



# Apprenticeship Standards Builder Requirements Assessment

Prepared for CareerSource Florida

October 2022



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction .....	3
Stakeholder Engagement.....	6
US Department of Labor RAPIDS Data.....	17
Customer Experience Design Research Findings .....	25
Strategic Considerations and Next Steps .....	44
Appendix 1: Design Exemplar .....	48
Appendix 2: Heuristics (Usability) Evaluation .....	53
Appendix 3: User Flows and Processes .....	65
Appendix 4: USDOL RAPIDS Data .....	88
Appendix 5: Acronyms .....	90

### Disclaimer

Our report may be relied upon by CareerSource Florida for the purpose set out in the Scope section only pursuant to the terms of our engagement letter. We disclaim all responsibility to any other party for any loss or liability that the other party may suffer or incur arising from or relating to or in any way connected with the contents of our report, the provision of our report to the other party, or the reliance upon our report by the other party.



## **Executive Summary**

### Apprenticeship Standards Builder Requirements Assessment



## Executive Summary

In May 2022, CareerSource Florida retained Ernst & Young LLP (EY) to evaluate existing apprenticeship processes, engage stakeholders, learn from state and national best practices, and identify strategic considerations to inform the adoption of the standards builder inside the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database (RAPIDS). The project was initiated by CareerSource Florida and has progressed in collaboration with support from the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (FLDEO). This report contains findings, technical assessments, and benchmarking to support the registered apprenticeship program (RAP) strategy and inform changes that may result in improvements to current platforms and processes. Considerations that may help align inter-agency efforts and coordination are identified to assist CareerSource Florida in prioritizing future tasks associated with apprenticeship strategy and growth.

CareerSource Florida's goal is to help strengthen the Registered Apprenticeship Program model in Florida by providing objective insights collected over the course of the project. Overall, the findings reveal the registered apprenticeship model in Florida has a firm foundation. Stakeholder engagement and technical assessments reveal opportunities to enhance existing practices, process, and technology.

While the complete findings from project activities are detailed throughout this report, several high-level takeaways capture the sentiment of stakeholders, are consistent with RAP leading practices, and support the design and benchmarking research.

- ▶ Stakeholder consensus is clear - registered apprenticeships can be a **strategic, turnkey talent solution for the state of Florida**. There is eagerness, and a pronounced sense of urgency among all stakeholders to accelerate apprenticeship success.
- ▶ Real time information, design changes, tools, features, and RAPIDS integration on [apprenticeflorida.com](https://apprenticeflorida.com) that compel user action can serve as a force multiplier, allowing **end-users to initiate, engage, and manage apprenticeships more effectively**.
- ▶ The efficiency, not just growth, of Florida's RAP model should be prioritized. Today, **Florida ranks last among comparator states (Identified by CareerSource Florida: Alabama, Colorado, Michigan, Ohio, South Carolina, and Tennessee) in per capita registered apprenticeship** growth in the last two years, and opportunities to diversify industry representation are abundant.
- ▶ **Inter-agency (CareerSource Florida, FLDOE, FLDEO) collaboration and joint goal setting is essential** to identify and reconcile any perceived or existing competing priorities, and ensure uniform policy and communication exists that powers the successful deployment of apprenticeships.
- ▶ Integrated, enterprise technology platforms will be essential to enable access to standards building, case management, and RAPIDS integration. **All six comparator states use a customer relationship management (CRM) system** and other digital means for RAP tasks.

Through a continued focus on strategic partnerships, operational alignment, and investment in key technologies, Florida could increase the efficacy of all RAP engagement, registration, management, compliance, reporting, and sponsorship processes. These efficiencies can lead to growth and diversification among industries and underrepresented populations, and improving these components will be essential to meeting Florida Governor Ron DeSantis' goal to "making Florida the number one state in the nation for workforce education by 2030."





# Introduction

Methodology, Process, and Data Sources



## Methodology, process, and data sources:

EY coordinated with **CareerSource Florida** and the FLDOE to conduct extensive stakeholder engagement, research, design analysis, and benchmarking of Florida's current processes as well as analysis of comparator states identified by CareerSource Florida. Research on best practice states included a usability analysis/comparison of the ApprenticeFlorida website ([apprenticeflorida.com](http://apprenticeflorida.com)) and all comparator state apprenticeship websites, the volume and mix of apprenticeship programs, the current degree to which states integrate with RAPIDS, and the use of interactive toolkits and data for employers and potential sponsors. In addition to research, EY conducted focus groups and interviews with stakeholders in Florida's workforce development ecosystem and comparator states.

A specific focus of the assessment included the elements necessary to improve the standards building process for employers, especially as it relates to the RAPIDS system in use by the FLDOE and CareerSource Florida. RAPIDS is the online database used by state authorized agencies to manage all apprenticeship programs. This database is managed by the United States Department of Labor, and utilized by authorized FLDOE staff to register and manage apprenticeships. Standards building is the process by which authorized staff at the FLDOE build components of apprenticeships, including wage scales, related technical instruction, and other essential requirements.

Our team coordinated activities according to the project schedule outlined in the scope of work. To ensure progress and communication with CareerSource Florida, the following activities occurred at regular intervals through the duration of the project:

- ▶ Weekly meetings with CareerSource Florida, FLDOE, and FLDEO leadership to discuss updates and align priorities
- ▶ Monthly progress reports provided to client leadership, enumerating project activities
- ▶ A strategic framework and visioning session with CareerSource Florida, FLDOE, and FLDEO leadership

The key project components included:





This report provides the context and considerations to build upon the current strategic priorities for apprenticeships in Florida, improving the user experience of all stakeholders in the apprenticeship ecosystem. In addition, the report serves to:

- ▶ Communicate findings related to the successful engagement, awareness, outreach, and education of various stakeholder groups
- ▶ Provide technical and customer experience considerations that augment apprenticeflorida.com, resulting in an easy and efficient way for employers, sponsors, potential apprentices, or other stakeholders to inquire, initiate, and/or complete a RAP process
- ▶ Provide a set of considerations and next steps for agency leadership and staff at CareerSource Florida and the FLDOE

The following documents, data sources, and resources were consulted during the research process. These materials were utilized to provide context as to the current state of the apprenticeship ecosystem, assist in the design of stakeholder engagement sessions, and/or provide background information to substantiate findings in either the stakeholder engagement or research portions of the project.

- ▶ [2020-2021 CareerSource Florida Annual Report](#)
- ▶ [2021-2022 Florida Annual Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Report](#)
- ▶ [2020-2021 Florida Annual Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Report](#)
- ▶ CareerSource Florida Job Seeker and Business Research Findings Report (August 2021) (Client provided)
- ▶ [The Florida Chamber of Commerce - The Florida 2030 Blueprint](#)
- ▶ FL Workforce Transformation Legislation Overview - REACH Act Summary (.pptx) (Client provided)
- ▶ [USDOL Legislation, Regulations, and Guidance for Apprenticeships](#)
- ▶ [Congressional Research Service - Apprenticeship Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- ▶ FLDOE Grant Application - "Modernization of Florida's Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-apprenticeship Systems" (Client provided)
- ▶ [USDOL Apprenticeship Building America \(ABA\), NOFO](#)
- ▶ FL DOL SAA and OA FAQ's
- ▶ [CareerSource Florida Workforce Training Institute Training Modules](#)
- ▶ [Apprentice Florida Education Toolkit](#)
- ▶ [Department of Labor - A Quick-Start Toolkit](#)
- ▶ [United States Department of Labor Apprenticeship Website](#)
- ▶ [Florida Workforce Investment & Opportunity \(WIOA\) Act Data](#)
- ▶ [Florida DOE Pathways to Career Opportunities \(PCOG\) Program Annual Report & Data](#)
- ▶ [Florida Job Growth Grant Fund](#)
- ▶ Comparator state apprenticeship and related websites
- ▶ Comparator state authorized apprenticeship directors/staff





# **Stakeholder Engagement**

Process, Framework, and Findings Summary



## Findings and observations

EY conducted research on current processes within Florida and a select number of leading practice states, while simultaneously facilitating engagement sessions (interviews and focus groups) with the stakeholders shown below. The research, design analysis, benchmarking, and stakeholder engagement processes identified several clear needs and opportunities within the apprenticeship program. While not all needs can be addressed simultaneously, they should be enumerated and prioritized.

### Stakeholder engagement process

Numerous stakeholder groups were interviewed during the project. These groups included agency leadership, CareerSource Florida Navigators and Apprenticeship Training Representatives (ATRs), sponsors and employers, workforce/talent leaders, higher education administrators, and comparator state leadership. The stakeholder engagement process revealed clear challenges faced by each group and provided EY insights as to how the program is currently performing. Of particular interest to the project team was the intersection of the findings, and the interdependent nature of the work that each stakeholder group is engaged in while supporting the RAP program in Florida.

Feedback and findings from all stakeholder groups were aggregated to prevent duplication and represent the most common concerns. It is important to note that findings are shown as reported by stakeholders and do not factor in current priorities, initiatives, or efforts underway at respective agencies. Quotes are added to emphasize certain elements.

Benchmark states were selected based on recommendations from agency, and some considerations included population, OA/SAA designation, use of the RAPIDS database, and similar challenges related to adoption of the standards builder in RAPIDS.



14 focus groups with  
8-15 attendees in  
each meeting



25 interviews with  
leadership, Navigators  
and ATRs, best  
practice states





During stakeholder engagement, EY developed a thematic framework by which findings can be categorized and further assessed. This framework was validated with client leadership during visioning sessions, and the development of the themes coincided with the following observations:

- ▶ Stakeholders in all groups expressed concern about the awareness, promotion, and available marketing and outreach collateral they perceived necessary to maintain or grow momentum for apprenticeships in the state.
- ▶ Stakeholders, especially employers, sponsors, and workforce leaders, expressed belief there is an opportunity for more turnkey technical tools, information, guides, and other resources to compel action in underrepresented industries and serve to debunk apprenticeship myths.
- ▶ CareerSource Navigators and FLDOE ATRs expressed there is variance in their collaboration, planning, tools, and communication across the state, leading to ambiguous purview, uniformity, and efficiency in operations.

This framework will be referenced throughout the findings report to provide context. All findings, observations, and considerations can be fairly grouped into one of these themes and are tagged accordingly on the following pages.

### **Engagement theme**

The tasks associated with the outreach, engagement, awareness, education, and promotion of RAPs in Florida. Also, the campaigns, collateral, collaboration, and partnerships necessary to debunk apprenticeship myths, and establish apprenticeships as the go-to solution for industry and economic development initiatives.

**Making RAPs a known and go-to talent solution**

### **Technical theme**

The tasks, tools, and resources associated with the adoption of the RAPIDS standards builder, and its integration with necessary changes to apprenticeflorida.com. Also, the toolkits for employers, sponsors, and other groups that will result in a better-informed process when inquiring, initiating, and/or completing a RAP process.

**Making RAP information actionable, and easy to start, register, and manage**

### **Organizational theme**

The tasks, collaboration, policies, and resource allocation that will result in process improvement, training, clarity, communication, and uniformity for all professionals at the FLDOE/CareerSource Florida who are engaged in the work of marketing, registration, management, reporting, and compliance of registered apprenticeships.

**Making apprenticeship management and operations efficient for ATRs & Navigators**



## Stakeholder Findings

### Engagement Theme Findings

The findings below represent the most prominent stakeholder concerns regarding the tasks associated with RAP ENGAGEMENT as described above. Addressing these concerns is key to establishing further industry utilization and capturing audiences who may not be familiar with the value of the apprenticeship model.

**Most stakeholders were not aware of ApprenticeFlorida.com, and the myriad websites in the workforce development, chamber of commerce, non-profit, and State of Florida governmental ecosystem can confuse end-users.**

While the ApprenticeFlorida effort has gained significant momentum since its inception, there is still significant confusion for various stakeholder groups regarding the authorized central location for all information related to apprenticeships. In addition, the platform as it exists today lacks certain tools and collateral that are proven effective in comparator states. Some of these include access to mock standards building, interactive dashboards, the ability to interact with staff, and a robust intake and case management capacity.

**ATRs and Navigators are known as helpful and knowledgeable resources for employers seeking to learn more about apprenticeships or register an apprenticeship program, but a lack of tools and training can delay response times to employers.**

In many cases, ATRs and Navigators work closely in coordinating engagement, communication, and registration with employers, sponsors, and higher education partners. Stakeholders mentioned a few ATRs manage more than one region, leading to a backlog in processing. In their estimation, this could be mitigated with additional features, information, and tools on the Apprentice Florida website, as well as the ability to manage and follow up on inquiries via a centralized customer relationship management tool. Staff believes that integration of standards building in the consumer facing site is critical in shortening the registration process.

**A degree of “myth-busting” is necessary for the continued success of the Florida RAP model.**

Stakeholders report a lack of information, or antiquated information and processes being used to make decisions that directly affect the awareness, adoption, and registration of RAPs in Florida. Employers with apprenticeship programs noted other employers may be reluctant to join due to misconceptions including apprenticeships serving unions, temporary workers, or interns only. In addition, Navigators report that a lack of online tools and data discourage industry from creating RAPs. Citing their business development responsibilities, Navigators report that employers are initially interested, but quickly discouraged by the absence of guidance and resources when seeking to learn more about apprenticeships.

**Apprenticeships require a more active versus passive level of engagement from employers, and stakeholders agreed costs and wage scales are as important as standards building when determining if apprenticeships will be a viable solution.**

Sponsors and employers mentioned that in addition to the lengthy process to register for an apprenticeship with the FLDOE, wage scales are confusing. Employers need clarity and support on funding models and grants for apprenticeships. Stakeholders noted the



importance of grant funding for apprenticeships but worry about relying on those funds due to their questionable sustainability, and application/compliance hurdles. Some employers mentioned the complexity of funding apprenticeship wage scales is often the reason they choose to abandon the process. Comparator states noted employers are pivotal in driving the success of RAPs, and that strategic, intentional, and direct communication and marketing tailored to employers is important in increasing the number of registered apprenticeships. Employer and sponsors must have clarity to determine if they have the resources to manage the administrative requirements of a RAP.

“ There has been a big push to increase apprenticeships, and we’re glad additional funding and staffing assistance is coming. We’re increasing volume of work and will need additional training and capacity.  
– FLDOE staff member

**FLDOE and CareerSource Florida staff have expressed concerns regarding the inconsistent processes and resources available to strategically engage with stakeholders in their region that could benefit from the registered apprenticeship model.**

Many stakeholders, including agency leadership, expressed a need for consistency across resources, services and marketing efforts among regions. Service offerings and program names vary by local workforce board which leads to confusion from employers with programs in different regions across the state. By creating a uniform process across regions, employers could have a clearer understanding of their responsibilities. Defining this process could also provide operational clarity to ATRs and Navigators.

**Navigators recognize the imbalance in occupations represented in apprenticeships and believe they can help.**

As part of their normal responsibilities, Navigators wish to expand their sphere of influence by engaging in additional professional development, business development, and outreach efforts aimed at non-traditional industries and populations who have historically not taken advantage of apprenticeships. Some of these include healthcare, information technology, education, and other business and professional services. By doing so, they believe they can “open the bottleneck” and guide employers, and the partners they rely on, to the appropriate training and fiscal resources, leading to increased apprenticeship adoption.



**The level of coordination between employers, sponsors, and related technical instruction (RTI) providers are unique to each county and LWDB, which regional workforce development board directors identified as both a strength and a challenge.**

Twenty-four local workforce development boards (LWDBs) across the state present twenty-four unique opportunities for regionally specific interventions and relationships. Some local workforce development boards demonstrate a much stronger commitment to apprenticeship programming than others, for various reasons. This can be a struggle for ATRs, who are charged with growing RAP success in their region. A stronger effort to map and assess the challenges, may result in a more defined RAP approach.

**Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations (EDO) have a direct line of communication to the business community and are willing to market apprenticeships as a talent solution to current, expanding, and new businesses.**

Chambers of Commerce and EDOs are hearing concerns from the business community about talent, workforce, and business expansion issues. They expressed a desire for simple marketing collateral with actionable and compelling information to provide to employers or potential sponsors. In addition, these organizations are eager to share apprenticeship opportunities more during the host of networking and industry specific events they coordinate for the business community. Attending, speaking at, or sponsoring these events provides direct access and marketing to employers and educators in the community.

**Stakeholders are confused by the concurrent nature of aggressive RAP promotion by the state of Florida and the lack of knowledge and misperceptions about apprenticeships that exist today.**

Some stakeholders suggest that while well intentioned, outreach and promotion efforts are fragmented, focused on specific regions or occupations only, and lack comprehensive coordination with appropriate strategic partners that will result in mass interest and adoption. Some mentioned a statewide campaign, centered around the ApprenticeFlorida effort, could yield results.

**“** We are excited the state is working on enhancing the apprenticeship system and we would like to be more involved. Our local companies are having a hard time finding talent and apprenticeships are a potential solution. We need a starting point . – EcoDevelopment professional



## Technical Theme Findings

The findings below represent the most prominent stakeholder concerns regarding the tasks associated with the RAP TECHNICAL theme. The findings below represent stakeholder input related to the toolkits for employers, sponsors, and other groups that may result in a better-informed process when inquiring, initiating, and/or completing a RAP process.

**The registration process is far more efficient when managed via a structured customer relationship management system.**

The analog nature of the current apprenticeship registration presents significant challenges for employers. ATRs expressed a desire for a streamlined intake and approval platform to support better project and case management and accelerate RAP approval. Paper templates and apprenticeship agreements are not efficient and create delays and disjointed communication. ATRs and employers suggest enterprise technologies and integration with RAPIDS to support their ability to effectively manage inquiries, registrations, and changes to RAPs. To increase speed and efficiency, comparator states have transitioned from a paper registration process to a fully electronic process including the use of RAPIDS standards building, electronic signatures, and workflows. Comparator states report that digital registration, file management, and file retention process and policy has dramatically decreased the time it takes to register a program and complete all approvals. All 6 comparator states interviewed noted they only use an enterprise CRM tool and/or RAPIDS for project management and file storage.

“

Our office decided to transition our registration process and file storage to a fully digital process. The transition was hard but once we had the right equipment and training it made for a much more efficient system.  
– Comparator state apprenticeship director

**The USDOL RAPIDS standard builder is in beta mode and will be the preferred standards builder in Florida. Sponsors struggle with the administrative burden of apprenticeships and require responsive technical support. ATRs need more training for RAPIDS.**

Although the expectation is clear from the start, sponsors reported a profound challenge in maintaining records, compliance, and reporting of apprenticeship tasks. In addition, they are concerned about the administrative load on their assigned ATRs, who are “well-intentioned” but at times overwhelmed with work and not able to respond quickly. ATRs spend a disproportionate amount of time interpreting requirements and seeking guidance for apprenticeship initiatives from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). While integration of these changes is important, there is a concern about the administrative burden it presents. Additional coordination and liaison efforts with the USDOL, coupled with organized feedback to ATRs, is desired. ATRs also desire increased FLDOE leadership



engagement with the USDOL to communicate and resolve concerns relating to the RAPIDS database and standards builder and unlock certain user features that would make the platform more usable for both ATRs, staff, and sponsors. In discussions with comparator states, they have seen success in using the RAPIDS standard builder, despite some constraints. Comparator states recommended staying in constant communication with USDOL to stay up to date on any technology improvements and updated requirements, especially while the system is still in beta mode.

**Employers and sponsors expressed confusion on where to start the inquiry and registration process and need interactive resources, prior to engaging with standards building or ATRs.**

Universal confusion exists among employers and sponsors, and a “starting point” is necessary to guide their value assessment, and subsequent registration of apprenticeships. Employers who have participated expressed sincere belief that apprenticeships are a viable talent solution but are concerned about the confusing process for registration and standards building. Employers and sponsors reported the need for building “mock” apprenticeships that model their costs, timelines, and responsibilities to help them determine the potential of an apprenticeship program and start the process well informed. In addition, employers and sponsors desire an online repository, dashboard, toolkit, or quick access to quickly identify existing programs, occupations, and training providers. Users on the ApprenticeFlorida platform report while the content is helpful, it is static and lacks interactivity.

“ I believe apprenticeships can be valuable for my company but the registration process, red-tape and lack of easy to find resources are making it really difficult. – CNC/machining employer

**While successful for many, stakeholders shared a belief that the current RAP model does not serve all business types and sizes equally. The belief is that educational outreach and toolkits can remedy this matter.**

Today among employers, alternative talent solutions are seen as easier to navigate and use than apprenticeships. It was noted that awareness of RAPs is high, but lack of resources among employers can lead to low engagement in the process. Also, utilization is low among smaller and mid-sized employers due to perceptions of high bureaucracy and complexity in the apprenticeship model. Smaller businesses face higher hurdles and costs associated with completing RAP approval and compliance relative to their larger peers, who have the capacity and relationships necessary to participate in a RAP. Stakeholders suggested establishing and empowering regional coalitions of small businesses within a particular industry, which may scale their resources and amplify relationships with the DOE, DOL, and RTI providers. Also, consortium or non-profit based RAP sponsorship was noted as a leading practice in comparator states that



reduces burden on employers. Employers are confused with recent introductions to hybrid, competency based learning, and other RAP models intended to provide flexibility but can result in confusion without sufficient outreach and educational efforts.

**Comparator states place a priority on public access to apprenticeship programs, standards, and occupations via their apprenticeship website or other tools. (Some ATRs and Navigators are aware of a list that is accessible to them).**

Employers, educators and community partners mentioned the importance of having a list of current programs to help increase understanding and marketing towards future apprentices or other employers. In discussion with best practice states, Alabama shared [the interactive dashboard](#) located on their website that shows current RAPs and details including the industry, company, location, and size.

**While eager to participate, educational institutions and training providers have differing perceptions and difficulties in accommodating training and instruction for apprenticeships and believe they can help ideate solutions.**

According to stakeholders, private educational institutions and training providers have shown far more interest and ability than public institutions in providing related training and instruction. Though education administrators expressed support and enthusiasm for the potential of apprenticeships, they expressed concern about their current inability to deploy RTI and need guidance on how to embed competencies for apprenticeships into curriculum. Complexities exist with competency-based modalities that present trouble for higher education including cohort and section capacities, instructional schedules, limited space, equipment needs, customized curriculum, and instructor availability. Administrators did express a sincere desire to learn more about how to reconcile operational challenges with RTI related needs of the apprenticeship model. Despite the additional burden, including the time and cost to certify in-house instructors, employers reported an increased trend of bringing RTI “in-house” to lower costs, rates of attrition, and circumvent challenges in working with institutions of higher education. Some employers and sponsors expressed a preference in working with industry credentialing organizations for proprietary curriculum, as it can offer opportunities for asynchronous learning that benefits work schedules. Employers/sponsors seek less prescriptive requirements.

“ Our State College has an apprenticeship program and has had a hard time filling the classes and graduating students. Finding businesses that are eager and not intimidated to participate has been difficult too.  
– Higher ed leader



## Organizational Theme Findings

The findings below represent stakeholder themes regarding the tasks, collaboration, policies, and resource allocation that will result in process improvement, training, clarity, communication, and uniformity for all professionals at the FLDOE/ CareerSource Florida who are engaged in the work of marketing, registration, management, reporting, and compliance of registered apprenticeships.

**Today, some role ambiguity exists, and duties vary demonstrably in different regions, for both ATRs and Navigators in apprenticeship related business development tasks. Collaboration between the two roles varies widely across the state.**

The FLDOE is the State Authorized Agency (SAA) charged with all federal responsibilities and management of the registered apprenticeship program. However, sometimes the lines between business development, standards building, and management of RAPs can be blurred, negatively impacting employers and sponsors. Role purview and a consistent and collaborative framework that clearly delineates duties for each role is desired by stakeholders, and could lead to efficiencies and clarity for employers.

**Significant apprenticeship subject matter expertise exists among CareerSource Florida and the FLDOE staff, and this expertise may be underutilized because of operational responsibilities within each role.**

Since the creation of the ApprenticeFlorida collaborative, information sharing and coordination among agencies has improved. Nonetheless, various stakeholders agree and encourage a deeper involvement of ATRs and Navigators in strategic planning. These two roles are seen as the linchpin of the RAP model, and consistently demonstrate technical skill that could be used to benefit operations and resource allocation planning.

**Both CareerSource Florida and FLDOE leadership agree there is a need for an inter-agency customer relationship management system for effective prospect, standards building, and management of all RAPs.**

Along with consumer facing features, the notion of case managing RAPs in all stages across agencies has merit. Today, there are multiple manual steps in processing RAP applications, causing delays in the review/approval process due to the current workload and manual exchange of required RAP documents. In fact, the current process (mapped in Appendix 3) can include up to 25 distinct steps, all managed through manual communication (email) with the sponsor. In some cases, RAP standards building and registration can take months, depending on a number of variables. A review and approval tracker was mentioned by stakeholders, and in some cases is used in comparator states, allowing a central location for all stakeholders to be involved in the RAP review and approval processes.

