

Scaling Placement Pathways: *Promising Practices from Apprenticeship Readiness Programs*

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TRADEFUTURES

Contributors

Authors

Jack Mackuse
Senior Program Manager
TradesFutures

Nicole Schwartz
Consultant former and Executive Director
TradesFutures

Marina Zhavoronkova

Executive Director
TradesFutures

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About TradesFutures

At TradesFutures, we believe everyone deserves the chance to build a secure future. We expand pathways to union apprenticeships and family-sustaining construction careers, remove barriers for underrepresented communities, and champion proven practices that work. Through our award-winning, nationally recognized Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3), expanding network of apprenticeship readiness partners, convening platform, and national leadership in policy and partnerships, we connect people, programs, and communities to create lasting opportunity.





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Executive Summary


Apprenticeship Readiness Programs (ARPs) are a proven pathway for jobseekers to explore and access union construction apprenticeships and careers. TradesFutures, a national workforce intermediary, supports over 200 ARPs that served over 7,700 participants in 34 states in 2025. ARPs increase awareness of the construction trades, place graduates into apprenticeship and employment, and expand the pool of skilled construction labor. This report outlines promising practices and emerging quality standards related to placement of ARP graduates into Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs). To establish these practices, TradesFutures reviewed historical ARP data, survey results, and relevant literature, and conducted qualitative analysis through interviews with training directors, industry employers, and program administrators and staff.

This report finds that while placement rates vary and barriers exist, programs can implement uniform, replicable practices to improve participant placement outcomes. Through the practices established in this report, ARPs—and other pre-apprenticeship programs—can increase the rate of participants accessing quality construction jobs, and support the skilled trades needs of the growing construction economy. Achieving these outcomes, however, requires sustained investment in program capacity, demand-side alignment, and network-building. The report outlines recommendations for funders to support these enabling conditions.

The following practices increase placement and employment opportunities for graduates of Apprenticeship Readiness Programs:

1. Union Engagement: Strong, sustained relationships with local unions build a program's industry relevance, reputation, and effectiveness in placing graduates into apprenticeships. This is a core differentiator of ARPs—unions are the conduit to registered apprenticeships, long-term, quality employment, and a career in the trades.

2. Industry Engagement: ARP engagement with industry differs from traditional workforce development models in that the union partnership is typically the primary conduit to industry. However, strategically engaging industry partners, employers, and signatory contractors throughout recruitment, instruction, graduation, and placement builds trust, strengthens hiring pipelines, and increases the likelihood of recurring hires. These partnerships should focus on relationship-building and participant exposure while respecting established union hall rules and apprenticeship selection policies and processes.



3. Managed Enrollment: Effective programs manage both the size and composition of their cohorts to maximize the likelihood of participant success. Programs calibrate enrollment to projected apprenticeship opportunities, accounting for attrition, and use structured intake screening to assess candidates across key dimensions, such as academic readiness, potential barriers to employment, and behavioral and motivational factors. This upfront screening ensures programs are delivering the right number of qualified candidates while identifying barriers early enough to mitigate them before placement.

4. Participant Readiness and Support: To prepare participants specifically for the demands of regional employers, programs can add instructional hours and supplemental certifications beyond the curriculum's minimum requirements. Moreover, either internally or in partnership with community-based organizations, programs can offer a wide variety of supportive services, such as transportation or stipends, to ensure participants graduate and transition into apprenticeship and employment.

5. Demand-Side Strategy: Government policies and collectively bargained agreements that prioritize ARP graduates for employment opportunities and placement (e.g., local hire, apprentice utilization requirements, direct entry or articulation agreements, Project Labor Agreements) can provide a clear placement pathway for participants post-completion. Successfully leveraging demand-side strategies requires ongoing engagement with project owners, contractors, and unions.

TradesFutures & Apprenticeship Readiness Programs

The construction industry faces unprecedented challenges related to satisfying the increased demand for skilled construction workers. Significant investments in the nation's infrastructure have resulted in the launch of large-scale construction projects across the country, including many projects that will advance new developments in the technology, energy, and transportation sectors (e.g., data centers, nuclear power plants).

Growing demand, combined with an aging construction workforce, will further strain the industry's labor supply. Moreover, youth interest in vocational and technical careers, while increasing, has not met the industry's workforce needs. To address the need for skilled workers, renewed efforts in workforce development, career awareness, and vocational training are essential. In the coming years, workforce development and training programs will play a crucial role in the recruitment of quality candidates into the industry, particularly those with barriers to employment, and/or without prior connection to the union construction sector.^{1,2,3}

TradesFutures is a national workforce intermediary that supports over 200 Apprenticeship Readiness Programs (ARPs) across the United States, serving over 7,700 participants each year. These programs compose the largest network of pre-apprenticeship programs in the country. While there are other union-led pre-apprenticeship programs, TradesFutures uses the term "apprenticeship readiness" to distinguish its multi-craft ARPs from trade-specific pre-apprenticeship programs.

58%

ARP survey respondents report enrolling at least 50 participants per year

98%

ARP survey respondents plan to maintain or grow enrollment over the next year

Each program in the network utilizes TradesFutures' **Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3)**, a comprehensive, standardized 120-hour curriculum that introduces participants to the construction industry and registered apprenticeship options across the trades. The curriculum is composed of nine units which include Industry Awareness, Tools and Materials, Construction Health and Safety, Blueprint Reading, Construction Math, Labor History, Maintaining a Respectful Workplace, Green Construction and Financial Literacy. There is flexibility in how programs implement the curriculum; each program in the network has a unique model, with a range of partner

organizations, training schedules, and expectations for participants.

Besides a standard curriculum, all ARPs are either operated by a building trades council or are required to have a partnership with a local building trades council. Building trades councils are local, state, and provincial organizations that represent affiliated construction trades and their joint labor-management apprenticeship programs, and thus represent the available registered apprenticeship programs and opportunities in the region. This relationship is crucial to ensure that ARP graduates have direct pathways into registered apprenticeship and construction employment.

95%

ARP survey respondents report a "strong" or "moderate" relationship with their local building trades council and/or local union partners

Many ARPs also engage with a variety of partners for recruitment, supportive services, or employment purposes. This may include community-based, social service, and/or workforce development organizations; and direct partnerships with employers to both inform instruction and support strong post-completion employment outcomes.

