving clarity and coordination among stakeholders and educators. Part of a larger legislative package to boost Georgia's workforce, HB 982 supports early professional training and streamlined educational pathways, aligning more closely with labor market needs and fostering a dynamic, skilled workforce for the future.

[Maine's apprenticeship programs are demonstrating significant progress in addressing the state's workforce challenges](#), particularly through innovative youth apprenticeships. These programs are designed to bridge the gap between retiring experts and young talent eager to enter the workforce. During the first Youth Apprenticeship Week, Maine celebrated the launch of several apprenticeships in collaboration with employers, educational institutions, and workforce agencies. These initiatives not only provide on-the-job training but also foster personal and professional growth among participants. For instance, apprentices in automotive and tech fields receive mentorship, earn competitive wages, and gain valuable credentials, often alongside college credits. Positive

feedback from participants and employers underscores the effectiveness of these initiatives in building a skilled workforce. Maine plans to further expand these programs across different sectors to continue addressing its workforce needs.

The New America brief, "[Developing State Governance Models for Youth Apprenticeship](#)," outlines various strategies states employ to optimize youth apprenticeship programs, a blend of classroom instruction and paid on-the-job training. Focusing on case studies from Maryland, South Carolina, and Wisconsin, the brief illustrates diverse approaches to governance that align with state-specific goals and economic contexts. Maryland integrates youth apprenticeships within its broader educational reform, South Carolina leverages technical colleges and industry collaborations, and Wisconsin utilizes a structured system dating back to 1991, emphasizing local consortia and strong state oversight. These models demonstrate the critical role of clear visions and adaptable governance structures in expanding apprenticeships, ensuring they meet both educational standards and labor market needs.

