

# Evaluation Brief

## BUILDING NEW APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS: THE CALIFORNIA APPRENTICESHIP INITIATIVE

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, Building New Apprenticeship Programs, can be found at:*

<https://caihub.foundationccc.org/Research-and-Reports>

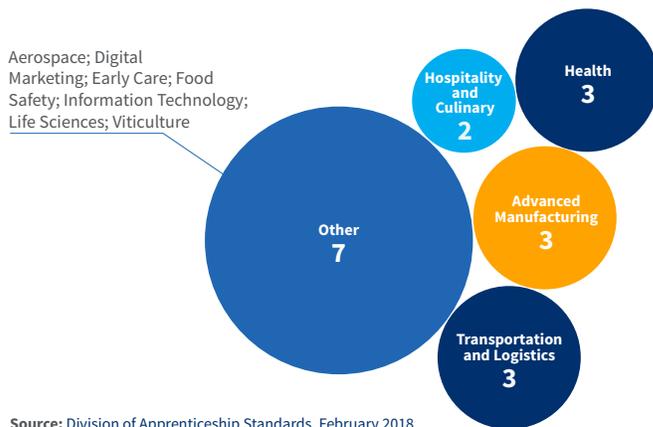
Recent data show that approximately 70 percent of registered apprenticeships in California are in the construction trades, even though the construction industry employs just 5 percent of the state's workforce. By contrast, fewer than 1 percent are in manufacturing, transportation, and healthcare occupations combined, even though approximately 18 percent of the state's workers are employed in these industries.<sup>1</sup> In 2015, to help address these types of imbalances and establish apprenticeships in industries where they are uncommon—particularly industries deemed by the state as a priority for economic growth—California's governor and state legislature created the ongoing California Apprenticeship Initiative (CAI) grant program.

The California Community College Chancellor's Office administers CAI and, between 2016 and 2018, awarded 40 grants (totaling \$27.5 million) to community colleges, school districts, and their partners. These organizations worked with employers to create new apprenticeship programs. This brief summarizes CAI implementation and outcomes findings, drawing on administrative data from the Division of Apprenticeship Standards; interviews with program staff, employers, and apprentices; a survey of apprentices; and a review of program documents.

## KEY FINDINGS

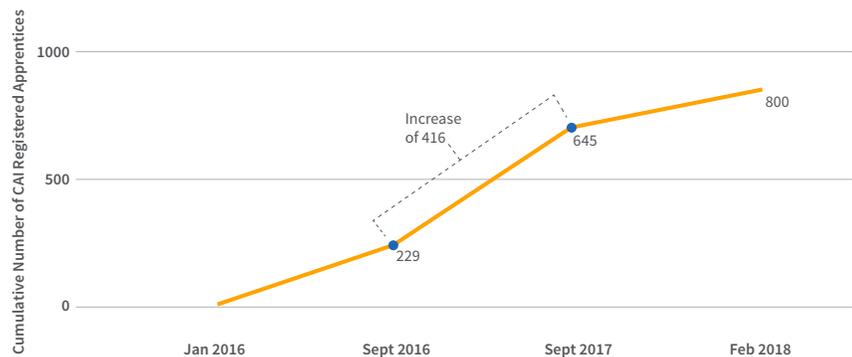
- Between 2016 and 2018, 17 grantees established new apprenticeships in one or more occupations in industries such as transportation, health care, manufacturing, hospitality, and early childcare education.
- As of early 2018, these grantees had enrolled 800 apprentices in occupations including information security analyst, community healthcare worker, lodging manager, and maintenance machinist.
- CAI met its goal of increasing the diversity of apprentices. The share of women in CAI-supported programs was 27 percent, compared to 6 percent among all apprentices in California in 2016.
- Employers value the program because it has filled their need for skilled talent and allowed them to have a role in designing training for apprentices.
- Apprentices appreciate the program because it has helped them develop skills, gain work experience, and advance their careers.
- CAI helped facilitate system changes to support apprenticeship. This includes changes to reimbursement rates for apprentice classroom training and the creation of an interagency advisory committee on apprenticeship.

**EXHIBIT 1.**  
Apprenticeship Industries Represented Among CAI Grantees



Source: Division of Apprenticeship Standards, February 2018

**EXHIBIT 2.**  
CAI Registered Apprentices



Source: Data for 2016–2017 come from SPR; data for 2018 come from DAS.

## By the Numbers

As of February 2018, 17 grantees had established one or more new registered apprenticeship programs in 11 industries where apprenticeship is uncommon in California. As illustrated in Exhibit 1, most new programs are in advanced manufacturing (n=3), transportation and logistics (n=3), and health (n=3). Seven programs are unique in their industries—viticulture, aerospace, and food safety, for example. The specific occupations that the new apprenticeships focus on are varied and include maintenance mechanic, overhead line worker, nurse, lodging manager, information security analyst, and quality assurance associate.

The 17 grantees had enrolled 800 apprentices by February 2018. The number of apprentices was relatively small in the first nine months of the initiative (January to September 2016) because many grantees needed at least a year to design their programs and have them approved by the Division of Apprenticeship Standards. In the subsequent months, the number of registered apprentices increased more rapidly (Exhibit 1).

