

## Report Abstract

“Registered Apprenticeships: Labor Could Do More to Expand to Other Occupations,” GAO-01-940, September 7, 2001. See instructions below to gain access to the complete report.

Apprenticeship, which combines supervised on-the-job training with formal instruction, benefits both employers and employees by providing the skills and knowledge necessary for a specific job and a credential recognized throughout an industry. The use of apprenticeship is standard practice in some industries, but expansion beyond traditional occupations has been limited. The Department of Labor has not systematically identified new occupations suitable for apprenticeship programs, nor has it successfully alleviated the concerns of some employers about apprenticeship requirements, which has slowed the expansion of apprenticeship to new occupations. Labor has approved 19 new occupations for apprenticeships in the last five years, and many of these have been in less traditional occupations, such as internetworking technicians. Employers are often wary of apprenticeship programs. For example, some employers are reluctant to commit to incremental increases in wages as required by apprenticeship regulations. GAO identified several apprenticeship programs in which apprenticeship training helped to develop workers with sought-after skills. The key to the establishment of the several programs GAO reviewed was the close interaction between employers and federal or state apprenticeship officials to ensure that employers understood the value of apprenticeships.

### GAO Recommendations:

- Lead a systematic effort to work with state apprenticeship councils and others interested to identify apprenticeable occupations that have shortages of skilled labor and establish plans for promoting apprenticeship programs in these occupations,
- Work with other federal workforce development programs to identify funding for developing apprenticeships when additional support is needed,
- Establish a mechanism for sharing among Labor representatives and employers information on apprenticeship programs, particularly those in occupations not traditionally apprentices, and
- Ensure that the apprenticeship database contains detailed information on current programs so that accurate and complete information is shared and progress in meeting labor market needs can be evaluated.

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