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Guide for Unions on Joint Apprenticeship Committees

Registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) enhance workers' skills and opportunities. Unions and employers share the goal of creating the most effective apprenticeship for all of their members/employees. A key step in this process is forming a joint apprenticeship committee (JAC), sometimes called a joint apprenticeship and training committee (JATC), to govern the RAP as equal partners. It's important that the union actively participates in governance, to protect workers' interests and ensure the program is run well. It also helps the union develop leaders and add value to the workplace, which can build the relationship with the employer. This resource lays out the steps to form a JAC and outlines its benefits, roles and responsibilities.

Benefits of the JAC Model

- Ensures the RAP meets industry standards and that apprentices attain skills aligned with those standards.
- Enhances market competitiveness by fostering labor-management cooperation with joint decision making and consensus problem solving.
- Ensures every party's interests are factored into the implementation of the RAP.

JAC Roles

- **Strategy:** Formulate strategy behind the development and implementation of apprenticeship standards.
- **Implementation:** Define necessary steps to successfully implement RAP standards and oversee implementation by the apprenticeship coordinator(s).
- **Oversight:** Take responsibility for oversight of—and accountability for—the effectiveness of the devised standards. Actively review and approve work by the apprenticeship coordinator(s).
- **Improvement:** Establish a process of feedback, continual review and improvement of the RAP.

Establishing the JAC

1. Authorization

- The existing collective bargaining agreement (CBA) should be negotiated to establish a JAC.
- If the RAP initiative is begun in between contracts, then a memorandum of understanding can define the terms.
- The CBA should be updated during the next negotiations.

2. Membership

- Labor and management choose their respective members, with equal representation.
- For an individual joint sponsorship, the union and employer each designate at least two committee members.
- For a group joint sponsorship (with multiple employers), each employer designates a representative, and the union designates an equal number. These members may be from a trade association.
- Form a JAC curriculum development subcommittee.

3. Governance

- Elect a chairperson and a secretary, to rotate among JAC members.
- Determine the time and place of regular meetings.
- Keep written minutes of the meetings. The secretary is responsible for documenting the meetings.
- The elected leaders may vote on all questions affecting the registered apprenticeship.
- Develop bylaws and/or CBA language with rules.

JAC Responsibilities

1. Program Development

- Identify an occupation for the apprenticeship.
  - Designate an occupation for the program based on the workforce needs of the employer(s).
  - If necessary, conduct a needs assessment to pick an occupation for a pilot RAP.
- Define work processes for on-the-job training (OJT).
  - Review existing work processes and training to customize for your RAP.
  - Designate subject matter experts from management and labor to review and validate the work process.
  - Develop an OJT checklist for each occupation with tasks and estimated time required to master each skill.
  - Develop a plan and selection process for an OJT mentorship program.
- Customize the classroom instruction for related technical instruction (RTI).
  - Identify training needs for classroom or online instruction.
  - Research local or online training options and identify training provider(s) for the RAP.
- Develop apprentice recruitment and selection policies.
  - Establish recruitment and selection policies and assessment procedures.
  - Approve selection of apprentices directly or delegate to the apprenticeship coordinator(s).
  - Develop an orientation program for the apprentices.
- Develop a mentorship program.
  - Develop a mentor selection process, including eligibility and assessment criteria.
  - Select or develop a train-the-trainer program for mentors.

2. Registering Standards of Apprenticeship



- Engage RAP partners in devising and reviewing standards.
- Determine wage scale and ratio of apprentices to journeyworkers.
- Complete sponsor application and standards.
- Submit standards for registration to the federal Office of Apprenticeship, state apprenticeship council or state apprenticeship agency.

3. Implementation of the Program

- Appoint apprenticeship coordinators—ideally two: one appointed by the union and one appointed by the employer.
- Recruit and bring your apprentices on board.
- Implement the mentorship program.
- Start up the OJT with mentoring.
- Start classroom instruction.

4. Monitoring and Oversight



- Document apprentices' progress via data reported to the state or federal database.
- Hear and resolve all complaints of violations of apprenticeship agreements.
- Develop feedback and review processes to improve the program.

Want to know more? Reach out to the Working for America Institute

www.workingforamerica.org • info@workingforamerica.org

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