**Navigators feel their responsibilities relating to the RAP program are unclear, and sometimes can conflict with directives from their local workforce development board.**

Navigators report apprenticeships are a viable solution for employers and significant interest exists. However, they desire training empowering them to guide employers and potential sponsors, and to navigate basic questions in a way that encourages the pursuit of apprenticeships. In addition, Navigators are at times confused about how and when to promote certain grant and training initiatives, as most existing programs are designed to support traditional workforce training, not apprenticeships. Navigators report a large variance in the prioritization of apprenticeship growth in their respective regions. Some boards proactively encourage participation, some don't.



## Stakeholder engagement and findings summary

Stakeholder engagement proved to be a powerful tool in understanding the current state of the apprenticeship program, as well as the strengths and challenges perceived by each group. Background research and benchmarking was valuable in designing engagement sessions, and the resulting framework will allow **CareerSource Florida** and the FLDOE to prioritize solutions moving forward. In many cases, similar observations and challenges were communicated by different stakeholder groups. The insight and vantage point of each stakeholder group served to highlight their own unique priorities and challenges while helping establish a baseline of strategic considerations and next steps for the client. All stakeholder groups agree the following high-level strengths exist today:

- ▶ The FLDOE, **CareerSource Florida**, and the FLDEO have expressed their full support and belief in the registered apprenticeship model, and recent investments and priorities indicate this is a recognized and underleveraged talent solution.
- ▶ In recent years, more education, tools, and efforts have been made to encourage employer and sponsor participation, and the launching of [apprenticeflorida.com](http://apprenticeflorida.com) was a good first step in outreach and engagement for end users.
- ▶ Apprenticeship Training Representatives (ATRs) and CareerSource Navigators are knowledgeable, eager, and enthusiastic about their roles. Conversely, they are best positioned to understand the pulse of employers, sponsors, and apprentices, and have a sound understanding of what tactical plans would make the most immediate and positive impact.
- ▶ The priority placed on the core function of RAP registration, standards building, is appreciated by sponsors and employers, as it is the focal point and area of most confusion for stakeholders.

As noted by the comparator states, the focus should be on the ease of which employers and sponsors can successfully initiate, register, and manage an apprenticeship. In addition, enterprise tools and resources for ATRs and Navigators are essential in the growth of the program. Certain themes emerged that likely present the biggest challenges, and some these challenges have been recognized as key areas of improvement by staff and agency leadership. Some of those include:

- ▶ The ambiguous processes, support resources, and tools for employers and sponsors who seek to learn more about or register in an existing or new apprenticeship. Recently embedded toolkits are effective but not yet widely known or utilized.
- ▶ The fragmented nature of the outreach tools and campaigns available to influence key audiences across the state.
- ▶ The challenge of coordinating related technical instruction among higher education institutions.
- ▶ The array of funding mechanisms for apprenticeships and wage scales, and the associated application and reporting requirements.
- ▶ The disconnected nature of the ApprenticeFlorida platform and RAPIDS/standards building functionality, and the lack of similar tools that may streamline the learning and registration process for employers.





## **US Department of Labor RAPIDS Data**

Key data trends, and associated considerations...



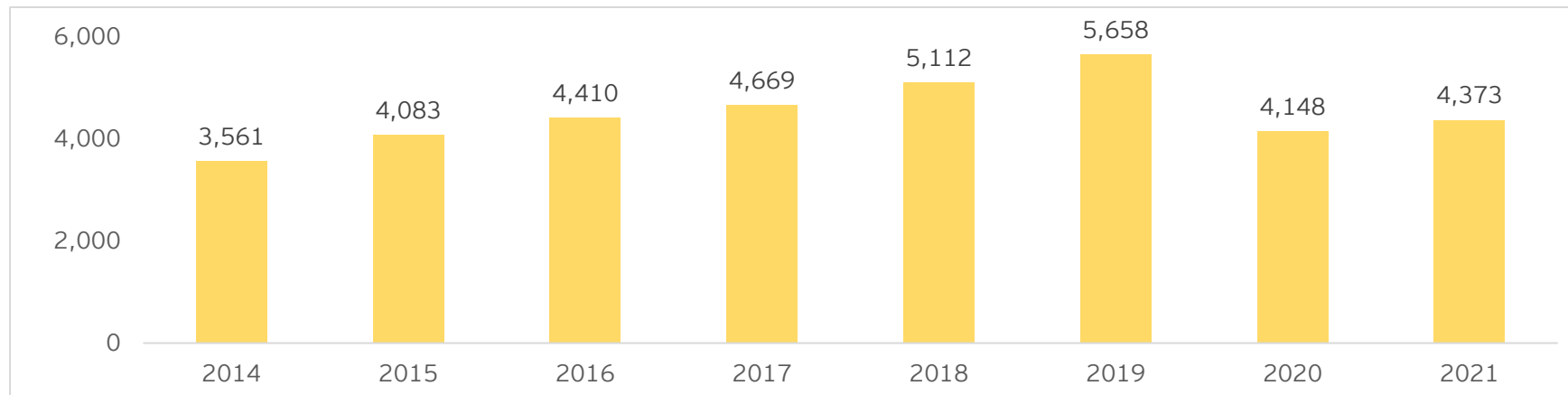
To better understand apprenticeship trends and guide future considerations, EY evaluated available DOL/ETA data on national apprenticeship trends for comparator states. Various metrics were measured for growth and per capita concentration, number of apprentices, program, occupation, students, and participating employers. This section of the report contains a summary of EY's findings as well as a data methodology appendix (Appendix 4) detailing the process to extract, compile and analyze the RAPIDS data. This research and evaluation aims to help further identify potential process improvements, apprenticeship gaps and opportunities in Florida, and leading practices in web-based tools while also validating key themes heard throughout stakeholder engagement.

## Data and Analysis

Total new apprentices over time (2014-2021 as seen in figure 1 below) in Florida were examined to measure growth prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a marked decline in 2020 (loss of over 1,500 apprentices) when program activity slowed due to the economic downturn during the height of the pandemic. Post-pandemic numbers show a steady increase in new registrations began as the US economy recovered. Additional analysis demonstrates how pre-pandemic Registered Apprenticeship Programs thrived while also showing areas where there is room for improvement. While healthy recovery occurred in 2021-2022, further assessment should be conducted to better understand the composition of the growth in underserved industries, occupations, and populations.

New Registered Apprentices reached a peak in Florida in 2019, when approximately 5,700 people entered registered apprenticeship programs. The number of new apprentices dropped by nearly 27 percent in the first year of the pandemic but made slight gains in 2021.

**Total New Apprentices in State of Florida Registered Apprenticeship Programs, 2014-2021**

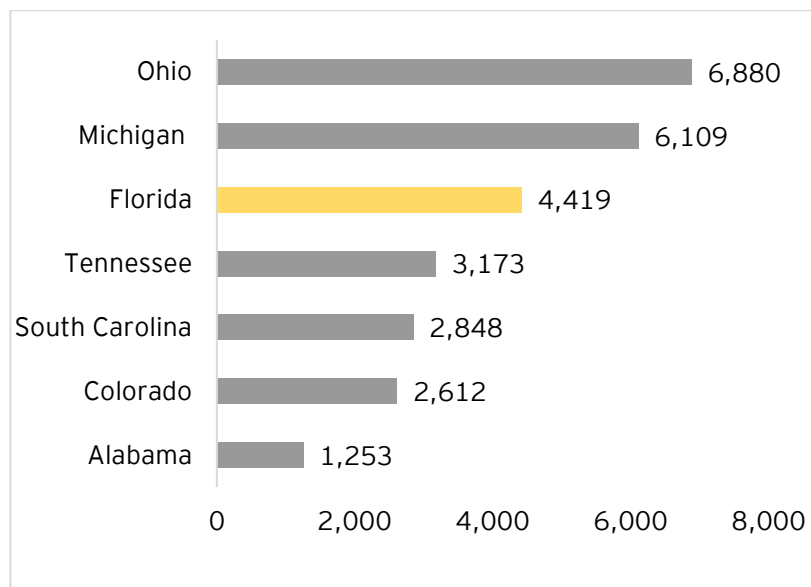


**Figure 1:** This chart was created in Power BI by adding the "apprID" to the y-axis and the "startdateFY" to the x-axis with the following filter applied: "ProgState" to get just Florida data, "startdateFY" to show just 2014-2021 data, and "apprStatus" to just show the DOL recommended active program statuses. The resulting metric is Total New Apprentices in a Registered Apprenticeship Program in the state of Florida from 2014-2021. Data collected is from October -September of FY's as reported by the USDOL.

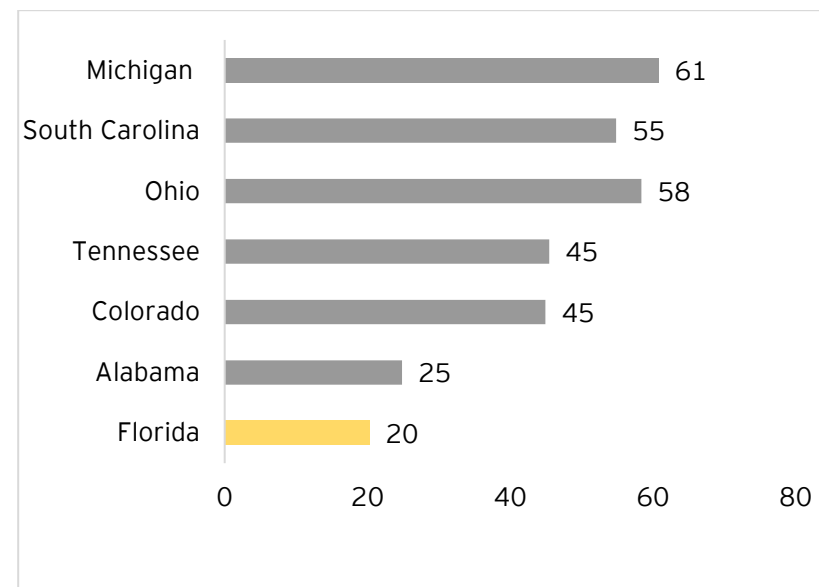


To evaluate Florida's growth further, data points were analyzed against the following comparator states: Alabama, Colorado, Michigan, Ohio, South Carolina, and Tennessee (as seen in figure 2 below). The chart on the left shows how Florida compares to comparator states in terms of Total New Apprentices in the fiscal year (starting in October the previous year, as USDOL FY starts annually on October 1st). In 2021, Florida ranked third in total number of New Apprentices; Ohio ranked the highest. In comparison, the chart on the right shows the per capita New Apprentices, showing Florida ranks in last place compared to the benchmark states. This indicator is important in assessing the opportunity to continue the current efforts in apprenticeship marketing.

**Total New Registered Apprentices in FL vs Benchmark States, 2021**



**Per-Capita New Registered Apprentices in FL vs Benchmark States, 2021 (per 100k population)**



**Figure 2:** This chart, Total New Registered Apprentices in FL vs Benchmark States for 2021 was created in Power BI by adding the "progState" to the y-axis and the "apprID" to the x-axis with the following filters applied: "ProgState" to get Florida, Alabama, Colorado, Michigan, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee data and "startdateFY" to show just 2021 data.

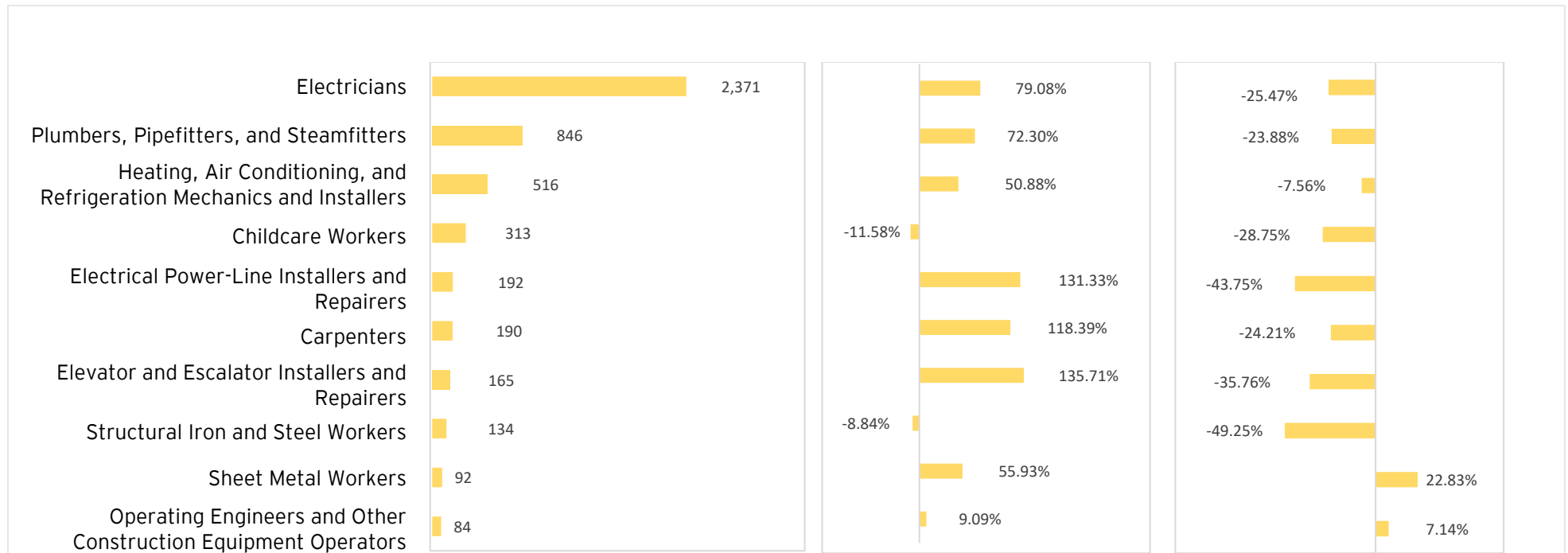
The top 10 Occupations (as seen below in figure 3 below) in the State of Florida were examined to analyze how they were increasing pre-pandemic (2014-2019) and how they might have decreased post-pandemic. The top 10 Registered Occupations for Florida are primarily in construction and trades-related occupations, with one notable exception being Childcare Workers. Electricians had the highest number of new Apprentices (2,400) in 2019 and grew 79% from 2014-2019. The largest decrease of New Apprentices post-pandemic was for the Structural Iron and Steel Workers occupation with a decrease of 49%. Overall, the data shows that almost all occupations experienced a decrease in registered occupations during the pandemic, with a few exceptions.



## Top 10 Registered Occupations in FL, 2019 for New Apprentices

% Growth, Pre-Pandemic  
(2014-2019)

% Growth, Post-Pandemic  
(2019-2021)



**Figure 3:** This chart was created in Power BI by adding the "onetSocCode" to the y-axis and the "apprID" to the x-axis with the following filters applied: "ProgState" to get a specific state data and "startdateFY" to show just 2019 data, and a filter to show just Top 10 Occupations. In addition to the top 10 Occupation count, an analysis of the increase from 2014-2019 and decrease from 2019-2021 was calculated to show pre-pandemic and post-pandemic fluctuations in new Apprentices.

While Florida's registered apprenticeship system is heavily weighted toward construction trades, CareerSource Florida has recognized the value of growing the number of industries reached through apprenticeships (as seen in figure 4 on the next page). Benchmark states are growing registered apprenticeship programs in high-demand occupations:

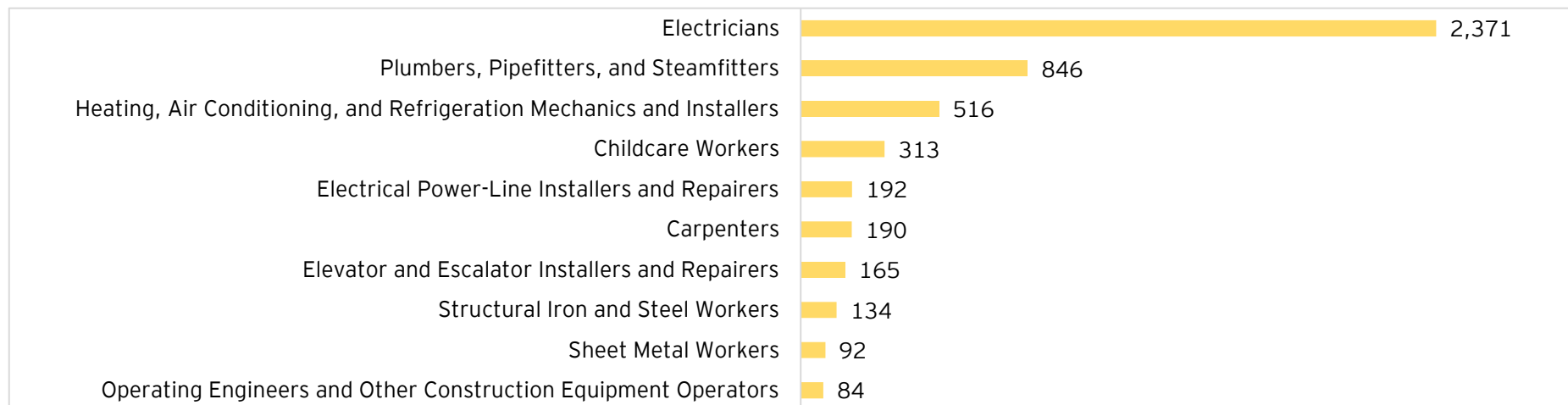
- ▶ Alabama had 275 (out of 1,250) new apprentices in metalworking occupations. Water treatment plant operators had 26 new apprentices.
- ▶ Colorado had 280 new apprentices (out of 2,600) in metalworking, and also has an apprentice program for "Operating Engineers".



- ▶ Michigan's largest occupation program is in the "Construction Laborers" category, but also has demonstrated growth in Electricians, Plumbers, and Carpenters. Michigan has an Industrial Machinery Mechanics apprenticeship, serving the automotive manufacturing industry. Nursing Assistants and Pharmacy Technicians also appear in Michigan's Top 10 occupations.
- ▶ Ohio has two unique programs in its Top 10, a Housekeeping Cleaners program, which ranks #3 and had 700 new apprentices in 2021. An Animal Trainers program had 267 new apprentices.
- ▶ In South Carolina, Pharmacy Technicians had the (430) new apprentices, followed by Industrial Machinery Mechanics (250). South Carolina has a diverse array of apprenticeships, including Nursing Assistants (128 new apprentices), Machine Tool (122), Maintenance (115), and Training/Development Specialists (113).
- ▶ In Tennessee, Electricians are the largest program (similar to most states), but the second-largest is Boilermakers (498 new apprentices). Industrial Engineering Technologist had 100 new apprentices, in addition to 180 in metalworking. Chemical Equipment Operators also was in the Top 10.

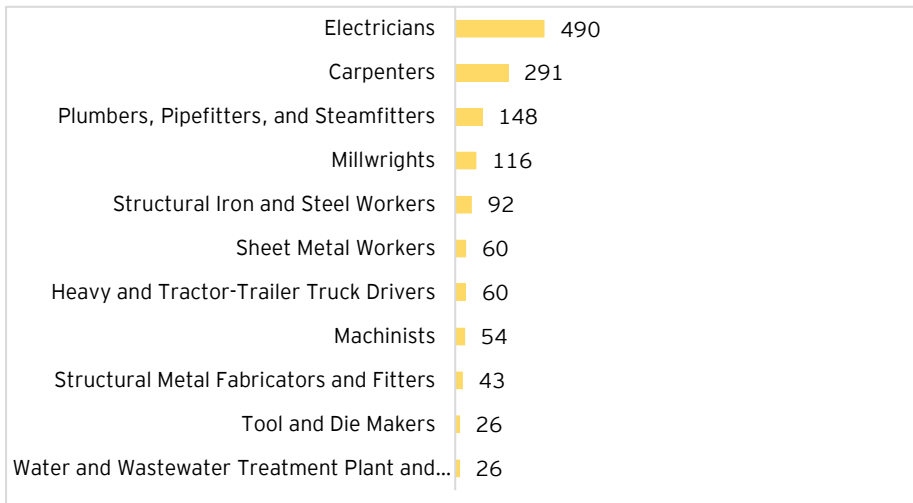
These trends demonstrate the value and effort of diversifying industry representation among new apprenticeship registration. Comparator states report that having the technological systems in place to effectively manage this change and alleviate manual processes is essential, and allowed them to focus on growth versus management.

#### Top 10 New Registered Occupations in FL, 2019 (Source: USDOL)

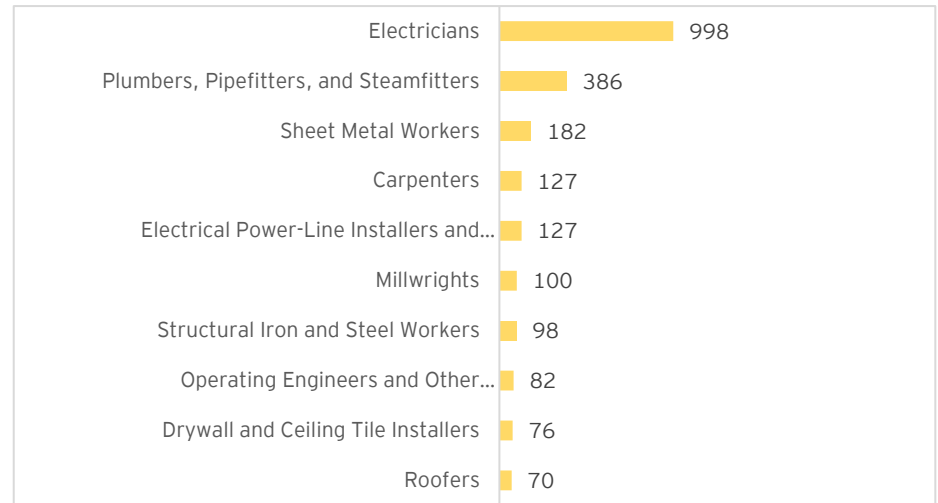




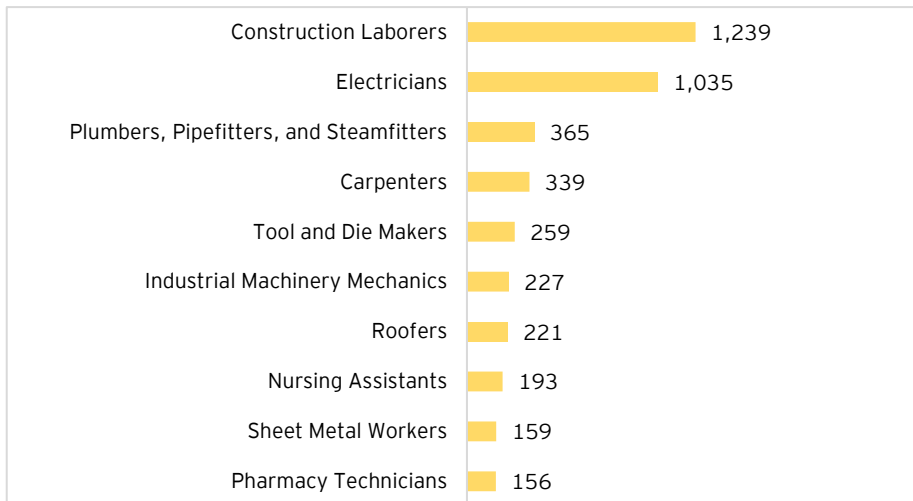
### Top 10 Registered Occupations in AL, 2019



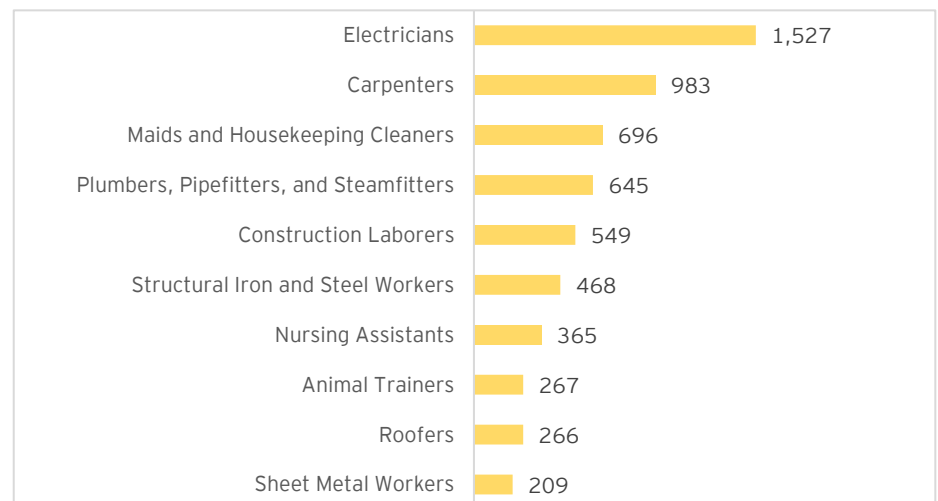
### Top 10 Registered Occupations in CO, 2019



