Empowering Apprenticeship Success: Strategies for Robust and Responsive Retention Services

Presented By
JFF's National Innovation Hub for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Registered Apprenticeship
With Special Guests Institute for Community Inclusion and Safal Partners

- Introductions
- DEIA in RA Center of Excellence
- **Robust and Responsive Retention Services**: Institute for Community Inclusion and Safal Partners
- Mentorship
- Closing

Goals and Objectives

Goals

- **Increase Awareness:** Raise awareness among employers, Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, and program designers about the critical role of retention services in enhancing apprenticeship outcomes.
- **Enhance Capacity:** Equip participants with practical strategies and resources to design or improve apprenticeship programs that prioritize retention, thereby empowering apprentices to successfully complete their training.

Objective

- **Increase Understanding of Critical Role of Supportive Services:** By the end of the webinar, participants will demonstrate an understanding of the significance of supportive services in apprenticeship programs, as evidenced by their ability to articulate at least three ways in which supportive services contribute to apprentice enrollment and successful completion. Participants will be able to identify common barriers faced by apprentices during their training, indicating comprehension of challenges that impede successful apprenticeship completion.

Objective

- **Equip Participants with Practical Strategies:** Following the webinar, participants will be able to understand the development of an individualized support plan for apprentices within their program, demonstrating application of tactics discussed during the session. Participants will gain familiarity with leveraging partnerships and referral networks to enhance apprenticeship retention, as evidenced by their ability to outline strategies for collaboration with community-based organizations and workforce partners in their action plans.

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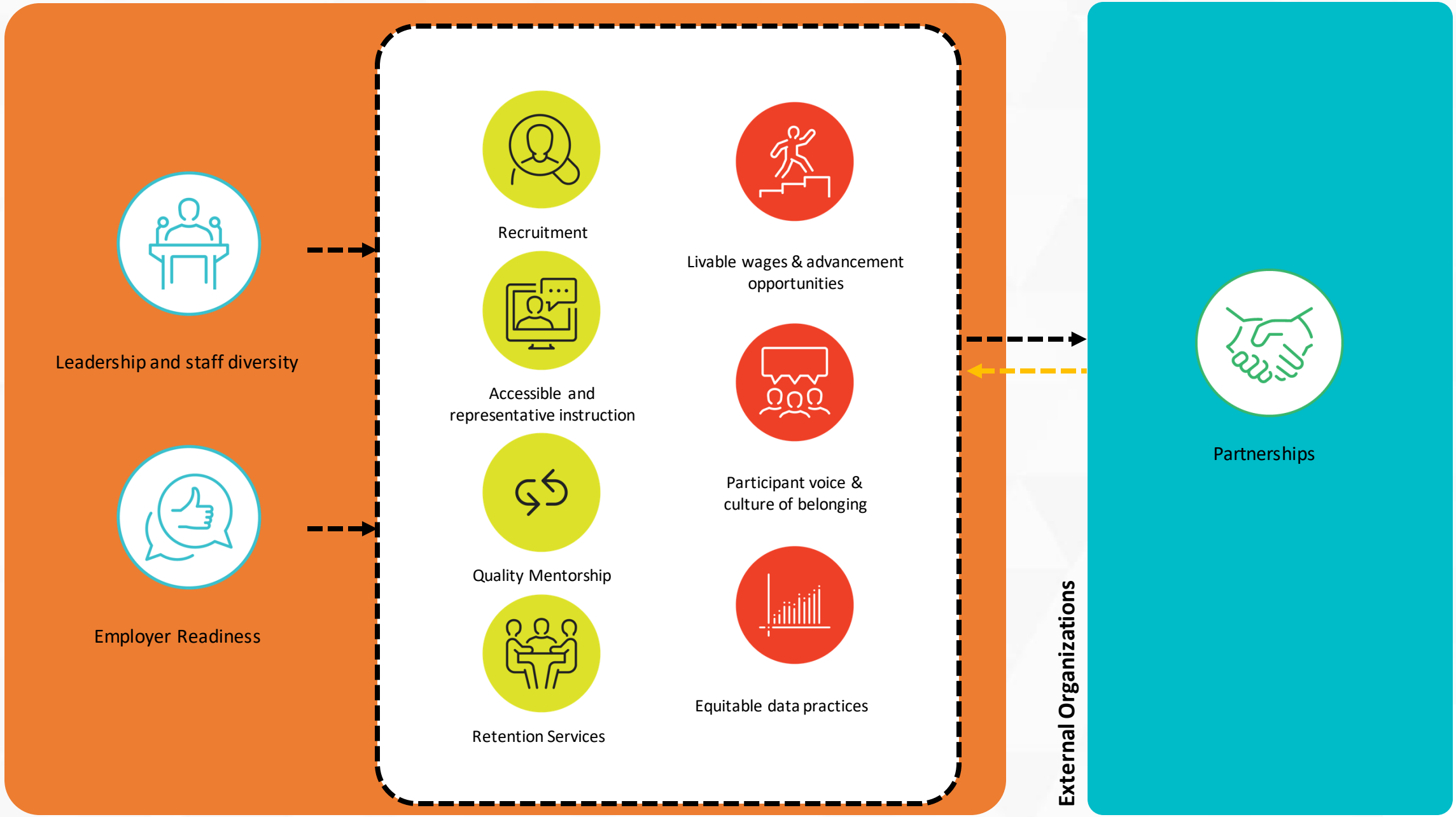
Organizational Conditions to Support Success



