

# **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

## **CONCERNING COOPERATION IN ADVANCING APPRENTICESHIPS, VOCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND OTHER WORK-BASED LEARNING**

### **BETWEEN**

#### **THE AUSTRIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

### **AND**

#### **THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF VERMONT**

##### Preamble

The Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the State of Vermont (hereinafter referred to as the “Participants”):

- RECOGNIZING the many decades of cordial bilateral relations, shared democratic values, growing economic cooperation, and significant Foreign Direct Investment between the Austria and the United States of America;
- SEEKING to promote the establishment and growth of high-quality apprenticeship training programs (known as the “dual apprenticeship system” with respect to the national apprenticeship system of Austria and known as the “Registered Apprenticeship Program” with respect to the national apprenticeship system of the United States),

career and technical education (CTE), and vocational and professional education and training (VPET); and

- ACKNOWLEDGING the economic and social benefits associated with the formation and expansion of high-quality, diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive apprenticeship programs across a variety of sectors and occupations that can equip workers with the work-related competencies and credentials necessary to launch rewarding and remunerative careers, and that can provide employers with a trained and prepared workforce capable of increasing business productivity and growth.

## SECTION I

### Overall Objective

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning cooperation to advance apprenticeship, CTE, and VPET seeks to strengthen bilateral collaboration and learning, with a focus on shared objectives related to apprenticeship, CTE, and VPET expansion, diversification, quality, and equity. The Participants will be guided by the following principles:

- 1.1 The purpose of the MOU is to develop the framework for the further cooperation between the Participants in expanding and strengthening apprenticeship, CTE, and VPET to help equip students and workers across a broad range of industries and sectors with occupational competencies developed and valued by employers, thus strengthening pathways to quality jobs and careers.
- 1.2 Collaborative efforts by the Participants that promote the development of effective, practice-oriented apprenticeships through the sharing of promising practices and the establishment of strong partnerships among industry, labor, education, and government are central to achieving this objective. This collaboration should aim to expand and improve the quality of, and equity within, apprenticeships in both countries and should help equip students and workers with those competencies needed to adapt to future challenges that may result from technical, economic, and social developments. Quality apprenticeships help to develop competencies by providing apprentices with mentoring and related technical instruction, an

introduction to an occupation's distinctive work processes and techniques, and a well-defined pathway to a job.

- 1.3 The collaboration should also seek to diversify apprenticeships by accelerating the development and expansion of high-quality apprenticeship programs in high-demand occupations and industries where such programs are not currently widespread, and among populations that are currently underrepresented in such programs, including but not limited to women, people of color, persons with disabilities, individuals with caregiving responsibilities, and older workers.

## SECTION II

### Content of the Cooperation

The Participants understand that their accumulated previous experiences, expertise, and knowledge with respect to the features of successful apprenticeship, CTE, and VPET programs can serve as a basis for fruitful and constructive dialogue and cooperation in this area. Potential expert visits and consultations with relevant stakeholders in the area of apprenticeships may commence after the signing of the MOU. The Participants intend that dialogue may include a focus on the following topics:

- 2.1 A proposed structure for an enhanced partnership among industry, labor, education, and government. This may take the form of pilot projects that enhance the apprenticeship system by promoting the value and benefits of apprenticeship programs, particularly those in the manufacturing sector, with an emphasis on programs that create equitable entry points to quality jobs in multiple sectors and industries.
- 2.2 Encouraging the adoption of measures that increase diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and equity in apprenticeship programs, and that protect apprentices from discrimination, harassment, and intimidation.

With respect to the national vocational education system in Austria, the Participants intend for cooperation pertaining to the classroom instruction aspect of apprenticeship training - as delivered by compulsory technical and vocational schools - as well as cooperation pertaining to schools for intermediate and higher vocational education and autonomous universities of

applied sciences to be carried out in accordance with the responsible Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research.

- 2.3 The sharing of information and insights that encourage the adoption of best practice with relation to the creation, adoption, administration, and evaluation of high-quality apprenticeship programs that are meaningful to both the participant and the employer communities.

## SECTION III

### General Terms

- 3.1 This MOU does not constitute a binding international agreement and does not create any legally binding obligations between the Participants under either international or domestic law.
- 3.2 Cooperation under this MOU commences upon the date of signature and is intended to cease three years (36-months) following its commencement. Participants may review and decide to continue their cooperation at regular intervals.
- 3.3 This MOU may be modified by mutual written understanding of the Participants.
- 3.4 A Participant may discontinue this understanding at any time but should endeavor to provide three months (90-days) advance written notification to the other Participant of its intent to do so.
- 3.5 Nothing in this MOU commits the Participants to the expenditure of funds. The Participants intend to bear their own costs associated with the implementation of this MOU, and where possible, work together to support the collective efforts. Other sources of funding may be sought to support cooperative programs at the discretion of each Participant and consistent with the policies, procedures, and requirements of the Participants.
- 3.6 All differences regarding the interpretation or application of this MOU will be settled by mutual consultations between the Participants.

Signed in Milton, Vermont, on November 14, 2023, in the English language.