### Top 10 Registered Occupations in MI, 2019

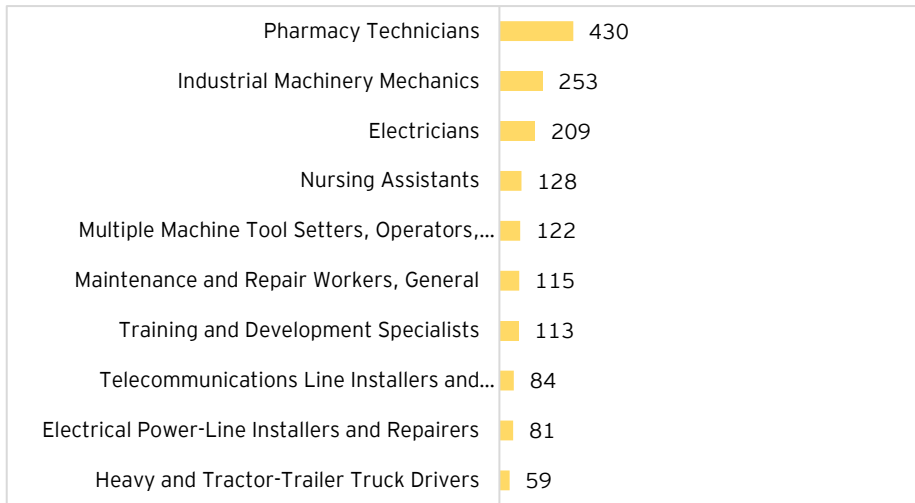


### Top 10 Registered Occupations in OH 2019

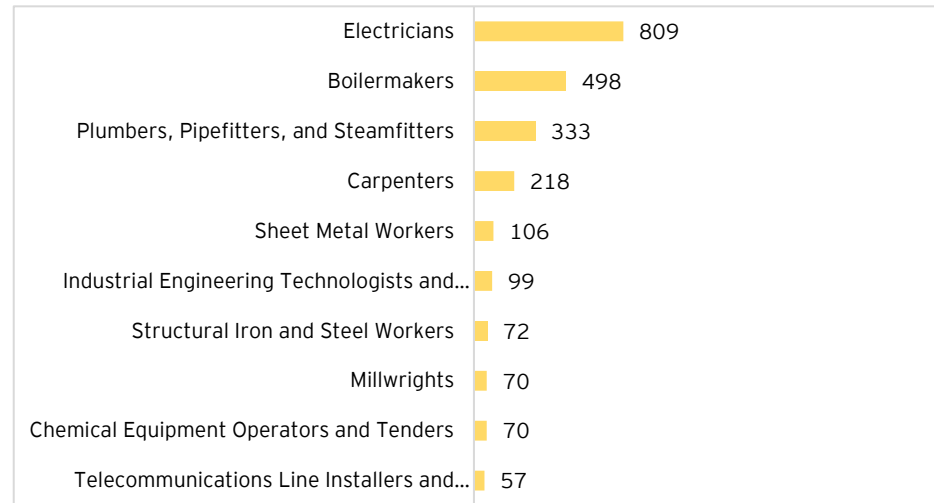




### Top 10 Registered Occupations in SC 2019



### Top 10 Registered Occupations in TN, 2019



**Figure 4:** The charts above were created in Power BI by adding the “onetSocCode” to the y-axis and the “apprID” to the x-axis with the following filters applied: “ProgState” to get a specific state data and “startdateFY” to show just 2019 data, and a filter to show just Top 10 Occupations.

### Additional Observations

Listed below are some observations that may guide future considerations for CareerSource Florida and the FLDOE:

- ▶ The data represented on USDOL’s website is a snapshot in time (done at the end of each fiscal year), resulting in the inability to replicate from the publicly available spreadsheets. The operating model currently in place allows states to retroactively submit Apprentice statuses in the RAPIDS system after the data analysis is published the USDOL website.
- ▶ Through conversations with FLDOE, the data submission process was discussed in detail to further understand the RAPIDS protocol. It was brought to our attention that there is not a defined process for when data needs to be uploaded into RAPIDS or how much demographic data to include (i.e., there is a lack of consistency in the system).
- ▶ In addition to unclear standards on the timing of submission, there is currently no guidance on who is responsible for submitting the Apprentice’s information into RAPIDS. Depending on the ATR, Employer or Sponsor, any of the three could be able to access and update RAPIDS for their apprenticeship programs.



The data in this section was utilized to substantiate leading practices discovered during conversations with comparator state leadership. The trends relating to apprenticeship growth demonstrate that overall, the state of Florida is successfully scaling their registered apprenticeship program. However, further analysis of key details can provide insight into resource allocation and focus areas.

Based on the data sample collected, and considering the feedback from comparator states and other stakeholders, apprenticeship partners in Florida might consider further analysis of the following:

- ▶ How can the state maintain momentum of the growth in total numbers of registered apprenticeships?
- ▶ How can the state strategize and plan for growth in occupations where apprenticeships are not common? What data is necessary to develop this plan, and what mechanisms could be used to conduct outreach?
- ▶ How can the state use higher education metrics, enrollment data, and other information to design effective strategy for related technical instruction, removing barriers that may exist today?
- ▶ How can key data points be integrated into the ApprenticeFlorida platform to draw interest from employers and sponsors?
- ▶ What does the mix of current occupations, and related trends, indicate about industry and worker interest in certain occupations? How can this information be used to develop awareness campaigns that debunk apprenticeship myths?
- ▶ What is the correlation between wage scales, journeyman salaries, and mix of occupations, if any? How can this information be used to promote return on investment approaches for industry, and attract displaced workers or those seeking career changes?

The USDOL RAPIDS Data may provide an opportunity for Florida to identify apprenticeship programs in other states that could be mirrored. Aligning the apprenticeship programming with targeted industries at the local level is generally viewed as a leading practice. While RAPIDS data integrity is not without flaw, some findings may prove helpful as Florida expands its own apprenticeship programs across the state.

Please refer to Appendix 4 below for additional details on how the EY team collated this data analysis.





## Customer Experience Design Research Findings

Understanding opportunities for [ApprenticeFlorida.com](https://www.apprenticeflorida.com)



# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

CareerSource Florida – in collaboration with The Florida Department of Education and The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – developed [apprenticeflorida.com](http://apprenticeflorida.com) to promote the benefits of registered apprenticeships in the state. The organization approached EY with the task of evaluating the intake process as well as the customer experience of utilizing the apprenticeship programs and corresponding websites.

There is recognition of an overarching need to make the digital experience more user-friendly, and EY assessed the current state of the ApprenticeFlorida website, comparing it to six select states, resulting in design considerations.

## Research Methods

- Feature analysis
- Visual analysis
- User flows, related processes
- Heuristics (usability) evaluation
- Journey mapping
- Design exemplar

## Key Learnings

While Florida's apprenticeship web experience includes relevant content and features, those aspects are currently spread across three separate websites. Users are unable to complete required intake processes on the ApprenticeFlorida website itself, which is also a limitation of all six comparator states' websites that were covered in this study. However, analysis included in this section serves to highlight the key strengths and challenges on [apprenticeflorida.com](http://apprenticeflorida.com) that may directly impact the efficacy of the platform.

The findings detailed in this section suggest FLDOE and CareerSource Florida should consider consolidating content into a single web experience and enhancing the functionality to make Apprentice Florida the comprehensive go-to for job seekers and potential employers/sponsors alike. Giving users an easy way to get involved (apply for an apprenticeship or establish a program) would alleviate roadblocks users currently encounter and set Florida apart as a leader amongst the other states. See *Design Recommendations...*



# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

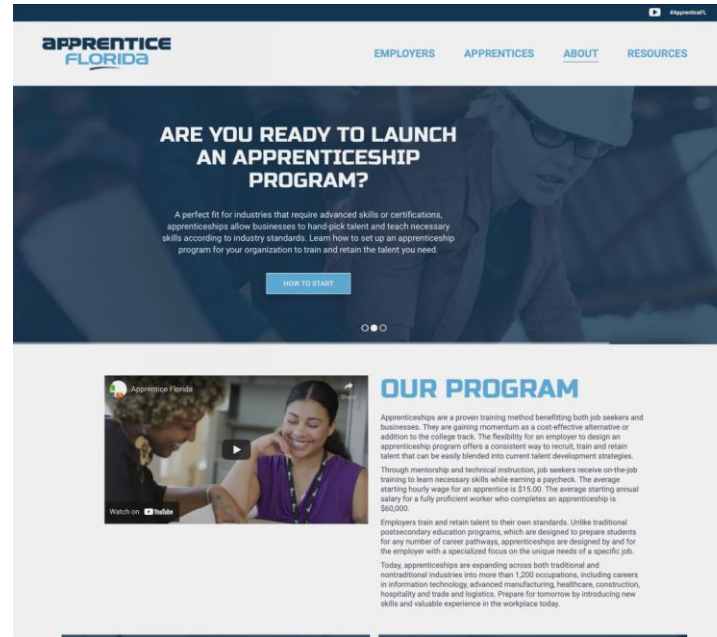
## FOCUS OF THE ANALYSIS

### Websites

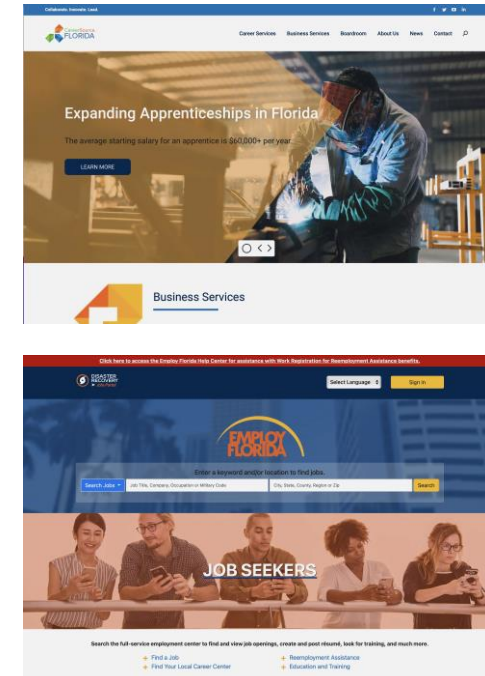
Both Florida and the comparator states have multiple websites pertaining to apprenticeships. Therefore, CareerSource Florida provided specific URLs for EY to include in this assessment.

CareerSource Florida indicated that Apprentice Florida would be the primary focus, so most findings home in on that specific URL. When helpful, the research also included additional websites such as [Employ Florida](#) and [CareerSource Florida](#) for additional comparative datapoints.

### Primary website



### Additional references





## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FOCUS

### USER GROUPS

In relation to this assessment, the primary user groups are employers who need approval to establish programs and job seekers who need to apply for apprenticeships.

While ATRs are key players in the process (and will inform the recommendations), research clarified that they do not execute business processes within these websites.

Therefore, ATRs are considered secondary users of the current state, and would likely become co-primary for the future state.

Employers/sponsors



Apprentices/Higher Ed/Other stakeholders



ATRs/Navigators





## APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

### CX RESEARCH METHODS

#### 1. WEBSITES AND CHANNELS

Features, visuals, user flows, and heuristics (usability)

##### Feature analysis

Evaluated functionality, tools, processes, and content across site compared to other states

##### Visual analysis

Assessed visuals of Florida channels and communications for cohesion

##### Heuristics evaluation

Performed heuristics evaluation to assess the degree of usability across multiple dimensions

##### User flows, process

Analyzed user flows and related processes through Florida channels and communications

#### 2. USER JOURNEY

Empathizing, mapping for all user groups

##### User journeys

Empathized and mapped users' experience across digital touchpoints including and beyond the website



# FEATURE ANALYSIS

## Research Method

To best understand how the ApprenticeFlorida website compares to selected comparator sites, methodical evaluation of the functionality, content, tools, and processes (or lack thereof) of each was conducted.

## Learnings

Though Apprentice Florida is related to CareerSource Florida and Employ Florida, there may be an opportunity to improve the look and feel of the brand to connect it to its counterparts.

It is possible Apprentice Florida has intended to differentiate itself from the other two. However, it must be done in a way that maintains a visual relationship to the whole. Since the intent is to ultimately reconcile content amongst all three and establish Apprentice Florida as the primary experience – or front door – it will be important for the future state to achieve stylistic alignment.

## FEATURE ANALYSIS



## COMPARISON CHART

		Employ Florida	Apprentice Florida	Career Source FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
User Groups	Career seekers (general)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Career seekers (youth / students)					●		●	●	●
	Employers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Sponsors / Educators		●		●				●	●
	Parents / Teachers					●				●
	Veterans			●						●
	ATRs / Navigators				●					
Content	Directory	●	●		●		●	●	●	●
	Contact	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	About apprenticeships (general)	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●
	How-to become apprentice <sup>1</sup>	●			●		●	●		
	How-to establish program <sup>1</sup>				●	●	●	●	●	●
	Average starting salary		●				●			
	Refers to RAPIDS				●			●		
Tech (functionality, tools, process)	Clear navigation (top menu)		●	●	●	●		●	●	
	Search	●		●			●		●	
	Contact form			●	●	●	●		●	
	ROI calculator				●		●			
	Interactive map(s)	●		●				●		
	Apply for an apprenticeship <sup>2</sup>	●								
	Register an apprenticeship program <sup>2</sup>									
	Monitor approval progress									
	Links to <a href="https://www.apprenticeship.gov">apprenticeship.gov</a>	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●
	Links to RAPIDS							●	●	●

### Legend

- Yes, website has it

### Findings

#### Content

In general, the content across states is similar:

- Audience: primary user groups are employers and job seekers
- Information: benefits are more prominent than guidance on how-to take action
- Level of detail: consistently high level

#### Tools (tech)

Most states utilize simple tools (tech):

- Submit a form
- Interact with an API map
- Email someone from a directory
- Link to a different website

#### Process (PAIN POINT)

None of the states offer a way to conduct the process to register/apply. The tech would need to be more sophisticated in order to be able to do so.

1. How-to content describes specific actions you must take in the process (including those involving an external site or consultant)
2. Ability to complete processes on the website itself (user flow)



# VISUAL DESIGN ANALYSIS

## Research Method

To create a cohesive customer experience, Florida will need to create visual cohesion throughout all channels and communications. To support that, an inventory of the current application of logos, color, typography, photography treatments, UI elements, and layouts was conducted.

## Learnings

Though Apprentice Florida is related to CareerSource Florida and Employ Florida, there is an opportunity to give the brand a look and feel as more connected to its counterparts.

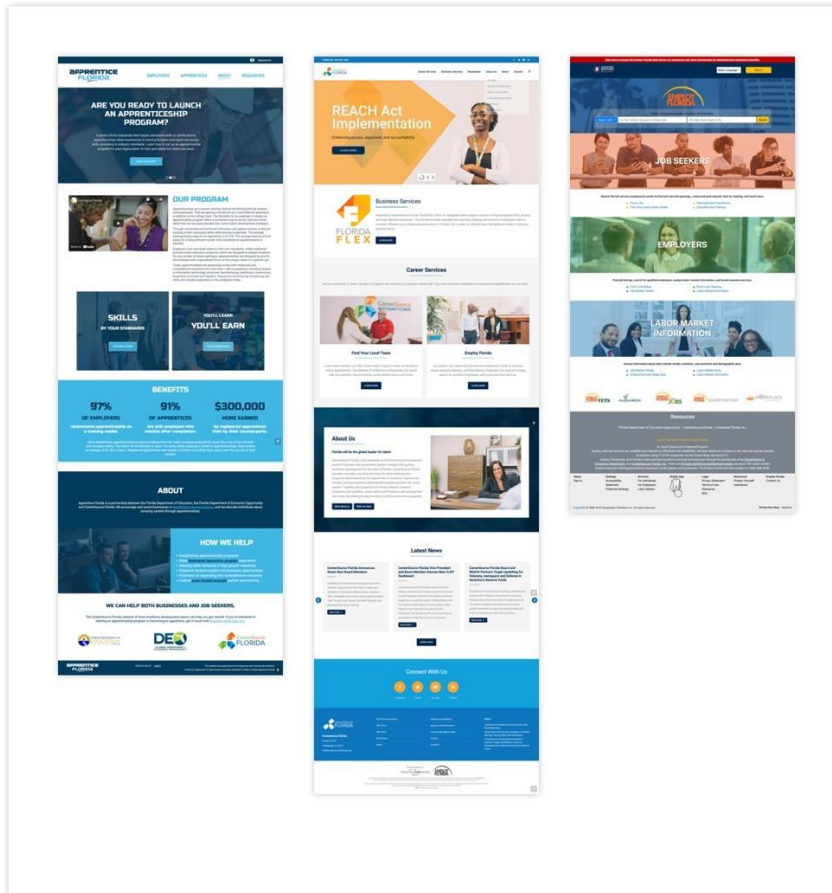
It's possible that Apprentice Florida has intended to differentiate itself from the other two. However, it must be done in a way that maintains a visual relationship to the whole. Since the intent is to ultimately reconcile content amongst all three and establish Apprentice Florida as the primary experience – or front door – it will be important for the future state to achieve stylistic alignment.



# VISUAL DESIGN ANALYSIS

## BRAND COHESION

### Layouts



### Color

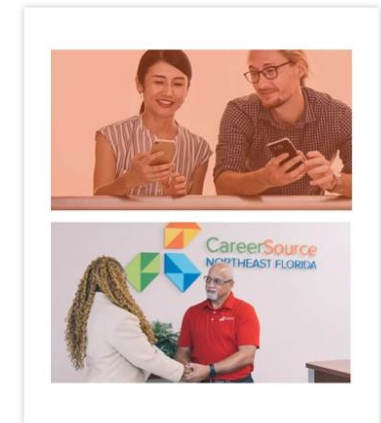


### Logos



Each logo utilizes different color treatments and font styles, making it difficult to discern that each is "one part to a whole" brand.

### Photography



### Typography



While a common font family seems to have been applied in certain instances, each website presents different font styles for the most prominent words in the visual hierarchy, effectively emphasizing the misalignment.



# HEURISTICS (USABILITY) EVALUATION

## Research Method

A heuristics evaluation was conducted to measure the degree of how user-friendly each site is across 10 categories.

## Learnings

Overall, ApprenticeFlorida scores similarly to the comparator states in most categories; while certain categories scored well across all states, none met best practices. Florida's outliers were its critical issues with *clear* and *usable*, and the comparators scored only slightly better.

Now that the landscape is better understood, this evaluation has informed the recommendation to expand reference points for Florida's future state to commercial examples of leading customer experience design, which is included in the next section of this document.



## HEURISTICS (Usability) EVALUATION

		FL*	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
Findable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can users easily locate the things they're seeking?</li> <li>- How is findability (search function) affected across devices?</li> <li>- Does the system support the multiple ways users look for features?</li> <li>- Does the search work the way users expect it to?</li> </ul>							
Accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can it be used via all expected channels and devices?</li> <li>- Does it meet levels of accessibility compliance to be considerate of users with disabilities (e.g., color blindness, contrast, dyslexia)</li> </ul>							
Clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is it easy to understand (including uncommon terms or being purposefully unclear in language)?</li> <li>- Is the target demographic's reading level considered?</li> <li>- Is the path to task completion obvious and free of distraction?</li> <li>- Would a user find it easy to describe?</li> </ul>							
Communicative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the status and location of the user obvious?</li> <li>- Does the navigation and messaging help establish a sense of place that is consistent and orienting across channels, contexts, tasks?</li> <li>- Is messaging effective and supportive?</li> </ul>							
Usable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it serve new and loyal users in ways that satisfies uniquely?</li> <li>- Are users able to complete the tasks that they set out to without major frustration or blockers?</li> </ul>							
Credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the design appropriate to the context of use and audience?</li> <li>- Is the content updated in a timely manner?</li> <li>- Is promotional content used with restraint?</li> <li>- Is it easy to contact a real person?</li> </ul>							
Controllable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do features and content meet users' expectations/mental model?</li> <li>- How well are errors anticipated and eliminated?</li> <li>- When errors do occur, how easily can a user recover?</li> <li>- Are exits and other important controls clearly marked?</li> </ul>							
Valuable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is it desirable to the target user?</li> <li>- Does it meet the business goals?</li> <li>- Can a user easily describe the value?</li> <li>- Does it improve customer satisfaction?</li> </ul>							
Learnable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can it be grasped quickly?</li> <li>- What is offered to ease the more complicated processes?</li> <li>- Is it easy to recall?</li> <li>- Does it behave consistently enough to be predictable?</li> </ul>							
Delightful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How are user expectations not just met but exceeded?</li> <li>- What can you take that is now ordinary and make extraordinary?</li> <li>- What are your differentiators from other similar experiences or competitors?</li> </ul>							

### Legend

- Excellent: Meets leading practice
- Good: Room for improvement
- Faulty: Significant issues
- Failed: Critical Issues

\* Apprentice Florida was the FL website evaluated under this method



# JOURNEY MAPS

## Research method

While user flows illustrate tech (the specific clicks on a given website), journey maps provide a qualitative and sentimental lens of someone's experience. Journey maps include the main activities at each stage, along with a user's level of satisfaction. It is informed by user flows, heuristics, and interviews.

Since all six states in the comparative cohort have fairly similar experiences (e.g., content, possibilities, limitations) a single, representative illustration was created.

## Learnings

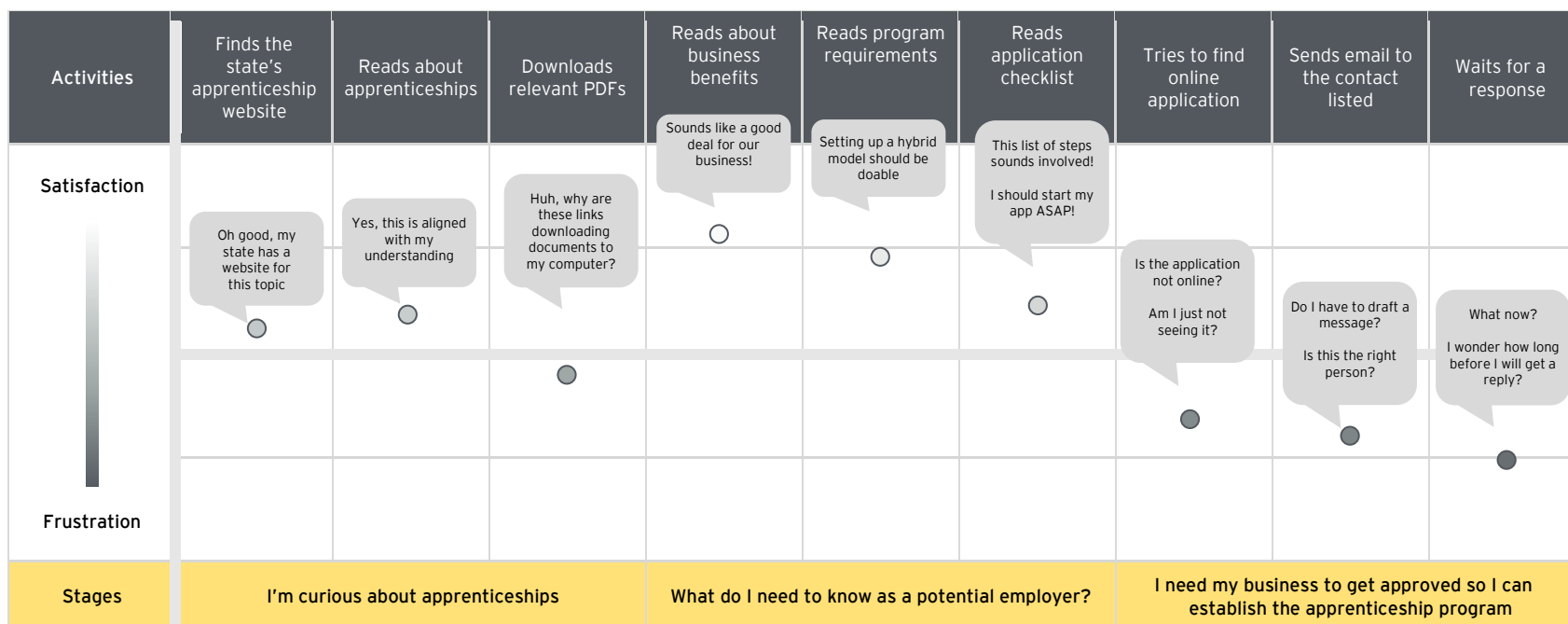
For Florida, and each of the comparator states, users eventually reach a point where they are unable to complete the task on the website itself. Most fail to make it obvious that users must leave in order to take meaningful steps toward the process to register/apply.

