

Apprenticeship System Navigators

ASN Program Overview

Last Updated: April 2022¹

Vision

Apprenticeship System Navigators (ASNs) work with educators and community partners to close the inequality gap by building relationships, offering guidance, and identifying resources that will make WBL accessible to more communities. Navigators are connectors between young people and the WBL (also known as apprenticeship / pre-apprenticeship, and ‘earn-and-learn’) opportunities that could accelerate their economic mobility. Because of a lack of information and referrals to programs and supportive services, only a small fraction of young people access WBL opportunities: in 2019, only 0.2% of all apprentices registered in California were between 16-24 years old. Meanwhile, over two-thirds of the 400,000 high school graduates in California were identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged and could benefit immensely from debt-free, skill-based learning opportunities. The ASN program envisions a world where all young people are informed about WBL and have the chance to avoid the overwhelm of college debt when transitioning from high school to pursue their education and career. Navigators will increase the number of young people who understand and connect with these future-building opportunities during the pivotal years of their early career planning.

Role and Responsibilities

Navigators pave the way to WBL opportunities by introducing young people to the value and possibility of earn-and-learn and linking these opportunities and youth educational and workforce systems.



Get the word out

ASNs collaborate with youth providers, high schools, employers, and apprentice advisors to disseminate information on WBL. They present WBL opportunities, models, benefits, risks, testimonials, and sample journeys to young people at school and community events and through field trips to employers.



Facilitate system integration

ASNs help to better integrate work-based learning pathways with the youth development system. Through feedback loops with community partners, educators and young people, they identify barriers and catalysts of progress for participants. ASNs partner with schools and WIOA providers to strategize ways to set up new infrastructure and promote equity goals.



Offer personalized support

Based on barriers identified, ASNs provide individualized guidance and services to help young people connect with WBL opportunities. In addition to WBL information, participants receive career counseling, WBL enrollment support, work readiness training, mentoring, resume preparation, interview training, and referrals to supportive services and workforce programs.

¹ This overview is a living document, detailing the ASN program. It may be updated as the program progresses.

Design Process

Through a multi-phase design process, 6 core team organizations consulted 94 community members in the California counties of San Bernardino and Riverside to develop and design the ASN program. In January 2020, the team convened to uncover a solution to better integrate the K-14 system and WBL and to encourage the participation of young people in these programs. The James Irvine Foundation funded this convening, and Third Sector, a nonprofit advisory organization, guided and supported the process.

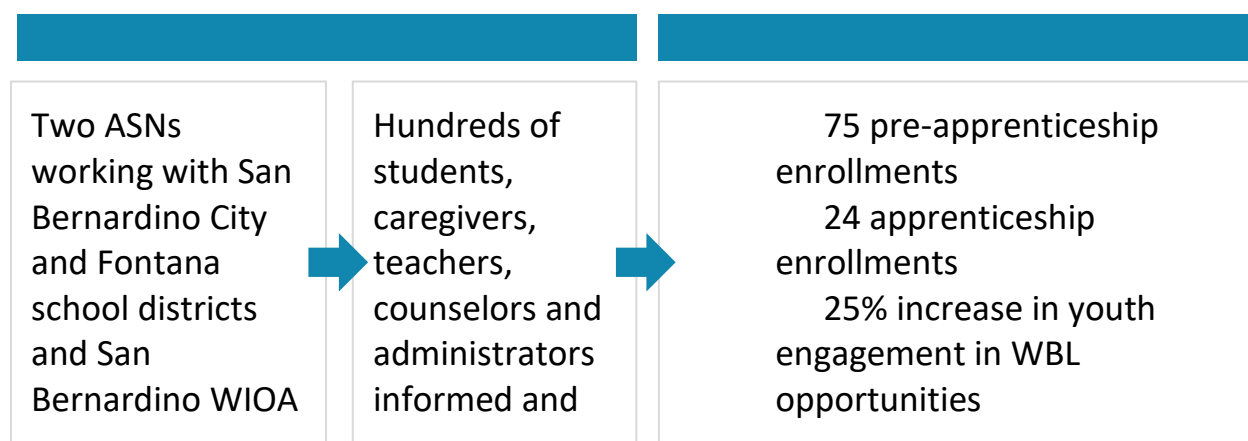
ASN Program Designers	
Better Career Design Group - Inland Empire Team	Community Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● InTech Center at Chaffey College ● LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network ● Fontana Unified School District ● San Bernardino City Unified School District ● San Bernardino Workforce Development Department ● California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Apprenticeship Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 44 young people ● 25 parents and caregivers ● 10 representatives from local community-based organizations ● 15 K-12 teachers, counselors and administrators.
6 core team organizations	94 community members

