

SPONSOR TOOLKIT

A Guide for Information Technology Registered Apprenticeship Program Sponsors

Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program

CLARK UNIVERSITY

Table of Contents

Welcome to the Information Technology Apprenticeship Incentive Fund (ITAIF) 3

Background 3

Information Technology Apprenticeship Incentive Fund Snapshot 4

Who Can Participate 4

Sponsor Roadmap 4

How to Apply 5

Get Approved 6

Executing the Sponsor Agreement 6

What to Expect 7

What's Next? 7

Payment Setup 7

Payment Information Requirements 7

Protecting Your Information 8

Grow Your Programs 8

Understanding the Substantial Growth Threshold (SGT) 8

New Programs and New Occupations 8

Apprentice Eligibility Requirements 9

What Counts Toward the 90-Day Requirement? 9

How Is Retention Verified? 9

Submit a Payment Request 10

Payment Request Review and Processing 10

Expected Payment Timeline 10

Tips for a Smooth Payment Review 11

Receive Incentive Payments 11

How Will I Know If My Payment Has Been Approved? 11

Receiving Payment 11

Payment Records 11

Need Help? 12

Key Definitions 12

Welcome to the Information Technology Apprenticeship Incentive Fund (ITAIF)

A Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program for Expanding Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Information Technology.

Background

The Pay-for-Performance (PfP) Incentive Payments Program is one of the Trump Administration's national initiatives to grow Registered Apprenticeships toward the goal of reaching and surpassing 1 million active apprentices. Under a pay-for-performance model, Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors can receive direct payments of up to $6,000 per apprentice to support the hiring and retention of new apprentices, reduce barriers for employers, and help train Americans for in-demand careers across priority industries nationwide.

In July 2026, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded nearly $162 million through five cooperative agreements as part of its **Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program**. This initiative is designed to accelerate the growth of Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in critical industries by providing performance-based incentive payments to eligible Registered Apprenticeship sponsors.

In addition, the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund (AMAIF), administered by the Arkansas Department of Commerce, supports apprenticeship growth in manufacturing occupations and remains an active U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship incentive fund.

The incentive funds each focus on a specific industry sector:

Grantee	Industry Sector	Program Name
Arkansas Department of Commerce	Manufacturing	American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund (AMAIF)
ASE Education Foundation	Transportation and Automotive	Transportation Automotive Technician Apprenticeship Incentive Fund
Clark University	**Information Technology**	**Information Technology Apprenticeship Incentive Fund**
Florida Department of Commerce	Defense Industrial Base, Shipbuilding, and Maritime Manufacturing	Shipbuilding and Defense Industrial Base Apprenticeship Incentive Fund
Jobs for the Future (JFF)	Super Intelligence, Semiconductor, and Nuclear Energy	SI, Semiconductor, and Nuclear Energy Infrastructure Apprenticeship Incentive Fund
Wireless Infrastructure Association (WIA)	Telecommunications and Digital Infrastructure	Telecommunication Apprenticeship Incentive Fund

Administered by Clark University, the **Information Technology Apprenticeship Incentive Fund (ITAIF)** is the Information Technology (IT) sector initiative within the U.S. Department of Labor's national Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program.

ITAIF provides incentive payments to eligible Registered Apprenticeship sponsors that expand participation in approved IT occupations and meet established program requirements.

Because the six total grantees serve different industry sectors, some Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs may be better aligned with another Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program. When appropriate, Clark University may provide information about other incentive funding opportunities or refer sponsors to a grantee whose sector closely aligns with their RA program.

Information Technology Apprenticeship Incentive Fund Snapshot

- Incentive payments to eligible sponsors who grow their RA programs
- IT sector focus
- New apprentices enrolled on or after July 1, 2026, and retained for 90 days
- One-time payment of **$6,000** per eligible apprentice

Who Can Participate

Sponsors may participate if they:

- Operate a **Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program** approved by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (OA) or a State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA)
- Have RA program(s) that include approved **IT occupations** appearing on the DOL approved **Eligible Occupations List**
- Meet all program eligibility requirements as described throughout this toolkit

Sponsor Roadmap

Participating in the Information Technology Apprenticeship Incentive Fund (ITAIF) is a straightforward process designed to help sponsors grow their RA programs and access incentive funding. The roadmap below provides an overview of the eight key steps, from initial application and approval through apprentice retention and incentive payment.



The remaining sections provide detailed instructions, requirements, and resources for each step of the process, beginning with submitting your Sponsor Application.

How to Apply

Participation begins with submission of a Sponsor Application through the **Sponsor Portal**. The application serves as the official entry point into the program and is used to verify sponsor eligibility, identify eligible RA programs and approved information technology (IT) occupations.

