New America PAYA

SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

State Policy Framework for Youth Apprenticeship

Building the policy and infrastructure for high-quality youth apprenticeship

Introduction

Many state leaders do not know where to start building the statewide policies and systems needed to make high-quality youth apprenticeship an accessible, widespread option for young people. New America's *State Policy Framework for Youth Apprenticeship* offers a vision for a strong state youth apprenticeship policy environment and identifies three key policy categories where states should focus their attention as they build their system:

1

VISION, GOVERNANCE, AND ALIGNMENT

What is the state's role in setting direction, defining the model, coordinating agencies, and establishing accountability and data infrastructure?

2

PROGRAM PARTNER SUPPORTS

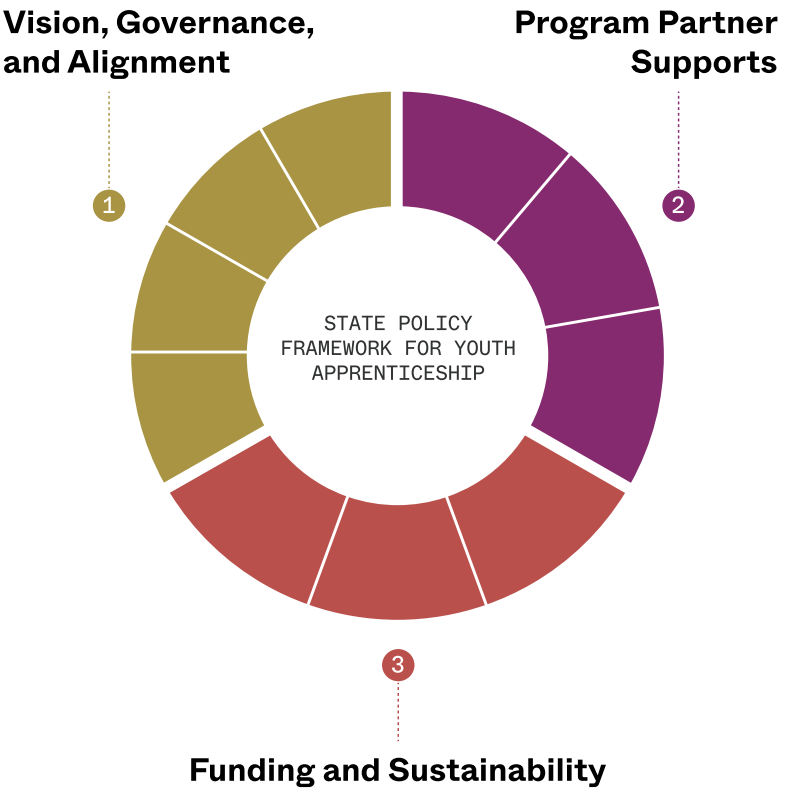
What are the state policies and supports that enable employers, schools, colleges, and local intermediaries to develop and deliver programs?

3

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

What are the funding mechanisms needed to support sustainable state-level infrastructure and local implementation and to reduce participation barriers?

We have organized 10 essential state policy issues within these themes, each with a list of key elements that explain what adoption of this policy entails. The policies recommended in this framework support the vision of high-quality youth apprenticeship as PAYA has defined it, where programs are a true postsecondary option: They begin in high school, include paid on-the-job training, provide classroom-based related instruction and assessment against established standards, and culminate in both a credential of value and postsecondary credit.



Purpose and Instructions

This worksheet version of the framework is a self-assessment tool for state leaders and policymakers to take stock of their progress in building a statewide youth apprenticeship system and identify opportunities for growth. It will be most effective when state leaders complete it in cross-agency teams. To complete this worksheet:

STEP 1: REVIEW
For each category, review each policy issue in the **WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE** column.

STEP 2: ASSESS
Consider whether your state has taken the actions recommended under each policy issue. Input your response **(YES/NO/PARTIALLY)** in the **HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?** column.

STEP 3: GATHER EVIDENCE
Use the **EVIDENCE** column for links to policy documents or state statutes that justify your answer in the previous column.

STEP 4: REFLECT
At the end of each category, reflect on the section overall. What are your state's goals for strengthening policy in this area? What challenges or barriers stand in the way? Are any policy issues a particular priority? Do any have existing momentum behind them? Note any action items for moving toward your goals.

