
National Center for Healthcare Apprenticeships

Building 21st Century Labor-Management Healthcare Workforce Solutions

Background

In this time of healthcare transformation, accelerated by the Affordable Care Act and changing age demographics, employers and care management organizations are faced with mounting pressures to meet not only the increasingly complex health needs of the individuals they serve, but also to produce better health and quality outcomes while reducing per capita healthcare expenditures. These are challenging undertakings that cannot be accomplished without a collaborative and comprehensive industry-based approach.

SEIU and AFSCME, the two largest healthcare unions in the nation, have joined forces with healthcare employers, local unions and partners across the country to develop the National Center for Healthcare Apprenticeships. The primary goal of the National Center is to pull together the collective strength of our union and employer partnerships as a means for building targeted workforce solutions – through apprenticeship training programs – that effectively address industry challenges while improving job quality and developing career advancement opportunities for workers.

Program Description

The National Center for Healthcare Apprenticeships offers a streamlined approach for working and learning well-suited for today's rapidly changing healthcare industry. The program will begin in at least six states – California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington – with an initial focus on three healthcare related occupations: Advanced Home Care Aide, Community Health Worker, and Medical Coder. Each of these occupational training programs are competency-based, contain on-the-job-learning components, include stackable credentials and linkages to career pathways, and are specifically designed to meet the evolving needs of the healthcare delivery system in home, community, and hospital-based settings. Below are brief descriptions of each:

Advanced Home Care Aide – A competency-based training and on-the-job-learning program designed to equip new and incumbent home care workers with advanced skills to meet the rapidly changing medical, social and behavioral health needs of home care consumers and their families.

Community Health Worker – A competency-based training and on-the-job-learning program designed to equip workers with the skills necessary to improve the health of the community and meet the growing demands of this emergent occupation.

Medical Coder – A competency-based training and on-the-job-learning program to equip workers with the skills and experience necessary to address the increasingly complex coding requirements under the new ICD 10 system.

Additionally, the National Center will incorporate an evaluation component for particular occupations measuring the impact a well-prepared, well-supported workforce has on health system improvements pertaining specifically to better care, better health, and lower costs.

National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee

As the Sponsor of a National Apprenticeship Program, the National Center designates a collaborative labor-management body known as the National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (NJATC) to act as an agent for the Sponsor in administration of the program. The NJATC is responsible for creating and overseeing a set of guidelines and occupational standards that can be adopted, customized, and expanded. This will lead to national credentials recognized by employers across the country beginning with the three aforementioned health-related occupations.

The NJATC offers a streamlined path through which unions and their industry partners who want to participate in registered apprenticeships locally can do so more quickly than is possible through state registration or through the U.S. Department of Labor. The NJATC will also provide support for programs that wish to only register locally through State Registering Agencies or at both local and national levels.

Partnership

One of the National Center's many strengths is in building collaborative relationships with a multitude of critical industry stakeholders. These include employers, unions, government agencies, workforce development systems, training funds and educational institutions, health systems, and research and evaluation organizations. From designing, implementing, advising, learning and evaluating – collaboration is the key ingredient in building an effective scalable system for healthcare apprenticeships that elevates workers and meets industry demand.

Conclusion

The National Center for Healthcare Apprenticeships creates an opportunity for union and employer partners to plan and implement a strategy that prepares new and incumbent workers with the knowledge, competencies, and critical thinking skills necessary to thrive in the increasingly complex and evolving 21st century healthcare workplace.

The tremendous amount of interest from employers, educational, and other partners combined with this streamlined model, occupational scope, and targeted training design demonstrates our intent to build a comprehensive and distinctive industry-based approach to healthcare workforce development through apprenticeships. This will not only lead to better outcomes for employers and other industry partners and create the foundation for expanding to other health and social service related occupations in the future, it will also lead to much needed job quality improvements, skill development and training options, higher wages, and career advancement opportunities for low-wage healthcare workers.

For more information about healthcare apprenticeships or how your organization can get involved, please contact: Daniel Bustillo at Daniel.Bustillo@1199funds.org / (646) 315-3573.