As part of the application process, sponsors will provide information about their organization, RA program(s), approved IT occupation(s), and estimated number of apprentices. ITAIF project staff will review RAPIDS to confirm RA programs and occupations listed in the application. However, sponsors may also upload supporting documentation needed to verify RA program information, occupations, and registration status if this information would be helpful to staff for eligibility determination or upon request.

Examples of information requested during the application process may include:

- Sponsor organization information
- Contact information
- RA program information
- RAPIDS Program ID(s)
- Information technology occupation(s) information, including RAPIDS codes
- Estimated number of apprentices expected to support incentive payment requests

Applicants should ensure that all submitted information is complete and accurate to help prevent delays during the review process. Staff will verify the information submitted in the Sponsor Portal with RAPIDS so please ensure your application's information matches what is entered in RAPIDS. Once submitted, your application enters the review process for approval.

Most applications are expected to be reviewed within approximately **5-10 business days**, although actual review times may vary depending on application volume and the completeness of submitted information.

Get Approved

After your application is submitted, the ITAIF team reviews the information provided to determine whether your organization and RA program(s) meet program eligibility requirements.

As part of the review process, staff will verify:

- RA program registration date and status;
- RAPIDS program ID information;
- Eligible information technology (IT) occupations.

Applications are reviewed for completeness, accuracy, and alignment with program requirements. If additional information or clarification is needed, staff will contact the sponsor and provide an opportunity to correct errors, submit supplemental information, or respond to questions before a final determination is made.

Following review of your application, Clark University will issue one of the following determinations:

Determination	Description
Approved	Your organization has satisfied the applicable program requirements and may proceed to the next step in the process: execution of the Sponsor Participation Agreement.
Additional Information Requested	Additional information, clarification, or supporting documentation is required before a final determination can be made.
Not Approved	The application does not satisfy one or more TechXcel participation requirements. Sponsors will receive information regarding the basis for the determination and any applicable appeal or reconsideration procedures.

Sponsors will receive notification of the determination and any required next steps.

Executing the Sponsor Agreement

Once your application has been approved, the next step is to execute the **Sponsor Agreement**.

The Sponsor Agreement formalizes your organization's participation in the program and establishes a shared understanding of program expectations, terms of payment, duration of the agreement, termination and amendment clauses, and other program requirements. The agreement also identifies the approved

occupation(s) eligible for participation and outlines the responsibilities of both Clark University and the sponsor.

The Sponsor Agreement must be reviewed and signed by an authorized representative of the organization before the sponsor can become active in the program.

What to Expect

Following application approval, sponsors will:

- Receive notification of application approval
- Receive a secure link to access the ITAIF Sponsor Agreement
- Review, sign, and submit the agreement electronically through the portal
- Receive confirmation once the agreement has been fully executed

What's Next?

Once the Sponsor Agreement has been fully executed, sponsors will move to **Step 4: Payment Setup**, where banking and ACH information will be established in the ITAIF Payment Management System.

Payment Setup

Once the Sponsor Agreement has been fully executed, Sponsors will receive access to the secure Sponsor Portal Payment Request Module. Access instructions will be provided via email and require portal login credentials. If you do not receive an email with access instructions or have misplaced it, please email us at: techxcel@pcgus.com.

Sponsors will also receive instructions regarding payment account setup and ACH enrollment, which must be completed before incentive payments can be issued. Approved incentive payments are issued electronically through the program's designated payment system. Public Consulting Group (PCG), serving as the Payment Management System Operator (PMSO), administers payment processing activities on behalf of Clark University.

After executing the Sponsor Agreement, sponsors will receive a link to the payment system to:

- Establish a payment account
- Complete payment system registration
- Enter banking information for direct deposit (ACH)
- Submit a completed IRS Form W-9

Payment Information Requirements

Prior to receiving incentive payments, sponsors will be required to provide:

- Legal organization name
- Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) or Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Completed and signed IRS Form W-9
- Bank account information for ACH/direct deposit

Protecting Your Information

The ITAIF program utilizes secure systems and administrative controls designed to protect sensitive organizational, financial, and payment-related information. Banking information is collected through the designated payment management platform and is not submitted through the Sponsor Portal.

Payment information is accessible only to authorized personnel involved in payment administration and is managed in accordance with applicable security, privacy, and data protection requirements.

After payment setup is complete, sponsors may begin growing participation in approved IT occupations and work toward meeting their established **Substantial Growth Threshold (SGT).**

Grow Your Programs

Understanding the Substantial Growth Threshold (SGT)

The Substantial Growth Threshold (SGT) is the active apprenticeship level a sponsor must exceed before apprentices become eligible for incentive payments.

