



## AFA E-Digest: May 21st, 2024

### Meet Harry and the AFA Team



The Apprenticeship for America team added a new member last week: Harry Leech. Harry is AFA's Director of Strategy and Program Development. Before joining AFA, Harry was the Head of Skills at HM Treasury, the U.K. government's economics and finance ministry, where he oversaw public funding and policy on apprenticeships, vocational training, and higher education. He previously worked on other areas of education policy within the U.K. government. He is based in Los Angeles, CA, having recently relocated from the U.K..

Harry will be working on a range of analysis efforts as well as exploring the development of new programs at AFA.

In addition to Harry, the AFA team comprises...



Deniz Nemli, Research and Communications Coordinator. Since joining in January 2023, Deniz has focused on data management, research, and policy support.



René Bryce-Laporte, AFA's Director of Membership Services. Having joined AFA in November of 2023, René's portfolio includes membership outreach and conference planning.



John Colborn, AFA's Executive Director since August of 2023.

### Apprenticeships in the News

## In the States



[Governor Wes Moore signed the Growing Apprenticeships and Public Safety \(GAPS\) Act into law](#), which further expands this successful “earn and learn” model in law enforcement, corrections, and other related occupations, and serves as a great example of how recruiting talent for public service jobs can also advance apprenticeship and widen paths to economic opportunity. The governor has prioritized making Maryland safer, noting that a key part of protecting the community is building a skilled public safety workforce that reflects the diversity of the state. The GAPS Act provides additional flexibility and greater incentives to attract Marylanders to fill these important jobs.

[Governor Brian P. Kemp of Georgia has signed several bills](#) aimed at enhancing workforce development, notably Senate Bill 497, which increases apprenticeship opportunities by expanding the High Demand Apprenticeship Program and initiating a pilot Public Service Apprenticeship Program. This legislation aligns with Georgia's commitment to fostering a skilled, top-tier workforce, essential for sustaining the state's economic growth and business-friendly environment.

[Jody Robbins, formerly an industrial statistician for Washington state](#), has taken on a pivotal role with the neighbor to the south as the administrator of the Apprenticeship and Training Division at the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries. With a background in the sheet metal industry, where he began his career, Robbins brings a wealth of experience in developing and teaching apprenticeship programs.

[In an innovative stride towards integrating apprenticeships with higher education](#), Delaware has introduced the Smart Transfer Enrollment Program (STEP Path™), offering up to 42 college credits at Wilmington University for apprenticeship graduates. This initiative targets a broad audience from high school graduates to seasoned journeypersons, enabling them to advance their careers by earning a college degree relevant to their field. Through collaborations with educational institutions, this program recognizes the practical skills and technical knowledge acquired through apprenticeships, offering a substantial bridge to further education. The Delaware Department of Labor, in partnership with Wilmington University, aims to enhance career pathways, increase workforce versatility, and support lifelong learning opportunities, ultimately benefiting both individuals and employers by fostering a more educated and skilled workforce.

## Other Stories

In its recent article "[How US employers and educators can build a more nimble education system with multiple paths to success](#)," the Brookings Institution highlighted how the U.S. education system is increasingly disconnected from labor market needs, creating challenges for employers to find skilled talent and limiting career opportunities for non-college-educated individuals. The article advocates for a transformative approach where employers play a proactive role in education and training. Drawing on successful models from states like Alabama, Indiana, and Colorado, it emphasizes the importance of work-based learning and suggests states should spearhead efforts to integrate such systems. This would involve employers not only in training but also in credentialing, thereby creating a more flexible and responsive education system that supports various career paths through apprenticeships and continuous professional development.

In an effort to expand apprenticeship access, [U.S. Rep. Suzan DelBene \(D-WA, 1st\) has introduced the Apprenticeship Opportunity Act](#). This legislation aims to support individuals in apprenticeship programs by exempting their income from consideration when determining eligibility for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Specifically, it targets the income earned during the first year of an apprenticeship, a period often marked by financial hardship due to unpaid training. By ensuring apprentices can receive TANF without penalty, the Act seeks to alleviate financial pressures, allowing participants to focus on their training and career development. The bill, which is cosponsored by Reps. Linda Sánchez (D-CA) and Terri Sewell (D-AL), highlights a critical adjustment to federal policy to foster a stronger, more inclusive workforce and enhance economic growth through skilled training opportunities.

## Members in the News

The National Institute for Innovation and Technology™ has teamed up with Micron Technology and Northern Virginia Community College to [launch a cutting-edge Registered Apprenticeship Program in Virginia](#), aimed at expanding the talent pipeline for the semiconductor industry. This initiative offers a "learn-and-earn" model, breaking down educational and financial barriers, and significantly improving accessibility for underrepresented communities. The program not only facilitates a pathway into high-demand tech careers through practical, paid experience but also emphasizes inclusivity and diversity within the tech sector. This collaboration builds on previous successful apprenticeships and sets the stage for the commencement of the program's first cohort this summer, further contributing to local and national economic development.

## And finally...



[Geneva Knott, a former Marine and single mother, has successfully transitioned into the tech industry](#) through the NPower Tech Fundamentals program. Geneva's story is a powerful testament to how NPower provides much more than technical training; it builds a supportive community that fosters both personal and professional growth. Through the program, Geneva gained key industry certifications and an

apprenticeship that evolved into a full-time role, allowing her to work from home and care for her children.