ARPs serve a wide range of age and demographic groups. TradesFutures distinguishes between three types of programs:

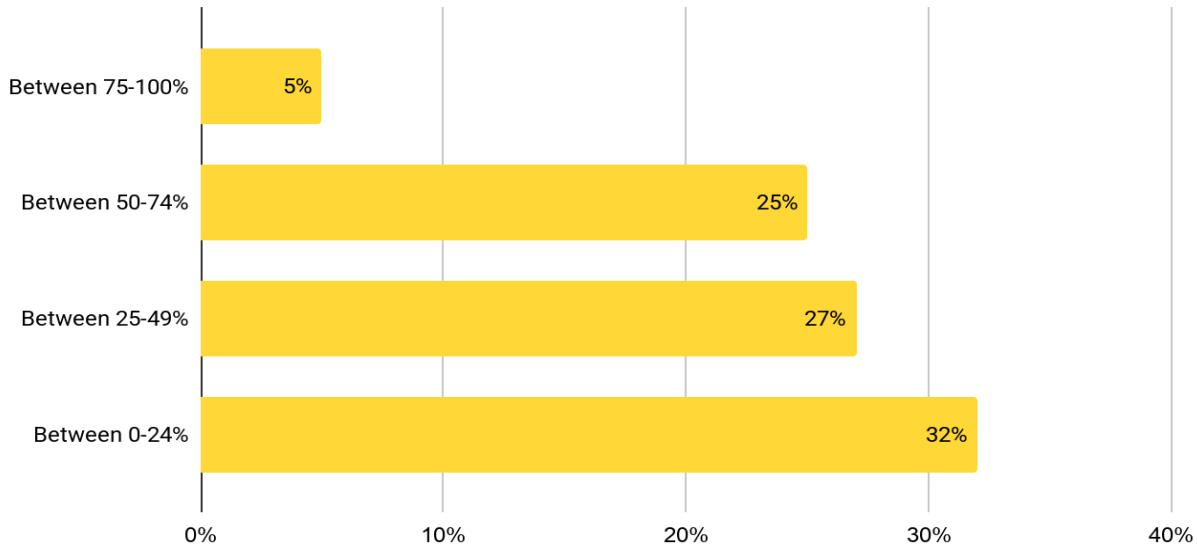
1. Work-Ready Adult Programs: These programs serve adult (age 18+) participants who are seeking employment upon completion of their program.

2. School-Based Programs: These programs serve high-school aged students (age 14-18), often through CTE programs at secondary schools.

3. Justice-Involved Programs: These programs specifically serve individuals currently or formerly impacted by the justice system.

Post-completion outcomes vary across programs, although programs generally target successful placement into registered apprenticeship and employment as a primary outcome. In the context of this report, "placement" of a participant denotes that the participant has transitioned into a construction Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) after completing their apprenticeship readiness training. Other graduates may also pursue positive pathways, such as a trade-specific pre-apprenticeship, employment that leads to apprenticeship, or even journey-level work.

Figure 1: ARP-reported 12-month RAP placement rates



Source: Internal analysis of TradesFutures-administered survey of Apprenticeship Readiness Programs, June – July 2025.

Adult programs typically aim for higher placement rates than school-based and justice-involved programs, which focus more on career awareness due to longer timelines between training and placement. This report will focus solely on programs serving adult participants because these programs will have the most direct experience placing ARP graduates into registered apprenticeships and employment.

Regardless of program type, ARPs are designed to introduce and prepare participants for careers in the construction trades. Considering this, there will always be a baseline percentage of participants who do not pursue a career in the trades, despite completing their ARP. This is an intentional design feature—by previewing the conditions of construction employment prior to entry

into an apprenticeship program, unions and employers can improve retention by ensuring new apprentices have a stronger understanding of what to expect in the industry.

Over the last several years, demand for ARPs in local communities has grown dramatically. Since 2007, the ARP network has grown from the first program in New Orleans, LA to over 200 programs nationwide. TradesFutures' review of historical data has shown that since 2016, the number of participants served per year has tripled, with over 7,700 participants served in 2025.

While there has been significant growth in the number of operating programs and number of participants served, placement numbers have varied widely across programs. While

some programs place 75 percent of cohort graduates into registered apprenticeships or other union pathways, others may place 10 percent.

40%

ARP survey respondents describe their current program outcomes as either "excellent" or "good".

Current data collection practices that isolate placements into RAPs as the primary positive outcome may not fully capture the full range of other positive outcomes an ARP graduate may experience. Many participants are placed into apprenticeship pathways (for example, wireman or trade-specific pre-apprentice training) or other types of union employment, including journey-level employment. RAP placement is the ideal outcome, but not the only positive outcome for program participants.

Taking this variety of outcomes into account, TradesFutures launched an initiative in July 2025 to investigate program data trends and better understand why placement appears to present unique challenges compared to enrollment and completion. This initiative further examined the challenges programs face in placement

and the promising practices that can address them.

These practices come with a strong caveat: many practices described in this report are not feasible if not adequately resourced. In the status quo, programs utilize a variety of funding sources to support their programming. This may include in-kind donations of space, equipment, and instructor time from union and apprenticeship partners; and philanthropic, government, and industry funding, often in the form of grants. In rare cases, programs receive a "per hour" contribution tied to a collective bargaining agreement, where contractors contribute a number of cents per hour worked on a covered construction project to the ARP, thus sustaining its ongoing operations.

Many programs operate in a heavily resource-constrained environment, and are not able to fully implement these practices without holistic, sustainable funding and support. This requires solutions driven by private, public, and philanthropic funders.

Specific recommendations for funders are highlighted on page 27 of this report.

Overview of Research Approach

To identify barriers to placement and the practices that address them, TradesFutures used several methods of information gathering, including:

- Analysis of historical data and trends, including trends in enrollment, completion, and placement outcomes from 2016 to 2024;
- Interviews with ARP directors, union training directors, and employers, conducted between June and December 2025;
- Survey of ARPs, fielded between June and July 2025; and

- Review of relevant academic literature.

Using the above methods, we sought to accomplish the following project objectives:

- Analyze the local union, employer, and ARP landscape;
- Identify placement challenges faced by ARPs across the TradesFutures network;
- Identify promising practices that result in successful placement of participants into RAPs; and
- Establish guidelines and promising practices for programs on placement of participants into RAPs and construction employment.

For a more detailed description of how this analysis was conducted, see **Appendix A: Detailed Research Approach**.

Findings

The findings below paint a detailed picture of where the apprenticeship readiness network is succeeding, and where targeted improvements could meaningfully increase placement outcomes.

I. BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

While barriers vary by program and location, five challenges emerged consistently across the network as obstacles to successful placement.

1. Misalignment between ARP Training and Apprenticeship Opportunity Windows

Interviewees and TradesFutures' ARP survey respondents reported that there were cases in which work-ready graduates were unable to successfully transition into RAPs within three months of completion. Extended time periods between graduation and successful placement can result in a loss of contact between the program and participant, leaving the program unable to accurately report the participant's outcome. Moreover, extended time between graduation and placement can contribute to participant frustration and fatigue, and a decision to disengage or seek other employment. Extended time gaps between graduation and placement are largely due to:

- **Trade-Specific Intake Cycles:** Each specific trade union has its own application processes and cycles. Some trades will accept new apprentices once per year, others multiple times per year, and others on a rolling basis. Trades that accept only at certain times during the year present the biggest challenge for

local ARPs. For example, if an ARP cohort completes in the spring, but the participant's trade of choice only accepts in the fall, there will be at least a 6-month gap between graduation and placement.

- **Extensive Application Process:** The apprenticeship application process can be a time-consuming process for applicants. Applicants need to prepare and submit pre-requisite documentation, complete necessary assessments and screenings, and participate in face-to-face interviews with training committees. Many ARPs also lack the staff bandwidth to provide dedicated application support to graduates.