For **existing programs** (RA programs registered with OA or an SAA before July 1, 2026):

- The U.S. DOL calculates and provides the SGT for existing programs
    - Calculated as 125% of the median active apprentice count for the 12 quarters prior to June 30, 2026. Programs operating fewer than three years will have the calculation based on all available years of operation.
- Sponsors do not calculate their own SGT
- The SGT remains fixed throughout the program

Example

Description	Count
Median Active Apprentice Count	10
SGT Calculation	10 × 125%
SGT	12.5
Apprentices Eligible for Incentives	13th apprentice and beyond*

*Provided all other eligibility requirements continue to be met.

New Programs and New Occupations

RA programs approved on or after **July 1, 2026**, are assigned an SGT of **zero**.

Likewise, if an existing RA program adds a new eligible occupation on or after **July 1, 2026**, that occupation is assigned an SGT of **zero**.

Adding new employers does not reset the SGT to zero. New employers added to existing programs must meet the established SGT.

Once your organization exceeds its established SGT, you may begin working toward the next milestone – retaining eligible apprentices for at least 90 days.

IMPORTANT: Sponsors must exceed their established SGT at the time of each payment request. Exceeding the SGT once does not permanently establish payment eligibility. If active apprenticeship enrollment later falls to or below the SGT, eligibility is suspended until enrollment once again exceeds the threshold.

Apprentice Eligibility Requirements

Once your organization has exceeded its established SGT, new apprentices must remain actively enrolled in the RA program for at least **90 calendar days** with the intent for apprentices to successfully complete the program before they may be considered for incentive payment eligibility.

The 90-day retention requirement is an important component of the Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program and is intended to reward sponsors that not only enroll new apprentices but also support their successful retention during the early stages of apprenticeship.

What Counts Toward the 90-Day Requirement?

To satisfy the retention requirement:

- The apprentice must be enrolled in an approved **information technology** (IT) occupation
- The apprentice's RAPIDS enrollment start date must be on or after **July 1, 2026**
- The apprentice must remain actively enrolled in the RA program for at least **90 calendar days**
- The sponsor continues to **exceed its SGT** at the time of each payment request

How Is Retention Verified?

ITIAF program staff verifies apprentice eligibility and retention requirements using approved data sources, including:

- RAPIDS
- The U.S. Department of Labor Apprenticeship Information (AI) Demographics Portal
- Other approved program records, as necessary

Sponsors should maintain records supporting apprentice enrollment and participation and be prepared to provide additional information if requested during the payment review process.

Example

Apprentice Start Date	90-Day Retention Milestone
July 1, 2026	September 29, 2026
October 15, 2026	January 13, 2027
January 1, 2027	March 31, 2027

Once the apprentice has satisfied the 90-day retention requirement and all other eligibility requirements have been met, the sponsor may move to the next step in the process - **submitting a payment request through the Sponsor Portal.**

Submit a Payment Request

Once your organization has exceeded its established SGT and apprentices have satisfied the 90-day retention requirement, you may submit a payment request through the Sponsor Portal. As previously stated, sponsors will receive access to the secure Sponsor Portal Payment Request Module. Access instructions will be provided via email, following the execution of a Sponsor Agreement, and requires portal login credentials. If you do not receive an email with access instructions or cannot locate it, please email us at: techxcel@pcgus.com and we will assist you.

Payment requests provide the information necessary for ITAIF program staff to review and verify retention requirements prior to issuing incentive payments.

What Information Is Required?

Sponsors will complete the Payment Request form and provide information related to the apprentices for whom payment is being requested in the Sponsor Portal.

At a minimum, payment requests must include:

- Apprentice name
- RAPIDS Apprentice ID
- RA program name
- Occupational title of the apprentice
- Apprentice's RA program start date

Sponsors may submit payment requests for one or more eligible apprentices at a time.

Payment Request Review and Processing

Once a payment request is submitted:

1. ITAIF staff reviews the payment request and information
2. Eligibility is verified using approved data sources such as RAPIDS and the AI Demographics Portal
3. Clark University makes the final payment determination
4. Approved payments are processed through the ITAIF payment system

Expected Payment Timeline

The ITAIF project team is committed to the timely review and processing of payment requests. Upon receipt of a complete payment request, the program will make reasonable efforts to process incentive payments within **twenty-five (25) business days of the approval date**.

Actual processing timelines may vary depending on payment volume, verification activities, holidays, requests for additional information, sponsor responsiveness, and other operational considerations.

Tips for a Smooth Payment Review

To help avoid delays:

- ✓ Ensure all apprentice information is accurate and complete and matches RAPIDS
- ✓ Verify that RAPIDS Apprentice IDs are entered correctly
- ✓ Confirm that apprentices satisfy all applicable eligibility requirements before submitting a request
- ✓ Respond promptly to any requests for additional information or clarification

Once your payment request has been approved, the final step is to receive approved incentive payments. Sponsors will receive payment through the designated ITAIF Payment System following completion of the payment review and approval process.

