

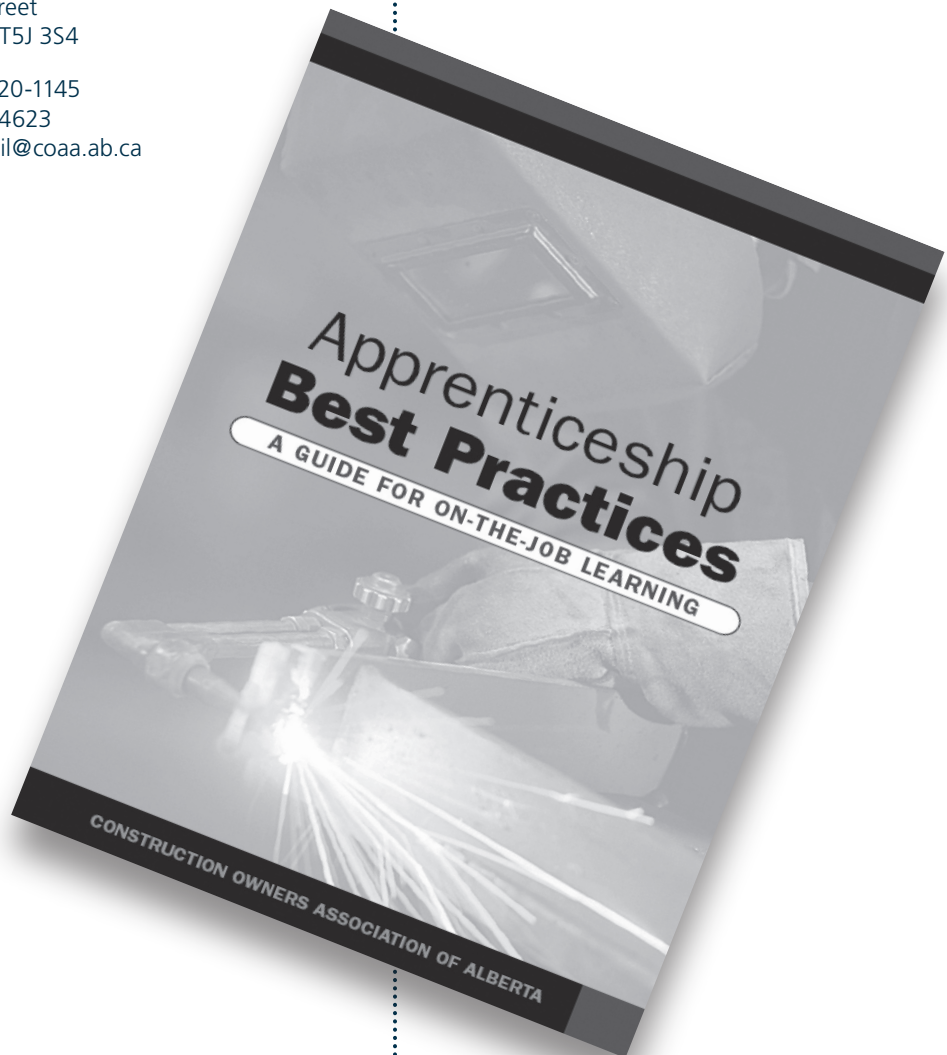
APPRENTICESHIP BEST PRACTICES: A GUIDE FOR ON-THE-JOB LEARNING

The Apprenticeship Best Practices booklet shown below was created to help the development of apprentices in Alberta. For those companies planning to implement an apprentice mentoring program (AMP), this booklet is a valuable supplement for program participants. It aims to enhance the on-the-job portion of apprenticeship learning so both the apprentice and journeyman can have positive learning experiences.

The Apprenticeship Best Practices booklet is available online at www.coaa.ab.ca. Printed copies are also available by contacting:

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KEY QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN AMP DEVELOPMENT

AMP leadership

- What AMP leadership, advisory group is needed?
- Do we need a formal, written governing agreement for our AMP? If so, who should be the parties to this agreement?
- What stakeholders should be involved in designing and advising the AMP?
 - Mentors?
 - Mentees?
 - New but experienced employees?
 - Managers (at what levels)?
 - Union or association leaders?
 - Others?
- In what ways can each stakeholder group be meaningfully involved in program design?
- What are the roles and tasks of an AMP coordinator?