30%

ARP survey respondents report that some graduates are not job-ready at the time of program completion

- **National Demand vs. Local Labor Market Reality:** Availability of apprenticeship slots varies significantly by trade and location. **Nearly half of respondents in TradesFutures' survey of ARPs (48%)**

noted limited availability of apprenticeship slots locally as a barrier in placing graduates. In interviews, several programs highlighted a difference in vocalized, national narratives regarding demand for construction workers and realities at the local level. While national demand may be strong, certain regions may have large waiting and out-of-work lists or generally less demand for new apprentices, resulting in fewer opportunities for ARP graduates.

- **Participant Selectivity:** A graduate who limits or is more selective in their placement preferences may compound the barriers above. While graduates should choose the trade or craft that best fits them, it's important to remind them to be realistic and open to other possibilities. It is also the responsibility of the program to be transparent regarding the application process and timeline for the participant's preferred trade.

2. Participant Readiness

Interviewees and ARP survey respondents have also found that participants were not considered "placeable" or "work-ready" even after completion of an ARP. Nearly a third of respondents named graduates not being job-ready at time of ARP completion as a barrier to placement. There are several common reasons for this:

- **Personal fit:** Participants may complete their ARP, only to discover that the construction industry is not a fit, either because their life circumstances may have

changed, or the reality of construction work did not match expectations. While this barrier exists, it is not inherently negative. In cases in which the participant determines the industry is not suitable for them, they can make an educated decision not to move forward. This decision will ultimately save time and resources for RAPs and participants alike, as it will eliminate candidates that likely would have withdrawn in year one or two of their apprenticeship.

- **Missing pre-requisites:** Despite an interest in the trades, participants also may be missing key requirements or pre-requisites for RAP entrance, including GED or diploma, driver's license, or transportation. Some programs mitigate these barriers through provision of supportive services, but other barriers, such as lack of a required GED or diploma, are difficult to mitigate in a short-term training program.
- **Math competency and apprenticeship exams:** Math competency presents a barrier for many participants at their entrance into an ARP and may persist even after completion. Math skills are required for each of the trades, with some, i.e., the mechanical trades, considered more "math-heavy" than others. Moreover, many trades require a passing score on their apprenticeship exam before a candidate can officially begin their RAP. If a candidate cannot achieve a passing score, they cannot be placed. **40 percent of respondents in TradesFutures' ARP**

survey identified that graduates not meeting all apprenticeship entry requirements, such as passing an exam, is a top barrier to placement. In interviews conducted for this research, some programs reported adding additional curriculum hours to construction math practice.

3. Limited Industry Engagement

Several interviewees expressed a desire to strengthen (or establish) relationships with industry associations and employers. This includes contractors, who represent direct employment opportunities; and project owners, who represent the broader industry the construction worker supports (i.e. energy, housing, artificial intelligence, etc.), and who also set standards for a variety of contractors on a specific project.

While our interviews found that most ARPs have strong relationships with union partners, many programs have not emphasized industry involvement at the same scale. Industry engagement at the program level should be done in a way that follows and respects existing union-employer relationships. That said, industry partners can provide valuable work-based learning opportunities to students, and commitments to hiring apprentices that have graduated from ARPs can speed up the process of entering an apprenticeship program.

Structural Factors: Hiring Hall Environments

In a union context, placement outcomes are shaped by the structure of the local hiring system. In hiring hall environments, unions control dispatch and referrals, limiting the ability of employers to directly hire ARP graduates. As a result, employer relationships may not translate into immediate placement opportunities, creating a structural constraint for programs seeking to place participants quickly.

In other scenarios, contractors may hire first and then refer candidates to the union, allowing for more direct entry into employment. This variation across local labor markets creates uneven placement conditions and affects the degree to which programs can influence employment outcomes.

4. Limited Staff and Case Management Capacity

Multiple interviewees stated that limited staff capacity has had an impact on their ability to successfully place participants. Many programs have staff that oversee both essential program operations and case management processes. Case management may include both supporting candidates to access supportive services like transportation or child care, and maintaining relationships with candidates while they await placement. This may result in an inability to dedicate the necessary time towards case management and placement coordination. In addition, program operations for new cohorts can lead to less time spent on case management of previous cohorts, as staff may shift their focus to recruitment and launch of new cohorts.

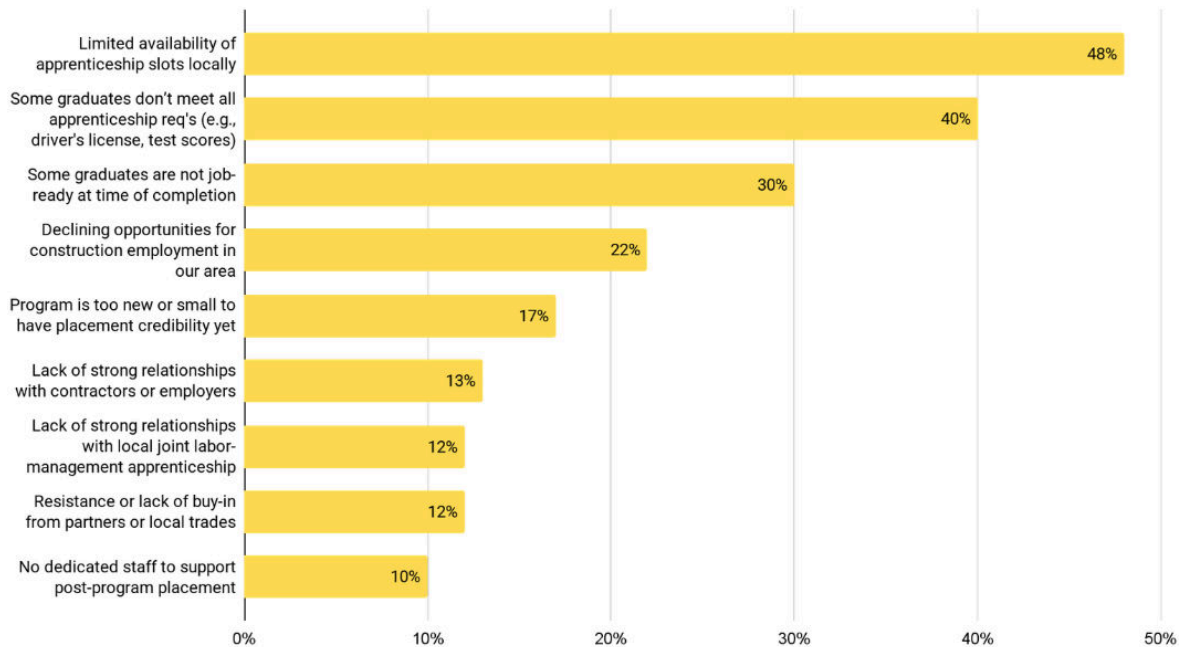
Lack of reliable funding streams can present a barrier to hiring a dedicated case management role, especially when government and/or philanthropic funding sources prioritize outcomes that are focused on the number of individuals served rather than the number of individuals placed; or, when funding prioritizes staffing for ARP programming rather than long-term apprenticeship placement support. And while union partners can offer in-kind support for equipment, space, and even instructor time, case management is typically a function that requires dedicated, external funding.

