

# Advancing Earnings of Populations Underrepresented in Apprenticeship:

## Findings from the Evaluation of the American Apprenticeship Initiative

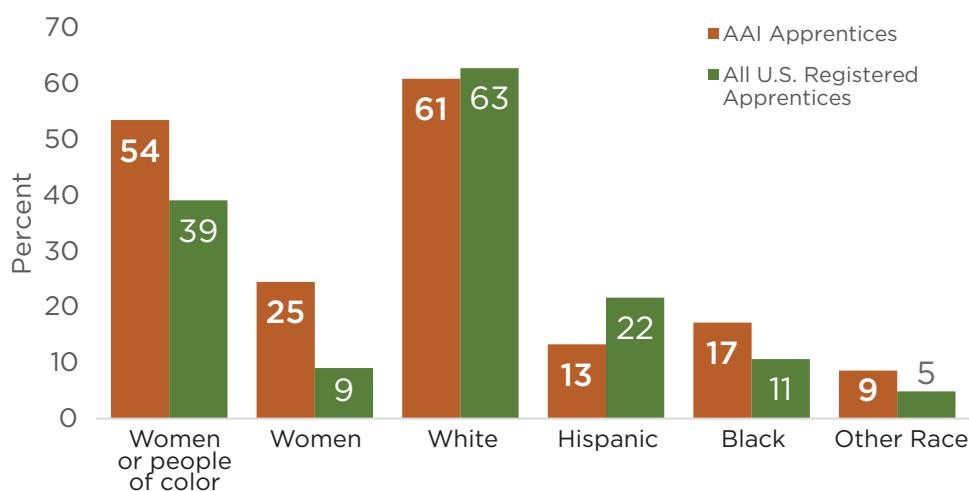


Registered apprenticeship is an innovative workforce training opportunity in which apprentices are hired by an employer and start earning their first day on the job. Apprentices receive a combination of classroom instruction (known as “related technical instruction”) and on-the-job learning from a mentor at the employer’s worksite. Apprentices’ earnings increase as they master occupational skills, complete program components, or at specified time intervals. Upon completing their apprenticeship, apprentices earn an industry-recognized credential. Their skills are transferrable across employers.

Although a common training model in other countries for a variety of industries, apprenticeship in the U.S. traditionally occurs in the construction sector. As a result, most apprentices are men (91 percent), and almost two-thirds are White (63 percent). The U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL’s) investment in the **American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI)** aimed to increase apprenticeship opportunities to populations traditionally underrepresented in registered apprenticeship programs, including women and people of color.<sup>1</sup> AAI also aimed to expand apprenticeship to occupations outside of construction. Findings from the evaluation of AAI demonstrate that AAI apprentices were diverse, and that they experienced earnings gains between the year prior to their apprenticeship and the year following its conclusion. Moreover, the evaluation suggests that pre-apprenticeship programs can potentially further diversify registered apprentices.

### Registered apprenticeship is a viable workforce training option for all job seekers.

Over half of AAI apprentices were women and people of color, compared to less than 40 percent of all registered apprentices. Specifically, a larger share of AAI apprentices were Women, Black, and Other Race workers.



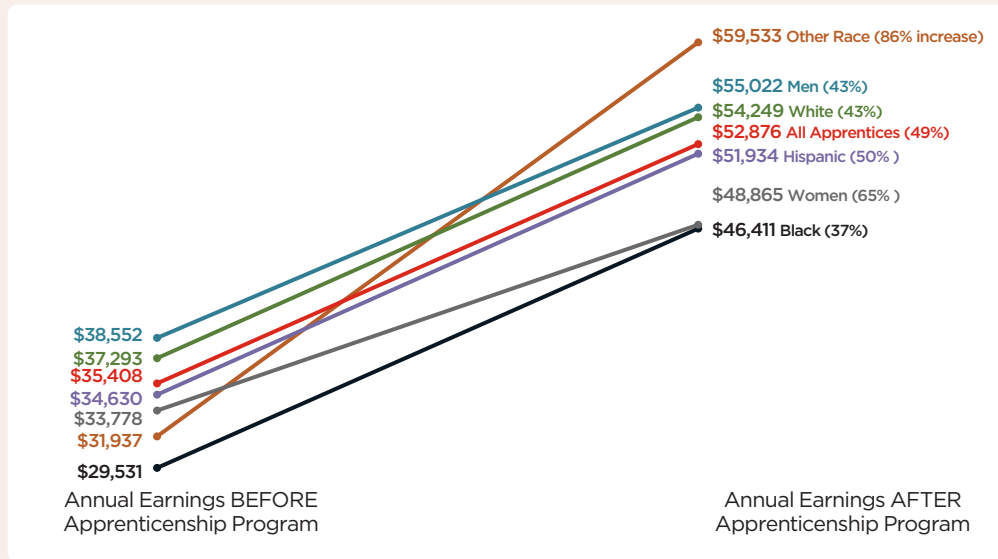
**Notes:** Survey means are weighted for survey non-response and imputed for item non-response. Race and ethnicity were reported separately, and apprentices could select more than one race. “White” describes non-Hispanic apprentices who reported themselves as White and no other race; “Black” describes non-Hispanic apprentices who reported themselves as Black and no other race; “Hispanic” includes all apprentices who reported themselves of Hispanic ethnicity, regardless of reported race. “Other Race” describes non-Hispanic apprentices who reported themselves as Asian (4.5 percent), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.7 percent), Native American (1.7 percent), or multiple races (1.7 percent). The Other Race group has too few observations to disaggregate further.