Since much of the target audience includes digital natives, the expectation of users may be for a single website to encompass the end-to-end journey. Everything they need to know and do should happen in one place, even if people and systems in the background act independently of each other.



# JOURNEY MAP

## EMPLOYERS / FUTURE SPONSORS

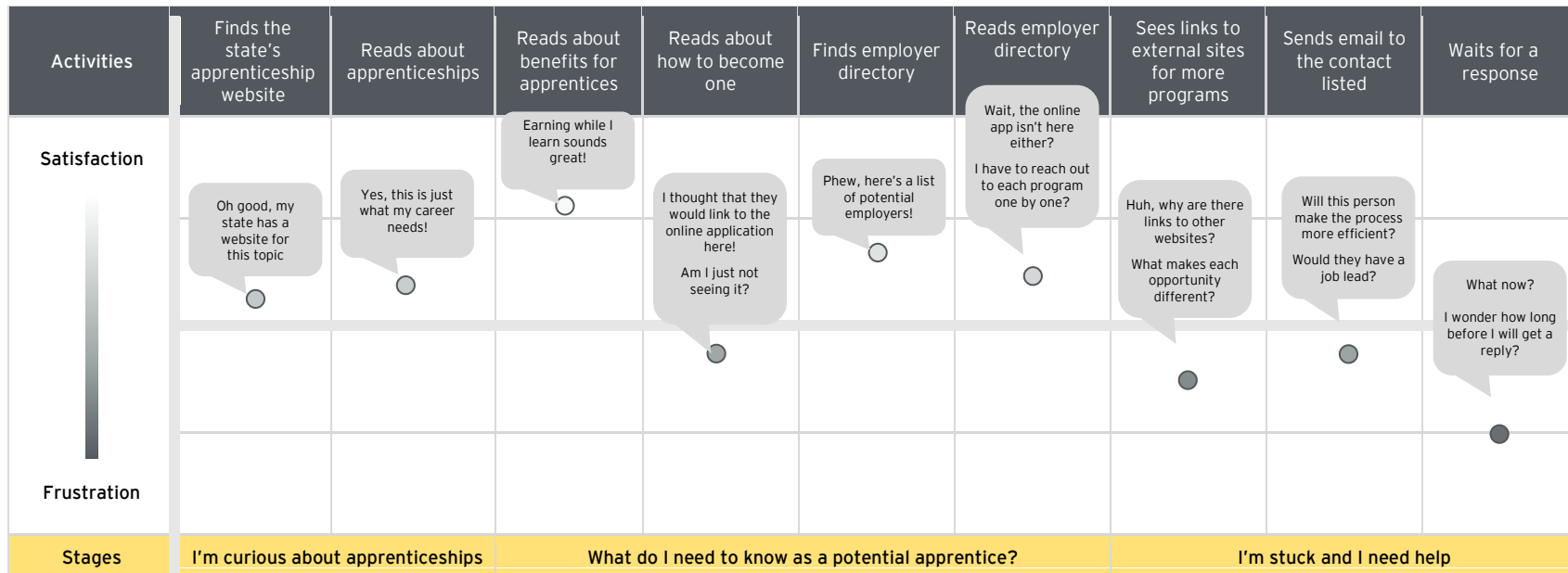


Representation of all states, including Florida.



# JOURNEY MAP

## JOB SEEKERS / FUTURE APPRENTICES



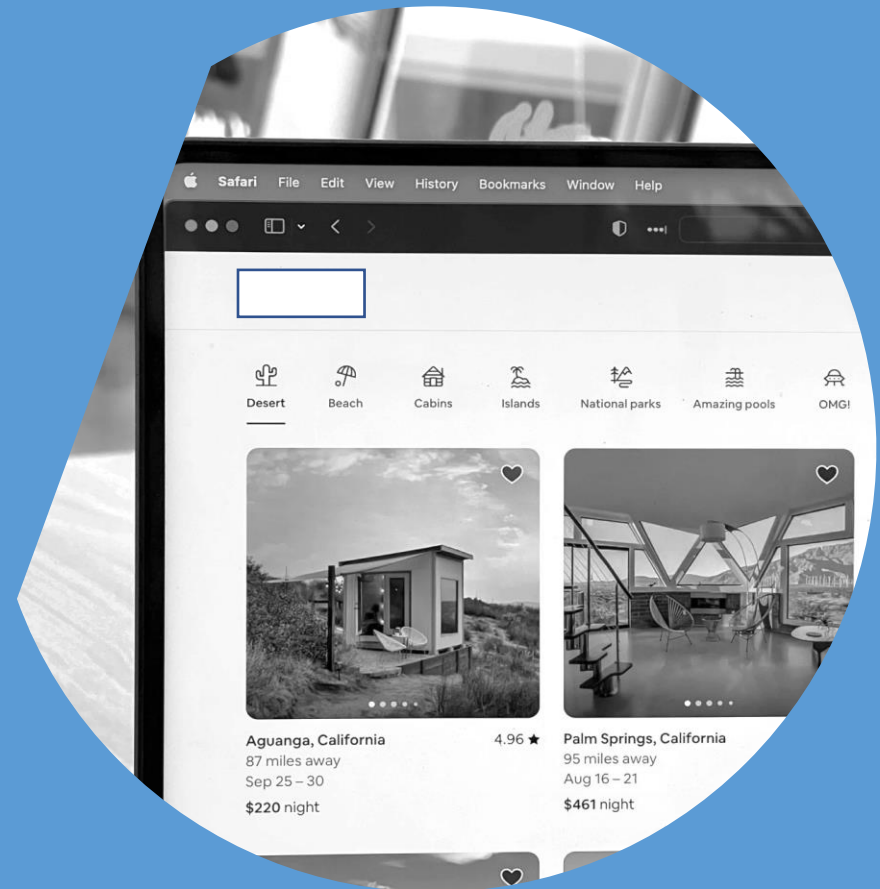
Representation of all states, including Florida.



# DESIGN EXEMPLAR

Connecting products and process by employing consistent design principles is ideal. However, getting users to love using Apprentice Florida and its website is the goal. An easy step to take toward this goal is getting users to quickly understand what Apprentice Florida is, and when and how they should engage with the people and products that comprise it.

The design solution to this problem is to adopt approaches and principles to create products that reflect what Apprentice Florida does in order to clear up some of the confusion that currently surrounds it and its online presence. The following is a company who employs design principles that can be leveraged to create a cohesive customer experience across Apprentice Florida tools, including the current website and suite of products and services.





## EXEMPLAR

### Core customer-centric features and functionality

Follow the robust build out of similar features such as the sign-up process, testimonials, and contact pages for current apprenticeship websites

### Distinct flows for each user group

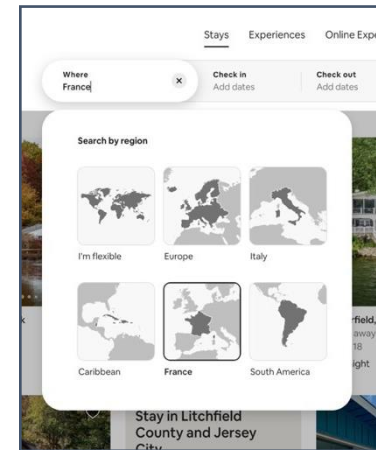
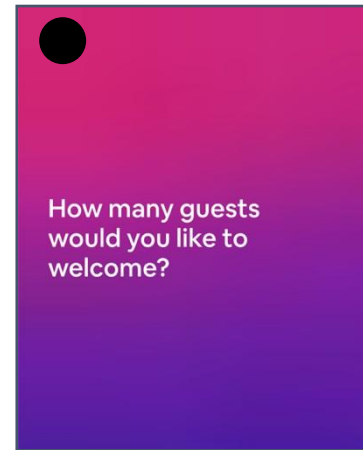
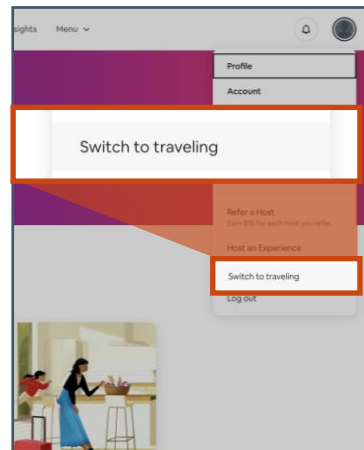
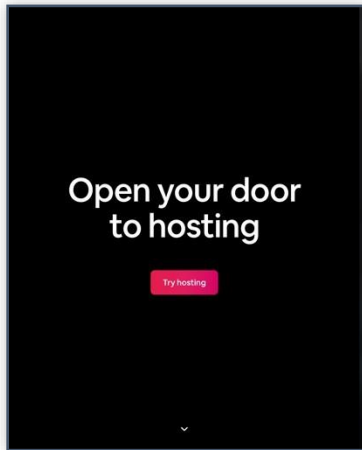
Accommodate multiple user groups effectively through distinct user flows for job seekers, sponsors, and project team members

### Supportive and clear intake process

Help user groups such as employers/sponsors establish a program smoothly with a simplified intake process

### Guided flows for the job seeker

Create ease when identifying and matching a job seeker to an apprenticeship opportunity like searching for a destination



*See the appendix for details*



# DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

This section includes customer-centric design recommendations for Florida to consider including in its future-state apprenticeship experience.

First and foremost, the future state should encompass a complete intake process user flow. Employers and job seekers alike need a simple way to enter their information, apply for their respective positions, and see the status of their application at any time.

Additionally, this intake flow - and the experience as a whole - should look, feel, and function as one cohesive sum of its parts. Unifying the design has the power to clarify, simplify and reassure users along their journey. Even if different people and systems may be in motion in the background, the front-end (i.e., user experience) should be seamless.

Eventually, the goal would be to fully integrate technologies on the back end so intake/inputs from users could populate directly into a CRM solution.





## FLORIDA FUTURE STATE

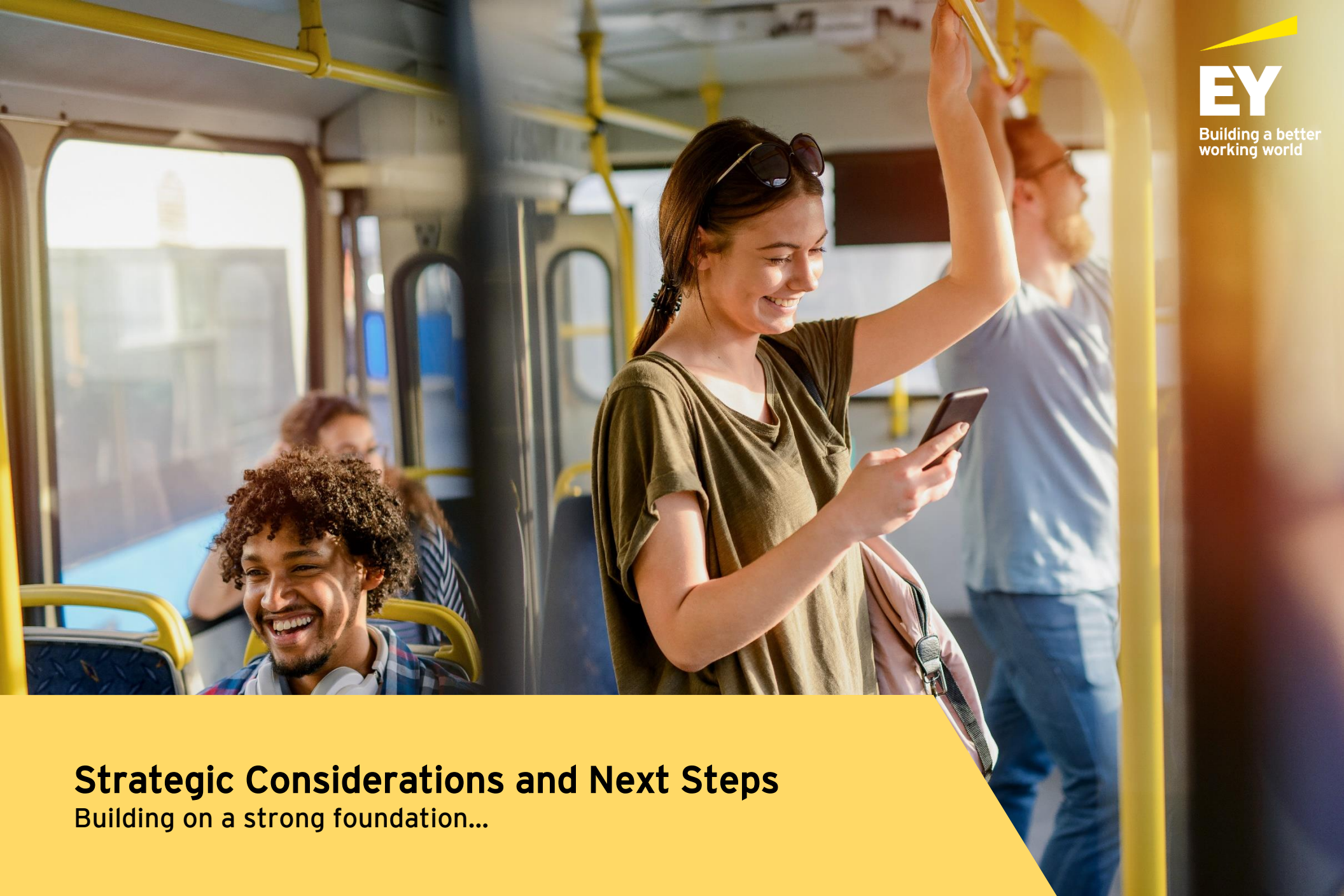
	1. Conduct a content audit	2. Revise information architecture	3. Clarify content with UX writing
Quick Wins		General navigation improvements within Apprentice FL and including CareerSource FL and Employ FL	Clarify what users can and cannot accomplish on this website vs elsewhere
Short term front-end improvements	<p>Audit the content on Apprentice Florida (the primary website) and related websites and reconcile the content.</p> <p>Identify gaps (and redundancy) in content that would make the experience more guided and predictable.</p> <p>Determine whether (and where/when) it's helpful to connect users to additional resources (DOE, CareerSource Florida, DEO, DOL).</p>	<p>Utilize the reconciled content to establish comprehensive information architecture (site structure) for ApprenticeFlorida. Shift content as needed to make the experience more guided and predictable.</p> <p>Within the proper IA, design distinct <b>user flows</b> that encompass the full intake process of registering/applying.</p> <p>See #5 for phased approach to user flow options.</p>	<p>Write delightful, explicit, concise copy. Break the content into bite-sized, guided easy to digest chunks.</p> <p>With the content audit, site structure, and user flows in place, write UX copy to provide precise detail where needed, without overwhelming the users.</p>
Long term integration		Consider combining the content functionality of the three current sites into one single experience that would live on <a href="http://apprenticeflorida.com">apprenticeflorida.com</a> .	Leverage the work from the short-term front-end efforts and adjust as needed.



## FLORIDA FUTURE STATE (CONTINUED)

	4. Leverage visual design	5. Enhance website functionality	6. Address accessibility concerns
Quick Wins			Address critical accessibility issues in content for screen readers (e.g., adding [alt] attributes to image elements, writing more descriptive link names)
Short term front-end improvements	<p>In conjunction with UX writing, employ content design to establish a consistent visual and verbal language within the website.</p> <p>Improve visual hierarchy so users notice the CTAs that connect them with the relevant external websites in which they can register/apply.</p> <p>Establish a cohesive look and feel (color, font, imagery, UI elements - potentially apply CareerSource Florida's branding) to utilize across the website.</p>	<p>Explore low-tech options that encompass a complete intake process on the front-end (customer side). I.e., seamless for customers even if separate people and systems are in motion in the background.</p> <p>Add more sophisticated functionality so the website provides a status of where a user is in the process (is a user's application: submitted, reviewed, pending approval, needs action, or complete?).</p>	<p>Revise visual design to ensure sufficient color contrast.</p> <p>Enable zoom function in browsers for the visually impaired.</p>
Long term integration	<p>Apply the cohesive style established to the related Florida apprenticeship websites (Employ Florida, Career Source Florida, others) and comms.</p>	<p>Explore integrated back-end technologies to feed the intake process directly into the systems at play.</p> <p>Implement <b>search</b> functionality.</p> <p>Consider digital natives when making decisions around how people expect to complete a given process.</p>	<p>Conduct a comprehensive set of manual audits to ensure technology functionalities and underlying programming are compatible with screen readers.</p> <p>Employ responsive design to maintain strong user experience even at 200% or 400% zoom.</p>





## **Strategic Considerations and Next Steps**

Building on a strong foundation...



## Strategic Considerations

The findings, leading practices, technical assessments, and stakeholder engagement completed for this project were examined to determine several strategic considerations and next steps for CareerSource Florida and the FLDOE. To better understand the best strategy to explore further, the following questions could be considered:

### What is the primary goal for apprenticeships, and how can that goal serve to shape policy, resource allocation, and action?

The appropriate agencies appear committed to growing the registered apprenticeship program in Florida. Executive order 19-31 (January 2019) helps to “chart a course for Florida to become number one in the nation for workforce education by 2030.” Recent appropriations directly and indirectly support the growth of registered apprenticeships. However, it has been demonstrated that the management of the apprenticeship program by the FLDOE, USDOL policy, and stakeholder needs all have unique complexities. To better assess the best immediate and long-term areas of focus and strategies, agencies may should first seek to understand what the primary goal of the registered apprenticeship system in Florida should be.

In exploring the primary goal, the collaborating agencies should consider:

- ▶ Does the goal clearly support Executive Order 19-31?
- ▶ What is the goal’s immediate impact to operations, existing priorities, and resource allocation, if any?
- ▶ What external variables, outside of Florida’s control, should be factored when determining the goal, and why?
- ▶ How quickly can assets and priorities be aligned to support the goal, if necessary?

Some example goals are:

- ▶ Growing the total amount of registered apprenticeships in Florida by “x” in the next “y” years.
- ▶ Growing the per capita number of registered apprenticeships in Florida as compared to states with similar populations, workforce priorities, and industry bases. (Florida is currently ranked last among comparator states for per-capita new apprentices per year)
- ▶ Growing the per capita new apprenticeships in underrepresented industries and occupations by “X” over the next “y” years.
- ▶ Developing the systems, processes, and technologies that will power success in the apprenticeship ecosystem first, then determining what the growth and program diversification priorities are.

### How can the policy, operational, and fiscal requirements of key stakeholder groups be assessed to better understand the capacity constraints of each, and how can this data be used to identify opportunities for efficiency in operations?

The stakeholder engagement findings demonstrate concerns from different vantage points, and the operational demands of stakeholder groups can conflict at times. Addressing this requires a keen understanding of the specific components of apprenticeships that can present challenges to certain groups, and the accelerated growth of the apprenticeship program will require an action plan that prevents delays in adoption, processing, registration, deployment, and management of registered apprenticeships.



Some examples of key challenges include:

- ▶ The USDOL's policies that govern SAA (State apprenticeship agency) states, the ongoing changes in the RAPIDS/standards builder, and related directives can be difficult to manage and adopt by key staff. The standards builder is still in beta mode, and functionality for end users is limited. Persistent and increased coordination with USDOL will be critical.
- ▶ Institutions of higher education and other related training and instruction (RTI) providers have complex regulatory, compliance, and operational considerations potentially impacting their ability to offer or accommodate requests for training, especially considering the various modalities and delivery systems available.
- ▶ The Pathways to Career Opportunities (PCOG), Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship & Preapprenticeship (ERAP), and Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant programs all contributed to the success and growth of apprenticeships. The availability, awareness, and process of each differs and further visioning is necessary to determine sustainability and outreach efforts that could benefit the ecosystem. In addition, increased data sharing among grant administrative bodies can assist in refining activities and reducing barriers to participation.
- ▶ Employers and sponsors often share concerns about administrative capacity when managing apprenticeships. Though valid, these concerns can be mitigated with messaging focused on return on investment and solutions to talent supply. Consortia, apprenticeship intermediaries, and sharing of leading practices surrounding apprenticeship standards building has proven effective among employers and sponsors in comparator states.

**How can messaging, co-developed with local workforce boards, successful RAP sponsors, institutions of higher education/RTI providers, and other apprenticeship supporters, be utilized to create statewide momentum, uniformity, and proxies?**

Leading practices in comparator states demonstrate the success of the registered apprenticeship program is accelerated via a proactive, versus transactional relationship with stakeholders, usually in pursuit of growth in a specific occupation or industry. In addition, and in order to reduce administrative barriers to employers and sponsors, most states direct employers to existing RAPs or consortiums prior to developing proprietary standards. This is a common practice, but one that is largely unclear to employers and potential sponsors when using existing resources in both the Apprentice Florida site and the USDOL's apprenticeship.gov websites. By focusing on the development of proxies with actionable and uniform information, the state could see an immediate impact in the level of interest and engagement from employers.

The benefits of this could include:

- ▶ Accelerated growth and momentum in underrepresented industries by increasing education and diversifying the mix of occupations and industries who pursue apprenticeship registration.
- ▶ The growth of sponsorship among non-employers, to include non-profits, higher education institutions, economic development organizations and others, reducing administrative burden to employers and making consortiums easier to join.
- ▶ Increase in sharing of information, crafted by the appropriate agencies, that over time will demystify apprenticeships and ease concerns with employers about access, registration, and management of apprenticeships.



- ▶ Further understanding of the nuanced needs that employers have across the state and per industry, resulting in a narrowed and prioritized inventory of tools and resources that can make an immediate impact. (Return on investment calculators, marketing collateral, interactive/mock standards building, etc.)

## Next Steps

The recently released [FLDOE annual report](#) articulates a promising vision for the future of the registered apprenticeship program across the state of Florida. Though necessary improvements throughout the program are clear, there is firm support and momentum among agency leadership and stakeholders throughout the state. Recently, a number of new members were appointed to the State Apprenticeship Advisory Council (SAAC), the governing body for apprenticeship visioning, policy, and strategy in Florida. The EY team had the privilege to interact with members of this team throughout this engagement, and we commend them for their commitment, expertise, and passion in scaling the apprenticeship model. This body will be pivotal in shaping apprenticeship policy for years to come, and the following next steps could accelerate shifts in policy, operations, and investment that lead to continued growth and success.

### 1. Convene

Increased coordination, planning, and resource sharing among **CareerSource Florida**, the FLDOE, and the SAAC may drive all future planning considerations. Frequent collaboration is in place today between key staff members, but a more structured, inter-agency effort, led by a steering committee or task force could yield more actionable results for **CareerSource Florida**, the FLDOE, and the SAAC.

### 2. Organize renewed priorities, goals, and areas of responsibility

Stakeholder engagement and leading practices have affirmed several areas of improvement and highlighted the importance of the expedited adoption of the RAPIDS standards builder. The FLDOE and **CareerSource Florida** may consider a focus on internal operations first, ensuring process clarity, uniformity, and role purview for the FLDOE and **CareerSource Florida**. In addition to the standards builder, an array of improved services, process design and clarity, technical specifications, and enterprise tools will be necessary to improve the experience and ease of registration for all users.

### 3. Continue focus on CRM, RAPIDS integration, access to standards building, changes to the ApprenticeFlorida platform, and the necessary appropriations to secure all efforts.

The pursuit of a federal grant to implement enterprise-wide technology solutions demonstrates the commitment of **CareerSource Florida** and the FLDOE to modernize the technologies that power all processes related to apprenticeships. In addition to the standards builder, an array of improved services, information, and integrated tools will be necessary to improve the experience for all users in RAPIDS/ApprenticeFlorida, and for staff's ability to engage in effective customer relationship management.





Building a better  
working world



## Appendix 1: Design Exemplar

### Apprenticeship Florida platform & Leading Practices



## APPENDIX 1

# DESIGN EXEMPLAR

When considering exemplars of customer experience and web design, we selected the award-winning website, [Company A], which people use to rent vacation homes (or rent their own homes out to travelers). It is a natural comparison for the apprenticeship experience because it has several user groups with needs similar to the feature and flow requirements of Florida's future state.