5. Lack of Awareness of TradesFutures, ARPs, and the MC3

Some interviewees reported a lack of awareness, by local unions or employers, of the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) and TradesFutures. Lack of MC3 awareness means that some unions may not be familiar enough with MC3 to work with new ARP programs or prioritize ARP graduates.

Some programs also report that local trades are aware of the MC3 certification, and are bought into the mission, but feel constrained by apprenticeship selection standards which reflect a mix of national and local requirements. As such, efforts to grow awareness of the MC3 nationally and find opportunities to include MC3 certification across affiliated trades would benefit placement opportunities for ARP graduates.

Figure 2: What are the biggest challenges your program currently faces in placing graduates into Registered Apprenticeship?



Source: Internal analysis of TradesFutures-administered survey of Apprenticeship Readiness Programs, June – July 2025.

II. PROMISING PRACTICES & INTERVENTIONS

Despite barriers faced by ARPs, programs have successfully developed practices and interventions to place meaningful numbers of students into apprenticeships.

PRACTICE 1:

Relationship Building and Union Engagement

Nearly every interviewee emphasized that strong, sustained relationships between ARPs and unions are essential to running a successful program from start to finish. **Among TradesFutures' ARP survey respondents, ongoing engagement from union partners and JATCs during the program was named the top practice for successful placement of graduates, with nearly 6 in 10 (57%) citing it.** These relationships take time to build and depend on consistent communication. Partnership development should begin during program implementation, not after. As the program model is designed, ARPs should involve union partners, employers, and other stakeholders in planning and decision-making. Their input can strengthen the program and improve participant readiness.

Key practices include:

- **Build multi-level union relationships.** Strong programs engage not only building trades councils but also individual unions and their JATCs to expand placement pathways. This includes developing direct relationships with training directors to understand trade-specific expectations, upcoming demand, waitlist conditions, and application processes. It also can include developing an advisory council that represents local unions, JATCs, contractors, and industry representatives, or varied union membership on an ARP's board and/or board leadership.

In Practice: Building Relationships Early

Building Futures of Southwest Ohio met individually with each local JATC during program implementation to understand expectations, demand, and application processes, building early buy-in across trades.

- **Engage partners early and continuously.** Effective programs involve union and employer partners from the outset and maintain consistent communication over time. They seek regular feedback on program design, participant readiness, and industry expectations, and use that input to refine their approach. Trust is built over time—particularly for newer

programs—and strengthened through ongoing engagement and responsiveness.

In Practice: Adapting Based on Partner Input

San Diego Building Trades Council expanded MC3 delivery to include OSHA 30, additional construction math, and AutoCAD training based on feedback from employer partners.

- **Establish formal pathways to placement.**

Programs work with union partners to create structured entry points into apprenticeship, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), direct entry agreements, and articulation agreements. These mechanisms can accelerate placement timelines, reduce uncertainty, and help ensure candidates are not lost between program completion and apprenticeship intake cycles.

In Practice: Creating Direct Pathways

Building Futures of Southwest Ohio established an agreement with the local Laborers JATC allowing ARP graduates to enter as second-year apprentices. **Houston Gulf Coast ARP** (Houston, TX), **CityBuild** (San Francisco, CA), **Apprenticeship Readiness Collective** (New York City, NY), **TRACS** (Rochester, NY) and others developed direct entry agreements with multiple trades, enabling qualified graduates to bypass standard intake cycles

and accelerate placement.

- **Build credibility through consistent performance and presence.** Trust and reputation are critical to long-term success. Strong programs build credibility by consistently referring well-prepared candidates, signaling reliability and increasing partner confidence over time. They also maintain an active presence in the local construction ecosystem—participating in advisory councils, industry meetings, and community partnerships—to strengthen relationships and extend program reach.

In Practice: Reducing Entry Barriers

LIUNA's (Laborers' International Union of North America) apprenticeship program design allows expanded access to apprenticeship opportunities by pairing local flexibility and candidate support to help individuals meet program requirements (e.g., GED or driver's license).

Insights from the Literature

The literature reinforces that relationships grounded in trust, shared goals, and ongoing communication are a core component of successful sectoral training programs.

Research on sectoral programs such as **Hire 360**, **City Build**, **Construction Skills**, **Year Up**, **WorkAdvance** and **Project Quest** underscores several themes:

- **Relationships must be substantive, not transactional.** The strongest programs engage in honest, sometimes difficult conversations with unions, employers, and community partners. These conversations address community concerns, hiring barriers, and equity issues directly rather than avoiding them (Cunningham & Shetler, 2023).
- **Consistent, intentional communication is essential.** At **City Build**—an organization that operates a successful Apprenticeship Readiness Program in San Francisco, CA—successful partnerships are not built through quarterly check-ins or occasional updates. Instead, they require regular, structured communication that keeps partners aligned on program progress, participant needs, and industry expectations (Harvey et al., 2024).
- **Relationships deepen over time and directly influence placement outcomes.** Among sectoral training programs implementing the **WorkAdvance** model, those with more mature relationships, particularly ones that have collaborated with employers for many years, achieve stronger placement rates and more stable employment outcomes. Newer programs, by contrast, often face a lag before trust is established, and partners begin to rely on them as a consistent talent pipeline (Kanengiser & Schaberg, 2022).

PRACTICE 2:

Industry Engagement

Industry and employer involvement was repeatedly identified by interviewees as a core driver of ARP success. Employers, including construction contractors, ultimately provide the work opportunities and apprenticeship slots that participants rely on, making these relationships central to ARP success. Strong programs maintain regular communication with employers, directly and through union partners, in a manner that is consistent with the union's own relationship with signatory contractors and other industry partners.

Interviewees highlighted several practices that strengthen employer engagement:

- **Use mock interviews, graduation attendance, and jobsite visits** to build familiarity between employers and participants.
- **Work with union partners to connect with industry partners**, leveraging the existing signatory contractor relationships developed by union partners.
- **Offer jobsite visits** to expose participants to real working conditions (e.g., early hours, tight spaces, heat, cold, noise, and pace), which helps set expectations, build alignment between the candidate and the industry, and improve retention.

In Practice: Bringing the Jobsite into the Program

WRTP / BIG STEP emphasizes the importance of a warm introduction between their participant and employer partners through jobsite visits, graduation attendance, and round-robin style mock interviews.

- **Consult employers when developing supplemental curriculum** to ensure participants gain the certifications and skills needed for upcoming projects.

Adapting Engagement Strategies to Hiring Hall Environments

Industry engagement strategies should be tailored to the local hiring structure. In hiring hall environments, where unions control dispatch and referrals, programs should prioritize strong relationships with union partners while using employer engagement to build awareness, provide work-based learning opportunities, and reinforce participant readiness. Employer commitments—such as pledges to hire a set number of ARP graduates—can help accelerate placement within the hiring hall system.

In scenarios where contractors hire directly, programs can more actively cultivate employer relationships that lead to concrete hiring commitments and faster placement outcomes. Aligning engagement strategies to the local hiring context allows ARPs to maximize the impact of both union and employer partnerships.