**Source:** AAI Apprentice Survey and QPR (N=2,601); RAPIDS (N=220,556). RAPIDS sample comprises apprentices registered between 2015 and 2018 who were still enrolled in 2020. Walton and Gardiner. 2022. Exhibit 1.

<sup>1</sup> This brief focuses on two underrepresented populations for which data was available—women and people of color.

## All AAI apprentices experienced wage growth, and earnings increases were particularly great for most populations traditionally underrepresented in registered apprenticeship.

Women AAI apprentices had higher earnings growth than men, decreasing the earnings gap from 23 percent one year prior to the apprenticeship to 11 percent one year after. Earnings increased for all races and ethnicities, with other race apprentices experiencing the highest earnings growth.



**Notes:** Pre-program and post-program earnings averages included apprentices with \$0 earnings. The period between apprenticeship start date and end date was 2.7 years, on average; it was longest for construction (4.2 years) and shortest for healthcare (1.2 years).  
**Source:** National Directory of New Hires. Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022. Exhibit 4-4.

## Reducing inequality is a selling point to employers.

AAI grantees identified and recruited employers to develop and register apprenticeship programs. In their messaging to employers, almost three-quarters (73 percent) of AAI grantees used “broader social benefits, such as reducing inequality” to market registered apprenticeship to employers.

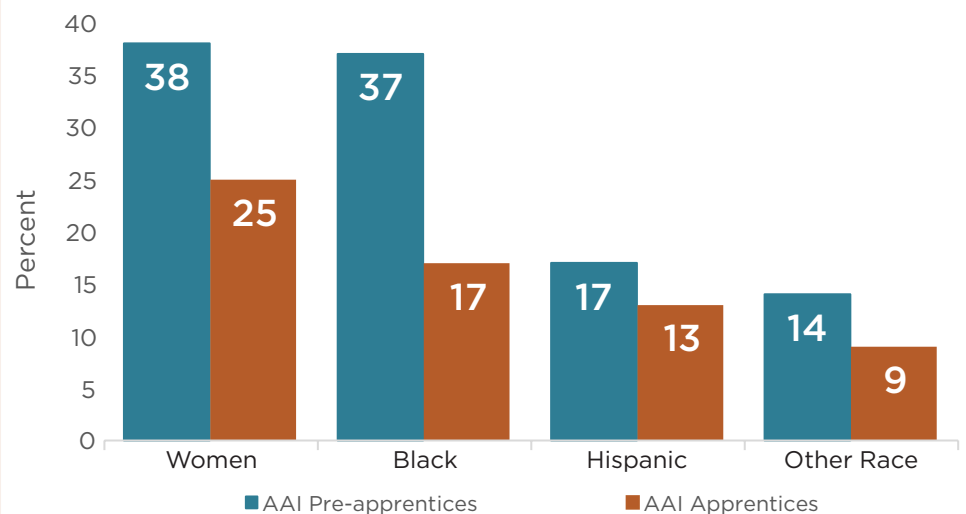


**Source:** AAI Grantee Survey. N=45. Gardiner et al., 2021. Appendix Table 7.

## Pre-apprenticeship programs can promote diversity in registered apprenticeship programs.

By ensuring that apprentices have the basic skill level required to successfully complete an apprenticeship program, pre-apprenticeship programs are one approach to improve access to apprenticeship for low-skilled populations.

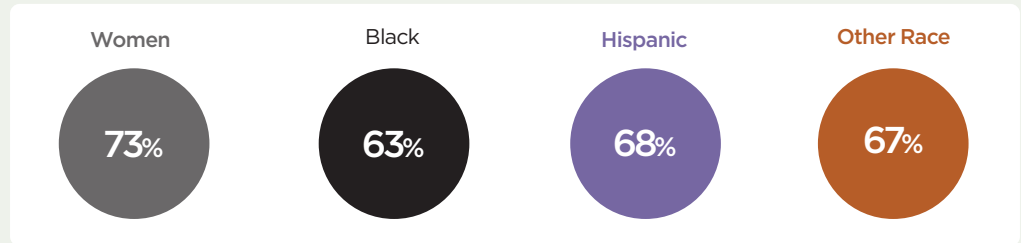
A larger share of AAI pre-apprentices was from underrepresented populations relative to AAI apprentices.



**Source:** Apprenticeship Quarterly Performance Report. N=6,282. Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022. Exhibit 5-1.

## Pre-apprenticeship is an on-ramp to registered apprenticeship for most underrepresented populations.

Most pre-apprenticeship completers from underrepresented populations continued to a registered apprenticeship program.



*Source:* Apprenticeship Quarterly Performance Report. N=3,301. Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022. Appendix Exhibit F-4.

## See related publications

[Expanding Apprenticeship to New Sectors and Populations: The Experiences and Outcomes of Apprentices in the American Apprenticeship Initiative](#)

[Expanding Registered Apprenticeship Opportunities to Underrepresented Populations: Findings from the American Apprenticeship Initiative Evaluation](#)

[Expanding Registered Apprenticeship in the United States: Description of American Apprenticeship Initiative Grantees and Their Programs](#)

## For more information

[Apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov)

[DOL Employment and Training Administration: AAI Evaluation Page](#)

[DOL Chief Evaluation Office: AAI Evaluation Page](#)