Program partners

- What partners might contribute to our program's success?
- How and at what point in the process can we establish any needed partnerships?
- What would potential partners gain from our partnerships?

Program approach

- For whom will the mentoring be provided?
 - Novice employees just starting in their careers?
 - Experienced but new hires?
- What should be the configuration of the mentoring support (one to one? team?)

Mentee needs assessment

- What research is there on mentee needs and what does it tell us?
- What local research do we have or need to do on our own mentees' needs, and what does it tell us?
- What needs are best addressed with training? With mentoring? With other program strategies?
- What methods do mentors need to help them assess and address specific needs of their mentee?

Organizational needs assessment

- What organizational needs are there that are appropriate for the program to address?
- What calendar issues and events should be considered when planning an AMP?

Other issues to consider

- What policies and practices are barriers to mentoring and how can these be overcome?
 - External?
 - Internal?
- What operational changes need to be made to make mentoring possible?
- Do mentors and mentees have ready access to email and telephones?
- How will mentors interact with mentees and have appropriate access to needed development opportunities and support?

The participants

- Which employees will receive mentoring?
 - First time, young employees?
 - Novice employees entering from another career?
 - New to the organization?
 - New to a job level, or specific assignment?
 - New to a site but experienced in the organization?
 - New hires with previous, but not recent, experience?
 - Persons in disadvantaged minorities?
 - Underrepresented minorities and women?
 - High potential junior supervisors?
 - Managers selected for future positions?
- Will participation in the AMP be mandatory or voluntary?
- How long will a mentee participate in a program?
- What and who will determine how long a mentee should be mentored?
 - Meeting a minimum performance standard?
 - Mentee self-assessment?
 - Mentor assessment of mentee need?
 - Coordinator or supervisor assessment of mentee need?
 - A fixed timeline, such as a year? Two years? Three years?
 - Externally set timeline for certification?

Program purpose and goals

- What goals and results can our program realistically expect to attain?
- What are the options for program goals that make the most sense for our employees and local needs as an organization?
- Which combination of goals will address the needs we have identified?
- What about goal permanence? Will our program's goals be:
 - Far-reaching and valid for a long time?
 - Shorter term (one to two years) and expected to change as the program evolves?
 - If the latter choice, what changes do we expect to occur and what timeline do we expect those changes to follow?
- Do our program goals compliment and not conflict with goals of other improvement efforts?

Program structures and components

- What components for our program are necessary to accomplish our goals?
- What other support components besides mentoring do mentees need?

Program implementation

- Should we implement the whole program design at once or phase it in?
- How can we phase in the implementation of a complex program to keep it manageable and successful?
- What parts should be implemented first? Later?

Time and timing

- How frequently should mentoring activities occur?
- What is the best way to provide time for mentoring?
- How can we estimate how much time is needed to effectively mentor?
- Should we do research regarding the impact of time available for mentoring and impact on mentors' effectiveness?
- Should we and how could we measure how much time mentors give to mentoring?
- How long will mentors serve?

Roles and tasks

- **Mentors**
 - Given our goals, what are the roles and tasks that every mentor should ideally be able to fulfill?
 - Which mentoring tasks are the same for every mentee?
 - Which mentoring tasks are unique to different people, or people with different levels of experience?
 - Which mentoring tasks will most mentors already know?
 - Which tasks are not likely to already be known?
 - What checklists can be developed (or found and adapted) that include typical mentoring tasks?
 - How can checklists be refined to focus early mentoring on priorities, so mentees are not overwhelmed?
- **Mentees**
 - What do effective mentees need to be able to do regarding the mentoring program?
- **Supervisors**
 - What do effective supervisors of mentees need to be able to do regarding the mentoring program?
 - How should mentors and supervisors determine which tasks each needs to complete?