To determine the influences on apprenticeship system integration and motivation to join programs, the team engaged community members in focus groups and interviews. The team gained insights on how people receive information on career pathways and make decisions about their own trajectory, including the lack of information and entry points, a culture that promotes only traditional college options and the influence of family members on career journeys.

The team decided to produce a solution that provides young people who are 16-24 years old, particularly those with barriers to work, and their caregivers with a compelling, integrated introduction to the apprenticeship system. After coming up with over 50 different possible solutions, the core team decided to test a new role that would work with educators, providers, young people, and families to present apprenticeship opportunities. They used the prototyping technique of Investigative Rehearsal to mock up how this person might present ‘earn-and-learn’ opportunities and presented a draft script to community members to test the program plan. This testing phase allowed community members to validate and co-design the program, making it better suited to help people transcend barriers to learn about and access apprenticeship programs. Based on insights from the testing phase, the ASN program incorporated real and hypothetical apprenticeship journeys, guidance on career decisions and workplace experiences, and partnership with schools and WIOA providers to set up new infrastructure and promote equity goals.

Early Results and Program Goals

In the first 3 months of the project, ASNs have presented at 7 community or school events² to a total of over 187 community members. They have engaged 9 young people interested in WBL pathways. Based on surveys, nearly 100% of event participants reported a stronger understanding of apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship pathways and enrollment processes. ASNs have also toured Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to learn more about the quality and scale of available local programming. After initial presentations, ASNs are often invited to return to give additional presentations to more staff, families, or youth. Already, high schools outside of the geographic focus area for the pilot program have even proactively reached out to the ASN program to request their services. Schools and providers are recognizing that the ASN program provides an essential bridge between career education services and next-level apprenticeship opportunities.



The objectives of the ASN program are to increase the number of young people engaged in, completing, and reaching livable wage jobs from WBL opportunities. To ensure equity is at the center, the ASN program will track its outreach and participation with the goal of engaging and supporting young people who are representative of the population in the factors of gender, race/ethnicity, disability, foster care experience, income, criminal legal system-involvement, and unstable housing experience. The latest data on the ASN program’s progress will be publicly available on a dashboard.

Employers have highlighted that they are more likely to offer WBL opportunities when there is a reliable pipeline of potential students and those students commit to completing programs. We believe that, as the ASN program allows more students to explore these opportunities and recognize their value, employer relationships and the program’s value to employers will strengthen, which will generate more local WBL opportunities.

² 1 WIOA Provider Program Manager Meeting, 2 High School Career Fairs, 2 Parent Meetings, 1 CTE Teacher Meeting, 1 K-8 STEAM Conference

Promising Practices for High Impact and Sustainability

Based on initial insights from working with high schools and WIOA providers, the ASN program is incorporating several practices to make WBL accessible to more young people and more organizations who support their career journeys. These initial enhancements, developed in the first three months of the program, are a testament to the program's potential innovation and impact. They allow ASNs to go beyond outreach and also effectively center equity, help to remove barriers to joining programs and recommend better ways to coordinate across high schools, community colleges, and WBL programs.