Receive Incentive Payments

Approved incentive payments are issued electronically (ACH) through the payment account established following the execution of the Sponsor Agreement. PCG, as the PMSO, administers payment processing activities on behalf of Clark University.

How Will I Know If My Payment Has Been Approved?

Sponsors will receive an email notification regarding the final determination of their payment request, including:

- Approved payment requests
- Requests for additional information
- Payment requests that are not approved and reason for denial

Sponsors will also be able to log in to their Sponsor Portal and review their payment request status and payment history.

Receiving Payment

Once payment processing has been completed, incentive payments will be deposited electronically into the bank account designated by the sponsor during payment setup.

Sponsors should promptly notify the PCG finance support team at TechXcelFinance@pcgus.com if:

- Banking information changes;
- A payment is not received as expected; or
- Questions arise regarding payment activity.

Please do not email your bank account information. You will be required to login to the ITAIF payment management system and add/delete/edit your ACH banking information directly into the system.

Payment Records

Sponsors should maintain records related to payment requests, payment approvals, and incentive payments received through the program.

Congratulations!

By completing these eight steps, your organization has successfully participated in the Information Technology Apprenticeship Information Program and helped expand Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in information technology occupations.

For additional information, resources, and support, please visit our website or contact the ITAIF team.

Need Help?

Topic	Contact / Resource
Program Questions	WorkforcePrograms@clarku.edu
Finance & Payment Questions	TechXcelFinance@pcgus.com
ITAIF Sponsor Application	Sponsor Portal - Application
Sponsor Portal Technical Questions	TechXcel@pcgus.com
ITAIF Website	ITAIF Website

Key Definitions

Active Apprentice: An apprentice who is currently enrolled and participating in a Registered Apprenticeship Program and has not completed, withdrawn from, or otherwise exited the program.

Apprenticeship Information (AI) Demographics Portal: A U.S. Department of Labor system used to collect and verify apprentice demographic and enrollment information for program administration and reporting purposes.

Eligible Occupation: An occupation included on the current **Eligible Occupation List** and approved by USDOL for participation in the program.

Existing Registered Apprenticeship Program: A Registered Apprenticeship program that was registered with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (OA) or a recognized State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) before July 1, 2026, the start of the program's Period of Performance.

Incentive Payment: A payment issued to an eligible Registered Apprenticeship sponsor after all applicable program eligibility requirements have been satisfied and verified.

New Apprentice: For existing RA programs, a new apprentice enrolled on or after July 1, 2026, whose enrollment is above the established SGT. For new RA programs registered after July 1, 2026, all enrolled apprentices are considered new apprentices.

New Registered Apprenticeship program: An RA program registered on or after July 1, 2026, the start of the program's Period of Performance (POP).

Office of Apprenticeship (OA): The U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship, which oversees the national Registered Apprenticeship system and administers RAPIDS.

Period of Performance (POP): The period during which ITAIF operates under its cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor. The program period began on July 01, 2026, and ends on **June 30, 2030.**

Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS): The primary platform used by Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to manage apprentices, occupations, job openings, and other Registered Apprenticeship program information.

RAPIDS Apprentice ID: The unique apprentice identifier maintained within RAPIDS and used by project staff to support payment eligibility verification activities.

Registered Apprenticeship Program: A Registered Apprenticeship program registered with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (OA) or a DOL-recognized State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) pursuant to 29 CFR Part 29.

Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor (Sponsor): Any person, association, committee, business, or organization operating a Registered Apprenticeship program in whose name the program is, or is to be, registered or approved.

State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA): A state agency officially recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor to register and oversee Registered Apprenticeship programs within that state.

States and Territories: For purposes of the ITAIF program, **States** include the fifty (50) states of the United States and the District of Columbia. **Territories** include Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

Substantial Growth Threshold (SGT): The apprenticeship enrollment level a sponsor must exceed before apprentices become eligible to support incentive payments. For existing Registered Apprenticeship programs, the SGT is calculated as **125 percent of the program's median active apprentice count** and is established by USDOL.

Sponsor Agreement: The agreement executed between Clark University and an approved sponsor that formalizes participation in the ITAIF program, and establishes program expectations, responsibilities, and requirements.

Sponsor Portal: The online system used by sponsors to submit applications, execute the Sponsor Agreement, submit payment requests, and receive program communications.

90-Day Retention Requirement: A requirement that an apprentice remain actively enrolled in a Registered Apprenticeship program for at least **90 calendar days** after the apprenticeship start date recorded in RAPIDS before being considered for incentive payment eligibility.