- **Be transparent when referring candidates**, sharing both strengths and areas for growth. Interviewees emphasized that honesty builds trust, and consistent quality referrals deepen employer engagement over time.
- **Maintain an updated list of recent graduates** so employers can quickly be referred candidates who meet their hiring needs, including local hire requirements.

In Practice: Maintaining Job-Ready Candidate Lists

The San Diego Building Trades ARP has become a resource for employer partners to reach local hire targets by keeping records on zip codes of their out-of-work MC3 graduates.

Insights from the Literature

The literature on sectoral training programs across industries, from healthcare to IT to construction, reinforces that employer engagement is a necessary program component. However, it is critical to note that employer engagement in the context of union construction—when the union typically manages employer relationships—differs from the sectors below. Several themes emerge:

- **Longstanding employer partnerships are a hallmark of the most successful programs.** **Project QUEST**, one of the most rigorously studied sectoral programs, attributes much of its success to working “in lockstep” with employer partners from its inception (Roder & Elliot, 2024).
- **Program effectiveness varies by the maturity of employer relationships.** In the **Project QUEST** randomized control trial, the original healthcare pathway, supported by deep, long-term employer and education partnerships, produced strong outcomes, while a newly added pathway struggled due to weaker employer ties (Roder & Elliot, 2024).
- **Employer engagement requires intentional, ongoing communication.** Studies of programs like **Year Up**, **WorkAdvance**, and **Project QUEST** show that successful models maintain regular dialogue with employers to align curriculum, hiring expectations, and participant supports.
- **Time is a critical factor.** Research consistently finds that sectoral programs become more effective as relationships deepen and employers come to trust the program’s candidate pipeline.

PRACTICE 3:

Managed Enrollment

Effective programs manage both the size and composition of their cohorts, calibrating enrollment to projected apprenticeship opportunities while using structured screening to ensure candidates are ready to succeed. The placement process begins long before graduation, starting with how participants are recruited, informed, and selected. ARPs must ensure that prospective participants clearly understand program expectations, the timeline for apprenticeship placement, and the steps required to apply successfully. This transparency is also essential for maintaining strong community relationships.

Interviewees highlighted several practices that strengthen recruitment and screening:

- **Calibrate cohort size** to projected apprenticeship opportunities, accounting for expected attrition, so programs are consistently delivering the right number of qualified candidates to union and employer partners, and ensuring that participants have accurate expectations of securing entry to an apprenticeship program upon ARP completion.
- **Assess genuine interest and readiness**, ensuring participants demonstrate motivation, willingness to learn, and a work ethic aligned with jobsite realities. Face-to-face interviews are essential for determining these qualities in program applicants, including academic readiness where required by specific trades, and behavioral and motivational factors such as work ethic, persistence, and ability and interest in meeting jobsite expectations.
- **Assess baseline eligibility and identify barriers early.** During screening, programs should differentiate between minimum requirements and addressable barriers. Some requirements represent unmitigable disqualifiers, and are factors that cannot be addressed during the program and ultimately prevent placement. These include lack of genuine interest in the construction trades, or absence of a GED or diploma in markets where all local apprenticeship programs require one. Applicants who do not meet these thresholds should be referred to resources that can help them qualify and return in a future cohort, or to other workforce development programs that are

61%

ARP survey respondents report running at least three cohorts per year

- **Establish a calendar** of Registered Apprenticeship program intakes and use this calendar to schedule cohort classes in a way that maximizes the chances that graduates can access an apprenticeship opportunity within a short time after graduation.

a better fit. Other factors, such as lack of a driver's license, unreliable transportation, or childcare needs, represent mitigable barriers that should be identified early and addressed through supportive services, either within the program or through CBO partners, rather than used as grounds for exclusion. Supportive services are addressed in the following section under "program enhancements."

- **Set expectations early** by clearly outlining attendance, conduct, and performance standards during recruitment and orientation. This includes hosting information sessions and a

structured Day 1 orientation to reinforce expectations and ensure participants understand program and industry expectations. Moreover, interviewees also underscored the importance of transparency on placement timelines and work waitlists so that participants are prepared for potential delays in placement after program completion.

- **Mirror apprenticeship expectations** through strict attendance and tardiness policies (often 1–3 allowable absences) and, in many cases, drug testing before, during, or after the program.

These practices help ensure that participants enter the program with realistic expectations and the foundational readiness needed to succeed in RAPs.

Insights from the Literature

The literature reinforces that rigorous recruitment and intentional enrollment are foundational to program effectiveness. Across the workforce development field, successful programs screen for baseline eligibility and readiness factors rather than logistical barriers like transportation or child care, which are better addressed through supportive services. Key findings include:

- **Rigorous recruitment yields more motivated participants.** In a sectoral training program focused on finance and technology, programs needed to recruit roughly five individuals to enroll one participant, suggesting that strong screening helps identify highly motivated candidates (Kanengiser & Schaberg, 2022).
- **Selective admissions can strengthen employer confidence.** **Year Up** was found, through a randomized controlled trial, to accept roughly one out of every six applicants. This selectivity was central to maintaining employer trust and ensuring that graduates met workplace expectations (Fein & Dastrup, 2022).
- **Consistency across sites matters.** The **Year Up** study also found that recruitment and screening practices were implemented with consistency across locations, contributing to the program's strong and consistent earnings impacts (Fein & Dastrup, 2022).

PRACTICE 4:

Participant Readiness & Support

While programs must manage enrollment and ensure participants meet minimum requirements, many are able to mitigate specific logistical barriers for participants that are otherwise motivated and work-ready.

A. Curriculum Supplements

Nearly half of TradesFutures' ARP survey respondents (45%) cited supplementing the MC3 curriculum with certifications and instructional hours to support more placements. These additions help build confidence, strengthen employability, and make graduates more competitive when applying to RAPs. Programs offer a range of supplemental certifications, including:

- Flagger
- Scaffolding
- Welding
- Aerial Lift
- Lead, Asbestos, and Silica Awareness
- Other site-specific or safety related credentials

Interviewees emphasized that ARPs should work closely with union and employer partners to determine which certifications are most valuable in their local context. Several programs also noted the benefit of adding **extra construction math instruction** to better prepare participants for apprenticeship entrance exams.

These supplemental elements were described as most effective when they were directly aligned with employer and union expectations, responsive to upcoming project needs, designed to strengthen participants' readiness for both application and on the job performance.

Insights from the Literature

The literature does not identify specific supplemental certifications that universally improve placement outcomes. Instead, research emphasizes that **the most effective supplements are those developed in partnership with employers and training providers**, ensuring alignment with real workplace needs. Key findings include:

- **Employer-driven curriculum design is essential.** ARPs including **HIRE360** are most successful when employers help determine which skills and credentials matter most for entry level success (Cunningham & Shetler, 2023).

B. Supportive Services

Traditional supportive and wrap-around services that provide assistance, often customized to the individual's needs, appear to have the greatest impact on program completion rates. **Nearly half of TradesFutures' ARP survey respondents (43%) cited job placement support or case management as a top practice for successful placement.**

These support services can vary and are often offered on a continuum across three stages of pre-apprenticeship training: during training, post-completion while awaiting placement, and post-placement for up to 12 months. Without supportive services in place, participants who have lingering barriers post-completion may choose not to pursue a RAP. When offered post-placement, supportive services can also have the secondary effect of increasing RAP retention rates.