### USER GROUPS

1. Hosts → employer/sponsor
2. Guests → apprentice
3. Organization → ATR/Navigator

### CORE FEATURES

- Sign up (complete intake process with approval layer)
- ROI calculator
- Testimonials
- Purpose-driven with statistic evidence
- Contact a real person



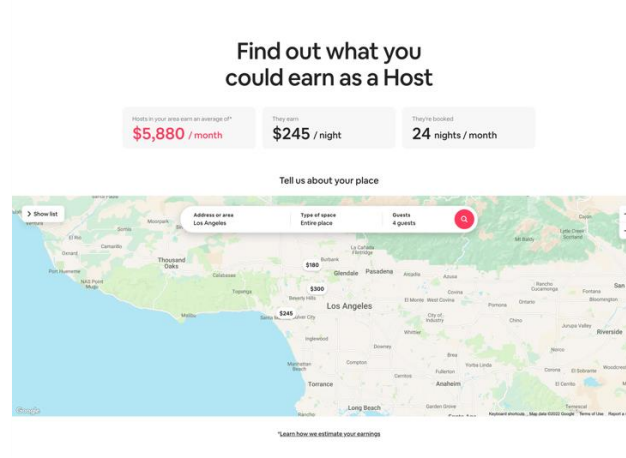
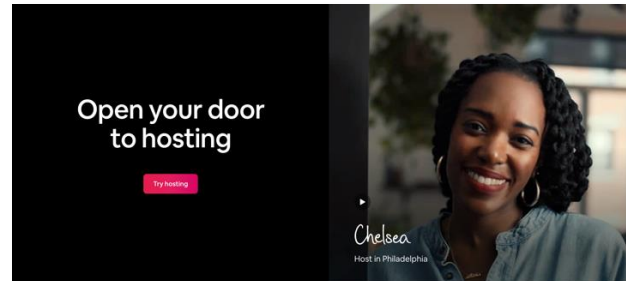
## DESIGN EXEMPLAR USER GROUPS

The exemplar experience accommodates distinct user types, allowing them to seamlessly flow to and from each view. The ways in which they are akin to apprenticeship customers are noted here.

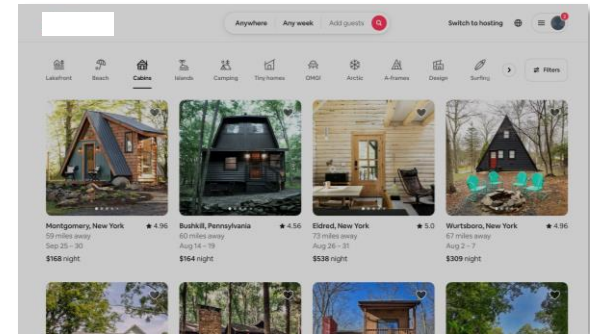
After analysis of features, usability, and process considerations, the design and process components of [company A] were identified as analogous with the needs of ApprenticeFlorida.

The following pages describe the design considerations specifically related to the identified user groups.

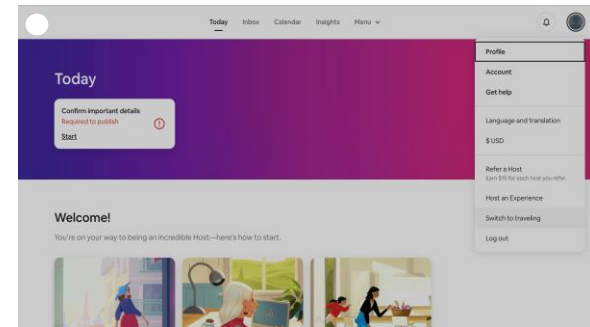
### COMPANY A USER → SIMILAR TO APPRENTICESHIPS



**01 HOST → Employers/sponsors**  
People who need to get approved and list their homes so others can rent them.



**02 GUEST → Apprentices**  
People who need to get approved and find a place to rent.



**03 ORGANIZATION → ATR/Navigators**  
Not a customer, but people who offer customer services, such as arranging for a photographer to come to your place, helping with approval hiccups, or ensuring safety precautions have been met.



## DESIGN EXEMPLAR

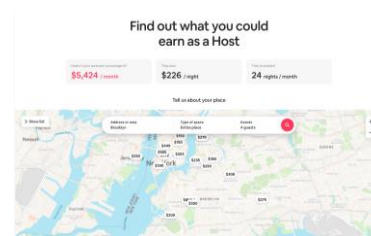
### CORE FEATURES / CUSTOMER-CENTRIC

Select core features that Company A utilizes align with the functionality the apprenticeship website needs.



#### Sign-up (intake process)

- UI: Simple, clear hierarchy
- Clear CTA: become a host / become a sponsor
- Button: triggers intake steps



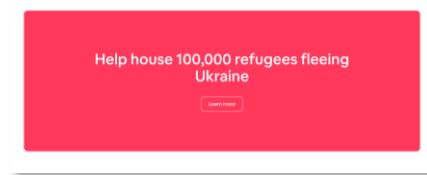
#### ROI Calculator

- Average per day/month
- Specifically in your area (map)
- Specifically in your field (filter)

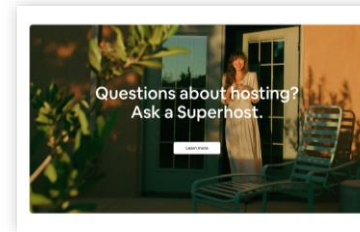


#### Testimonials

- Clear, encouraging header
- Clean slider, multiple on view at once
- Simplicity: one quote at a time

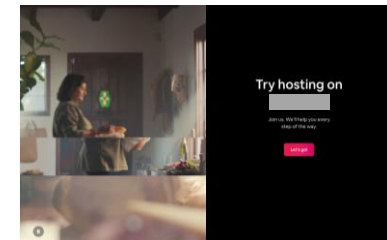


#### Purpose with stats



#### Contact

- Clear, inviting header
- Pairs potential host with current host
- Chat style UI (response time 5 hours)



#### Sign-up (multiple opportunities)

- Second opportunity to take action
- Concludes the page

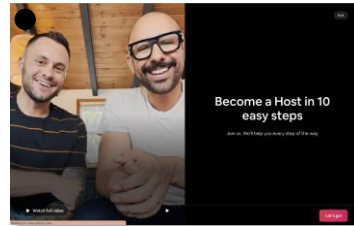


## DESIGN EXEMPLAR

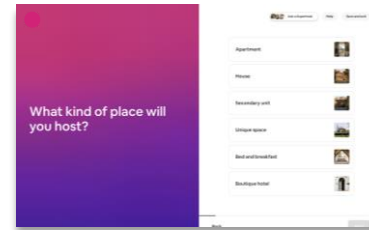
### COMPLETE INTAKE PROCESS (Host/Sponsor)

The website guides users through each step, using simple language and minimal UI design. The feature to emulate is to present users with one thing at a time, shown here.

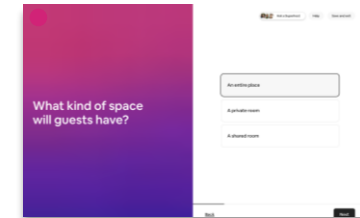
*Captions illustrate how this idea could ease the customer's burden as it pertains to a sponsor/employer.*



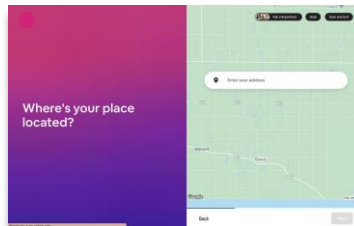
**01 BUTTON** launches intake  
*Invite users to get involved by communicating how easy it is*



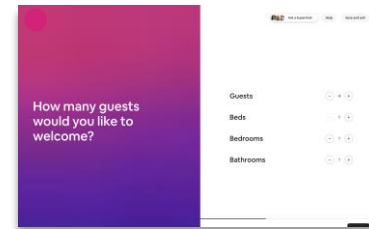
**02 SKIP LOGIC**  
*What kind of industry/business will your apprenticeship program sponsor?*



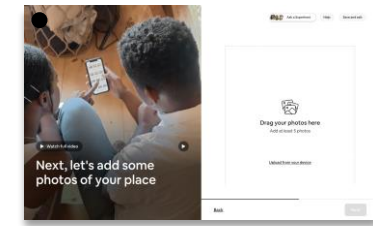
**03 SKIP LOGIC**  
*What kind of apprenticeship roles will your program have?*



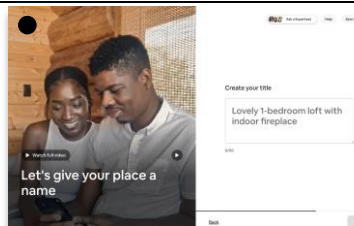
**04 MAPS**  
*Where will your apprenticeship program be located?*



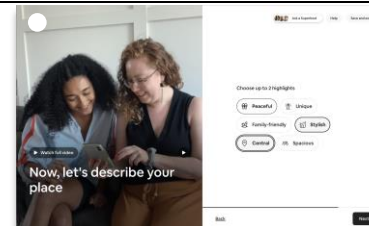
**05 COUNTS**  
*How many apprenticeships would you like your program to have?*



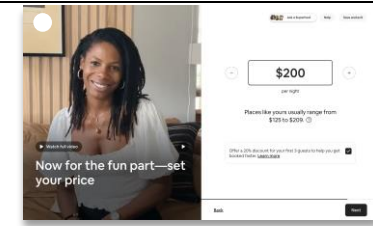
**07 FILE UPLOAD**  
*Next, let's add your business license and a few other files.*



**08 FREEFORM TEXT**  
*Let's give your apprenticeship a name.*

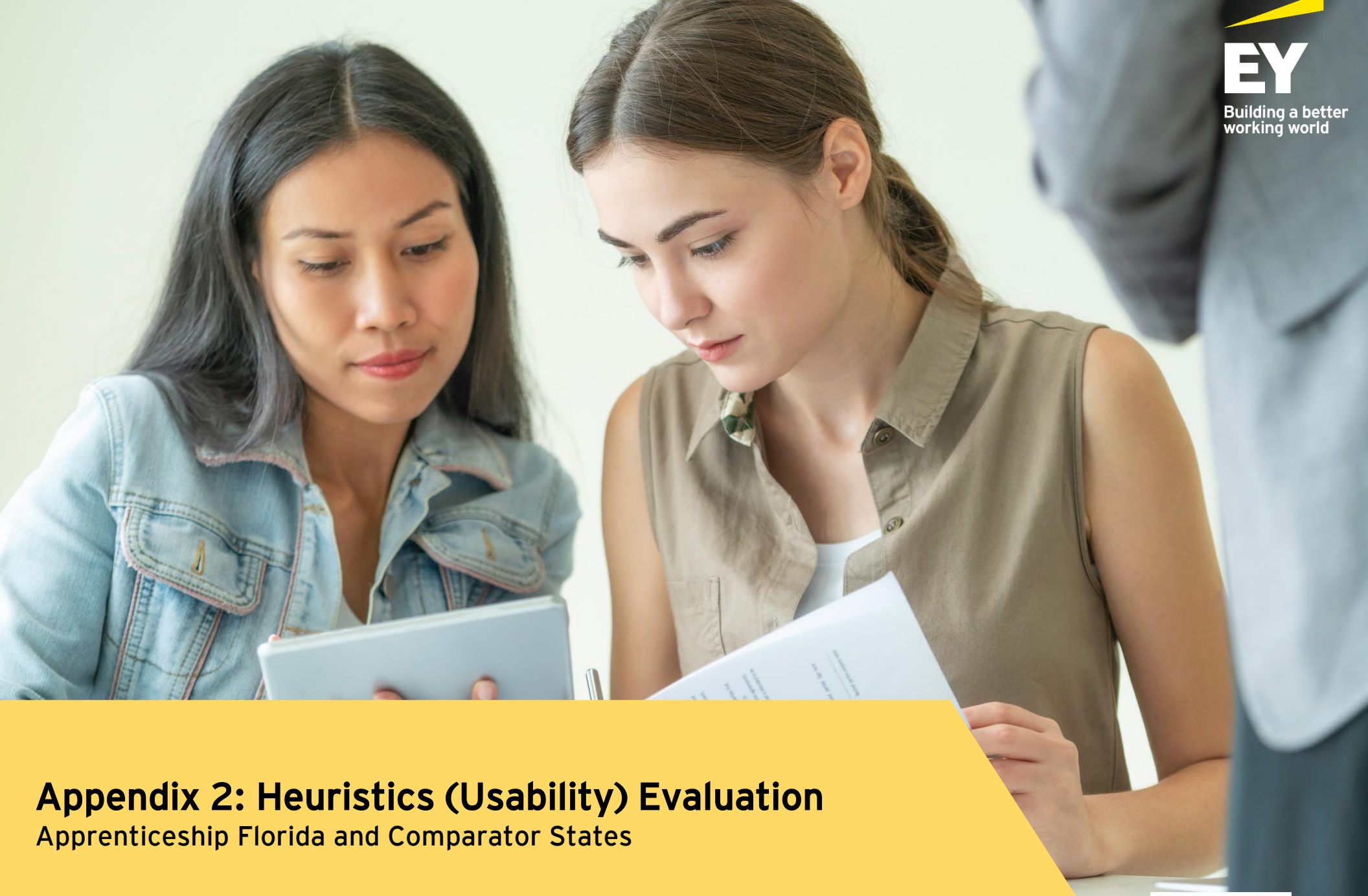


**08 FILTERS**  
*Now, let's describe the skills your program will provide training for.*



**09 SET THE PRICE**  
*How much will you pay an apprentice per hour?*





## **Appendix 2: Heuristics (Usability) Evaluation**

Apprenticeship Florida and Comparator States



## APPENDIX 2

# HEURISTICS EVALUATION

## ApprenticeFlorida.com & Comparator state websites

### Research Method

As previously noted, this heuristics evaluation was conducted to measure the degree of how user-friendly each site is across 10 categories.

The analysis presented on the following pages are observations and potential opportunities for apprenticeflorida.com.



Legend		
<span style="color: green;">●</span> <b>Excellent:</b> Meets best practice <span style="color: gold;">●</span> <b>Good:</b> Room for improvement <span style="color: orange;">●</span> <b>Faulty:</b> Significant issues <span style="color: red;">●</span> <b>Failed:</b> Critical issues		
Heuristic Score	Observation	Opportunity
<b>Findable</b> Score: Faulty (significant issues)	<p>At a glance, the navigation prominently displayed on the homepage seems intuitive (employers, apprentices, about, resources).</p> <p>Like all of the comparator states, the FL user flows do not fulfill what the target users are looking to do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employer: Get approval to establish a program</li> <li>- Job seeker: Apply for an apprenticeship</li> </ul> <p>Different pages include the same information, causing confusion about how to find ways to apply for an apprenticeship vs establish a program.</p> <p>Some resources appear in PDFs that need to be downloaded (as opposed to the standard presentation of info on a webpage).</p> <p>The website does not have a search function which inherently lowers the findability score. There are not multiple ways to look for features. Users navigate around the site through trial and error to find what they need.</p>	<p>Audit related Florida websites and <b>reconcile content</b> in order to establish comprehensive <b>information architecture</b> within this primary website.</p> <p>Establish a <b>visual hierarchy</b> and <b>consistent visual and verbal language</b> and across the site. For example, if two links go to the same place, utilize the same call-to-action (CTA) and visual treatment to signal to users that it's the same destination in both cases. <b>(Content design)</b></p> <p>Clarify what users can and cannot accomplish on this website vs elsewhere. Explicitly <b>(UX writing)</b> set expectations so users don't spend time looking for ways to do things that must be done through another channel.</p> <p>See below: <i>usable</i></p> <p>Implement <b>search</b> functionality.</p> <p>Design distinct <b>user flows</b> that encompass the full intake process of registering/applying.</p>
<b>Accessible</b> Score: Failed (critical issues)	<p>Yes, the website responds across multiple devices (laptop, phone, tablet, etc.)</p> <p>No, it failed at a score of 51. (Benchmark score is 75%, anything lower is in risk of accessibility lawsuits.)</p> <p>Urgent issues: 5</p> <p>Passed the compliance test: 18 items</p> <p>Most issues relate to the visually impaired.</p>	



<b>Legend</b> <span>●</span> <b>Excellent:</b> Meets best practice <span>●</span> <b>Good:</b> Room for improvement <span>●</span> <b>Faulty:</b> Significant issues <span>●</span> <b>Failed:</b> Critical issues		
Heuristic Score	Observation	Opportunity
<b>Clear</b>  Score: Failed (critical issues)	<p>Clarity scored low for a few reasons:</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> The goal of the site is to be informative (as opposed to process-driven). Since users cannot register/apply on the website itself, the content design should make the site's purpose and limits obvious. As it stands, users may not understand that they must first submit the form and then wait to hear back before they can take meaningful action toward the application/registration process.</p> <p><b>Hierarchy:</b> A helpful description of apprenticeships is set too low in the hierarchy. The description is too long and appears as plain text, which doesn't adhere to the bite-sized best practice that would make the info more obvious and digestible.</p> <p><b>Redundant content:</b> The same intake form appears at the top of two different pages. Similar content appears on pages for employers and job-seekers alike.</p> <p><b>Language:</b> When referring to the homepage's navigation, new users may not know what "apprentices" are. The term is clarified further down the page, but menu options should be self-explanatory.</p>	<p>Use explicit and concise language as well as effective content design to clarify what users can (and cannot) accomplish on the site versus elsewhere</p> <p>Adopt common terminology like "job-seekers".</p> <p>See above: <i>findable</i> (design complete user flows)</p>
<b>Communicative</b>  Score: Faulty (significant issues)	<p>The design of the active/inactive states in the top navigation makes the status and location obvious.</p> <p>The navigation may be too simple in that there is not a clear roadmap of which tab to go to and which link to click/download for the target need of registering/applying for an apprenticeship; see <i>clear</i></p> <p>The site's messaging supports finding information about apprenticeships but misses the administrative processes of registering/applying to apprenticeships; see <i>findable</i></p>	<p>Employ design principles to serve users bite-sized information that's easy to digest</p> <p>Utilize the proper IA (see <i>Findable</i>) to streamline user flows and ultimately guide users through the process in a strategic sequence</p> <p>Write UX copy to provide precise detail where needed, without overwhelming the users</p> <p>Provide additional resources where it's helpful (DOE, CareerSource Florida, DEO, DOL)</p>



<b>Legend</b> <span style="color: green;">●</span> <b>Excellent:</b> Meets best practice <span style="color: gold;">●</span> <b>Good:</b> Room for improvement <span style="color: orange;">●</span> <b>Faulty:</b> Significant issues <span style="color: red;">●</span> <b>Failed:</b> Critical issues		
Heuristic Score	Observation	Opportunity
<b>Usable</b> Score: Failed (critical issues)	<p>Like the other states, users are not able to complete the tasks they set out to do (process to register, apply).</p> <p>While the functionality of the website is fairly simple, the lack of content design prevents users from having a seamless experience. It does not serve new users in ways that satisfy their needs uniquely.</p> <p>There are not multiple navigation options that lead to where users may want to go next. The information meant to guide users is not clearly labeled and has not been strategically placed within a visual hierarchy - which makes it difficult to grasp what's most important now / next / later.</p> <p>See above: <i>findable, clear, communicative</i></p>	<p>See above: <i>findable, clear</i></p> <p>Add more sophisticated functionality so the website can provide a complete path to task (or at least a complete intake process for ATRs to work with)</p>
<b>Credibility</b> Score: Good (room for improvement)	<p>ApprenticeFlorida comes across as a legitimate organization, but the lack of content design and technical functionality to complete the necessary processes may lose credibility with users given that much of the target audience are digital natives.</p> <p>Modern design practices encompass end-to-end experiences whereas Florida's requires the most important steps be taken outside of its own experience. Florida shares this score and observation with all of the other comparator states.</p> <p>Content seems current.</p> <p>Promotional content is used with restraint.</p> <p>It's not easy to contact a real person for general help because the employer and apprenticeship tab has a sign-up form (no phone number or chat available).</p> <p>Sensitive data is not being collected through this website.</p>	<p>Consider the digital native population when making decisions around user interface and how people may want to get in touch. For example, does the audience want to get in touch through a form or is there a more preferable way like chat, phone, or a direct email address?</p> <p>Include information on someone they can contact with inside of Apprentice Florida, or if there is already one make it more clear of who they are contacting.</p> <p>Clearly identify agency for form.</p>



<b>Legend</b> <span style="color: #4CAF50;">●</span> <b>Excellent:</b> Meets best practice <span style="color: #FFEB3B;">●</span> <b>Good:</b> Room for improvement <span style="color: #FF9800;">●</span> <b>Faulty:</b> Significant issues <span style="color: #F44336;">●</span> <b>Failed:</b> Critical issues		
Heuristic Score	Observation	Opportunity
<b>Controllable</b> Score: Good (room for improvement)	<p>The website scores well even though the content and features would likely not meet a user's expectations and mental model (paths to tasks are incomplete).</p> <p>The simplicity of the features and content eliminate the opportunity to make errors, and users can easily recover when errors do occur by simply clicking the browser back button or an option in the top navigation.</p>	<p>Add/move content to make the experience more guided and predictable. Clarify what users can and cannot accomplish on this website versus elsewhere.</p> <p>Improve visual hierarchy so users notice the CTAs that connect them with the relevant external websites in which they can register/apply.</p>
<b>Valuable</b> Score: Faulty (significant issues)	<p>The website may not be desirable to the target user, who is likely a digital native. It includes valuable information (mostly for employers), albeit in a roundabout way. It may take some time for a user to find what they need, but the information and the ability to connect with support is indeed there.</p> <p>See above: <i>credibility</i></p> <p>It meets business goals to an extent, but it's important to note that's only in cases when users grasp that they need to submit a form and wait to hear back.</p> <p>The website itself doesn't have a direct way of letting users build/register for an apprenticeship program, which inherently lowers the customer satisfaction score.</p> <p>See above: <i>usable</i></p>	<p>Make it easier for users to understand the big picture. Communicate what they can expect along the way; that employers need to get approval (and how/where) before they can establish a program (and how/where).</p> <p>Make it more explicit on what they can and cannot achieve on this website versus elsewhere.</p>



<b>Legend</b> <span style="color: #4CAF50;">●</span> <b>Excellent:</b> Meets best practice <span style="color: #FFC107;">●</span> <b>Good:</b> Room for improvement <span style="color: #FF9800;">●</span> <b>Faulty:</b> Significant issues <span style="color: #E91E63;">●</span> <b>Failed:</b> Critical issues		
Heuristic Score	Observation	Opportunity
<b>Learnable</b> Score: Faulty (significant issues)	The website itself is learnable in terms of the top navigation, which can be grasped quickly and is easy to recall. Links and PDFs are offered to connect users with the more complicated processes (register/apply), but the site itself does not ease said processes.	Create a guided aspect of the experience. Explain the register/apply process in plain language, giving users bite sizes of information in a step-by-step format.  Determine whether a birds-eye-view of the process would be helpful to users, and if so, how to visually communicate it
<b>Delightful</b> Score: Faulty (significant issues)	The tone of the website is welcoming and supportive. However, user expectations are likely not being exceeded.  See above: <i>credibility, valuable</i>	Enhancing the overall usability and clarity of the website will inherently increase the delight factor. See recommendations above.  Consider the growing digital native population when making decisions around user interface and experience design. How might we update the look and feel as well the functionality of the site? What kinds of interactions bring joy and satisfaction to a gen-z user? What are their expectations from real world tech and how might we exceed them here?



## Findability

Legend							
<span>● Excellent: Meets best practice</span> <span>● Good: Room for improvement</span> <span>● Faulty: Significant issues</span> <span>● Failed: Critical issues</span>							
Criteria	FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
- Can users easily locate the things they're seeking?	Faulty	Good	Faulty	Faulty	Faulty	Good	Faulty
- How is findability affected across devices?	Faulty	Good	Faulty	Faulty	Faulty	Good	Faulty
- Does the system support the multiple ways users look for features?	Faulty	Good	Faulty	Faulty	Faulty	Good	Faulty
- Does the search work the way users expect it to work?	Faulty	Good	Faulty	Faulty	Faulty	Good	Faulty

### Observed challenge(s):

- Absence of search functions
- Prioritizing important content too low in the visual hierarchy
- Relevant pieces of information living separately on external sites

### Selected Highlight(s):

- Search functionality that works as expected (Tennessee)
- Prominently displayed cards/call-to-actions for different user groups (Michigan)

## Accessibility

Legend							
<span>● Excellent: Meets best practice</span> <span>● Good: Room for improvement</span> <span>● Faulty: Significant issues</span> <span>● Failed: Critical issues</span>							
Criteria	FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
- Can it be used via all expected channels and devices?	Failed	Failed	Faulty	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed
- Does it meet levels of accessibility compliance to be considerate of those users with disabilities (e.g. color blindness, contrast, dyslexia)?	Failed	Failed	Faulty	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed

### Observed challenge(s):

- Failing accessibility compliance requirements with a score below 75% runs the risk of accessibility lawsuits



## Clarity

Legend							
<span>● Excellent: Meets best practice</span> <span>● Good: Room for improvement</span> <span>● Faulty: Significant issues</span> <span>● Failed: Critical issues</span>							
Criteria	FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is it easy to understand (including uncommon terms or being purposefully unclear in language)?</li> <li>- Is the target demographics' reading level considered?</li> <li>- Is the path to task completion obvious and free of distraction?</li> <li>- Would a user find it easy to describe?</li> </ul>	Failed	Faulty	Faulty	Faulty	Good	Faulty	Faulty

### Observed challenge(s):

- Users to miss useful information due to unintuitive wording and/or confusing visual hierarchy
- Insufficiently detailed content may make paths to task completion unclear (how/where to apply, who to contact, etc.)

