

# Supporting Success: Assessing the Role of Targeted Supports in Reducing Apprentice Attrition

## Overview of Research Opportunity



### Summary of Opportunity:

Apprenticeships have long been a cornerstone of economic mobility, offering structured pathways into well-paying, skilled careers across a variety of industries. While enrollment in apprenticeships is increasing, high attrition rates—particularly within the first 1-2 years—remain a significant challenge, limiting the effectiveness of these programs in building a stable and diverse workforce.

To explore this challenge, **Social Finance is interested in partnering with unions to analyze the drivers and costs of attrition in apprenticeship programs. Our hypothesis is that investing in supports, both before and during an apprenticeship, will increase retention rates.** (*Example supports: pre-apprenticeship programs, mentorship, or targeted assistance / wraparound supports.*)

To test this hypothesis, we plan to explore the following research questions:

- What is the cost of apprentice attrition, and how does it compare to the cost of other supports?
- Do supports increase apprentice retention? What other benefits do supports bring?

The analysis will leverage historical data from our partner(s). Key metrics of interest include retention rates for people receiving supports versus those who do not, costs of these supports, and costs of attrition. Ultimately, we want the output from this effort to be as actionable as possible and to support the case for increased investment in effective supports. Our goal is to rapidly uncover insights that will inform the design of new funding and partnership models to expand access to effective supports.

**Ideal Research Partner:** Apprenticeship programs or intermediaries that have a strong relationship with a pre-apprenticeship program (e.g., a local building trades union with a large membership base)

### What We Need from the Research Partner:

- Able to share historical data (ideally 3+ years) on apprentice attrition and related metrics, and to engage in net-new data collection efforts as needed
- Willing to engage with our team (e.g., 1x/month) to participate in activities such as collecting data and discussing analysis takeaways
- Interest in identifying key drivers of apprenticeship attrition, supporting strategies to improve persistence, and contributing to field-building research

### How the Research Partner Will Benefit:

- Receive personalized insights into apprentice attrition reasons and costs, as well as the most effective learner supports to improve retention in their apprenticeship program(s)
- Contribute to field-building research and position themselves as an industry leader
- Chance to apply findings and increase funding for supports, in partnership with Social Finance

### Contact Us!

Want to learn more? Know of any organizations that might be a good fit as a research partner? Please reach out to Nadine Abraham (Director, Social Finance) via email at [nabraham@socialfinance.org](mailto:nabraham@socialfinance.org).