Not all programs will have resources to offer the full continuum of services described below, but programs should identify which barriers their target population faces and prioritize accordingly, leveraging CBO partnerships where direct provision is not feasible.

- **Stipends** offered during training can make up for a portion of lost wages a participant may incur by deciding to pursue training over employment. Stipends offered while the participant is awaiting placement can both be a critical lifeline to an unemployed or low-income jobseeker, and keep the participant connected to the program for the time until a placement opportunity materializes.
- **Emergency funds** for trainees or recent graduates can cover surprise expenses that may otherwise derail program completion or apprenticeship retention. Emergency funds can be used to cover surprise car repairs, health-related expenses, and more.
- **Tools and equipment** represent one of the largest initial expenses for a new apprentice. Programs can provide basic tools and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to graduates upon their placement. Many women have a particularly challenging time finding PPE that fits, so programs should ensure that they are able to provide appropriate equipment for all participants.
- **Reliable transportation** can present a significant barrier to employment in the construction industry. Depending on project length and job assignments, workers may be required to travel long distances to different jobsites, many of which are not accessible by public transportation. Programs can help address this barrier by offering financial assistance for transportation-related needs, such as transit subsidies, driver's license fees, or driver's education courses. In some cases, programs also support access to vehicle ownership.

In Practice: Addressing Transportation Barriers

Building Futures (Cincinnati, OH) provides support for driver's license attainment, including covering associated fees and driver's education costs.

Pathways to Apprenticeship (Syracuse, NY) partners with Vehicles to Work to help participants gain or maintain access to a personal vehicle, expanding their ability to access jobsites.

- **Child care** is a significant barrier for workers in any industry, and is particularly challenging in construction, where nontraditional work hours can make consistent care difficult. Programs can help address this barrier by providing financial assistance—such as stipends or vouchers—or by making payments directly to child care providers on behalf of participants and graduates.

In Practice: Supporting Access to Child Care

Through the TradesFutures Child Care Pilot, **EmpowHER** (Milwaukee, WI) and **NEW – Nontraditional Employment for Women** (New York City, NY) provided monthly payments directly to child care providers on behalf of eligible apprentices and journey workers.

- **Co-locating job training programs with social service providers** can increase the likelihood that participants access the supports they need. By integrating training and services within a single setting, programs can streamline referrals, reduce barriers to access, and better connect participants to the broader workforce system.

In Practice: Integrating Training and Support Services

Missouri Workforce Initiative operates programs within a local American Job Center, enabling streamlined referrals, co-enrollment in federal programs, and stronger integration with the public workforce system.

Through direct operation by the Urban League in partnership with the Cincinnati Building and Construction Trades Council, participants of **Building Futures of Southwest Ohio ARP** (Cincinnati, OH) access a range of support services—including child care, housing, transportation assistance, and case management—alongside their MC3 training.

Insights from the Literature

Throughout the literature, supportive services were indicated as an essential program component for participants' success. While supportive services are necessary, there was no one common service that proved more successful than others. Rather, sustainable, flexible funding is necessary so programs can meet the varying needs of the participants served by sectoral training programs (Cunningham & Shetler, 2023).

- **Some programs provide stipends** so that participants can fully participate in a training that is offered during traditional working hours (Cunningham & Shetler, 2023).
- **Career coaching** was offered through many of the reviewed sectoral training programs (Roder & Elliot, 2023, 2024). Participants worked with a career coach to receive their first placement post-program completion, but they also received guidance on how to independently progress in their careers, providing further opportunity years beyond program completion.
- **Co-locating with community partners** provided sectoral training programs the opportunity to save on costs, but also ensured that program participants (especially those most at risk) will access the services they need in a location they feel safe (Department of Transportation, 2024).
- **Policymakers can fund supportive services.** For instance, stipends make it easier for participants to enroll in and complete multi-week training programs, such as ARPs that often take place during "traditional" working hours (Bruno & Manzo, 2025).

The vast majority of programs reviewed in the literature provided support to participants for up to **a year post-graduation**, and some for even longer (Roder & Elliot, 2023). The literature confirms that supportive services, especially for participants who are looking to transition into higher paying career pathways, are essential for success, not only for a placement into the targeted industry, but to thrive long term. ARP graduates are often not accepted into the career path of their choice immediately upon completion, and offering supportive services beyond program completion can ensure that otherwise fully prepared and ready RAP candidates do not leave the recruitment pipeline to handle unforeseen emergencies.

PRACTICE 5:

Demand-Side Strategy: Collective Bargaining, Local Policy, and State Policy

Policies and agreements that increase demand for ARP graduates on worksites are critical to strengthening ARP outcomes. Several interviewees described how legislation, hiring incentives, and Project Labor Agreement (PLA) requirements have directly increased opportunities for ARP graduates. When policies create clear pathways or incentives, ARPs can play a central role in helping employers meet local hire, apprenticeship utilization, and disadvantaged worker goals.

ARPs have leveraged wide-ranging policy environments:

- **ARPs can help contractors meet local and targeted hire goals** by matching employers with recent graduates who live in required zip codes. Programs that actively leverage these policies are also well-positioned to demonstrate their value to policymakers.

In Practice: Supporting Local Hire Compliance

WRTP / BIG STEP (Milwaukee, WI) screens residents to determine eligibility for local hire requirements and connects qualified ARP graduates to projects where contractors must meet those goals.

- **ARPs can serve as a resource for contractors** navigating Project Labor Agreement (PLA) requirements tied to apprentice utilization, especially when strong union and employer-ARP relationships already exist.

In Practice: Supporting Apprentice Utilization Requirements

Building Futures (Providence, RI) monitors compliance with apprentice utilization targets and supports contractors that are not meeting requirements by directing eligible ARP graduates to their jobsites.

- **ARPs can advocate for policy changes that explicitly support program outcomes.** While local hire and apprentice utilization requirements can benefit participants, policies that directly reference ARPs or pre-apprenticeship programs create more consistent and accessible placement pathways.
- **Hiring from an eligible ARP can lower the cost of a public bid in Illinois.** Under the Illinois Works Bid Credit program, contractors that hire from an eligible pre-apprenticeship program on a private or public work receive a "bid credit", which lowers the cost of their bid on a future public project.

In Practice: Advancing Policy That Supports ARP Outcomes

Philadelphia, PA: Under the city's Geographic and Economic Hiring Preferences policy, certain construction projects have targets to meet local hire, apprentice utilization, and pre-apprenticeship hiring targets, incentivizing contractors to partner with ARPs and other pre-apprenticeship programs.

California (Los Angeles and Orange County): ARP graduates are recognized as "disadvantaged workers" under state policy, allowing them to count toward required percentages of apprentice hours worked

by disadvantaged workers on jobsites.

