

Press Release



The Impact of Ending Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs

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In February, President Biden ended the federal Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs) system, which was created in 2017 as a more flexible alternative to the traditional Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs). The loss of IRAPs leaves RAPs as the only federal apprenticeship program — a model that is largely concentrated in a handful of stagnant industries that are not aligned with the economy’s projected areas of growth. In a new analysis, AAF’s Director of Labor Market Policy Isabel Soto examines the consequences of the administration eliminating IRAPs and the potential challenges facing RAPs.

An excerpt:

While the number of workers participating in RAPs has grown by 8.3 percent between 2018 to 2019, the programs remain concentrated in a handful of [industries](#). Construction, public administration, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and utilities make up [90 percent](#) of active federal apprenticeships. [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) data, however, show that six out of the 10 most rapidly growing occupations are in the health care sector, and [American Action Forum research](#) shows that the service sector will be responsible for the majority of occupational growth through 2024. Among [RAPs](#), those categories represent 2.5 percent and 1 percent of apprenticeships, respectively. Thus, the RAP model does not appear to be flexible enough to keep up with the demands of today’s workforce and keep apprenticeships in line with the fastest growing industries.

[Read the analysis.](#)