

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## How Coalitions Build Systems:

### A CASE STUDY OF IDAHO'S REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP EXPANSION EFFORT



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As the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has invested in the growth, expansion, diversification, and modernization of the Registered Apprenticeship system, states like Idaho have developed a coordinated system and strong infrastructure to support significant program growth while balancing limited state resources. With federal grant investments totaling \$12.6 million since 2016, Idaho has created a robust system that collaborates with and enhances the capacity of the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship (OA) staff.

Idaho's apprenticeship system has grown significantly since 2016, from a total of 121 Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) serving 1,630 apprentices in 2016 to 225 RAPs serving 2,962 apprentices in 2022. This executive summary outlines the factors and strategies that have contributed to Idaho's success, which are fully described in the case study report [How Coalitions Build Systems: A Case Study of Idaho's Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Effort](#).



#### About the State Apprenticeship Expansion Case Studies

The apprenticeship expansion case studies document the growth, successful implementation, and key expansion strategies from two states, Idaho and Maine, offering scalable strategies and promising practices.

The case study reports on Idaho and Maine, along with executive summaries of those reports, are available on the [Apprenticeship Promising Practices: Expanding Registered Apprenticeship Systems page](#).

## Apprenticeship Expansion Success Factors

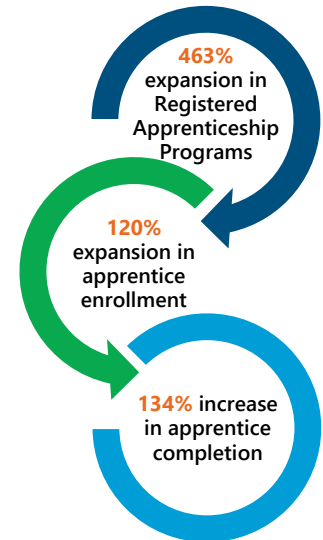
Idaho apprenticeship leaders attribute the State’s expansion success to efforts in three key areas:

- **Apprenticeship Idaho Coalition:** Mid- and high-level staff across several state agencies meet regularly to strategize on apprenticeship expansion efforts. This ensures consistent information and guidance reach employers, partners, and apprentices.
- **Streamlined registration process:** Before connecting with USDOL OA for registration, all potential sponsors meet with one of the Idaho Department of Labor’s (IDOL) apprenticeship coordinators, who help draft strong program standards and make sure administrative systems are in place.
- **Sector development targeting group sponsors:** IDOL prioritizes trade associations and large employers who can serve as sponsors for multiple smaller employers spread out across the State.

## Apprenticeship Idaho Coalition

Leaders from three Idaho state agencies—[IDOL](#), the [Idaho Division of Career Technical Education](#), and the [Idaho Workforce Development Council](#) (IWDC)—formed the Apprenticeship Idaho Coalition. This coalition of state agencies collaborates with apprenticeship partners, collectively manages a series of USDOL apprenticeship expansion grants, and identifies strategies to encourage businesses operating in both traditional and new apprenticeship sectors to create RAPs.

Since launching in 2020, this group has met biweekly to coordinate, strategize, and develop internal processes to support program growth and efficient grants management. The coalition adds capacity to the state apprenticeship system by easing the administrative burden for individual agencies and aligning points of contact for external stakeholders. Apprenticeship Idaho also acts as a brand for the Registered Apprenticeship system in the State, issuing unified public-facing messages such as press releases and requests for proposals. Over time, other organizations have joined the coalition, including Idaho Business for Education, Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Idaho Division of Veterans Services, and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations’ Idaho Workers Opportunity Network.



### IDAHO’S REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM OUTCOMES (2016-2022)

#### IDOL’s INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH OA

IDOL proactively engaged with the USDOL OA Idaho State Director and found strategies to help OA conduct its registration and oversight responsibilities more effectively.

- **Holding regular check-ins with OA** reinforces well-established trusting partnership between OA and IDOL staff and engages OA support of state apprenticeship initiatives.
- **Helping sponsors develop program sponsors before meeting with OA** has reduced average RAP approval time from one to three weeks to two to five days.
- **Monitoring and providing technical assistance to sponsors on RAPs** yields more accurate data in RAPIDS and shortened OA monitoring reviews of RAPs.

## Streamlined Registration Process

The Apprenticeship Idaho Coalition members sought to design a system that provides an efficient, customer-centered program registration experience for businesses. They created a structured registration process based on trust and coordination with USDOL OA and coalition partner agencies. To make this system effective and efficient, the team focused on assigning distinct roles and defining clear points for handoffs. The process supports the critical relationships with employer partners.

In Idaho's registration process, it is a shared responsibility of IDOL and USDOL OA, as well as other coalition partner agencies, to conduct initial outreach and establish employer relationships. After this initial outreach and connection, employers are directly handed off to IDOL, whose staff conduct a screening process and discovery meetings to inform the development of program standards. IDOL forwards the standards to USDOL OA for approval and then, once approved, conducts training with the employer on RAPIDS and program administration. As coalition partners make employer referrals to IDOL, progress through the registration process is captured in a shared data tracking system to which all coalition partners have access. Once the program is registered, IDOL reconnects the employer to the original coalition agency partner.

**“We need to make this a seamless process for Idaho’s employers and the apprentices we’re serving under these grants. They don’t need to know which grant is serving them. They just need to know that they’re going to get the help.”**

*Wendi Secrist, Executive Director, IWDC*

### PROGRAM REGISTRATION AND SUPPORT TEAM

Idaho established three different staff positions that each focus on a different aspect of the program development and registration process.

- **Program development and registration coordinator.** Using the [Apprenticeship Idaho Toolkit](#), the program development coordinator leads discovery meetings, helps develop program standards, and submits the standards to OA for review and approval.
- **Data management coordinator.** After approval of program standards, the data management coordinator conducts a training on program administration, including data entry through the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Management Data System (RAPIDS).
- **Apprentice recruitment coordinator.** All newly registered programs are offered support with apprentice recruitment, including assisting sponsors with drafting and posting job descriptions and navigating the State’s network of coalition agencies and partners. This role is sponsored by the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and is staffed by a certified vocational rehabilitation counselor with expertise in inclusive and accessible practices.

## Group Sponsors and New Sector Development

Apprenticeship Idaho focuses on large employers and trade associations to act as an intermediary or “group sponsor.” Smaller employers can hire apprentices without the administrative burden of managing a program. This strategy also attracts employers in new industries including manufacturing and healthcare.

In communities with limited resources, apprenticeship serves as a “grow-your-own” approach to funding talent development. This message has been effective for Idaho’s largely rural landscape and small towns experiencing workforce challenges and aging infrastructure. Idaho is prioritizing apprenticeship expansion to both tribal and rural communities through sector associations and networks of public service providers.

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### Disclaimer

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