## Communication

Legend							
<span>● Excellent: Meets best practice</span> <span>● Good: Room for improvement</span> <span>● Faulty: Significant issues</span> <span>● Failed: Critical issues</span>							
Criteria	FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the status and location of the user obvious?</li> <li>- Does the navigation and messaging help establish a sense of place that is consistent and orienting across channels, contexts, and tasks?</li> <li>- Is messaging effective and supportive?</li> </ul>	Faulty	Good	Good	Faulty	Good	Good	Faulty

### Observed challenge(s):

- Without breadcrumbs, user status and location is not obvious

**Selected Highlight(s):** Active states in navigation can help establish sense of place when breadcrumbs are absent (Tennessee, Florida)



## Usability

Legend							
<span style="color: green;">●</span> <b>Excellent:</b> Meets best practice <span style="color: yellow;">●</span> <b>Good:</b> Room for improvement <span style="color: orange;">●</span> <b>Faulty:</b> Significant issues <span style="color: red;">●</span> <b>Failed:</b> Critical issues							
Criteria	FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it serve new users as well as loyal users in ways that satisfy their needs uniquely?</li> <li>- Are users able to complete the tasks that they set out to without major frustration or blockers?</li> <li>- Are there a few navigation options that lead where users may want to go next? Are they clearly labeled?</li> </ul>							

### Observed challenge(s):

- Lack of content design may negatively impact user experience
- Unclear labels and/or visual hierarchy take away from user understanding of navigation options

### Selected Highlight(s):

- Even if unable to satisfy user needs completely, it serves new users well to clearly indicate what they can and cannot use the website for (Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina)

## Credibility

Legend							
<span style="color: green;">●</span> <b>Excellent:</b> Meets best practice <span style="color: yellow;">●</span> <b>Good:</b> Room for improvement <span style="color: orange;">●</span> <b>Faulty:</b> Significant issues <span style="color: red;">●</span> <b>Failed:</b> Critical issues							
Criteria	FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the design appropriate to the context of use and audience?</li> <li>- Is the content updated in a timely manner?</li> <li>- Is promotional content used with restraint?</li> <li>- Is it easy to contact a real person?</li> <li>- Is there help/support content where needed, especially when asked for sensitive personal data?</li> </ul>							

### Observed challenge(s):

- Lack of contact information (phone numbers, email addresses) may make it difficult to access support



## Controllability

Legend							
<span style="color: green;">●</span> <b>Excellent:</b> Meets best practice <span style="color: orange;">●</span> <b>Good:</b> Room for improvement <span style="color: brown;">●</span> <b>Faulty:</b> Significant issues <span style="color: red;">●</span> <b>Failed:</b> Critical issues							
Criteria	FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do features and content meet users' expectations and mental model?</li> <li>- How well are errors anticipated and eliminated?</li> <li>- When errors do occur, how easily can a user recover?</li> <li>- Are exits and other important controls clearly marked?</li> </ul>							

### Observed challenge(s):

- Limited functionality may not align with the expectations and mental models of users trying to register/apply directly on the website

### Selected Highlight(s):

- Where functionality does not meet user expectations, content can help clearly guide users towards contacts and/or external sites for next steps (South Carolina, Tennessee)

## Value

Legend							
<span style="color: green;">●</span> <b>Excellent:</b> Meets best practice <span style="color: orange;">●</span> <b>Good:</b> Room for improvement <span style="color: brown;">●</span> <b>Faulty:</b> Significant issues <span style="color: red;">●</span> <b>Failed:</b> Critical issues							
Criteria	FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is it desirable to the target user?</li> <li>- Does it meet the business goals?</li> <li>- Can a user easily describe the value?</li> <li>- Does it improve customer satisfaction?</li> </ul>							

### Observed challenge(s):

- Target users who are digital natives may not value having to contact someone to initiate a process



## Learnability

Legend							
<span>● Excellent: Meets best practice</span> <span>● Good: Room for improvement</span> <span>● Faulty: Significant issues</span> <span>● Failed: Critical issues</span>							
Criteria	FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can it be grasped quickly?</li> <li>- What is offered to ease the more complicated processes?</li> <li>- Is it easy to recall?</li> <li>- Does it behave consistently enough to be predictable?</li> </ul>	Faulty	Faulty	Good	Good	Good	Good	Faulty

### Observed challenge(s):

- Unclear content design may challenge users' recall of their flow and/or where helpful information and links were located

### Selected Highlight(s):

## Delight

Legend							
<span>● Excellent: Meets best practice</span> <span>● Good: Room for improvement</span> <span>● Faulty: Significant issues</span> <span>● Failed: Critical issues</span>							
Criteria	FL	MI	SC	CO	AL	TN	OH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How are user expectations not just met but exceeded?</li> <li>- What can you take that is now ordinary and make extraordinary?</li> <li>- What are your differentiators from other similar experiences or competitors?</li> </ul>	Faulty	Good	Good	Faulty	Good	Faulty	Faulty

### Observed challenge(s):

- Additional functionality that makes it possible complete an application/registration process could take the experience from ordinary to extraordinary

### Selected Highlight(s):

- Visual design can elevate how welcoming and modern the experience feels (Michigan, Alabama)





Building a better  
working world

## Appendix 3: User Flows and Processes

Apprenticeship Florida & Comparator States



## APPENDIX 3

# USER FLOWS

### Research method

In order to provide thoughtful design recommendations, we first needed to understand the process that users go through when it comes to establishing an apprenticeship program (employers and sponsors) as well as the process for applying to become an apprentice (job seekers).

Since process is intertwined with experience design in the user flows, we started by defining the goals of each primary user group in the form of user stories (shown here) – and we studied the corresponding flows on all sites.

All user flows are provided in the standalone PDF document accompanying the final report, titled “UserFlows\_and\_ProcessMaps.pdf”

### Learnings (PAIN POINT)

If you define a “complete” user flow as the website provides a path to complete the end-to-end process the user story speaks to, then none of the comparator states’ websites have complete user flows.

However, if you define “complete” as providing a path to the *starting point of a process that doesn’t live within the website*, then all of them are successful to an extent. With that in mind, successful customer experience should encompass a cohesive end-to-end process.



# Florida

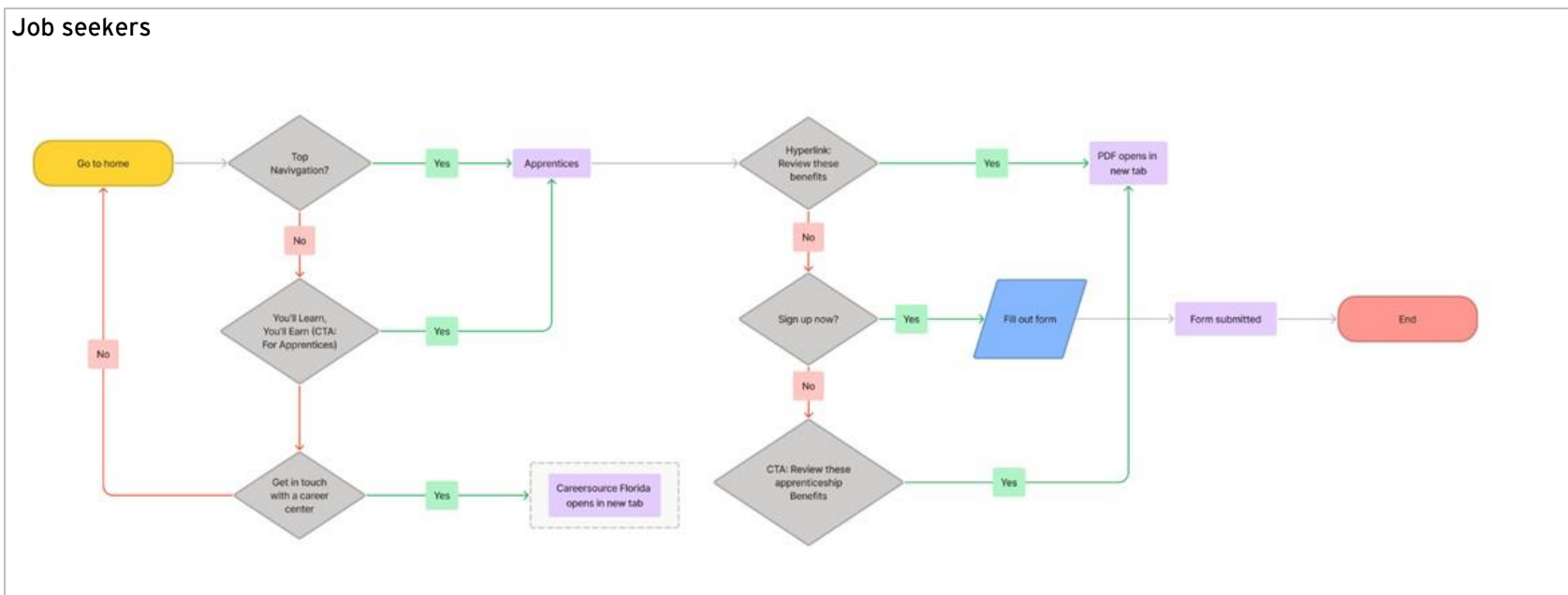
## User groups

- Employers (primary)
- Job-seekers (primary)
- Sponsors (secondary)

## User flow highlights

- Employer and apprentice PDFs are accessible from multiple locations
- Links to [apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov)
- Links to CareerSource Florida
- Links to the Florida DOE
- Both employer and job-seeker flows end at “sign up now”
- Clarity: “sign-up now” doesn’t allow the user to complete their process and is actually unclear as to what it does entail
- Job-seekers flow is less robust than the one for employers
- Consultant flow is open ended; the user is offered a content kit for them to use in their activities

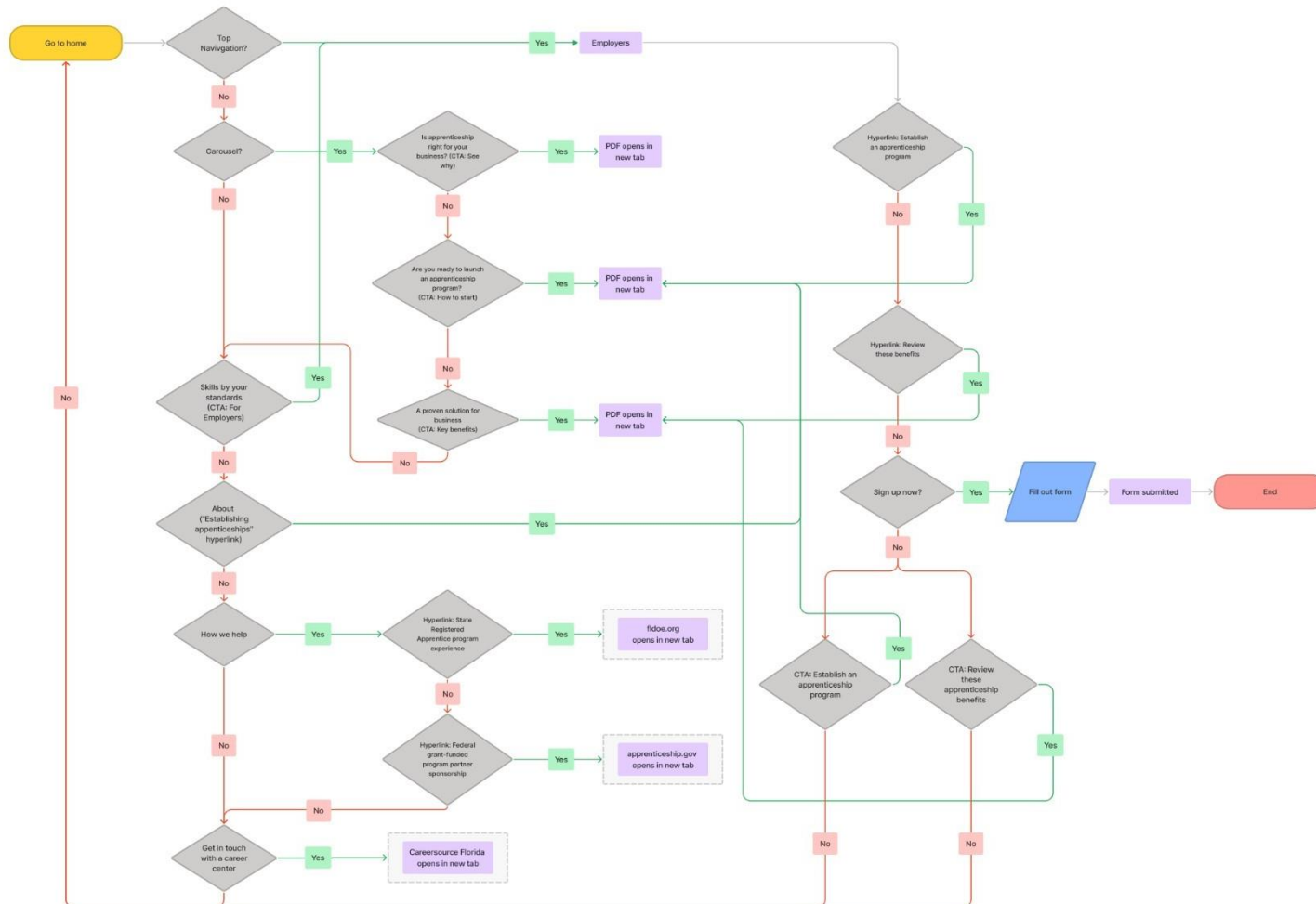
## Job seekers





## Florida (Continued)

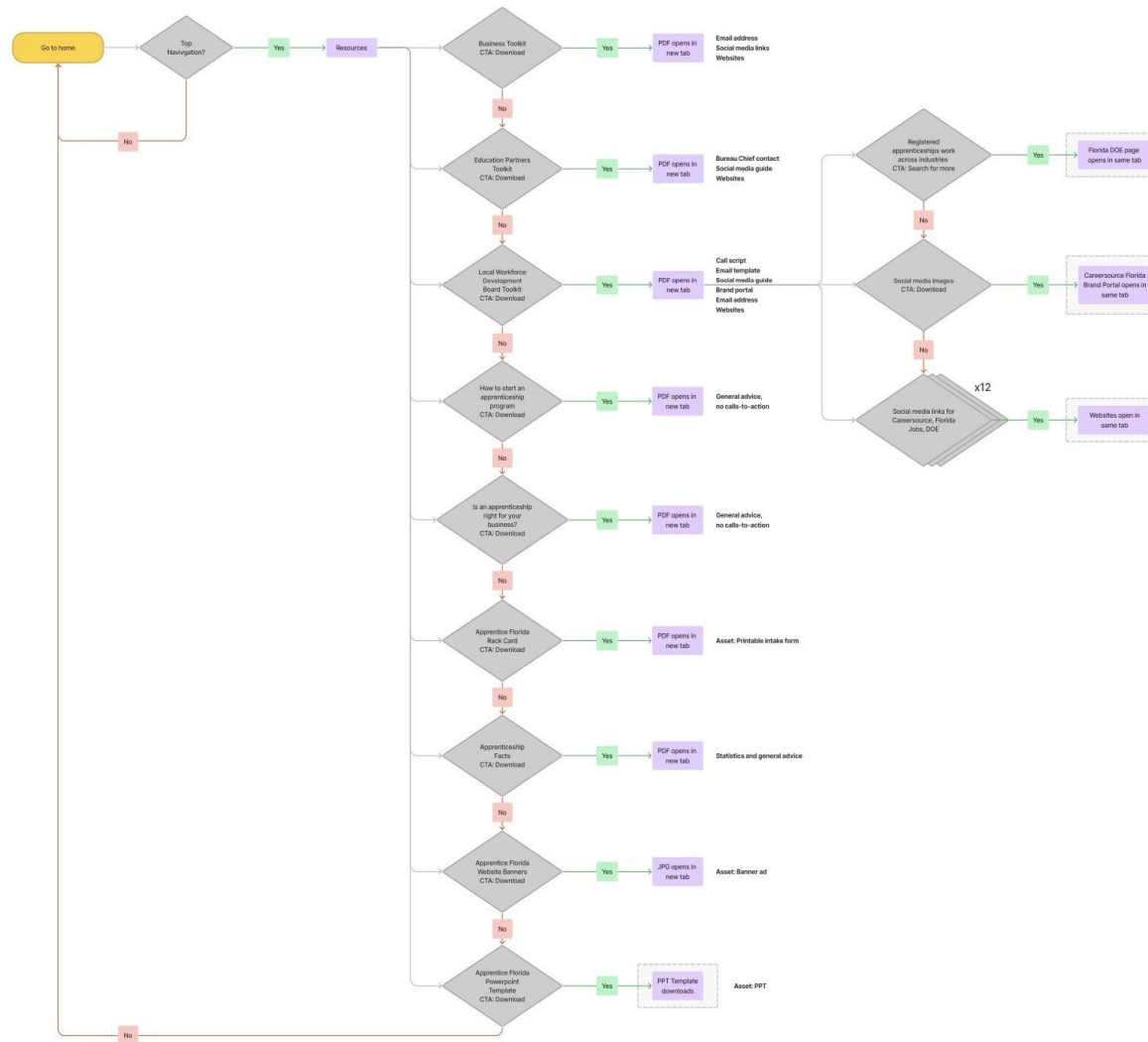
### Employers





## Florida (Continued)

### Job-seekers





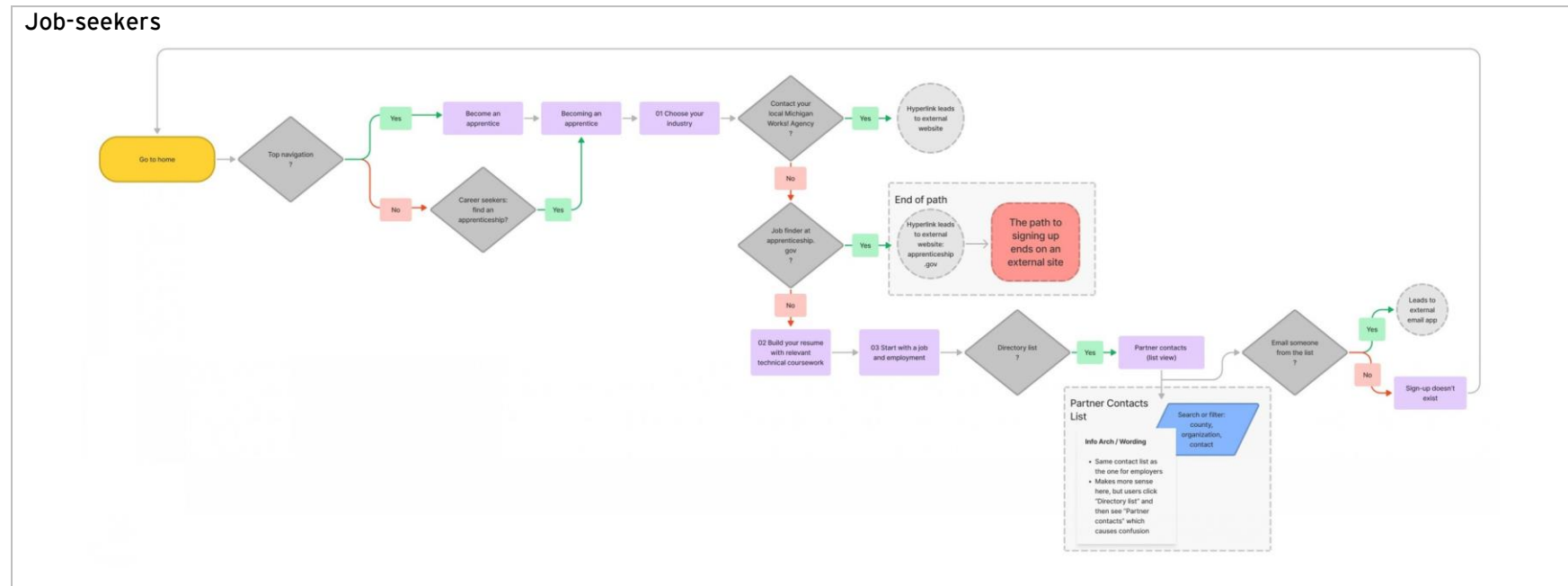
# Michigan

## User groups

- Employers (primary)
- Job-seekers (primary)
- Consultants (secondary)

## User flow highlights

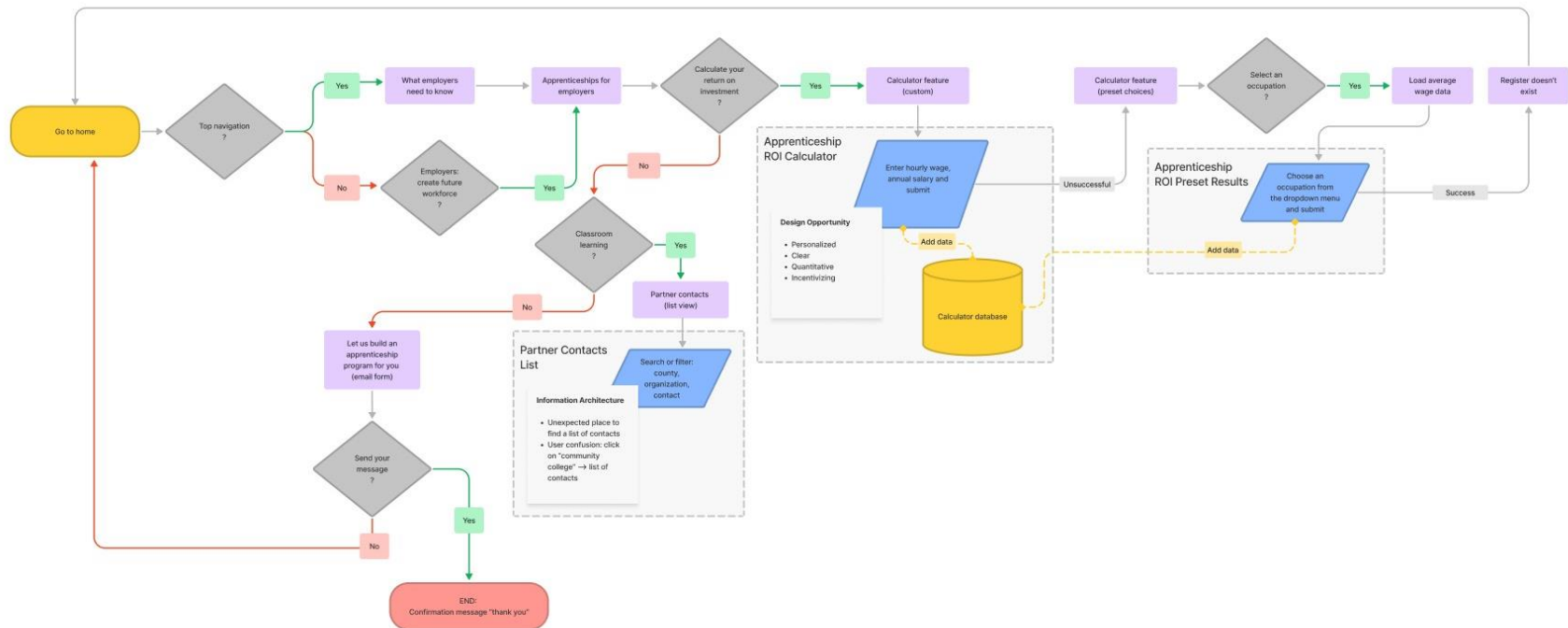
- Fairly straightforward flow
- Includes ROI calculator (design op for FL)
- Partner contacts: unexpected place to find it. User confusion: click “community college” -> list of contacts (IA issue)
- Processes: leave the site
- Clarity: it's not obvious that users must leave the site in order to take meaningful action toward register/apply
- End: submit a form





## Michigan (Continued)

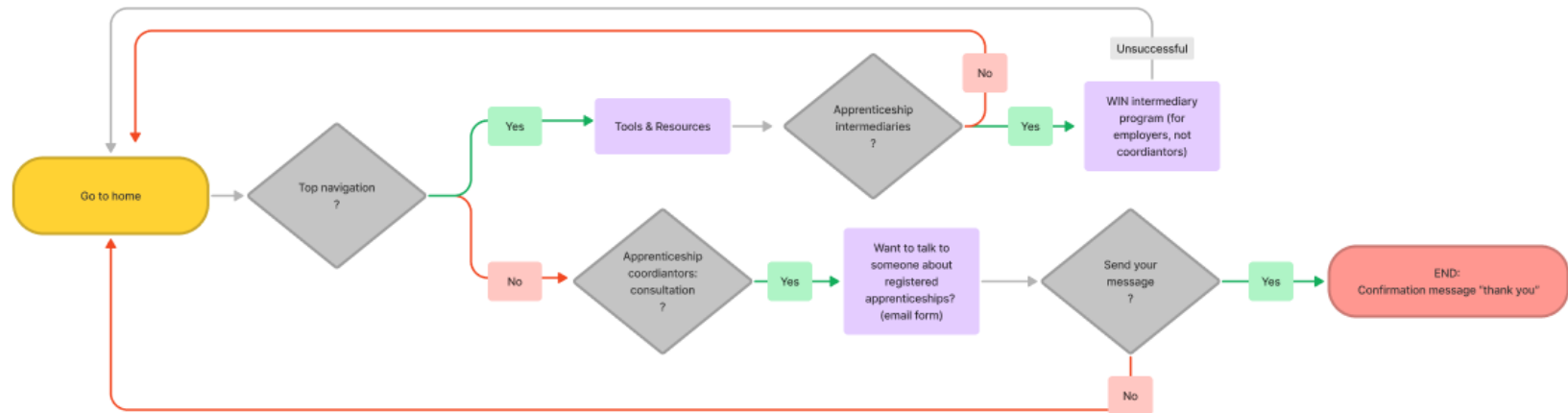
### Employers





## Michigan (Continued)

### Consultants



g, Information Technology, Cybersecurity, L  
y, Automation, Advanced Manufacturing and  
g a career path? **Contact your local Michigan**  
visit the **job finder at apprenticeship.gov**.

