

# Evaluation Brief

## ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY:

### USING PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS TO CONNECT TO REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

FEBRUARY 2020

#### BRIEF BACKGROUND

*The findings in this brief are drawn from Social Policy Research Associates' evaluation of the California Apprenticeship Initiative. CAI was established in 2015 by the governor and state legislature to establish apprenticeships in industries where they are uncommon. The entire briefing paper, Access to Opportunity: Using Pre-Apprenticeship Programs to Connect to Registered Apprenticeship, can be found at: <https://caihub.foundationccc.org/Research-and-Reports>*

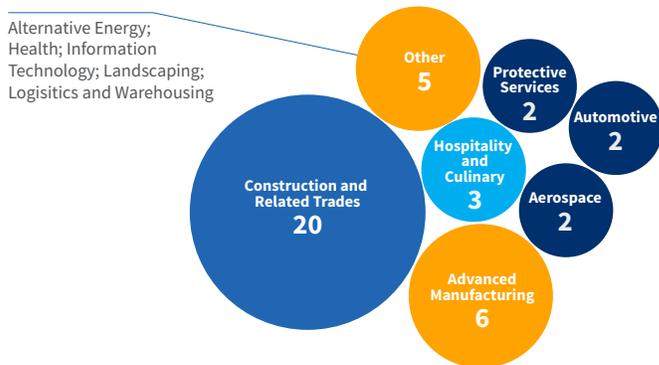
A primary goal of the California Apprenticeship Initiative (CAI) is to increase access to the opportunity of apprenticeship for all Californians by (1) expanding the number of registered apprenticeship (RA) programs in California and (2) ensuring that dedicated pre-apprenticeship (PA) programs are developed to connect individuals traditionally underrepresented in RA programs with the training, support, and connections they need to become apprentices. To this end, between 2016 and 2018, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Chancellor's Office) invested \$15 million to develop new and innovative PA programs across the state in order to increase the diversity of RA programs. This brief summarizes findings from the evaluation of CAI-supported PA programs, drawing on interviews with program staff, a site visit, and a review of program documents.



## KEY FINDINGS

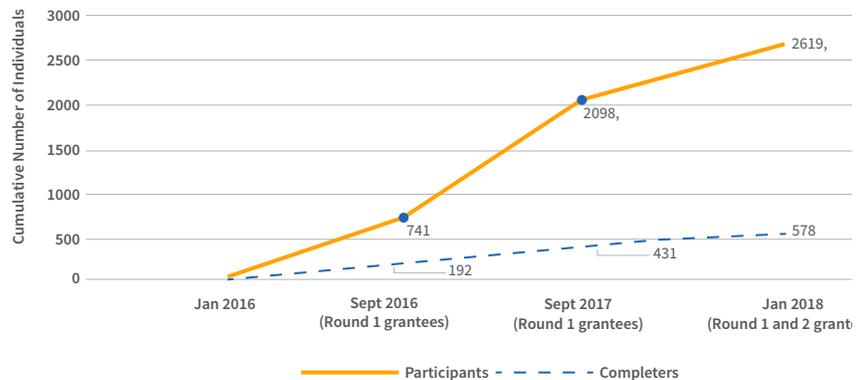
- Between 2016 and 2018, 35 grantees operated 40 PA programs in a wide range of industries. About half were in construction; the remaining programs were in advanced manufacturing and service industries like hospitality, culinary, health care, and pre services.
- As of January 2018, CAI-funded PA programs had recruited, screened, and enrolled 2,619 participants.
- The PA programs provided value to RA programs by introducing new and qualified candidates to their applicant pools.
- The programs have been successful in securing a variety of advantages in the RA application process for PA participants, such as guaranteed interviews, application points, and RA credit for credentials and training attained.
- CAI met its goal of serving a diverse population. While only 6 percent of California registered apprentices are women, 27 percent of PA participants have been women. Similarly, statewide, 7 percent of registered apprentices identify as Black, compared to 11 percent of PA participants.

**EXHIBIT 1.**  
Pre-Apprenticeship Industries Reported by Grantees



Source: Grant application and grantee interview responses

**EXHIBIT 2.**  
Pre-Apprenticeship Participants and Completers



Source: Grantee Reprints to SPR

## By the Numbers

To date, 35 grantees have developed 40 CAI-funded PA programs. These programs have focused on a variety of industries, with half in construction (n=20) and the rest spread across several industries, including advanced manufacturing (n=6), hospitality and culinary (n=3), automotive (n=2), aerospace (n=2), and protective services (n=2), as well as alternative energy, health, information technology, landscaping, and logistics and warehousing (Exhibit 1).

The number of PA participants enrolled in these programs increased from 741 to 2,619 between January 2016 and January 2018. In the same period, the number of PA completers increased from 192 to 578. This is in keeping with the primary initiative goal of expanding the pool of potential applicants to apprenticeship programs (Exhibit 1).

