

Quick Tips: Making Apprenticeships Inclusive of LGBTQ+ Youth

Diversity is one of the seven elements of a registered apprenticeship program (RAP). As explained by U.S. Department of Labor, all RAPs should be designed to reflect the communities in which they operate, and RAP sponsors must engage in anti-discrimination work across their organization to ensure access, equity, and inclusion.¹ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other ([LGBTQ+](#)) communities have historically experienced discrimination in employment and may face barriers to success at work.² This tip sheet highlights promising strategies for ensuring that RAPs are inclusive of LGBTQ+ youth.

What You Can Do

Understand barriers to employment experienced by the LGBTQ+ community.



Until 2020, there was no nationwide ban on [employment discrimination](#) against LGBTQ+ people. As a result, almost half of the United States' 8 million LGBTQ+ workers have experienced workplace [harassment in their lifetimes](#). Past experiences of discrimination or harassment can induce [workplace trauma](#) which may discourage people from returning to the workplace in the future.

Within the LGBTQ+ community, transgender people and LGBTQ+ people of color are [most likely to face employment barriers](#). Black transgender people, for example, [experience unemployment rates of 28%](#), up to four times higher than the national average.

LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to [experience difficulties in school](#) and [unstable housing](#), which could prevent them from obtaining traditional credentials and work experience.

Recognize the benefits of diversity in the workplace.



LGBTQ+ people are vibrant members of our communities and their inclusion can have positive benefits on your workplace.

Research shows that diverse workplaces are [more productive and positive](#).

Diversity of viewpoints, experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives is particularly important in cybersecurity settings because it [protects organizations from a wider array of threats](#).

"The people who are carrying out these [malicious hacking] attacks don't come from one background. You can't defend against that by having one train of thought, you need those different perspectives."

– Christine Izuakor, [Cybersecurity Founder and CEO](#)

¹ The U.S. Department of Labor. "What is a Registered Apprenticeship Program?" <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/registered-apprenticeship-program>.

² Norton, K. 2021. eSecurity Planet. "Tech's LGBTQ+ Report Card." <https://www.esecurityplanet.com/trends/tech-lgbtq-diversity/>.



Recruit and welcome members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Underrepresented groups in the workplace such as [LGBTQ+ youth are less likely to apply for jobs](#) even when they are qualified for the role. Seize the opportunity to be recognized and appreciated for attracting top talent from all communities. Include specific anti-discrimination and diversity statements regarding sexuality and gender in job postings or RAP announcements to create a welcoming environment from the first interaction to the last shift.

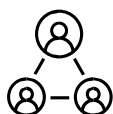
“You can’t actively seek out and track sexual diversity...but you can create an environment where people feel accepted and celebrated for who they are”

– Christina Luconi, [Chief People Officer at Rapid7](#)

Young LGBTQ+ people are less motivated to apply to or work in organizations they feel are not accepting of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The [Trade Union’s Congress’](#) guide to LGBTQ+ inclusive apprenticeships suggests that programs feature the stories and voices of LGBTQ+ mentors and role models in recruitment materials, public communications, and website content to demonstrate a commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Support LGBTQ+ apprentices from enrollment to completion.

Between 10 and 20% of LGBTQ+ workers [seek out new employment opportunities](#) because of discrimination; this impacts your bottom line. Ensure all employees and partners treat LGBTQ+ apprentices with respect and dignity by [creating explicit standards and core values](#) of LGBTQ+ non-discrimination that everyone is aware of.



Strive to create a workplace where employees feel safe to be open about their identity. Normalize practices like including [personal pronouns](#) in email signatures and introductions. At the office, consider establishing a [gender-neutral bathroom](#).

Commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion should throughout a RAP, with in-person or virtual ‘spaces’ for LGBTQ+ expression and fellowship such as LGBTQ+ apprentice committees, networks, and support groups. These opportunities improve the employment experience by [diminishing feelings of isolation](#).

Additional Resources & Partners

[Maven Youth](#) provides training and mentorship for LGBTQ+ youth to explore and prepare for opportunities in the technology sector.

[OSTEM](#) is a national, chapter-based professional association for that provides fellowship and support for LGBT+ members of the Science-Technology-Engineering-Math (STEM) community.

[Out in Tech](#) creates opportunities for LGBTQ+ tech professionals to advance their careers through networking, mentorship opportunities for youth, and social advocacy.

The [Office of Apprenticeship](#) Equal Employment Opportunity regulation guidance on sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination provides background on important policies that govern RAPs.