#### Visual hierarchy

Job seekers need to visit apprenticeship.gov, but the prompt sits too low in the visual hierarchy making it easy for users to miss.





## South Carolina

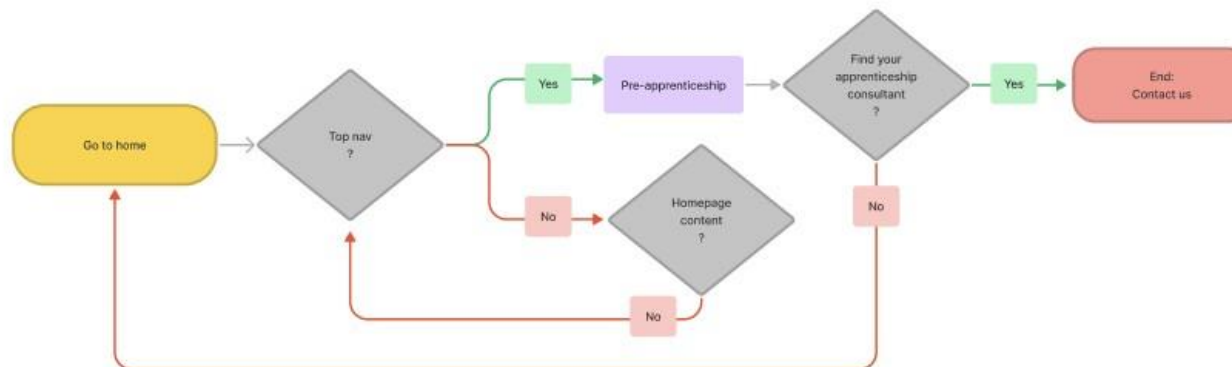
### User groups

- Employers (primary)
- Job-seekers (primary)
- Consultants (secondary)

### User flow highlights

- Fairly straightforward flow
- Includes ROI calculator (design op for FL)
- Partner contacts: unexpected place to find it. User confusion: click "community college" -> list of contacts (IA issue)
- Processes: leave the site
- Clarity: it's not obvious that users must leave the site in order to take meaningful action toward register/apply
- End: submit a form

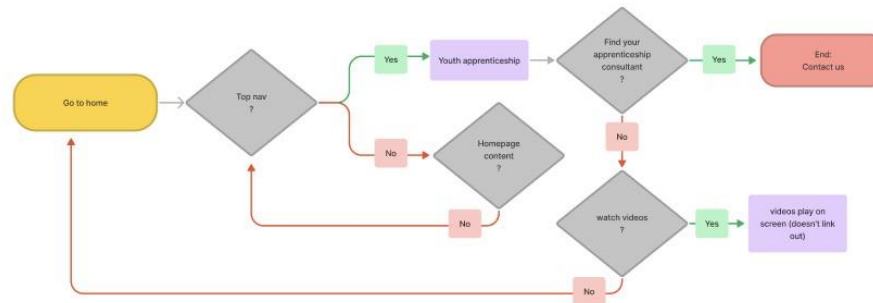
### Job-seeker 1 (pre-apprentice)



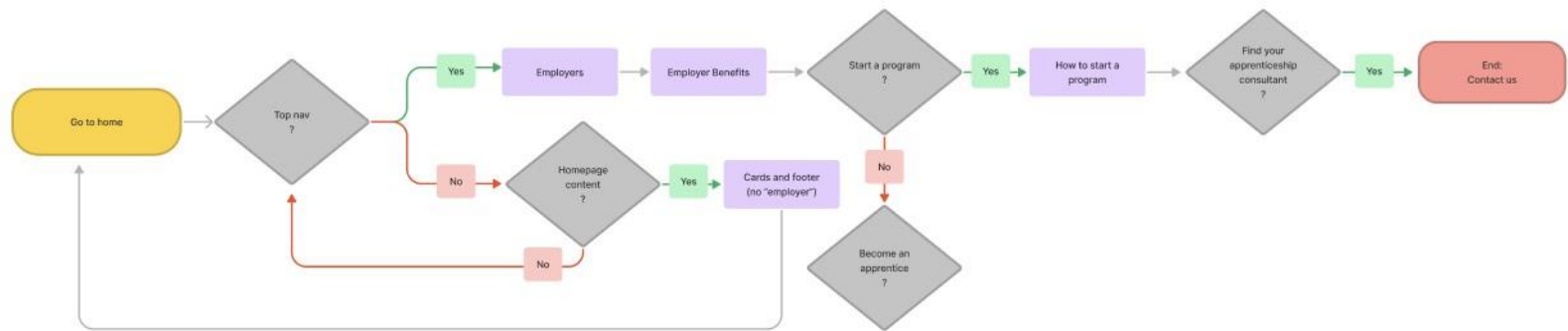


## South Carolina (Continued)

### Job-seeker 2 (youth apprentice)



### Employers





## Colorado

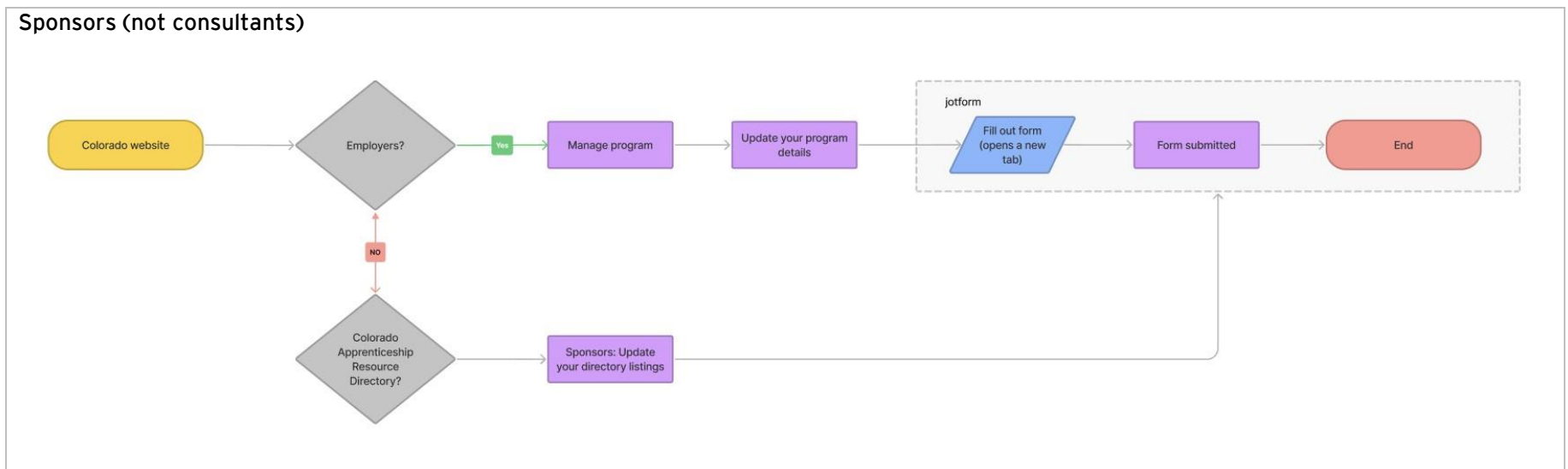
### User groups

- Employers (primary)
- Job-seekers (primary)
- Consultants (secondary)

### User flow highlights

- Fairly straightforward flow
- Includes ROI calculator (design op for FL)
- Partner contacts: unexpected place to find it. User confusion: click “community college” -> list of contacts (IA issue)
- Processes: leave the site
- Clarity: it’s not obvious that users must leave the site in order to take meaningful action toward register/apply
- End: submit a form

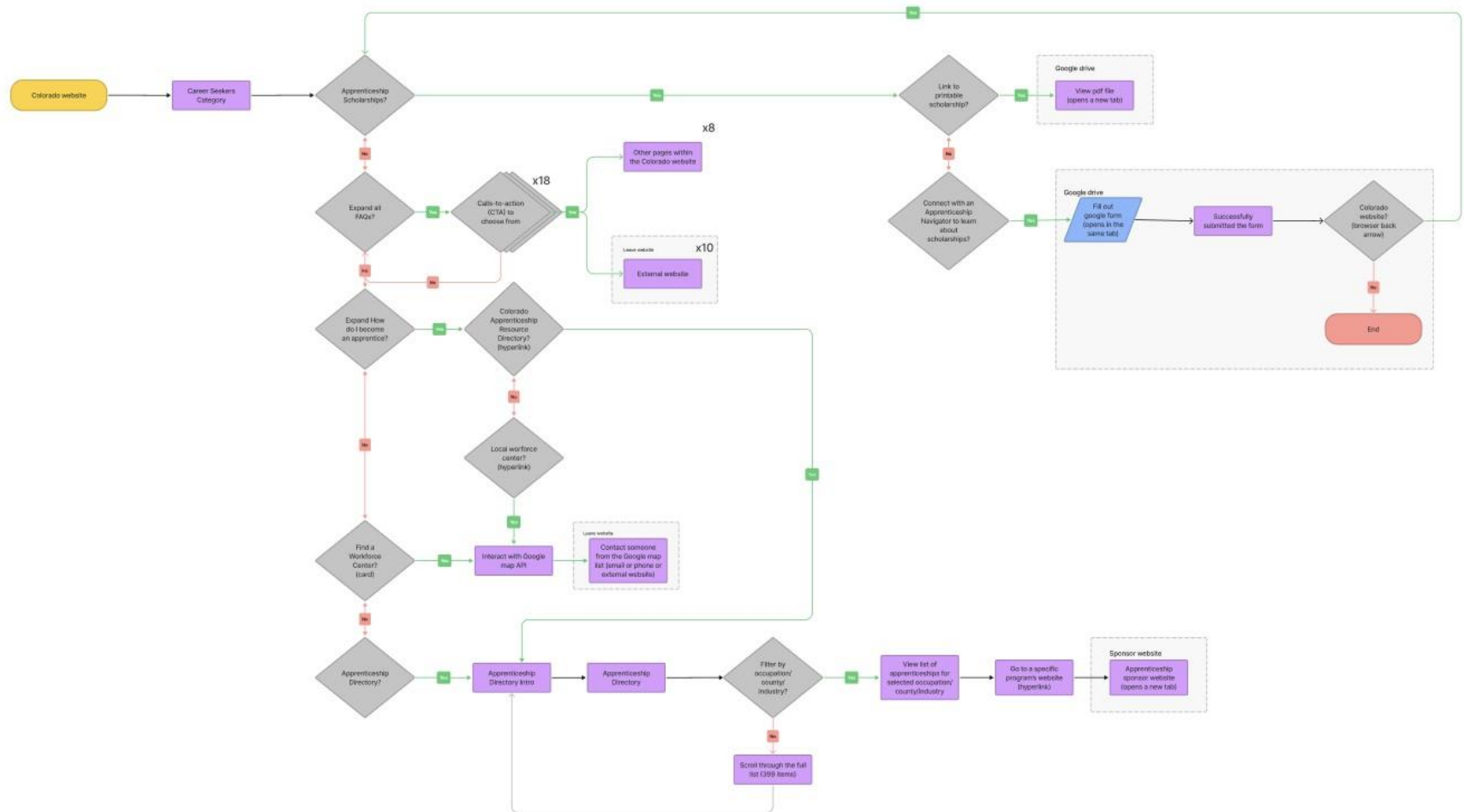
### Sponsors (not consultants)





## Colorado (Continued)

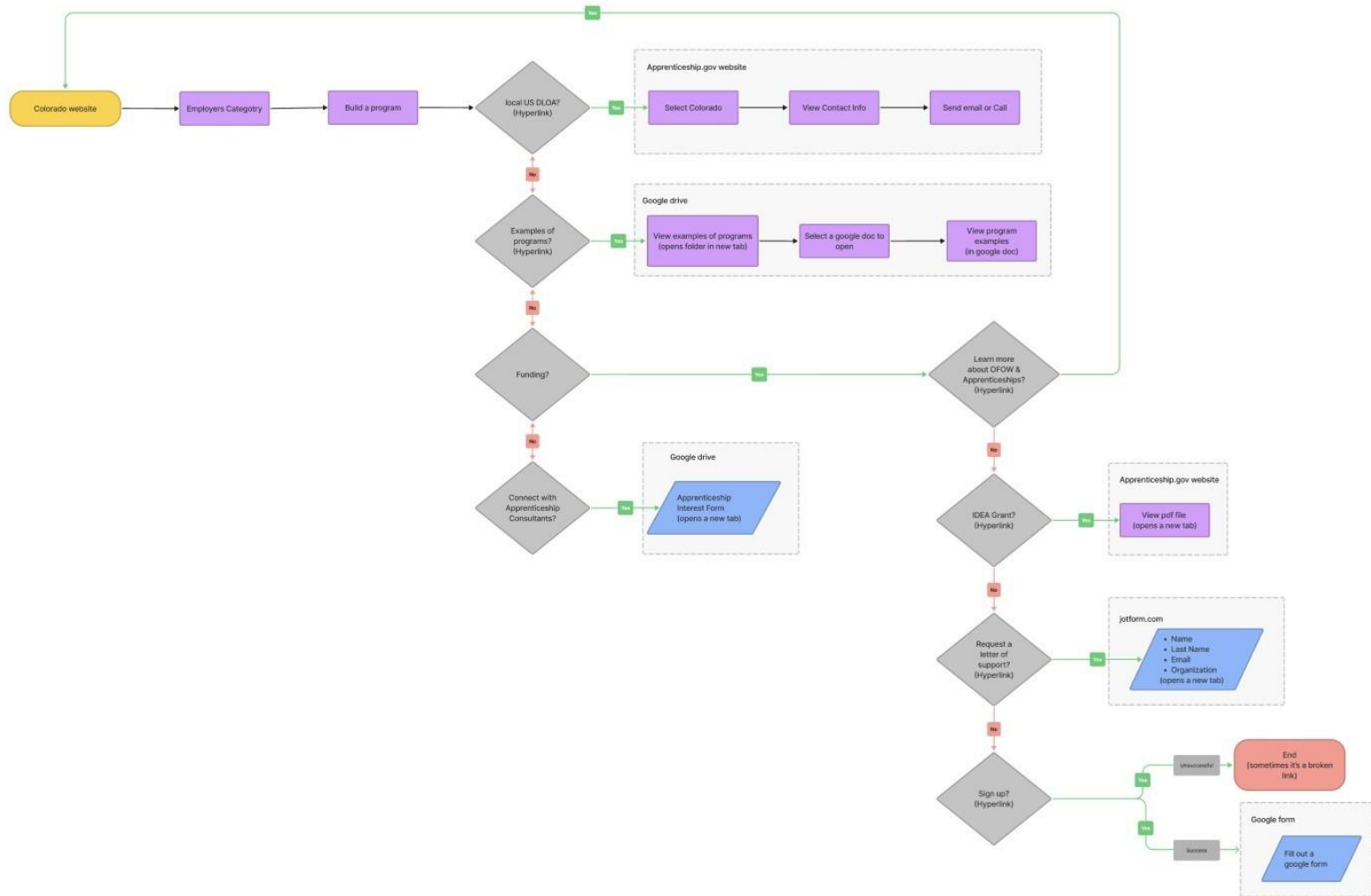
### Job-seekers





## Colorado (Continued)

### Employers





# Alabama

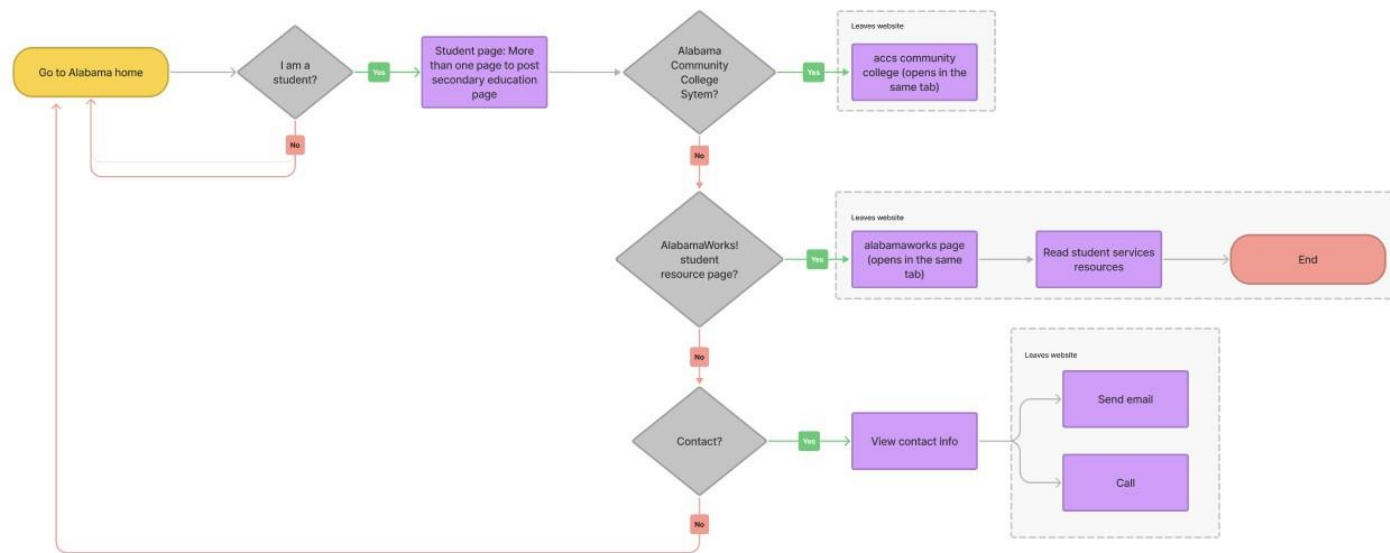
## User groups

- Employers (primary)
- Job-seekers (primary)
- Students (secondary)

## User flow highlights

- Flows don't have many clicks, but cause confusion nonetheless
- Employers: only have 1 click before being prompted to either download a PDF or log into RAPIDS, both of which are out of context
- Job-seekers can't use the main nav option (it's broken), but can use the secondary button above the fold
- Processes: leave the site
- Clarity: it's mostly obvious that users must leave the site in order to take meaningful action toward register/apply
- End: hyperlinks, leave site

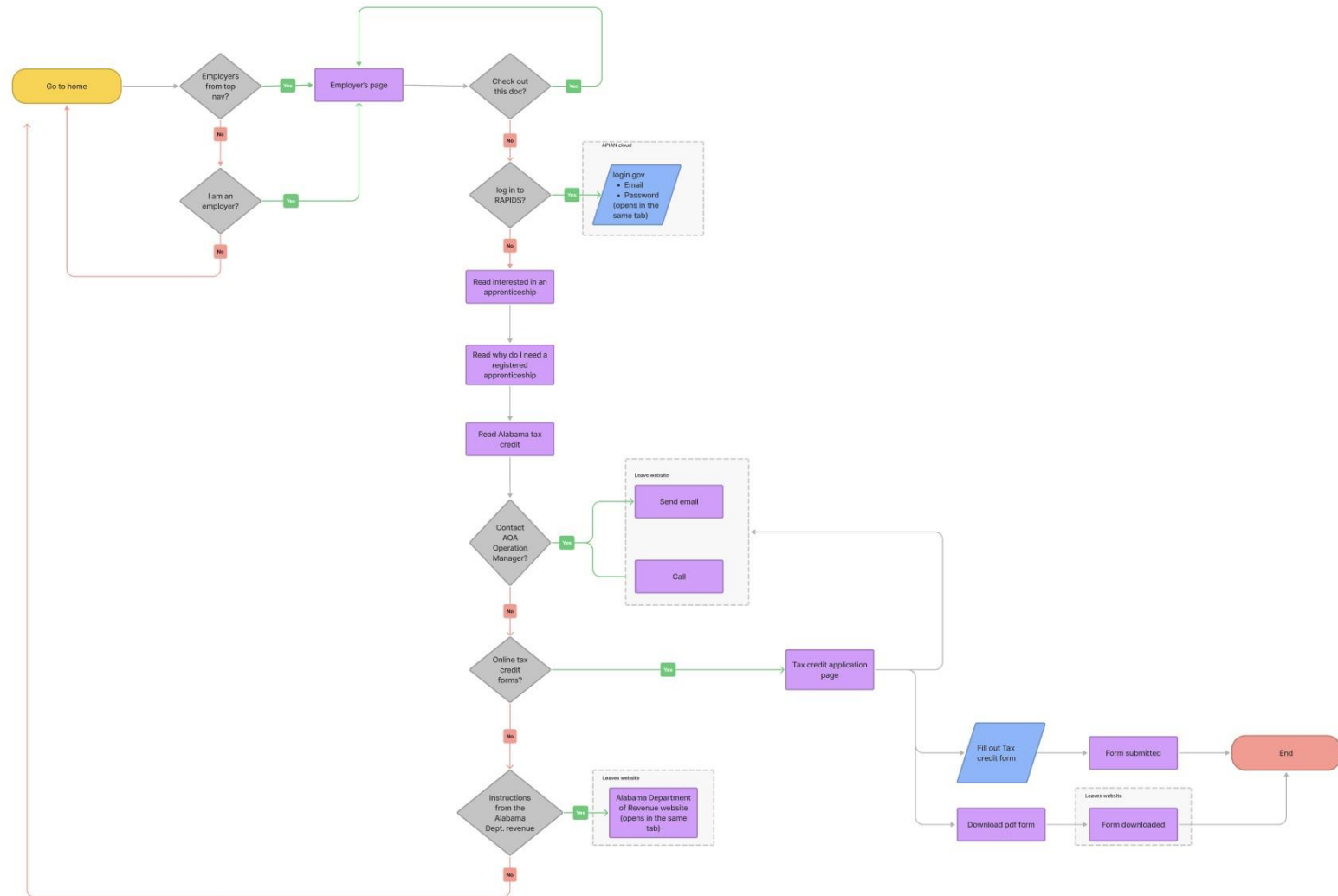
### Students (not consultants)





