

Building Pathways into Local Government



Learn more about the Bridge initiative and how local governments can take advantage of a proven apprenticeship approach to build workforce pipelines to address employee shortages in various job classifications.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Bridge?

Bridge is a new initiative to support local governments across California in recruiting and attracting workers for various local government careers through Registered Apprenticeships. Bridge focuses on non-traditional apprenticeships in fields like human resources, accounting, IT, health and human services and more.

The Institute for Local Government (ILG) is spearheading Bridge, including a pilot phase of 5-10 Registered Apprenticeships in California local governments.

What are Registered Apprenticeships?

A Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) is a federally or state-accredited career pathway program that incorporates classroom learning with on-the-job training.

RAPs have been successful to help public sector employers meet increasing labor demands by preparing and growing the workforce in construction, technology, health care, education and many vocational sectors.

According to a Calbright report, Registered Apprenticeship Programs offer higher retention rates than non-apprenticed career pathways and participants advance faster than traditional hires. *(Source: The Road to Optimizing California's Public Sector Labor Market, 2024)*

A RAP consists of the following components:



On-the-Job
Training



Classroom or
Online Instruction



Paid
Employment



Supervision



Industry-Recognized
Credentials

🔍 DID YOU KNOW?

A recent ILG survey found that **nearly 70%** of California's cities, counties and special districts experience workforce recruitment and retention challenges. This results in vacancies in critical roles that can disrupt everything from social services and permit approvals to health service delivery.

(Source: ILG Survey, 2023)

What is a non-traditional apprenticeship?

A non-traditional apprenticeship serves career paths outside of building, construction, public safety or fire trade jobs.

How can my local government benefit from Bridge's pilot program?

Each local government has unique communities and workforce needs. Yet many share similar workforce challenges including a tight labor market, an impending wave of retirees and competition with private-sector employers.

The Bridge pilot program will help local governments to:

- Support understaffed departments by building a pipeline of skilled workers.
- Improve recruitment and retention, and as a result, minimize hiring costs.
- Expand awareness of and access to local government careers to those who have been previously under-represented.
- Provide opportunities to train existing employees in high-demand skills.

Local governments that participate in the pilot program will receive ongoing technical assistance, support and resources from ILG as they plan, develop and implement their Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Which local government jurisdictions can participate in the pilot program?

Bridge is open to California cities, counties and special districts (such as utility districts, transit districts, and parks and recreation districts). The goal of the Bridge pilot is to create a range of non-traditional Registered Apprenticeship Programs that support 5-10 different high-demand occupations with a diverse mix of California local governments to better understand how to scale the framework statewide.

Pilot jurisdictions will be selected based on these criteria:

- Jurisdiction type (a mix of city, county or special district)
- Size (population of service area/jurisdiction)
- Geography (urban, rural, suburban, mountain, etc., across the state)
- Capacity (agency staff size and interest)
- Representation of California's diverse population
- Workforce need (high-demand occupation, e.g., human resources, accounting, IT, health and human services)

SPOTLIGHT

The employer partner Twilio in San Francisco's Office of Workforce & Economic Development technology apprenticeship program saw a **91% retention rate** of software engineers who participated in the program, with apprentices staying longer at the company than university graduates. *(Source: The State of Apprenticeships in California, 2024)*

How will the pilot program work?

Once selected, ILG will work with each pilot jurisdiction to plan and customize an apprenticeship program that best meets their workforce needs. We recognize that government employers will want to direct apprenticeships that fill various jobs in specific departments - each of which may require different skill sets.

What is the timeline of the pilot program?

FALL 2024 TO FALL 2025

ILG will assist pilot jurisdictions in registering occupations and building out Registered Apprenticeship Programs for their local workforce.

FALL 2025

Programs will launch*, ILG will provide ongoing support to pilot participants through individualized technical assistance, regular community of practice meetings and a digital library that will include a suite of resources, tools, case studies, potential partners and written templates.

**Assuming successful state or federal registration*

SEPT 2025 TO SEPT 2028

During the implementation phase between approximately September 2025 and September 2028, ILG will oversee documentation of the programs' success and develop an adaptable framework that local governments throughout California can follow to address their workforce needs.

How much does it cost to join Bridge?

ILG does not charge a fee to local governments that join Bridge. Local governments will be responsible for the cost of employing apprentices and any other fees associated with the standard hiring and recruitment process. During the planning phase of the program, ILG will work with all Bridge employers to assess program costs and strategize possible funding mechanisms to offset costs to both apprentices and employers.

What is the role of the local government in Bridge?

The local government serves as the “Employer of Record” for the apprentices. With support from the Institute for Local Government, local governments will define the program structure, success measures and learning objectives and help identify the right educational and workforce partners. After the program structure is set, employers will hire and pay apprentices, provide on-the-job training, identify supervisors and select apprentices for full-time employment at the conclusion of the program.

Who runs Bridge?

Bridge is coordinated by the Institute for Local Government (ILG), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization focused on supporting California’s cities, counties and special districts. ILG is the Intermediary for Bridge, serving as the facilitator and coordinator for local government non-traditional Registered Apprenticeship Programs. With a 70-year history of supporting local governments, ILG has the expertise, resources and tools necessary to partner with California cities, counties and special districts implementing Bridge.

How can my local government get involved?

To express interest in becoming a pilot, senior staff or elected officials within city, county or special district departments should complete [this interest form](#). After submitting this form, ILG will schedule an initial consultation to discuss your jurisdiction’s workforce needs and goals, as well as any existing partnerships with educational institutions or labor unions.