Support Participant Success With Robust and Responsive Retention Services

Apprentices will not fully access the value and opportunity of an apprenticeship unless they can complete their training. Employers, RA sponsors, and those designing programs should invest in removing barriers to completion to ensure all apprentices can successfully complete.

Support Participant Success With Robust and Responsive Retention Services

The following are tactics for designing programs that help all apprentices fully engage with their training and support completion:

- Meet regularly with apprentices to discuss their needs, and work with them to develop individualized plans and make connections to services and partners as needed.
- Remove financial barriers to participation by covering the costs of uniforms, training materials, testing fees, equipment, and other costs.
- Provide services and support through partnerships and robust referral networks that can help provide resources such as transportation, housing, food access, and mental health services.
- Use public workforce funding, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training and Workforce Investment Opportunity Act dollars, to increase access to training and expand services and supports for apprentices.

Support Participant Success With Robust and Responsive Retention Services

The following are tactics for designing programs that help all apprentices fully engage with their training and support completion:

- Connect apprentices to navigators and mentors who can help them access services and troubleshoot challenges during training. This could include providing technical or employability skill building, wraparound services, and assistance in navigating the workplace.

- Introduce apprentices to employers, community partners, and other stakeholders to build their professional networks (social capital).

Partnership consideration: Collaborate with community-based organizations, service agencies, workforce and education partners, and others to identify resources to support apprentices. Work with partners to determine which organization is best positioned to provide resources, and employ apprentice navigators and mentors to connect participants to needed services.

Mary Di Biasi

Training Associate

Institute for Community Inclusion

ACCESSIBILITY *and* ADAPTABILITY *within* APPRENTICESHIPS

Mary DiBiase
Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston

Highlights…what to know

PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN APPRENTICESHIPS

- Inclusive workplaces: **everyone has a role**
- **Perspectives, roles, and responsibilities** of disability and disclosure
- Opportunities for **recruitment and retaining** talent
- Know and **connect with** your partners

RESPONSIVE, PROACTIVE, AND INSIGHTFUL PRACTICES

- Positively impact productivity and retention rates
- Open to feedback and change re. processes and employee diversity
- Proactive approach to making an inclusive workplace
- Create (and continually analyze) an inclusive culture *(including information, discussions, attitudes, policies)*

A TRULY ACCURATE DEFINITION OF A DISABILITY IS DIFFICULT TO PRODUCE

- ❑ Type (diagnosis)
- ❑ Timing
- ❑ Impact on daily living
- ❑ Relationship to occupation
- ❑ Personal Experience

There is no universal disability experience or reference point. AND, it may occur at any time.

Self-disclosure vs. Self-identification

Self-identification: a check-the-box, data-collection exercise to ensure compliance with federal requirements and is prompted by the employer

Self-disclosure: prompted by the job seeker or employee, generally during the process of requesting an accommodation needed to successfully perform the essential functions of the job.

Disclosure is built on a foundation of trust which ensures there is no risk to disclosing a disability.

Strategies to Encourage Self-Identification and Self-Disclosure (National Business and Disability Council)

What works for one, often works for many…

- **Clear policies and procedures**, with staff training, regarding reasonable accommodation requests
- **All** applicants and employees are aware of process for requesting reasonable accommodations
  - *Process as simple and clear as possible*
- Respond **positively and affirmatively** when requests are made.
- Work on **navigating these conversations**, if uncomfortable

PUBLIC VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES

Integral workforce developmental partner

Serve individuals with disabilities from age 16 (no maximum age)

Provides training and resources to facilitate employment for individuals with disabilities

PARTNERSHIP POTENTIAL:

- ❑ Disability expert
- ❑ Labor source
- ❑ Workgroup member (RA initiatives)

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Environments, processes, and materials are created for as many people as possible, regardless of age, size, ability, or disability

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ACCOMMODATIONS VS. UNIVERSAL DESIGN

(*These can overlap!)

