

Addressing the CMA Shortage through Healthcare Apprenticeships



The Challenge: A Growing Demand for Medical Assistants

A few years ago, the Austin metro area faced a significant shortage of Certified Medical Assistants (CMAs). Employers regularly reported over 50 open CMA positions—far outpacing the number of local graduates. This imbalance led to intense competition for candidates and critical staffing gaps across regional healthcare providers.

The Solution: Apprenticeships That Work

In 2019, Central Texas Healthcare Partnership (CTHP), in partnership with Austin Community College and Innovative Workforce Projects, launched a nationally accredited CMA Registered Apprenticeship program with the U.S. Department of Labor. Program goals:

- Hire individuals with no prior healthcare experience and provide paid, on-the-job CMA training
- Upskill existing staff with advanced certifications to retain top talent
- Strengthen the regional talent pipeline and reduce CMA job vacancies

Key Partners and Employers

Four major healthcare employers implemented the CMA Apprenticeship:

- Ascension Seton
- Austin Regional Clinic
- Baylor Scott & White Health
- CommUnityCare

Workforce Solutions Capital Area secured and leveraged multiple Texas Workforce Commission grants to fund and expand the program.

Impact to Date

- 334 CMA apprentices hired and trained
- 311% increase in participation in 2022 alone
- Average of five CMA apprentices hired per month over five years

Looking Ahead

CTHP and Workforce Solutions Capital Area are committed to expanding earn-and-learn models to address local healthcare workforce shortages. The CMA Apprenticeship Program is a proven model of success—building a stronger and more stable healthcare workforce for Central Texas.

“The apprenticeship allows clinics to support and develop community members into CMAs, improving employment pathways and the pipeline from underserved populations... The apprenticeship is helping stabilize the CMA workforce.”

Yesenia Renzi
RN Program Coordinator
Ascension Seton

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