PA program participants were generally more diverse than the apprenticeship population in California. For example, women represent just 6 percent of registered apprentices in California versus 27 percent of CAI PA participants. Statewide, 7 percent of registered apprentices identify as Black, compared to 11 percent of CAI PA participants. The diversity of PA participants, combined with increasing enrollments over time, indicates that PA grantees achieved the goal of increasing the number of potential applicants, especially in underrepresented populations.

# Implementation Findings and Lessons Learned

Interview responses suggest several lessons learned that can help others developing PA programs.

- **CAI PA programs recruit, screen, prepare, and support a diverse pipeline of applicants.** While program design varied significantly along aspects such as length of training and types of supportive services and technical training offered, all programs provided value to RA partners by introducing new, qualified candidates to their applicant pools.
- **CAI PA programs are tailored to address specific RA pipeline issues and remediate barriers their target populations face in successfully applying to RA programs.** Whether a PA program partnered with one RA program or many, those that were successful were tailored to address particular pipeline issues around recruitment, application, and persistence, as well as the specific barriers faced by target populations.
- **Partnerships enable customization to align PA programs with RA program needs, but they require trust and take time to build.** Many grantees leveraged long-term relationships with local RAs and employers to kick-start their PA programs. These relationships and the trust between employers/unions and training partners facilitated effective program design and ultimately the transition of PAs into RA programs.
- **CAI PA grantees can often secure advantages for program participants in the RA selection process.** Different RAs had different structures (single employer, multiple employers, union, non-union) as well as differing application and acceptance processes. As such, the types of advantages to PA participants also varied. These included:
  - **Exposure.** The majority of CAI PA programs with strong ties to an RA partner said the biggest advantage to participants was exposure. RA partners engaged with participants in PA programs by, for example, serving as technical trainers, giving job-site tours and presentations, conducting mock interviews, and hosting work-based learning experiences.
  - **Extra credit on applications.** Some grantees worked out ways for PA participants to get additional points on their RA applications. In RA programs that used top scores as a basis for admission, this gave PA participants a competitive boost. PA programs were also able to provide industry-recognized credentials or certifications that were of value to the RA. These qualifications counted as over and above entry-level requirements, thus warranting additional points or increased consideration.
  - **Preference.** Some PA programs had agreements with RA programs where completers moved to the front of the line to take the RA entrance test. Other programs were able to guarantee interviews with the employers. For RA programs with long waitlists or competitive pools of applicants, these were very important advantages.
  - **Direct entry.** In some cases, PA participants who successfully completed their programs were automatically accepted into RA programs. This was the least common linkage arrangement, as it required a high degree of trust and communication with the RA partner to ensure that the right volume of apprentices was coming through so that supply matched demand.
  - **RA program credit.** Several PA programs arranged ahead of time for their participants, once accepted into an RA program, to receive credit for time or credentials attained through the PA program.
- **Offering credentials and technical training confers benefits to all PA participants, including those who do not become registered apprentices.** Offering credentials and technical training gives PA participants who matriculate to RA programs advantages once they start their apprenticeships, including credit towards apprenticeship hours or expedited placement at job sites with specific credentialing requirements. It also gives those who do not become apprentices industry-recognized credentials that help them find related employment.

## Program Sustainability

All grantees were actively looking for ways to sustain and grow their programs after CAI grant support ended. Some were seeking additional grants from the Chancellor's Office, the state workforce board, and other public and philanthropic sources of grants in order to keep the programs going. Others had emerged from their proof-of-concept phase and reported linking to more institutional sources of funding, including the following:

- **Apportionment.** A few grantees were seeking to move their PA programs to the for-credit side of their colleges, which would make them eligible for apportionment funds.<sup>1</sup>
- **CTE/Perkins grants.** Other grantees were looking for ways for pre-existing career academies and career pathways programs to absorb their PA programs.
- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Individual Training Account dollars.** Some programs were working with local Workforce Development Boards to access training and supportive service funds to support PA programs.
- **Partnerships with adult schools.** Several programs said they were exploring deeper partnerships with regional adult schools that were mandated by WIOA (and had some funding) to provide on-ramps to regional career pathways opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> Apportionment is the process the state uses for determining funding amounts for colleges. More details about the process can be found at: <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/College-Finance-and-Facilities-Planning/Student-Centered-Funding-Formula>



### ABOUT THIS SERIES

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Other briefs in this series can be found **HERE** and include:

- CAI Apprenticeship Evaluation Brief
- CAI Pre-App-Evaluation Brief
- Columbia College Case Study
- Mission College Case Study
- SCCCD Pre-Apprenticeship Case Study
- WERC Case Study Brief