- **ARPs can use workforce data to demonstrate impact**, though many communities currently lack the tracking systems needed to respond to state or federal inquiries about past investments. Programs should fine-tune their intake, data-management, and reporting processes to ensure performance metrics are adequately prepared for inquiries and funder proposals.

Insights from the Literature

Recent research reinforces the importance of policy alignment and industry engagement in expanding apprenticeship pathways. Policy creates openings, but relationships, data systems, and industry engagement determine whether ARP graduates can benefit from them.

- **Local hire policies can create consistent demand for ARP graduates.** Apprenticeship readiness is a key strategy for diversifying access to union careers in the clean energy economy; local hire requirements help generate a steady pipeline of opportunities for residents (Cunningham and Shetler, 2023).
- **Policy alone is not enough; relationships must evolve alongside it.** Programs benefit most when employer partners, unions, and community organizations actively support the recruitment pipeline created by local hire policies. In some regions, this collaboration opened opportunities beyond the policy itself (Cunningham and Shetler, 2023).
- **High-road labor standards can extend opportunities beyond site construction.** While new construction work is often covered by standards such as PLAs or CWAs, many energy generation and maintenance jobs are not. When municipalities leverage their role as owners, they can create longer-term, high-road career pathways for ARP graduates by ensuring maintenance work is also included (Appel & Hammerling, 2023).
- **Data infrastructure matters.** Studies across sectoral programs emphasize that communities need reliable workforce data to plan effectively, evaluate outcomes, and align future investments with equity and labor goals.

Recommendations for Funders

While this report focuses on program-level practices, their successful implementation depends on enabling conditions, particularly adequate and sustained funding. Private, philanthropic, and public workforce development funders play a critical role in building the capacity of Apprenticeship Readiness Programs to develop and place a skilled, diverse, and local workforce.

Specifically, funders should invest in:

- **Program capacity to implement promising practices**, including sustained union and industry engagement, effective enrollment management, and participant readiness through curriculum enhancements and supportive services.
- **Dedicated capacity to connect programs to demand-side opportunities**, including government policies and labor agreements such as local hire, targeted hire, and apprentice utilization provisions.
- **Direct training costs for students**, allowing programs to re-allocate in-kind or separately resourced staff time to promising practices and placement activities.
- **Regional and national network-building efforts** that support knowledge sharing, replication, and the scaling of promising practices. programs to re-allocate in-kind or separately resourced staff time to promising practices and placement activities.

Conclusion & Outlook

TradesFutures Apprenticeship Readiness Programs are dedicated to serving their participants and their union and employer partners, all in the interest of building stronger communities across the country.

Like any workforce development program, ARPs face challenges in reaching those goals. However, research in this report shows that effective interventions to overcome these barriers include relationship building with core union partners, industry engagement, managed enrollment, participant readiness and support in the form of curriculum supplements and supportive services, and demand-side strategy that incentivizes the hire of ARP graduates. Our research shows that effective interventions to overcome these barriers include relationship building with core union partners, industry engagement, managed enrollment, participant readiness and support in the form of curriculum supplements and supportive services, and demand-side strategy that incentivizes the hire of ARP graduates.

The cyclical nature of these promising practices is notable. Managed recruitment, enrollment, and provision of supportive services produces highly prepared RAP candidates who in turn hold the door open for future candidates. Successful apprentices can share their stories in the community and in turn inspire more candidates to enroll in an ARP.

Programmatically, successful graduates can help tell the story of an ARP and secure funding for its future cohorts. Projects completed by local apprentices can convince policymakers of the value in prioritizing collective bargaining and policies that connect communities to good quality jobs. All of this is supported through genuine relationships built on organizational missions aligned around strengthening communities and advancing economic opportunity.

TABLE 1: PROMISING PRACTICE MATRIX

Promising Practice	Practice In Action	Example(s)	Barrier/ Challenge Addressed
<p>Union Engagement</p>	<p>Consult union partners on expected demand, upcoming projects, and out-of-work lists, and application cycles</p> <p>Utilize union partner feedback to be transparent with participants about placement timelines; encourage participants to pursue locally in-demand trades</p> <p>Incorporate managed enrollment when advised by union partners to ensure cohort size and schedule coincides with apprentice demand</p> <p>Leverage union partners to develop and strengthen relationships with other industry stakeholders and employers.</p>	<p>Building Futures of Southwest Ohio in Cincinnati, OH, incorporates feedback from all unions—on instruction, curriculum, demand, and placement—in the local area during program implementation.</p> <p>Many ARPs, including Training Rochester Adults in Construction (TRACS), incorporate union hall and training center visits into program training.</p> <p>ARPs can work with local unions and JATCs to establish facilitated entry agreements like that developed by the San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council, which allows MC3 completers to enter as second-year apprentices with the local Sheet Metal Workers Union.</p> <p>WRTP/BIG STEP has a unique relationship with their local unions in which their apprenticeship readiness program is partly funded through a cents per hour contribution on collective bargaining agreements.</p>	<p>Misalignment between ARP training and apprenticeship opportunity windows</p> <p>Lack of Awareness of TradesFutures, ARPs, and the MC3</p>
<p>Industry Engagement</p>	<p>Engage signatory contractors in program implementation,</p>	<p>Missouri Works Initiative attends project planning or other industry stakeholder</p>	<p>Limited Industry Engagement</p>

	<p>training, and future program improvements.</p> <p>Ensure industry stakeholder and employer involvement in ARP</p> <p>Invite industry stakeholders and employers to take part in ARP training through in-class presentations mock interviews, and graduation attendance</p> <p>Solicit input and feedback from industry and employer partners on participant readiness, curriculum, and program model.</p> <p>Consult Industry and Employer partners on valuable supplemental certifications for participants.</p>	<p>meetings to pitch the role of the ARP to employers and industry stakeholders.</p> <p>San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council, at the recommendation of industry partners, added an Introduction to AutoCAD certification to their program's instruction.</p> <p>WRTP/BIG STEP emphasizes the importance of a warm introduction between ARP participants and employer partners – incorporating jobsite visits and mock interviews into ARP training.</p>	<p>Participant Readiness</p>
<p>Managed Enrollment</p>	<p>Leverage relationships with industry, employer, and union partners to better understand needs and local demand</p> <p>Set clear expectations during recruitment and orientation</p> <p>Mirror cohort/class sizes to match anticipated demand for apprenticeship candidates</p> <p>Improve staff bandwidth to allocate more time and resources to case management, placement coordination, and data management</p> <p>Mirror your ARP's policies to apprenticeship expectations (e.g. attendance policy, drug testing)</p>	<p>WRTP/BIG STEP incorporates an employer-matching model for placement of participants, consulting with General Contractors (GCs) directly on the number of expected apprenticeship slots.</p> <p>Building Pathways South enforces strict punctuality and attendance policies for all classes, case management, and placement appointments.</p> <p>Before launching a new cohort, staff from the East Tennessee Apprenticeship Readiness Program in Oak Ridge, TN, keep in close contact with unions and track out of work lists to ensure that union partners have needs in the next thirty days; and ask the same</p>	<p>Participant Readiness</p> <p>Limited Staff and Case Management Capacity</p>

