Purpose of the Survey: The New York Association of Training & Employment Professionals (NYATEP) is New York State’s workforce development association (www.nyatep.org) which represents the organizations that provide education, training, and employment services across the State. With the rise of apprenticeship programming in the public spotlight, NYATEP sought feedback directly from New York State employers in advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, technology and telecommunications for their opinions of apprenticeship programs as a training option. Specifically, NYATEP collected data on the perceived barriers held by employers to accessing and registering an apprenticeship program in New York State. The goal is to use this information to recommend policy and programmatic improvements to the NYS Apprenticeship Program. NYATEP distributed the survey from July 14 – August 15, 2017 through a network of members and partners that regularly engage with employers across the state, including economic development, business associations, intermediaries, Chambers of Commerce, and Workforce Boards.

Overview of the Survey Respondents: In total 170 employers responded from a wide-range of sectors; 114 responded from the targeted sectors (advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, technology and telecommunications). Employers were asked provide basic organizational information, i.e. size, composition of their workforce, recruitment practices, and about their company’s engagement with and/or understanding about the New York State Apprenticeship Program.

Summary of Employer Characteristics from Applicable Respondents:

- The majority of respondents are from the manufacturing and advanced manufacturing sector.

- Just over 40% of the respondents have less than 50 employees. Respondents expect about 1/5 of their workforce to retire in the next 5 years.

- The vast majority of respondents primarily maintain a full time workforce. However, 16 of the respondents have more than half of their workforce as part-time employees.

- The top methods of recruitment include “word of mouth”, “NYS Job Bank”, “direct college recruitment”, “temp agencies” and “recruitment from competitors.”

- Of the 114 employers, 86 have less than $50,000 a year internal staff training budget (36) or no budget for training their workforce (50).

- The top workforce challenge was “recruiting and hiring a skilled workforce”, which was identified by 81 respondents. The majority of respondents said it was either “very difficult” or “somewhat difficult” to fill open positions in the last year. Positions are open most frequently between 3 - 6 months.
Overview of Employer Attitudes towards Apprenticeship in New York

Employers who HAVE used the program:

Eleven employers utilized the Apprenticeship Program in New York; the rest had no experience with the program. Ten of the employers were in Advanced Manufacturing/Manufacturing and one is in Telecommunications.

All responded that they viewed the program either very favorably or favorably. All would recommend the program, three with caution or reservations.

When asked to select why their company has engaged in the Apprenticeship Program, the primary reason was “Our company wanted to proactively create a skilled workforce pipeline.” Two respondents noted their company participated as part of a grant program.

The job title most commonly utilized for the registered apprenticeship program was “machinist.”

On average (a rating of 3 on a scale of 1-5) the companies currently participating in the apprenticeship program reported feeling neutral about the ease or challenges in engaging in the following activities: raising awareness about apprenticeship internally; navigating the regulations or filling out the paperwork; developing related instruction, finding resources within to support the apprentice or mentor; and funding the wages.

Eight of the eleven employers have hosted between 1-5 apprentices in the last five years. Three have hosted over 11 apprentices in the last five years.

Employers who HAVE NOT used the program:

103 Employers did not use the apprenticeship program, of which 57 are unfamiliar with the NYS apprenticeship program; 42 are familiar or somewhat familiar with the program and 4 are very familiar with the program. When asked about their perceptions about the New York State Apprenticeship Program:

- 60% perceived navigating the NYS Apprenticeship program’s regulations within the NYS Department of Labor as very challenging or challenging
- 58% perceived the availability of internal resources to support and mentor an apprentice as very challenging or challenging
- 55% perceived the volume of paperwork required to register our company’s apprenticeship program as very challenging or challenging

In Transportation and Telecommunications employers perceived resources to pay for the increased wages for the apprentice or mentor as the most challenging.

In Manufacturing employers perceived navigating the NYS Apprenticeship program’s regulations within the NYS Department of Labor as the most challenging. Biotechnology, Technology and Healthcare companies needed additional information about the apprenticeship program in order to share their perceptions, therefore did not respond negatively or positively.

Employer Recommendations to improve the program:
- Streamline the paperwork or provide an apprenticeship navigator: “I would love to learn about the program and how to develop an apprenticeship program in my company but I’m overwhelmed at the prospect of the paperwork and time commitment considering that I don’t have any budget to pay the potential apprentices with.”
- Increase awareness of, and direct connection to, alternative pathways into employment, like apprenticeship in K-12: “Hard to get interest in skilled trades from youth - no help from guidance counselors. Fighting the "got to go to college" mentality, no one is pushing for trade schools.”
- Employer awareness campaign to increase overall awareness and understanding of the process: “Tell me more.” “I am interested but don’t think it is good for my workforce.”