

# Apprenticeship Program Sustainability Self-Assessment and Planning Worksheet

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Designing, registering, and launching an apprenticeship program is a major achievement. But the hard work does not end there. Maintaining a successful apprenticeship program requires ongoing planning and effort to provide long-term benefits to workers and employers.

For some, success means maintaining a steady pipeline of skilled apprentices; for others, it means growing the number of apprentices or expanding apprenticeship programs to new occupations. Long-term planning may also require updating the training curriculum to reflect the industry's evolving business, skill, and knowledge needs.

Regardless of how you measure success, sustainability planning can help any apprenticeship program articulate a long-term vision and identify specific actions to achieve it. This self-assessment and sustainability planning worksheet can help apprenticeship programs jumpstart the planning process.

Use this worksheet to:

- brainstorm what sustainable success looks like for your registered apprenticeship program,
- identify and assess current strengths and risks to your program's future success, and
- identify actions to address sustainability challenges.

## KEY TERMS

- **Resilience** is a program's ability to endure direct challenges.
- **Sustainability** is a program's ability to maintain itself indefinitely through self-evaluation and improvement.
- **Sustainability planning** involves evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of elements that contribute to success and resilience, and making necessary adjustments to achieve success.

## PART 1: DEFINE SUCCESS AND UNDERSTAND PROGRAM RESILIENCY

Start by defining a long-term vision of success for your apprenticeship program.

1. What might change and what might stay the same for your program in 10 years? Describe your vision of success.

- In the following table, assess the relative strength of different elements that contribute to a program’s long-term success: cultural integration, stable financing, management infrastructure, quality experience, external partnerships, and monitoring and improvement. For more details on the elements of program success, review our [interactive graphic](#). How you rank each element will help you prioritize areas of focus for program sustainability planning.

### Assessing Elements of Sustainability in an Apprenticeship Program

| Elements of Success and Resilience  | Ranking (“No Presence,” “Limited Presence,” “Strong Presence”) |
|---|--|
| <b>Cultural Integration:</b> An organization-wide understanding that the apprenticeship program is a valuable investment to the organization.   |  |
| <b>Stable Financing:</b> Financial resources needed to support apprentice training and apprenticeship program management are built into the organizational budget, or otherwise clearly identified.   |  |
| <b>Management Infrastructure:</b> There is a clearly defined leadership structure for the oversight and maintenance of the apprenticeship program.  |  |
| <b>Quality Experience:</b> The most successful programs have a clear emphasis on training the trainers. They provide supports and trainings for program mentors to ensure they are well equipped and ready to support apprentices.  |  |
| <b>External Partnerships:</b> Partners can often provide critical resources and supports for program and apprentice success that a single employer may not be able to provide on their own. Relevant partnerships may include registration agencies, local schools, employer networks, TA providers, community nonprofits, and economic development groups. |  |
| <b>Monitoring and Improvement:</b> There is a process in place to regularly evaluate apprenticeship program practices and outcomes, identifying opportunities to improve the structure and delivery of on-the-job training for apprentices, training for mentors, supportive services for apprentices, and more.  |  |

- For any elements of program success listed above that were marked as having a “strong presence,” provide a short description of why that element received that ranking and how it can contribute to the vision of success for your program.

4. For any elements of program success listed above that were marked as having “no presence” or “limited presence” in your program, provide a short description of why that element received that ranking and what might need to change to achieve the long-term vision of success for your program.
  
5. Based on the assessment above, identify goals and success indicators specific to your program. In the second column of the chart below, list goals to strengthen and solidify the presence of each element in your program. In the third column, write intermediate success indicators that will allow you to measure progress in achieving each goal. The success indicator should not be completion of the goal, but instead should be a milestone toward overall success.

**Goals and Success Indicators for Program Sustainability**

| <b>Element of Sustainable Apprenticeship</b> | <b>Goal to Strengthen This Element</b> | <b>Intermediate Indicator of Success</b> |
|--|--|--|
| Cultural Integration                         |  |  |
| Stable Financing                             |  |  |
| Management Infrastructure                    |  |  |
| Quality Experience                           |  |  |
| External Partnerships                        |  |  |
| Monitoring and Improvement                   |  |  |

## 2. PART 2: MAKING ACTION PLANS TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

In Part 1, you created a 10-year vision of success for your apprenticeship program and documented some specific goals for how to strengthen six different elements of success and resilience for your program. Now that you've identified where you want to go, the next step is to start planning how to get there.

This next exercise will prompt you to anticipate potential challenges and how to overcome them. Consider that not all barriers are equal, nor do they all halt operations. Identifying barriers includes recognizing gaps in a program's ability to respond to unexpected change. For example, if one person manages an apprenticeship program and holds most of the institutional knowledge, the program's resilience is at risk if that person leaves. Sharing institutional knowledge among multiple people ensures stronger resilience during staffing changes.

Using the information documented above, summarize goals for your apprenticeship program that will support long-term resilience and sustainability, any known barriers that explain why action is still needed, any program strengths that will help address program challenges, short-term actions that can be taken to make progress toward the program goal, and the stakeholders responsible for leading efforts and activities progress. It's important to break down your long-term goals into smaller action steps to make them more manageable. Try to ensure that some of these actions are immediate, beginning now, to help you jumpstart your sustainability planning.

**Program Sustainability Action Planning Table**

| <b>Program Goals</b>   | <b>Barriers or Uncertainties you Will Face</b>   | <b>Program Strengths and Assets You Will Leverage to Overcome Challenges</b>  | <b>Next Steps/Short Term Actions (Six Months)</b>  | <b>Stakeholder(s) Responsible</b>                           |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <i>Example: Develop new external partnerships with local service providers to help apprentices access resources that will help them stay enrolled and complete their apprenticeship program.</i> | <i>Example: No current knowledge of nonprofit landscape and programs offered by different organizations.</i> | <i>Example: Strong relationship with local workforce board and regional economic development that can help facilitate connections to service providers.</i> | <i>Example: Create an ecosystem map to identify different nonprofits and community-based organizations with relevant programs and supports that apprentices would qualify for.</i> | <i>Example: Apprenticeship program manager, HR manager.</i> |
|  |  |   |  |   |
|  |  |   |  |   |

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|---------------|---|---|--|----------------------------|
|               |   |   |  |                            |

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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