## Alabama (Continued)

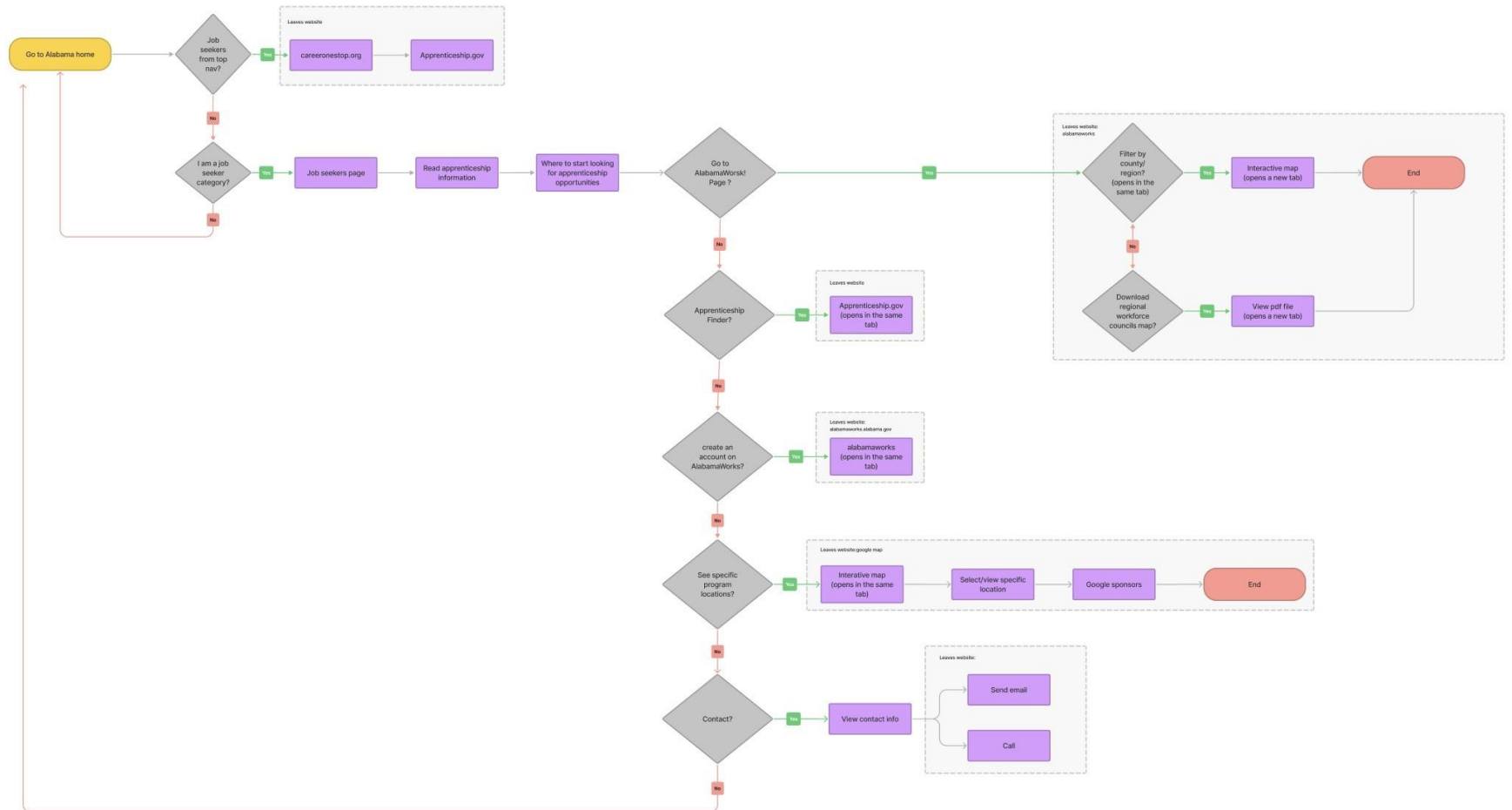
### Employers





## Alabama (Continued)

### Job-seekers





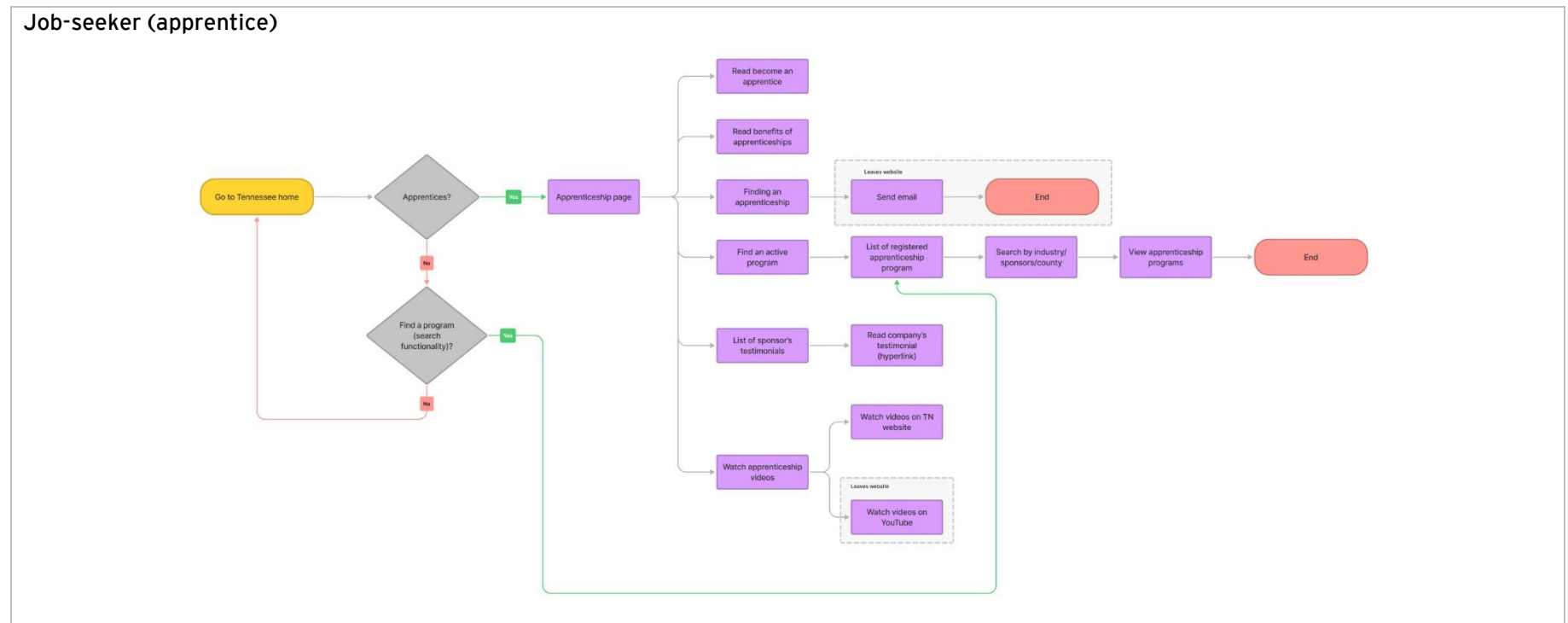
# Tennessee

## User groups

- Employer/sponsor (primary)
- Job-seekers (primary)
- Job-seeker youth (secondary)

## User flow highlights

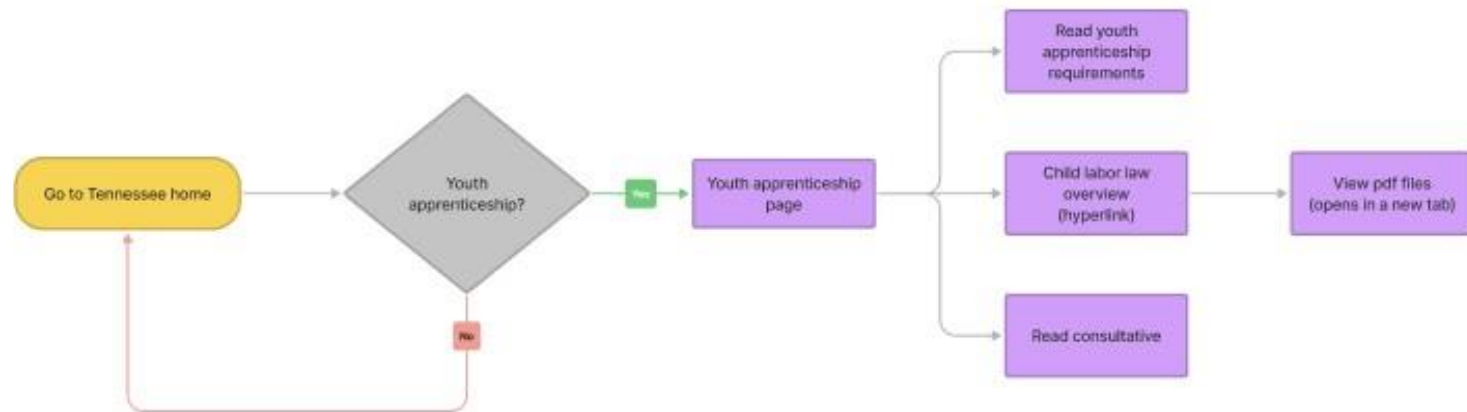
- Flows are fairly clear, though many require users to download PDFs instead of offering info within the site
- Job-seeker flow is simple: 4 clicks before prompt to email someone to find an apprenticeship
- Employers: Most valuable info is geared toward employer/sponsor user group, but lives outside of the website (hyperlinks or PDF downloads)
- Processes: leave the site
- Clarity: it's not obvious that users must leave the site in order to take meaningful action toward register/apply
- End: send email





## Tennessee (Continued)

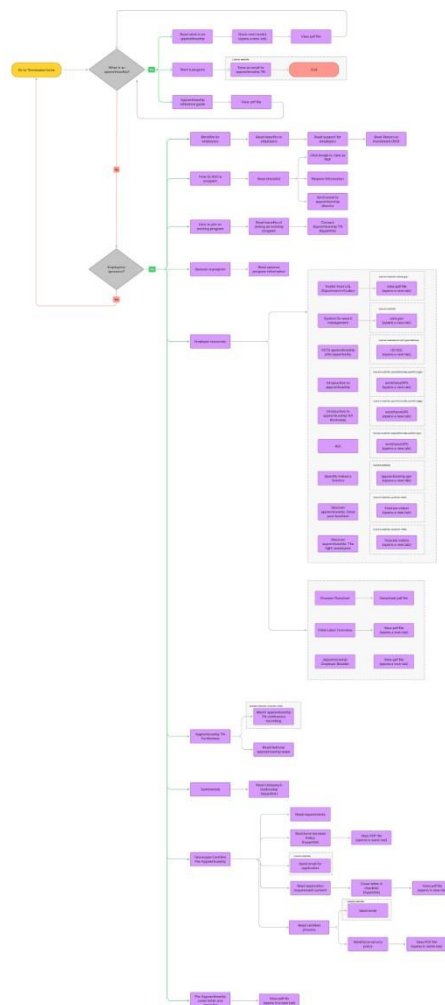
Job-seeker 2 (youth apprentice)





### Tennessee (Continued)

## Employer/Sponsors





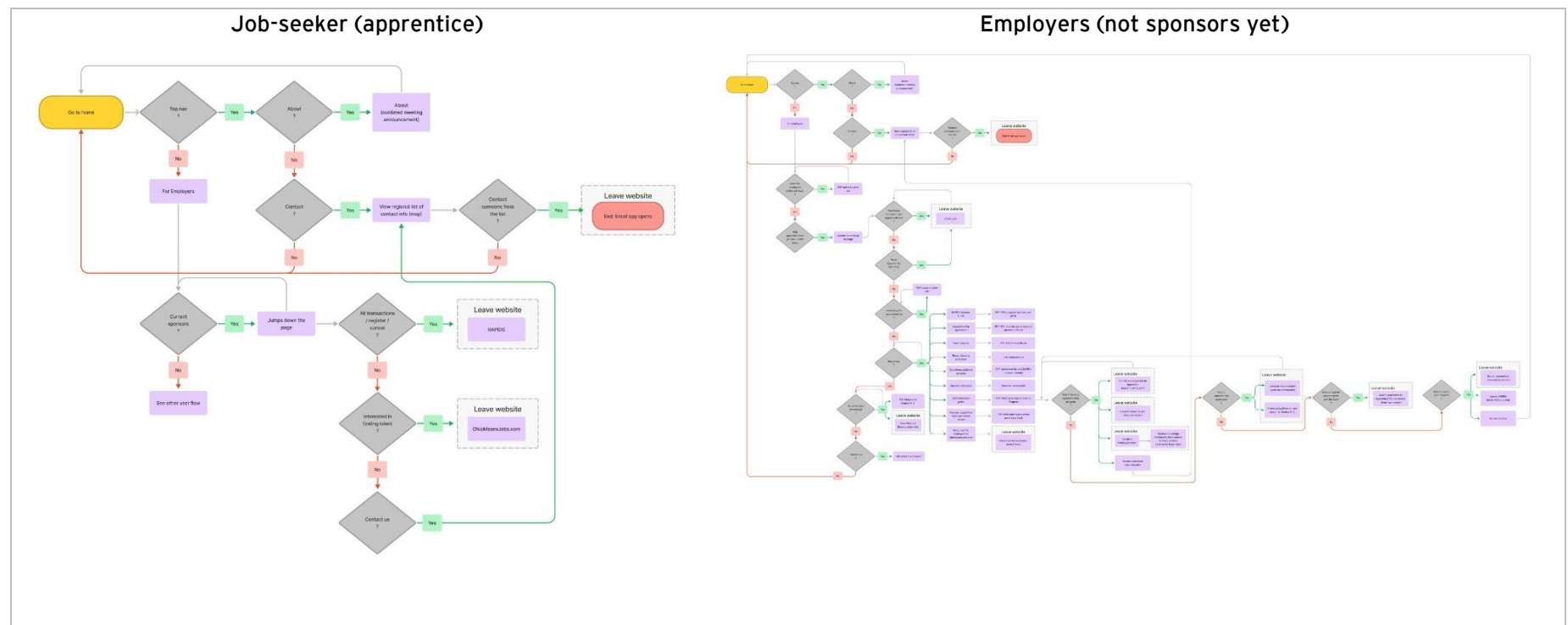
# Ohio

## User groups

- Employer/sponsor (primary)
- Job-seekers (primary)
- Job-seeker youth (secondary)

## User flow highlights

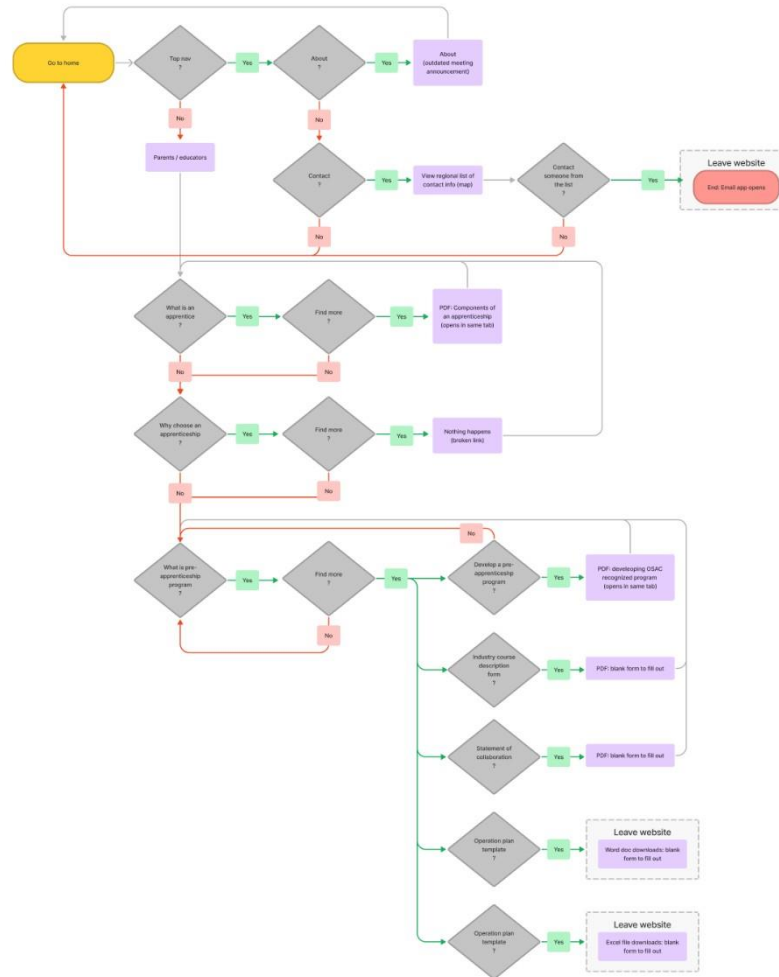
- Flows are fairly clear, though many require users to download PDFs instead of offering info within the site
- Job-seeker flow is simple: 4 clicks before prompt to email someone to find an apprenticeship
- Employers: Most valuable info is geared toward employer/sponsor user group, but lives outside of the website (hyperlinks or PDF downloads)
- Processes: leave the site
- Clarity: it's not obvious that users must leave the site in order to take meaningful action toward register/apply
- End: send email





## Ohio (Continued)

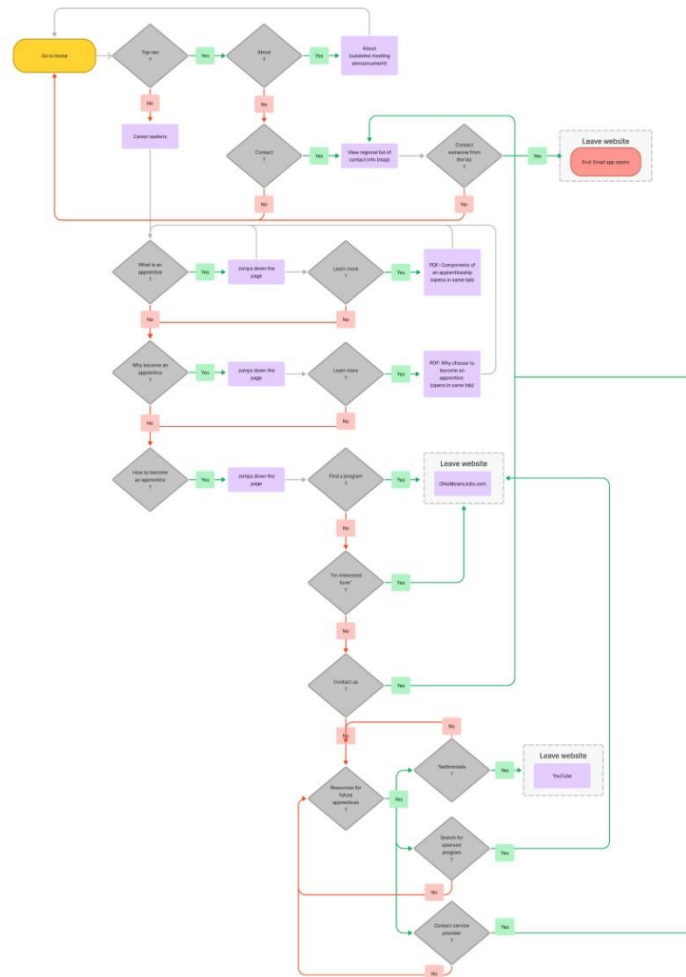
### Parents/educators





## Ohio (Continued)

### Job-seekers



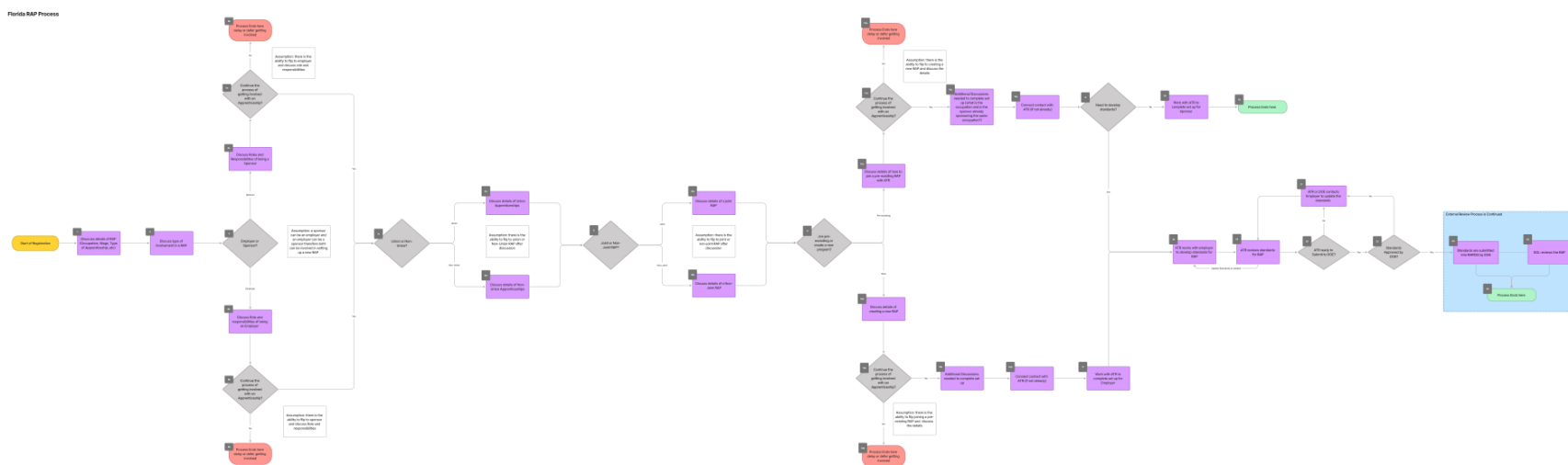


## Registered Apprenticeship Program Process Map

During stakeholder engagement, the team collected details on the current process for registration of a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) in the state of Florida. The process map below was created with documents provided by ATRs along with FLDOE leadership review and input. The entire process for setting up a RAP from start to finish can include up to 25 steps, not including the frequent and ad hoc communication necessary during initial intake. The process map shows that most of the RAP process is manual and completed through emails and conversations rather than being automated through the [ApprenticeFlorida.com](https://www.apprenticeflorida.com) website or a customer relationship management platform.

Employers and sponsors were asked questions surrounding the timeframe for completing a RAP registration. It was determined there is a variance in the length of processing. Today, the process can least from a few weeks to over a year to complete the RAP process, depending on certain variables. We found the two main variables in time duration to be (1) the amount of education and awareness the employer/sponsor maintained prior to starting registration and (2) the review, approval, and/or revision of the required forms to complete registration. There is a great need for automation within the RAP process as most handoff of forms and critical program information are completed through email or mail.

Please zoom in to see the process map details. This map is also included in the accompanying PDF, "UserFlows\_and\_ProcessMaps".







Building a better  
working world



# Appendix 4: USDOL RAPIDS Data

Data Analysis Process



## Data Analysis Process

The data to complete the analysis was accessed through the publicly available US DOL RAPIDS dataset and was analyzed to find key metrics related to Registered Apprenticeships in the State of Florida and Benchmark States (AL, CO, MI, OH, SC, TN). The data download included six excel files with four of those excel files pertaining to Apprentice level data. EY created new fields in our database to align our analysis with DOL's published annual reports, such as creating a Fiscal Year that starts in October.

New fields include:

- ▶ **Head Count** - Count of all the rows in the combined data sheets to ensure all the Apprentices are accounted for
- ▶ **Start Date Month** - Consolidated start date to show just the month the Apprentice start their program.
- ▶ **Start Date Fiscal Year** - Rounds up the Start date month field to capture all the Apprentices within the Fiscal Year. Purpose is to align the data with the fiscal year used by DOL (October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2021)

During the analysis, we discovered there is a heavy variance in how apprenticeship data is being gathered from US DOL RAPIDS. After discussions with a US DOL representative, we collectively determined the best way to analyze the US DOL RAPIDS data was to organize the data by determining what status we wanted to use for the state of the apprenticeship. Below is the list of all the statuses available for the Apprentice State data field.

"Apprstatus" definitions:

Apprstate code	Definition
CA	Canceled
CO	Completed
DR	<b>Deleted Registration</b>
DU	<b>Duplicate</b>
IR	<b>Incomplete Registration</b>
PR	<b>Pending Registration</b>
RE	Registered
RI	Reinstated
SU	Suspended
RS	Restricted
TR	Transferred
UP	Updated

*(Bold/red statuses left out of data analysis due to not pertaining to an active program: DR, DU, IR, PR.)*





## **Appendix 5: Acronyms**

Apprenticeship Standards Builder Requirements Assessment



Acronym	Name
ATR	Application Programming Interface
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CTA	Call-to-action
EDO	Economic Development Organizations
ERAP	Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship and Preapprenticeship
EY	Ernst and Young US LLP
FLDEO	Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
FLDOE	Florida Department of Education
IA	Information Architecture
IRAPS	Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs
LEA	Local Employment Agency
LWDB	Local Workforce Development Board
OA	Office of Apprenticeship
PCOG	Pathway to Career Opportunities Grant
RAP	Registered Apprenticeship Program
RAPIDS	Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System
RTI	Related Technical Instruction
SAA	State Administrative Agency
SAAC	State Apprenticeship Advisory Council
UI	User interface
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
UX	User experience
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



#### About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via [ey.com/privacy](https://ey.com/privacy). For more information about our organization, please visit [ey.com](https://ey.com).

Ernst & Young LLP is a client-serving member firm of Ernst & Young Global Limited operating in the US.

© 2022 Ernst & Young LLP.  
All Rights Reserved.

ED None

This material has been prepared for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be relied upon as accounting, tax, or other professional advice. Please refer to your advisors for specific advice.

[ey.com](https://ey.com)