Recruitment of mentors

- What relationship should there be among the mentor recruitment, selection and matching processes?
- What are the best methods for recruiting mentors?
- What must we do to attract the better candidates for mentoring?
- Should we use incentives to attract mentors?
- Can mentors nominate themselves or should mentors be chosen?
- What can we do if there are insufficient numbers of people willing to be mentors?
- What job descriptions, applications or contracts do we need to use during recruitment?

Selection of mentors

- Who can become a mentor?
- What are the pros and cons of the exclusive or inclusive selection approaches?
- If the inclusive approach is best, how can we ensure that only appropriate people serve as mentors?
- Can supervisors also be mentors?
- Who has a valued viewpoint on mentor skills and should have input on selection?
- What selection criteria should we establish to select mentors?
 - How can the criteria reflect the program's goals?
 - How can the criteria be reasonable and not burdensome, while setting a fair standard for acceptance as a mentor?
- What selection process should we use to apply the criteria?
 - What process will ensure that we make fair and appropriate decisions?
 - What steps should the process include?
 - What timeline will the process need to follow so it works with recruitment, hiring practices, mentor training, etc.?

Matching mentors and protégés

- What are appropriate criteria for matching?
- Is it appropriate to match based on personality, working, learning, age or ethnic group?
- What is an appropriate matching process?
- What timeline for matching do we need to follow?
- Who should coordinate the matching process and communication?
- How many mentees can/should a mentor work with at the same time?
- What proactive steps can be taken to avoid mismatches?
- What should we do if a mismatch occurs?

Initial training

• Mentor training:

- What are the implications of mentor roles and tasks for their training?
- What are the goals and outcomes for the mentor training?
- How can we train every mentor so they can successfully accomplish the program's goals?
- How should we train and assist mentors in learning and mastering needed tasks?
- What mentoring strategies do most excellent employees already know and what strategies will mentors probably need to learn during training?
- When will the training take place and how many times should we train each year?
- What should be the agenda, sequence and length of training?
- Will mentors be required to participate in the training?
- Should mentees attend any parts of the mentoring training?
- What roles will other stakeholders have in the training?
- What will be the optimal way for mentors to learn the skills they have not yet mastered?
- Is there an employee who already has the necessary knowledge that could be taught to the mentors?
- Is there an employee who might already have the skills that could be modeled and taught to mentors?
- If no employee has the needed knowledge or skills, who does, and how can we arrange to learn from him or her?
- What effective, proven mentor training materials are available to which we might gain access to give us a starting place?

• Mentee training

- What are the implications of mentee roles and tasks for their training?
- What are the goals and outcomes for the mentor training?
- How should we train and assist mentees to learn and master needed tasks?
- How should we train mentees to work effectively with their mentors?
- What should be the agenda, sequence and length of training?
- What effective, proven training materials are available for mentees, which we might access to give us a starting place?

• Supervisor training

- What are the implications of supervisor roles and tasks for their training?
- What are the goals and outcomes for the supervisors' training regarding the mentor program?
- How should we train and assist supervisors to learn what they need?
- How should we train supervisors to work effectively with the mentors?
- What mentoring skills do effective supervisors need?
- What should be the agenda, sequence and length of training?
- What effective, proven training materials are available for supervisors, which we might access to give us a starting place?

Resources for mentors

- What resources and expertise should be available to mentors?
- Ongoing counsel from others?
 - A program coordinator?
 - A mentor of mentors?

The mentor-mentee relationship

- What are the critical factors in the mentor-mentee relationship?
- How can participants build trust into their relationship?
- Exactly what does "confidential" mean?
- What should mentors do if mentees need to change a key behaviour and will not change it?

Mentor-mentee communication

- What strategies and skills do mentoring partners need for effective communication?
- How can participants learn what they need to maintain effective communications?
- What communication with supervisors is appropriate?
- What communication with a mentor program coordinator is appropriate?

The developmental mentoring process

- What are the typical phases that mentees go through as they gain experience and skill as employees?
- How long does each separate stage of the mentoring process take?
- How will the focus of mentoring change during the course of a mentee's involvement in the program?