<u>Accommodations</u>:

Disclosure is optional but needs to happen to request accommodation. Disclosure may happen at any time, especially since a disability can happen at any time. A new job or task may call for disclosure and accommodation.

<u>Universal Design</u>:

Something that benefits more than just one/few. It may have been originally requested as an accommodation. Proactive process that benefits everyone.

INCORPORATING UNIVERSAL DESIGN

- Design an environment to meet the needs of **all people** who wish to use it
- **Flexibility** in use – *not "one size fits all"*
- Meeting needs of people with disabilities is no longer considered *"Special"* or *"Extra"*

Universal Design is Good Design

Thank you!

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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Alan Dodkowtiz

Apprenticeship Subject Matter Expert (SME)

SAFAL PARTNERS

Funding Sources, Supportive Services for RA

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Supportive Services

- Community services
- Transportation
- Dependent care
- Housing
- Needs-related payments
- Educational testing
- Accommodations for disabilities
- Legal aid services
- Referrals to health care
- Work attire and work tools
- Necessary items for postsecondary education classes
- Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

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A World of Funding Options

- Workforce System
  - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
  - Non-WIOA Funding
- Federal Funding
- State-Based Funding
- Private Funding

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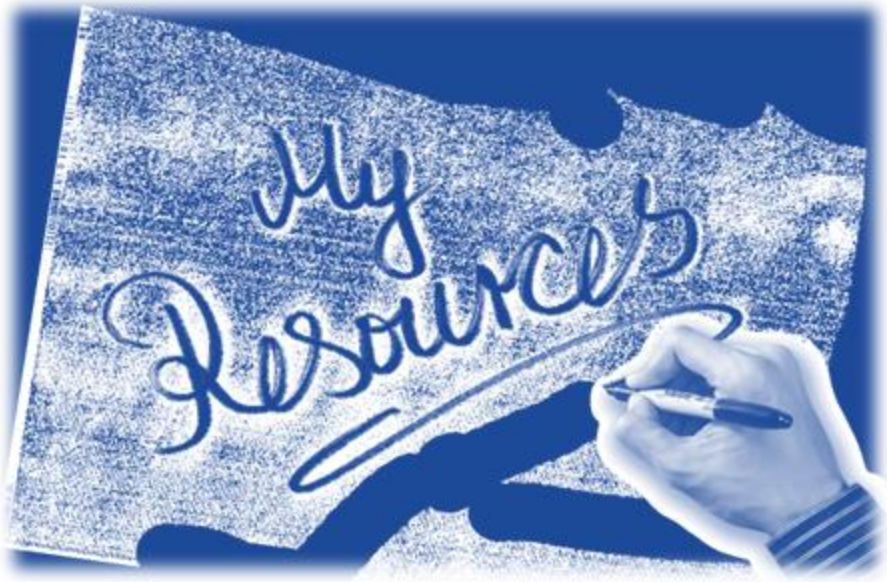
State Funding, Private Sources

- Increasing number of states providing:
  - Direct incentive (per apprentice) funding
  - Tuition subsidy to offset RTI costs
  - Grants to support program start-up, expansion, sustainability
- Private foundations increasingly supporting RA and youth RA



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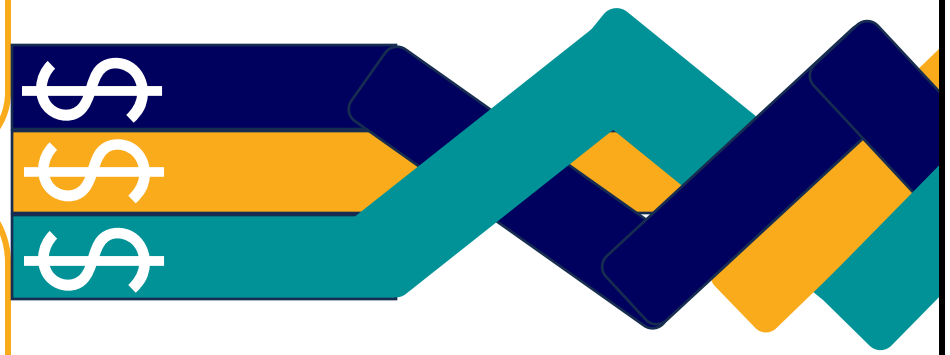
Braiding Funds to Support RA

Students

- WIOA
- Veterans Benefits
- SNAP/TANF

Institution

- State/Federal Grants
- DOL – Apprenticeship Grants
- State Workforce Grants
- Adult Ed Grant Funds