	<p>Incorporate interviews into your ARP's application process.</p> <p>Assess completion and placement barriers of participants and ensure your ARP is adequately equipped with supportive services that can address these barriers.</p> <p>Incorporate partners into participant selection but be wary of outsourcing recruitment</p> <p>Schedule fewer cohorts to allocate more staff time to placement of past graduates, rather than training of new participants</p>	<p>set of questions to up to 40 contractor partners.</p>	
<p>Participant Readiness and Support</p>	<p>Ensure participants are able to meet minimum requirements for area apprenticeship programs that cannot be mitigated during the course of an ARP, e.g. minimum academic requirements</p> <p>Improve participant math competency and literacy in preparation for apprenticeship exams</p> <p>Supplement training with additional instructional hours and resources</p> <p>Leverage resources and existing or newly developed partnerships with community partners (e.g. community-based organizations) who can provide supportive services, such as</p>	<p>The unique model of Building Futures of Southwest Ohio—operated in close partnership between the local Building Trades and Urban League (UL)—allows the local UL to support the program's recruitment, screening, and supportive service needs. TRACS also works closely with the UL to provide supportive services to participants.</p> <p>San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council increased the number of their program's instructional hours from the 120 minimum to 256.</p> <p>Missouri Works Initiative utilizes Build Your Skills, which is a supplemental curriculum which offers trade-specific math resources, during program instruction to better</p>	<p>Participant Readiness</p> <p>Limited Staff and Case Management Capacity</p>

	<p>transportation, child care, or stipends</p>	<p>prepare participants for apprenticeship entrance exams.</p> <p>Many programs offer stipends to participants, such as WINC (Women in Non-traditional Careers) in Philadelphia, PA.</p>	
<p>Demand-Side Strategy: Collective Bargaining, Local Policy, and State Policy</p>	<p>Assist contractors with meeting local and targeted hiring goals, and match employers with recent ARP graduates in targeted zip codes</p> <p>Serve as a resource to contractors in navigating PLA requirements (e.g. apprenticeship utilization)</p> <p>Advocate for policy changes that explicitly support ARP graduates, i.e. targeted hire from pre-apprenticeship or workforce development programs</p> <p>Fine-tune intake, data-management and reporting processes so that workforce data can be used to demonstrate program impact</p>	<p>In Los Angeles, California, local procurement policies set hiring targets, and ARP participants qualify as “disadvantaged workers” for employers, allowing local ARPs in Los Angeles and Orange County to serve as a resource to assist contractors in meeting work demographic targets on projects.</p> <p>Many ARPs, including those operated by the San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council, maintain an accurate list of recent participants and their zip codes of residence allowing their ARPs to assist contractors with meeting local hire requirements.</p> <p>Illinois operates a “bid credit” program, where employers hiring from pre-apprenticeship programs, including ARPs, receive a credit towards a future public bid that lowers the cost of their bid.</p> <p>The TRACS program is a New York State Department of Labor certified direct-entry program with 12 Registered Apprenticeship sponsors.</p>	<p>Misalignment between ARP Training and Apprenticeship Opportunity Windows</p> <p>Limited Industry Engagement</p>

Appendix A: Detailed Research Approach

I. Historical Data Analysis and Program Survey

TradesFutures analyzed program-level data to develop a baseline understanding of placement averages and trends. This required analysis of data sets which totaled over 20,000 participants who have been enrolled in ARP programs since 2016.

TradesFutures also conducted a survey of current programs in June–July 2025. The survey provided insights and feedback on a wide range of topics concerning program quality, including participant placement outcomes. The survey was distributed via email to 200+ local ARPs, generating 60 extremely valuable responses over three weeks as a first-of-its-kind effort in gathering information directly from a large number of local ARPs.

II. Interviews

To inform this report, it was essential to receive information directly from all parties who are involved in the local implementation of ARPs—union partners, construction employers, project owners, and ARP staff. TradesFutures interviewed a wide variety of programs representative of its total program network, including urban, metro, suburban, and rural population densities; above average, average, and below average placement outcomes; and eight different states.

Union partners provide the foundation for ARPs. Each ARP is required to establish a partnership with their local or state building and construction trades council to administer the MC3. The building trades council serves as the connection between ARPs, employers, and local unions, especially in the early stages of program development.

Employers, including construction contractors, also play an essential role in the success of ARPs. Contractors provide employment opportunities, sponsor apprentices, and essentially determine the number of apprenticeship slots available for ARP graduates. Just as contractors are essential to Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees (JATCs), their involvement in ARPs is equally crucial.

Interview Topics

Standard interview questions were prepared and utilized in each ARP director interview. However, interviewees were encouraged to elaborate, and additional questions were asked depending on each individual discussion. It was determined that a more free-flow open dialogue would result in the maximum amount of information gathered from interviewees. Interviews were recorded and

transcribed. At minimum, the following topics were discussed in program interviews:

- 1) Building and Construction Trades Council and Local Union Partnerships
- 2) Employer and Contractor Partnerships and Engagement
- 3) Local and State Legislation
- 4) Program Model/Structure
 - a. Cohort Sizes
 - b. Class Schedule
 - c. Program Partners
- 5) Case Management System and Placement Process
- 6) Placement Challenges
- 7) Placement Successes

Standard interview questions and topics specific to Local Union Training Directors were also prepared and utilized for these interviews. In a similar structure as program interviews, questions were used to guide discussion, but free-flow open dialogue was encouraged to gather the maximum amount of information from the interviewee. At minimum, the following topics were discussed in Local Union interviews:

- 1) Engagement and Partnership Advancement with local ARP
 - a. What prompted your involvement?
 - b. How can local ARPs strengthen their relationships with Local Unions?
- 2) Key Qualities in RA Candidates
 - a. What are you looking for in an RA candidate?
 - b. What is most valuable for an RA candidate seeking placement?
- 3) Feedback from Employers and Contractors
 - a. What are employers and contractors looking for in RA candidates?
- 4) Local and State Policy Supporting Placement
 - a. Are there any local or state policies (local hire, apprenticeship utilization) that have provided pathways for your apprentices?
- 5) Suggestions and Promising Practices
 - a. What best practices would you suggest to other training directors who are engaged in developing an ARP and/or are looking to strengthen their relationship with their local ARP?
- 6) Issues and Barriers faced by RAs
 - a. What retention issues most often affect apprentices in your training program?
 - b. Do you think any of those issues can be addressed in ARP/Pre-RA training?



III. Literature Review

TradesFutures conducted a literature review on best practices in job placement from workforce development programs across industries, focusing on lessons applicable to ARPs placing graduates into unionized construction careers. Because peer-reviewed literature on construction ARPs is limited, the review drew on broader workforce development research, recognizing that effective practices from other sectors, such as healthcare, offer transferable insights for ARPs and their partners.

While research confirms that sectoral training programs are effective at placing participants and supplying employers with vetted candidates, less attention has been paid to the specific program components that support long-term career placement, which is the focus of this review. Using JSTOR and ERIC databases (search terms: "job placement," "workforce development," and "best practices"), supplemented by referrals from program partners, TradesFutures reviewed fourteen English-language studies and reports on job placement in the United States published within the last ten years.

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