

## Apprenticeship “U” in Northern Middle Tennessee:

### Introduction

The Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Nashville, in partnership with Nashville State Community College (NSCC), seeks to build a new workforce development training pathway for Davidson County residents. The training pathway will leverage the Tennessee Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship model to increase employment and training to residents, while also providing immediate access to labor for Davidson County businesses. Apprenticeship U will partner with local companies to develop career opportunities to Davidson County residents that provides an “earn as you learn” training model.

### Registered Apprenticeship Model

The registered apprenticeship model is an underutilized training method in Tennessee that consists of five main components. These include:

1. **Business Involvement:** Employers are the foundation of every registered apprenticeship program.
2. **Structured On-the-Job Training:** Apprentices receive on-the-job training from an experienced mentor for typically not less than one year.
3. **Related Instruction:** Apprenticeships combine on-the-job learning with technical education at community colleges, technical colleges, apprenticeship training schools, provided online or at the job site.
4. **Rewards for Skills Gains:** Apprentices receive increases in wages as they gain higher-level skills.
5. **National Occupational Credential:** Registered apprenticeship programs result in a nationally-recognized credential—a 100% guarantee to employers that apprentices are fully qualified for the job.

The registered apprenticeship training model is first and foremost an employment opportunity. The underlying feature of this model is that to be an apprentice the candidate must first be an employee. This is a key feature that allows this method to extend education opportunities to a larger population of adults in the Greater Nashville region. Apprenticeship “U” offers the opportunity to increase the number of adults involved in earning certificates that can add to the Drive to 55 goals.

The effort to strategically scale registered apprenticeship in the Nashville is an opportunity that allows business to lead, state partners to deliver a highly structured training, and apprentices to earn their way into higher-wage positions.

### Apprenticeship “U”

The goal for this proposal is to target the “In Demand Occupations to 2026” as defined by TN DOL’s “Northern Middle In-Demand Occupations to 2026” and develop a funding source to support a pilot program that can offset training cost of registered apprenticeship programs. The focused approach on the fastest growing occupational groups is beneficial in several ways. First, it leverages a data-driven approach that ensures middle skill occupations remain the focus of the pilot program. Second, it allows local colleges the tolerance to meet regional training needs. Third, targeting the fastest growing occupational groups

builds a focal point that a wide array of industry partners can leverage. Fourth, the program aids employees the opportunity to earn post-secondary credit while working in the apprenticeship program.

Financial Request

The registered apprenticeship model largely falls outside traditional funding sources such as TN Promise and TN Reconnect. Due to the highly focused approach on employment supplemented by technical training, apprentices attend too few hours to meet the registration requirements of traditional financial aid. Furthermore, technical training provided in this model is uniquely designed to equip the apprentice with job-specific skills, which results in transcribed credit but not a diploma or degree. It is important to underscore that this training model is designed for full-time employees to receive technical training designed by industry, while also receiving mentorship on-the-job.

The proposal seeks to secure funding to support **100** apprentices in the Nashville region. The funding request for this project totals **\$400,000 to support a two-year pilot program**. The proposal will provide tuition assistance for up to **\$2,000 per apprentice per year**, totaling **\$400,000**. Removing this barrier will allow industry access to proven training pathways targeting middle skill occupations.

The proposal creates the ability to quantify the return-on-investment (ROI) annually using the United Stated Department of Labor RAPIDS, the United State Department of Labor reporting system. The table below provides the estimate based on placing 200 apprentices within 12 months.

Scaling Apprenticeship: ROI Figures			
Total Apprentices Served	Total Training Cost	Total Wage Gains (Year One)	ROI
100	400,000	2,800,000	300%

\*Total Wage Gains: calculation based on 2000 annual work hours per apprentice and average starting apprenticeship wage of \$14.00.

Sustainability

TCAT Nashville and NSCC understand the importance of building a sustainable model. This proposal provides the “start-up” cost to create one of the most unique training pathways in the United States. Both colleges will leverage the two-year pilot program to create and refine the registered apprenticeship model. During the two-year pilot program colleges will seek avenues to transition apprenticeship programs into a space that allows for TN Promise and Reconnect to offset tuition cost by year three. The personnel requested in this proposal will be supported by the tuition funds generated by a mature Apprenticeship U model.

Registered Apprenticeship Outcomes/Credentials

According to US DOL, registered apprentices have a 94% completion rate nationwide, and all programs result in a US DOL journeyman’s license. Additional third-party credentials can also be attached to the programs such as the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and National Institute of Metal Working Skills (NIMS). Completers of an apprenticeship program will earn a US DOL journeyman’s license, supplemental certificates from the TBR college, and additional third-party credentials that fit the occupation.

## Conclusion

Apprenticeship “U” is a collaborative effort that offers access to middle-skilled jobs for Tennesseans facing multiple barriers. The focus on employment is a dynamic feature of this model that can provide access to middle-skilled jobs for a larger portion of adults in Tennessee. The requested funds for this program will allow state partners to design and implement registered apprenticeships. The proposal also provides the opportunity to collect data that can lead our efforts to move forward quickly and efficiently. This proposal builds one of the most unique employment/training programs in the United States. TCAT Nashville and NSCC, along with industry and community partners, will provide a substantial ROI on the funds requested by building a pathway that is built to address the need to earn a living, support a family, and add to the vibrancy of our community.


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