

# Pre-Apprenticeship Solutions for English-Language Learners



Apprenticeships are on the rise in the United States. Since 2011, the U.S. has seen a 70% growth in these programs, with more than 1.9 million new apprentices in the same time period. As recent as 2020, 221,000 individuals nationwide entered into the apprenticeship system.

The growth in apprenticeship programs are fueled forward by historic federal funding. In 2021, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced that approximately \$87.5 million in grants would be available to expand Registered Apprenticeship programs across the country. The rise in apprenticeships is also fueled by the promise of a better life. According to the DOL, people who complete an apprenticeship program can expect to earn an average annual income of approximately \$60,000.

## The Apprenticeship Gap

While apprenticeships are on the rise, there is a gap that needs a bridge. Many apprenticeship programs are out of reach for English-Language Learners (ELLs) simply because they are not equipped with the language skills necessary to meaningfully participate. Simultaneously, employers are facing an unprecedented talent shortage. Immigrants, refugees, and speakers of other languages are too often overlooked when it comes to high-value jobs, apprenticeships, and incumbent worker upskilling programs. When these workers are included in the conversation, apprenticeship programs can serve as a powerful tool for diversity, equity, and inclusion work. For context, in 2019, 88% of new apprentices coming into federally registered programs were male, and 56% were white.

EnGen works with higher-education organizations and employers to build highly customized language learning programs that can serve as a pre-apprenticeship, an on-ramp for ELLs providing them with the skills and language they need to succeed in a registered apprenticeship program. This opens more opportunities to more people and nurtures a larger talent pool for employers and organizations.

## Inclusion in Practice: ADVANCE, Lake Tahoe, California

Lake Tahoe, California is an idyllic ski and lake town that plays host to nearly 15 million visitors annually. The local economy runs on tourism. Because of this, there is always a demand for seasonal and highly specific skilled workers, like ski lift operators and technicians. ADVANCE is a Lake Tahoe collaborative network of local organizations, government offices, and employers that provides access to a wide range of services—helping adults meet educational, career, and personal goals. ADVANCE came to EnGen for support in making their apprenticeship programs more accessible to a larger number of adult learners.

Lake Tahoe's population is 38% Hispanic, but most apprenticeship programs are built for native English speakers and have strict reading and writing level requirements. That means many people from Lake Tahoe's Hispanic population are blocked from these career pathways. Together, EnGen and ADVANCE created a first-of-its-kind, highly customized curriculum for ELLs that can serve as a first step towards ADVANCE's Tahoe Lift Maintenance Apprenticeship. Using EnGen's task-based learning approach and content from the National Ski Areas Association's Lift Maintenance Training Guide, speakers of other languages can work through this curriculum digitally, clicking through highly-specific terms and phrases to learn pronunciation and meaning, familiarizing the learners with the technical language needed to advance.

“For us here in Tahoe, about 38% of the population is Hispanic. Even at the entry level, but at the top end [especially], a seasoned level two or level three lift maintenance tech makes a pretty decent wage for Tahoe. We don't want to exclude 38% of our population from accessing that pathway.”

*Frank Gerdeman, Director of ADVANCE*



EnGen can help organizations and employers prepare for the workforce of the future with custom career pathways. [Learn more with a demo](#) from one of our workforce development experts.

## Apprenticeship Stats at a Glance

**70%** growth in U.S. apprenticeship programs since 2011

**1,900,000** new apprentices since 2011

**221,000** individuals in the U.S. started apprenticeships in 2020

**\$87,500,000** dollars in apprenticeship funding from the Department of Labor in 2021

**\$60,000** average salary for those who complete an apprenticeship program

## Custom Content Language Curriculum

EnGen has worked with many higher-education organizations and employers to create customized content and curriculum for ELLs. Some include:

- English Readiness for Allied Health
- Medical Assistants
- Bilingual Banking - Integrated Education and Training course
- Foodservice Safety
- Certified Production Technician (CPT) - in progress