STEP 5: ACTION
After you complete the worksheet, convene your state team to review your results and share reflections. Identify and assign immediate next steps and develop a cross-agency plan for building stronger youth apprenticeship policy in your state.

Please note this tool is intended to be flexible and to serve as a guide. States do not need to implement the policies in this framework in any particular order. Your state's approach to developing a strong youth apprenticeship system will depend on your specific context. Our recommendation is to identify areas with existing momentum or opportunity and build from those places.

1

Vision, Governance, and Alignment

State agencies and partners need a common vision and governance structure to coordinate youth apprenticeship models that, by design, span K-12 education, postsecondary education, and workforce development systems. A clear, shared vision ensures all partners understand why youth apprenticeship matters for them and what quality looks like, while governance structures provide infrastructure for state agencies and partners to collaborate.

The policy issues in this category aim to move states away from multiple agencies supporting youth apprenticeship and toward a coordinated state system for youth apprenticeship.



The state has a definition of youth apprenticeship or an adopted model for youth apprenticeship that state agencies share, understand, and use.

WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE	HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?	EVIDENCE
The definition or model is codified in statute, regulations, or formal policy issuance and is widely adopted and applied across the state.		
The definition or model clarifies the relationship between youth apprenticeship and career technical education (CTE), pre-apprenticeship, and Registered Apprenticeship.		
The definition or model aligns with quality standards, such as the PAYA definition and principles, and stipulates that youth apprenticeship: • begins in high school, • includes paid on-the-job training, • provides classroom-based related instruction through secondary and postsecondary partners, • provides career navigation and wraparound support, and • culminates with a credential of value and postsecondary credit.		
The definition or model provides flexibilities that allow disconnected youth to participate, including opportunities to reconnect with education where appropriate.		



The state has embedded youth apprenticeship within education, workforce, and economic development strategies and accountability systems.

WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE	HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?	EVIDENCE
State education, workforce, and economic development plans identify specific opportunities to integrate youth apprenticeship into talent development strategies and to leverage relevant federal funding and policy frameworks (e.g., Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Every Student Succeeds Act).		
State accountability systems (including K–12, higher education, and workforce) recognize participation in youth apprenticeship and credit it toward other incentivized outcomes (e.g., postsecondary matriculation, job placement, etc.).		
Measurable goals for youth apprenticeship have been defined and are tied to state economic and workforce development priorities.		
State youth apprenticeship strategies prioritize occupations and career pathways aligned with regional labor-market demand, family-sustaining wages, and opportunities for career advancement.		



The state has an established statewide governance structure for youth apprenticeship.

WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE	HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?	EVIDENCE
The state outlines the key state-level partners supporting its youth apprenticeship system, identifies a state-level system lead, and distributes the core functions of the youth apprenticeship system among the partners. Core functions include, at minimum, • program development and delivery, • stakeholder engagement, monitoring, and evaluation, and • policy, strategy, and sustainability.		
State leaders have a clear vision for how youth apprenticeship is implemented locally—including what entities can serve as local lead partners and how the state will work with them—and they provide guidance and incentives to support that vision.		



The state has a data system to track and monitor youth apprenticeship outcomes.

WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE	HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?	EVIDENCE
Individual-level data for youth apprentices can be found in the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System (RAPIDS) or in a work-based learning (WBL) data system, and it can be linked to other state data systems that track academic and workforce outcomes.		
Data systems help states collect, disaggregate, and publicly share data to identify gaps in participation and outcomes in youth apprenticeship programs.		

NOTES AND REFLECTIONS	ACTION ITEMS

2

Program Partner Supports

Employers, institutions of higher education, school districts, and other local partners translate state policy and priorities into practice, but they often face barriers related to capacity and alignment. State policy can reduce these points of friction by allowing youth apprenticeship to integrate in the K-12, higher education, and workforce systems.

The policies in this category suggest ways states can equip a core network of partners to develop and implement high-quality youth apprenticeship statewide.



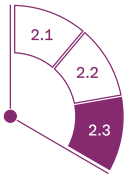
The state establishes mechanisms to support employer participation in youth apprenticeship programs.

WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE	HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?	EVIDENCE
The workforce system promotes youth apprenticeship to employers, which includes publicizing the model's benefits for employers and ways to participate.		
The state provides clear guidance on requirements such as child labor laws and workers' compensation and addresses unnecessary barriers to employer participation.		
Policies and incentives encourage employers to hire apprentices and to contribute resources, expertise, and leadership to develop and sustain youth apprenticeship programs.		
The state leverages sector strategies and federal planning processes, including WIOA and Perkins, to engage employers by industry and ensure youth apprenticeship aligns with industry needs and standards.		



The state helps high schools integrate youth apprenticeship into their structure and design.

WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE	HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?	EVIDENCE
The state creates high school course codes for youth apprenticeship, supports flexible scheduling, and permits credit attainment for learning outside of school campuses and the standard school day.		
The state provides guidance to clarify how schools can leverage CTE programs of study, Pathways in Technology Early College High School programs, and other work-based learning programs for youth apprenticeship related instruction.		
The state provides the school-based staff (counselors, advisors, work-based learning coordinators, etc.) responsible for career and academic planning with information about youth apprenticeship and how to integrate it into students' plans.		



The state helps institutions of higher education (IHEs) integrate youth apprenticeship into postsecondary education and credential pathways.

WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE	HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?	EVIDENCE
The state provides guidance to IHEs on the roles they can play in youth apprenticeship, including providing related technical instruction and serving as local lead partners.		
The state encourages and supports IHEs in developing sequences of related technical instruction that bridge high school and college coursework and enable apprentices to earn postsecondary credit through mechanisms such as dual enrollment, articulated credit, or recognition of demonstrated competencies.		
The state requires that college credit earned through youth apprenticeship, including dual credit and dual enrollment, be transferable across public institutions and applicable toward a range of associate and bachelor's degrees.		

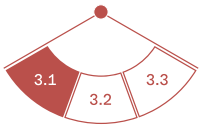
NOTES AND REFLECTIONS	ACTION ITEMS

3

Funding and Sustainability

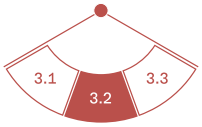
Reliable funding mechanisms enable youth apprenticeship programs to build the capacity, partnerships, and infrastructure needed for long-term success. Many states already fund critical pieces of the youth apprenticeship infrastructure, but need to rethink how they leverage, align, and braid those resources to make youth apprenticeship affordable for all stakeholders.

The goal of this category is to move states from fragmented, short-term funding to sustainable, aligned funding that supports quality and scale.



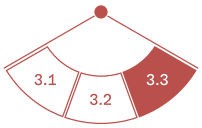
The state has a sustainable funding stream to support the state-level governance of the youth apprenticeship system.

WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE	HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?	EVIDENCE
The state funds capacity at the state level to carry out the core functions of a youth apprenticeship system, which includes staff time for aligning systems and building and maintaining resources for local programs; stakeholder engagement; monitoring and evaluation; and policy, strategy, and sustainability.		
The state provides funding for state-level youth apprenticeship infrastructure, such as data systems that collect and monitor outcomes.		



The state promotes the financial sustainability of the local lead partners that coordinate and implement youth apprenticeship programs.

WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE	HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?	EVIDENCE
The state allocates reliable and recurring funding to support the capacity of local lead partners to coordinate and administer youth apprenticeship programs.		
The state develops eligibility criteria for local lead partners so they can receive funding aligned with the state's vision for local implementation.		
The state provides local lead partners with guidance on how to braid and blend state youth apprenticeship funds with other local, state, and federal funding streams to support program implementation.		



The state minimizes financial barriers to youth apprenticeship participation and addresses gaps in program and participant costs.

WHAT STRONG STATE ACTION LOOKS LIKE	HAS YOUR STATE TAKEN THIS ACTION?	EVIDENCE
Youth apprentices are eligible to use state-funded dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and other early postsecondary access programs to support related technical instruction.		
State financial aid, scholarship, and tuition assistance programs support related technical instruction and credential attainment.		
The state provides funding to reduce common barriers to participation in youth apprenticeship, including, for example, transportation between school and workplace.		
Income earned through a youth apprenticeship is excluded from household income limits for the purposes of calculating eligibility for public benefits.		

NOTES AND REFLECTIONS	ACTION ITEMS