Individualized case management services: Responding to the variety of barriers that the population faces, ASNs plan to provide the following services to facilitate successful exploration, enrollment, and completion of WBL programs:

- Apprenticeship Education, including awareness of models, benefits, challenges, enrollment processes, and local opportunities
- Career Counseling, including guidance in selecting an initial education path, training, or job
- Enrollment Support for pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, or other WBL programs
- Work Readiness Training to develop foundational (attitude), workplace (attendance, appearance, ambition), and interpersonal skills (acceptance, appreciation, accountability)
- Job Search Preparation: resume preparation and interview skills
- Formal Mentoring with structured activities that provide guidance, support, and encouragement to develop competence and character
- Referral to Supportive Services to enable successful WBL participation, including assistance with dependent care, transportation, housing, tools, employment-related attire, testing fees, academic materials, etc.
- Referral to WIOA Youth Programs to provide intense, individualized workforce services for identified needs
- Connection to Other Educational Institutions: connection to college or secondary education (to earn a high school diploma)

Regional leadership to support outreach: The core implementation team bolsters ASN outreach and recruitment. The two school districts in the core team connect ASNs with CTE teachers, guidance counselors, and high school administrators eager for information on resources and WBL opportunities that can set their students up for long-term success. Two regional system intermediaries, the InTech Center and the LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network, as well as the San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board link ASNs with local youth providers, WBL programs, and leaders, such as a county superintendent who is mapping CTE pathways from high schools and community college and building out pre-apprenticeship programs at high schools. These regional organizations in the core implementation team will continue to coach and support the ASNs in identifying the local connectors and college and career events that can help ASNs connect with the right audience for referrals.

Leveraging expertise in serving youth with barriers: With appreciation for various outreach methods and individualized services needed, the program hires ASNs with experience and competencies around

serving youth with diverse barriers. The program utilizes the unique strengths of each ASN in a collaborative team structure, rather than simply assigning ASNs to different geographic areas. For instance, each ASN brings language skills, experience working with schools or WIOA providers, case management experience, and other strengths which can be pivotal for engaging with specific partners or individuals.

Standardization: ASNs have created Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to establish program elements and facilitate expansion or replication in other areas. This documentation will strengthen program efficiency and streamline operations, allowing ASNs to focus more time on responding to individual needs and system change.

Accessible and inclusive: ASNs continue to note opportunities to improve accessibility and inclusiveness for youth with barriers. Presentations will be delivered in Spanish to ensure that the program includes and builds trust within Latino communities. Materials are intentionally created and refined with the purpose of being easily comprehensible. The tone is upbeat and youth-friendly, the language is clear and avoids industry jargon, the images represent a variety of identities, and the materials are adjusted for each event based on context and audience.

WBL opportunity database: Understanding that young people are interested in a range of industries and skill options, the program is developing a diverse database of apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and other quality, tuition-free WBL opportunities in the area that lead to well-paying jobs.

Sustainability planning: The program is developing a sustainability plan that will increase the number of ASNs in the region and access ongoing financial support through government resources, grants and contracts, and employers.

Field trips for immersion and faster starts: ASNs are planning group tours of employer sites that offer apprenticeship programs to offer youth an immersive introduction to the WBL journey. These trips also allow ASNs to work closely with youth at new school partners (following parent permission) as they wait to initiate data sharing agreements with the school and get permission to present on school grounds.

Equity-based continuous improvement process: The ASN program is currently working with schools and WIOA providers to establish a continuous improvement process that will use administrative data and stakeholder engagement to monitor results and recommend improvements. As currently envisioned, schools and apprenticeship programs will link the data on who is participating in the program to demographic data and outcomes and then provide aggregate analysis, segmented by equity factors. This will reveal if the program delivery is equitable, if it is encouraging young people to enter and complete WBL programs, and if it is connecting people to well-paying jobs. We are currently working on data sharing agreements with the pilot school districts and expect them to be established by Fall 2022. Using online collaboration tools, ASNs are already tracking and analyzing issues in accessibility, usability, and inclusion. The ASNs are engaging the core implementation team and other stakeholders to problem-solve these issues and develop system infrastructure or advocate for policy changes to counter systemic barriers and increase equity. When the continuous improvement process is established, the core implementation team and other stakeholders will regularly review open equity and outcomes data on

the dashboard, as well as qualitative data from surveys and interviews with educators, providers, and young people, and provide recommendations to improve the program.