Mentoring styles

- What different mentoring strategies will mentors need at various times in the mentoring process?
- How can mentoring styles be effectively assessed and how is that data used?
- How can mentors predict where they will be naturally strong and appropriate, because of their personality and style of mentoring, and where they may not automatically respond the best way?

Incentives and recognition for mentoring

- How does recognition fit with or compare to incentives for mentoring?
- What is the link between motivation and incentives?
- What incentives will attract the best candidates to serve as mentors?
 - Modified or reduced work assignments and schedules?
 - Leadership opportunities?
 - Other incentives?
- In what other ways can mentors be compensated for their additional work and participation?

Evaluation of program participants

- Should we hold mentors accountable and, if so, how and for what?
 - How can we ensure that mentors make a big impact on mentees' performance?
- Should mentors be assessed and, if so, how and for what?
- Should mentees be assessed and, if so, how and for what?
- Should the program coordinator be assessed and, if so, how and for what?

- Who will be involved in making any mentor, mentee, or program coordinator assessments?
- What evidence will be needed to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the participants?

Program evaluation and improvement

- What evidence will be used to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the program?
- What is the difference in evaluating for quality versus effectiveness?
- What data can we collect to demonstrate we are accomplishing our program's goals?
- How can we show that the program contributes to other improvement efforts?
- What baseline data can we collect now to demonstrate later that desired results have occurred and even increased with time?
- How can we capture and demonstrate the value of mentoring when conversations between mentors and mentees are confidential?
- How could we help decision makers understand our program's value even if they have never experienced the value of a mentor themselves?
- Who should be involved in evaluating and documenting the program?
 - An independent external program evaluator?
 - Mentors?
 - Mentees?
 - Managers? At what level?
 - Union leaders?
 - Others?

Supporting and sustaining the program over time

- How can we assemble the funding needed to support and grow the program?
- How can we build support for the program with key decision makers?
- How can we build support for the program with others who are non-participants in mentoring?
- What are the program pitfalls that we need to avoid to keep building a better program and how can we avoid them?

AMP – IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

✓	Description
	Formation of an AMP coordination committee
	Determine /clarify reasons for implementing an AMP
	Determine if the organization has sufficient qualified staff and resources to implement an effective AMP. If not, seek support from appropriate levels of management
	Solicit and gain support and permission to form a small mentoring coordination committee to plan, implement and evaluate the AMP
	Identify key personnel for the AMP. Consider experienced individuals who have a passion and/or knowledge about an AMP and ensure a cross-section of stakeholders
	Preparation and development of the AMP
	Draw up a program plan allocating tasks and timeframes to committee members
	Use the program plan to seek budget approval for program and permission to proceed
	Determine the issues that impact recruitment and retention of employees
	Determine how best to provide support to mentees during their participation in the AMP
	In consultation with stakeholders, determine the structure and scope of the AMP
	Type of AMP: Formal or informal
	Role clarification for mentee, mentor, supervisors, coordinator/administrator, assistant administrator and clerical assistant
	Resources (time/dollars) to be expended per mentee, etc.
	Organize communications skills training for all participants
	Produce or purchase training guides and kits for mentees and mentors
	Finalize all documents (promotional materials, application forms, etc.) and arrange for printing
	Implementing the AMP
	Organize a formal launch of program at suitable time and venue with appropriate people invited
	Match mentees with mentors
	Conduct orientation and training on mentoring
	Follow-up with each participant to gain feedback on launch and training, and to clarify any concerns about who they are matched with, etc.
	Evaluate reaction to launch, training, kits, guides, etc.
	Rematch pairs if required
	Promote best practice ideas as deemed appropriate
	Evaluating the AMP
	Arrange for the coordinator and/or administrator to follow up on mentees for regular feedback at regular pre-determined intervals throughout the program
	Conduct formal evaluations of all program participants (mentees, mentors, supervisors, coordinator/ administrator) at regular pre-determined intervals

AMP – SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Note: Owners may assign their communications staff to provide assistance with the development of a communications strategy.

Purpose

- To inform all EPCMs, contractors and labour suppliers working on the Project of the apprentice mentoring program (AMP).
- To encourage the ongoing support and participation in the AMP of all apprentices, potential mentors and supervisors working on the Project.

