

QUICK GUIDE

Earn-and-Learn Models in Tech: What's Right for Your Company?



Earn-and-Learn Models in Tech: What's Right for Your Company?

The talent shortage in cloud computing, AI, SaaS, and cybersecurity is at an all-time high. Wage-based learning programs—like apprenticeships, fellowships, and residency models—offer a scalable, cost-effective way to “grow” the talent you need. Whether you’re a mid-sized firm or a fast-scaling enterprise, choosing the right Earn-and-Learn model can give you a competitive hiring advantage while reducing costs and improving retention.

This quick guide will help you:

- Understand the different Earn-and-Learn models available.
- Choose the right approach based on your hiring needs.
- Take immediate action to launch a wage-based learning program.

1. Should You Use a Wage-Based Learning Program?

Answer these quick questions:

- Do you have hard-to-fill roles in cloud, AI, SaaS, or cybersecurity?
- Do you struggle to find experienced talent within your budget?
- Would you benefit from a structured, skills-based hiring pipeline?
- Are you willing to invest in training and mentorship for 6-18 months?

If YES to 3+ questions, a wage-based learning program may be right for you!

2. Choosing the Right Earn-and-Learn Model

Use this chart to decide which approach fits your needs.

Model Type	Best For	Structure	Duration
Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)	Companies seeking a formal program with national recognition, a certification, and potential university hours aligned with the training in the program	Highly structured and certified through the Department of Labor (DOL)	1-4 years
Wage-Based Learning Program / Internal Apprenticeship (Non-Registered)	Companies wanting flexibility without formal registration though committed to on-the-job learning while talent is earning a competitive wage	Tailored to company needs, shorter timeline	6-18 months
Fellowship or Residency	Shorter-term skills-building for niche tech roles	Project-based, focused on specific skills	3-12 months
Pre-Apprenticeship Program	Building a diverse talent pipeline before full apprenticeship	Bootcamp + workplace exposure, feeder into full apprenticeship	3-6 months
Hybrid Model	Fast-track hiring while upskilling internally	Mix of bootcamp, mentoring, and on-the-job learning	6-12 months

3. Quick Decision Flowchart

Which best describes your company's needs?

We want a DOL certified and nationally recognized program.

→ Consider a DOL Registered Apprenticeship Program

We need flexibility and faster hiring without DOL certification and standards.

→ Build an Internal Wage-Based Apprenticeship Program

We only need a short-term, project-based learning model.

→ Explore a Fellowship or Residency Program

We want to build a pipeline of non-degreed, early-career talent.

→ Build a Pre-Apprenticeship Program

We need a mix of bootcamp training + internal mentorship.

→ Consider building a Hybrid Model Program

4. Next Steps: How to Get Started

1. Identify which model fits your hiring goals. You may wish to build more than one hiring model.
2. Assess available resources (departments who support the models, internal employee mentors and trainers, training budget, hiring budget, and seek out external partnerships).
3. Seek out champions and C-Suite support to build your future workforce.

Need help designing your Earn-and-Learn program? As an official DOL Apprenticeship Ambassador, YUPRO Placement would be delighted to help you build your program. [Learn more.](#)