Tuition

Fees

Supplies

Wrap-Around Services

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Example of Braiding Funding

Julie - $6000 income/yr, 1 child, single, 20yo

1) Goes to the American Job Center
2) Says she wants to be a Nurse (CNA)
3) LWC looks at the ETPL
4) Is co-enrolled in WIOA Title 1 and an RA program
5) Now she qualifies for supportive services
   - HCAP
   - MAR Grant
   - Youth – Urban Institute

Supportive Services

- Pre-Apprenticeship
  - Transportation Assistance
- Registered Apprenticeship
  - SNAP/TANF
  - Child-Care
  - Rent Assistance
  - Transportation
  - WIOA Individual Training Account (ITA)

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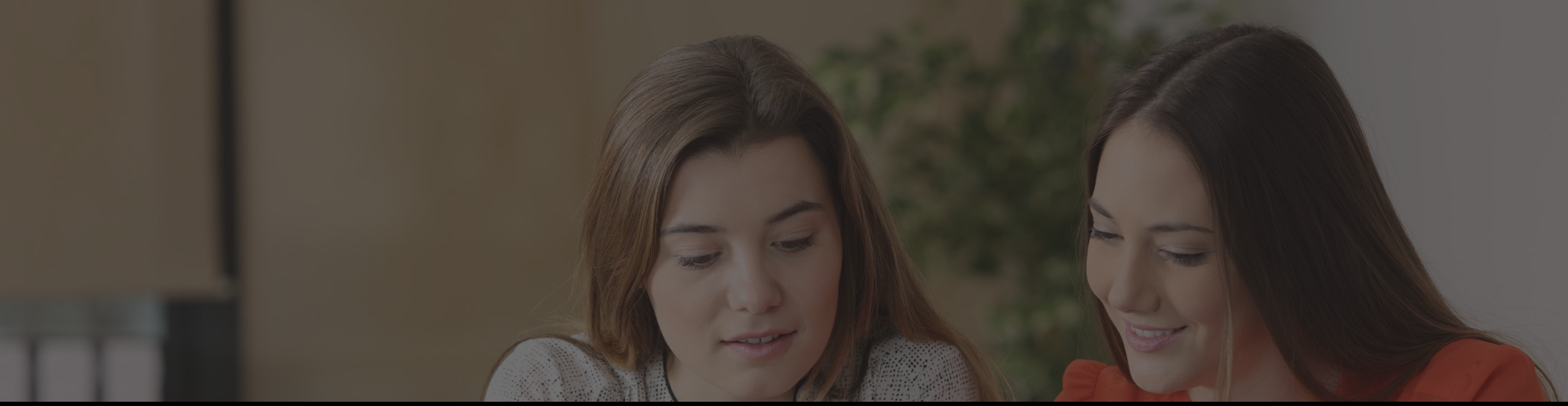
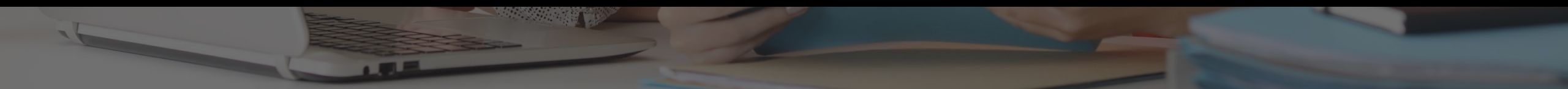


Provide Comprehensive and Quality Mentorship to Participants

Mentorship in Registered Apprenticeship helps participants learn the details of their occupation and workplace while providing coaching and guidance to support them in their training. Mentors can expose participants to advancement opportunities, foster career exploration, and create a culture of inclusion.



APPRENTICE EXPERIENCE ELEMENTS

Provide Comprehensive and Quality Mentorship to Participants

- Recruit and engage mentors with backgrounds representative of the community and the program's participants.
- Establish goals and a clear purpose for the mentorship program in partnership with mentors and apprentices.
- Provide training to mentors to help them support apprentices from different backgrounds. This could include training on DEIA, how to center and empower apprentices, and how to deliver culturally relevant and accessible learning and training.

Provide Comprehensive and Quality Mentorship to Participants

The following mentorship program design strategies enable all participants to thrive and succeed:

- Support accessibility by offering multiple ways for mentors and mentees to connect, such as in person, virtually, or in group settings.

- Ensure that mentors have mechanisms to continue supporting apprentices after they have completed the program.

Partnership consideration: Find partners to support mentor training. This can include engaging partners to deliver training, develop or offer resources, or provide funding to support mentorship programs. This can also include networking with other programs to help provide racial- and gender-conscious mentoring online or in person.

Mentorship Course

JFF offers a self-paced course made up of eight 20-minute modules. This course is ideal for mentors in Registered Apprenticeship. After completing this course, you will be able to define what is an effective mentor and integrate the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) framework into your mentorship practice. Register for the FREE Mentorship Training Course today!

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