Strategy

- To communicate to all stakeholders that the Project is implementing the AMP to encourage apprentices at all levels to further develop their competencies in regards to safety and their given trade.

Target audiences

- **Internal stakeholders**
 - Company senior management (president, VPs, GMs)
 - Project construction manager
 - Construction managers
 - Manager Labour Relations, where applicable
 - Manager Human Resources, where applicable
 - Manager Public Affairs, where applicable
 - Labour provider leadership
 - EPCMs, where applicable
 - Mentors and mentees
 - Construction supervisors/foremen.
- **External stakeholders**
 - Labour providers
 - Training institutions
 - Apprenticeship and Industry Training
 - COAA
 - Contractor associations as applicable.

Messages

- The Project owner(s) and contractor are working towards creating an environment that encourages apprentices to become safer, more skilled, competent and effective in their jobs.
- The Project owner(s) and contractor are committed to improving safety, quality, cost, schedule and injury reduction both in overall numbers and severity.
- The Project owner(s) and contractor are committed to contributing towards the betterment and increased professionalism of the construction industry.

Desired outcome(s)

- Apprentices will become fully aware of the AMP and understand how their participation will further their competencies, add value and increase the safety of all people across the organization.
- To communicate to all stakeholders that the Project is committed to addressing the skilled trades shortage by enhancing training in competencies.
- To add value to the construction industry and work towards enhancing the workforce on the Project.
- A highly skilled, qualified, professional tradesperson.

Implementation

The communication schedule and plan will incorporate a variety of communications tactics including those that directly deliver the information from a communication perspective (i.e. meetings, captive audiences) as well as those that provide additional sources of information for people actively seeking information on their own.

Date/timing	Communications activity	Audience	Distribution	Responsible
When program is finalized	Orientation of the program to leaders to ensure support of program	Leadership	Presentation/ discussion session	Labour relations (LR) where applicable
When program is finalized	Background information on the program and status updates of mentors/mentees	Internal stakeholders, owner and contractor employees	Intranet	LR, AMP coordinator with public affairs (PA) support, where applicable
When program is finalized	Memo to internal stakeholders announcing the launch of the program	Internal stakeholders	Memo via email	LR, AMP coordinator with PA support, where applicable
When program is finalized	Courtesy letter to external stakeholders announcing the launch of the program	External stakeholders	Letter via email	LR, AMP coordinator with PA support, where applicable
First week of every month	Orientation/on-boarding of AMP to all apprentices	Apprentices	Presentation/ discussion session	AMP coordinator
Third week of every month	Communicate apprentice matches to the organization	Each apprentice	Newsletters and bulletin boards throughout the site	AMP coordinator (assigned matchmaker) liaison with contractor and PA to coordinate newsletter and bulletin board
Quarterly update meetings	Communicate programs and success rate (number of participants, competencies being developed)	Project employees (hosted by _____)	Presentation/ discussion session	AMP coordinator to provide facts and figures to _____ for presentation
At program launch and quarterly updates	AMP launch and quarterly personal interest stories	Owner employees and contractor site workers	– Connections newsletter – E-Journal – newsletters for site	PA liaison with AMP coordinator
Ongoing	Recognition of workers achieving milestones	Apprentices	Congratulatory letter from construction leader, certificate on wall frame	AMP coordinator and PA to draft and leadership to sign and add personal remarks
Ongoing	Recognition of workers achieving milestones	Apprentices	Pins for participants to wear and collect to demonstrate to their colleagues progress being made in program	AMP coordinator and supervisor
Annually	Recognition of workers achieving milestones	Apprentices and leadership	Event held at auditorium or restaurant	TBD
Ongoing/as appropriate	Recognition of workers in paid advertorial in local newspaper, profile program, success stories and recognize individuals	Alberta and industry partners	500 word advertorial and photo(s) of people being recognized in Calgary Herald, Fort McMurray Today, Edmonton Journal	PA with support from AMP coordinator

Note: Additional information on the AMP can be found on the Construction Owners Of Alberta website at www.coaa.ab.ca