As of early 2018, 139 of the 800 registered apprentices had completed their apprenticeships. This number is expected to grow substantially by the end of 2019, as the many apprentices who enrolled in 2017 and 2018 reach the end of their programs.

## Apprentice Perspectives

Overwhelmingly, surveyed apprentices found their CAI apprenticeship programs to be very helpful (61 percent) or helpful (21 percent) in preparing them for work. They also reported several specific benefits to participating:

- **Classroom training** was useful because it provided relevant knowledge and skills and allowed apprentices to earn college and industry certifications.
- **On-the-job training (OJT)** gave apprentices an opportunity to gain work experience and apply their skills. It also allowed them to learn “industry jargon” and to be more resourceful in their approaches to their work.
- **Instructors and OJT mentors** were viewed as knowledgeable and encouraging. Apprentices appreciated instructors’ willingness to think “out of the box” and help them navigate new challenges in the workplace; they valued how their OJT mentors shared practical insights and institutional knowledge about their industries and organizations.

## Employer Perspectives

In interviews, employers reported that CAI apprenticeship programs helped them recruit employees and alleviate a shortage of skilled workers. One employer noted that CAI apprentices were better prepared than new workers recruited in other ways, such as through internships; another specifically valued how the program’s college partner helped access job candidates that the employer’s human resources department typically did not reach. Employers also valued the opportunity to help design CAI programs, and they appreciated how the OJT was complimented by classroom training.

*“The apprentices were very well prepared, and more so than interns we’ve had, because the apprentices knew so much from the classroom training, such as medical terminology and the importance of continued care.”*

**—Apprenticeship Mentor  
and Coordinator**

## Implementation Findings & Lessons Learned

Interview, survey, and focus group responses suggest several lessons that may help others who are developing apprenticeship programs.

### Employer Engagement

- **Community colleges and school districts effectively established new apprenticeship programs, collaborated with employer partners, and served as classroom training providers.** Key factors contributing to their success in establishing programs include:
  - **Building on established relationships.** Grantees that had already identified employer partners prior to the grant had an easier time establishing their programs within the grant period.
  - **Identifying problems for which apprenticeship is a viable solution.** Focusing on, for example, persistent worker/skill shortages or mass retirements was a more effective strategy for engaging employers than “selling” apprenticeship as a generally good strategy.
  - **Utilizing extensive and persistent industry networking and convenings with groups of employers.** These proved to be effective strategies for identifying and engaging employer partners.

## Employer Engagement (continued)

- **Relying on program staff and leaders with deep industry knowledge, extensive professional networks, and effective communication skills.** These individuals were more effective at employer engagement than staff without these characteristics. Otherwise, engaging a labor market intermediary with industry expertise was effective.

## Program Design

- **A thorough understanding of the requirements and competencies for a job and their relationship to an employer's general workflow helped ensure that an apprenticeship program was designed successfully.** Grantees were able to gain this in-depth understanding by involving employer partners in the program design process and ensuring they provided feedback on the curricula and job competencies.
- **Integration of college certificates and industry certifications meant apprentices' skills were more portable and aligned with general industry standards.** Apprentices expressed appreciation for these certifications.
- **Employer staff members who served as mentors played a key role in program success.** According to apprentices, mentors helped them apply their skills in a work setting, shared practical insights about the work they had learned over the years, and passed on institutional knowledge about their organizations and industries.

## Program Sustainability

- **As of February 2018, grantees were working to access sources of continued funding, including Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), California Employment Training Panel (ETP), and other grant funds.** Some grantees had obtained additional funding through grants and WIOA.
- **Some grantees are conducting ongoing outreach to expand their programs to new employers.** Grantees recognize that continued enrollment of apprentices depends on employers' needs—needs that vary, particularly among smaller employers. Therefore, grantees are engaged in ongoing outreach to identify additional employers interested in participating in apprenticeship programs.
- **CAI has helped facilitate statewide, system-level changes to support the development and sustainability of new apprenticeships.** These changes include the passage in 2018 of state legislation that equates community college reimbursement rates for apprentice classroom instruction (called Related Supplemental Instruction) and non-apprentice classroom instruction. This has made it more financially feasible for community colleges—many of which have developed apprenticeship programs under CAI—to continue to provide classroom training for apprentices. Also, in 2018, the state created an interagency apprenticeship advisory committee that will provide advice and guidance to DAS about how best to support and monitor apprenticeship programs in non-construction and non-firefighter trades, such as those developed by CAI grantees.

1 Apprentice statistics come from California Department of Industrial Relations (2016), State of California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Apprenticeship Standards: 2016 Legislative Report (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/DAS/reports/2016LegReport.pdf>) and from internal DAS statistics. Construction, manufacturing, transportation, and utilities statistics from: [https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/indhist/cal\\$shws.xls](https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/indhist/cal$shws.xls); health care statistic from: [https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/SpecialReports/Health\\_Care\\_in\\_CA.pdf](https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/SpecialReports/Health_Care_in_CA.pdf)

## 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
- SCCC Pre-Apprenticeship Case Study
- WERC Case Study Brief

