

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Policy Recommendation on Registered Pre-Apprenticeship
FY 2025-2026

Establish the criteria for registering pre-apprenticeship programs in North Carolina.

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges (SBCC) is requested to approve a new policy recommended by the ApprenticeshipNC Council. The purpose of this policy is to establish the criteria for registering pre-apprenticeship programs in North Carolina.

Strategic Plan Reference:

Goal 4: Economic and Workforce Development

Provide education, training, and credentials to develop the most competitive workforce in the nation.

Strategies: 4.1.1, 4.2.1 & 4.3.1

Background/Rationale:

US DOL does not regulate Pre-Apprenticeship. DOL has provided a Training and Employment Notice (TEN 23-23 dated March 5, 2024).

ApprenticeshipNC has been registering Pre-Apprenticeship programs (PAP) since 2014 without a documented definition or policy. The verbal guidelines have been that the purpose of a PA is to lead to selection and success in a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). The PAP must be connected with a RAP and should include a combination of on-the-job learning and related classroom instruction.

In 2024, it became clear that a specific policy was needed because of recurring problems with pre-apprenticeship programs. These problems included:

- **Lack of clear guidance:** There wasn't enough direction on how pre-apprenticeship programs should operate.
- **Failed connections:** Some pre-apprenticeship programs reportedly didn't successfully connect participants with a Registered Apprenticeship Program.
- **Geographic disconnect:** In other cases, the associated Registered Apprenticeship Program was located too far away, making it impractical for participants.
- **Insufficient training:** Some pre-apprenticeship programs only offered classroom training, lacking the crucial hands-on or work-based experience needed for a true apprenticeship.

Essentially, these issues revealed a need for a clear, standardized policy to ensure pre-apprenticeship programs are effective, well-connected, and provide comprehensive training.

The proposed policy has iterated since 2024 including feedback from a sub-committee of Community College Presidents and the Apprenticeship Council. To gain consensus, the policy

only codifies what has been in practice which aligns with US DOL guidelines and highlights best practices that could be incorporated into a future policy revision.

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Goals

The main goals of a registered pre-apprenticeship program are:

- Preparing an individual for selection and success in a registered apprenticeship program.
- Eligibility for the state tuition waiver.
- Broadening the recruiting pool for employers.
- Forming of relationships between employers and potential apprentices.

Minimum Requirements

The only requirement of a registered Pre-Apprenticeship Program (PAP) is that it be connected in a meaningful way to a participating employer in a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP).

This is confirmed by the employer signing Appendix E of the PAP, which includes one of the following benefits a Pre-Apprenticeship completer will enjoy:

- Grant an interview.
- Grant direct entry (specific application and selection criteria).
- Grant advanced standing/credit.

Best Practices of a High-Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program

100 hours or more of paid work-based learning and nine hours or more of related instruction (technical, safety, and/or career).

A high completion rate (individual enrolling in pre-apprenticeship program complete).

A high conversion rate (pre-apprentice completers successfully enroll in a Registered Apprenticeship Program).