

# Hiring Youth Apprentices

## Fact Sheet for Wisconsin Employers

**Basic Structure** Youth Apprenticeship (YA) is a highly successful talent acquisition strategy in which employers hire high school juniors or seniors for a one or two-year apprenticeship. During the apprenticeship, the student continues toward high school graduation and takes courses related to the profession as a way of enhancing what is being learned on the job. The YA Program is coordinated locally by regional consortia and overseen by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD). Each consortium typically includes several participating high schools. Employers may hire from more than one high school and even work with multiple consortia to meet their hiring needs.

Below are the eleven YA career program areas that have been approved:

- ♦ Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- ♦ Architecture and Construction
- ♦ Art, A/V Technology and Communications
- ♦ Finance
- ♦ Health Science
- ♦ Hospitality, Lodging and Tourism
- ♦ Information Technology
- ♦ Manufacturing
- ♦ Marketing
- ♦ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- ♦ Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

### Key Attributes for Employers

- ♦ **Hiring:** YA coordinators help identify potential youth apprentices and assist with coordinating interviews, but employers determine who to hire and may opt to not hire any youth.
- ♦ **Mentors:** Before hiring a youth apprentice, employers are asked to identify an individual who will act as a mentor at the workplace for the apprentice.
- ♦ **Education/Training Agreement:** Signed by the apprentice, their parent, the employer, the school principal and the local YA coordinator, this agreement enumerates the expectations and responsibilities of each party during the apprenticeship.
- ♦ **Skills Checklists:** Each type of apprenticeship offers a list of skills that youth are expected to learn at the workplace. These are shared with employers prior to hiring the apprentice.

**Benefits for Employers** Employers have used the Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Program to connect with high school students for over 25 years. Over 3,100 employers and 4,300 youth apprentices across Wisconsin participated in the YA Program during the 2017/18 school year. Employers extend permanent job offers to more than 75 percent of the graduating youth apprentices annually, making YA an excellent pipeline for recruiting and retaining loyal, well-trained talent. Employers continually report a high level of satisfaction, and cite these program benefits:

- ♦ Access to young workers who are eager to learn and who have an interest in the profession.
- ♦ Quality, prescreened youth apprentices who receive ongoing support during their apprenticeship.
- ♦ A method to address future hiring needs in a cost-effective and timely manner.
- ♦ The chance to shape the skills, expectations and habits of youth apprentices at a young age.

**Work Permits** Work permits are not required in Wisconsin for anyone 16 years of age and older as of June 23, 2017. Most youth apprentices are at least 16 years old.

**Types of Work Allowed** Some types of work are deemed hazardous for minors and are not allowed. For additional information, please see these resources from DWD's Equal Rights Division (ERD): [State of Wisconsin Work Permit Officer Handbook: Employment of Minors and Street Trades](#) and [Manufacturing & Construction Equipment & Wisconsin's Employment of Minor Law factsheet](#). Other resources are also available on the ERD website at: [https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/er/labor\\_standards/child\\_labor\\_laws.htm](https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/er/labor_standards/child_labor_laws.htm).

Employers with specific questions are encouraged to contact ERD's Labor Standards Bureau directly by calling the Madison Office at (608) 266-6860 or the Milwaukee Office at (414) 227-4384 or connecting with staff online at: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/er/contacts.htm>.

**Student Learner Status of Youth Apprentices** Youth apprentices are considered Student Learners, a classification which allows them to perform some work that otherwise would be off-limits to minors when certain conditions are met. Inquire about the Student Learner Exemption if there are doubts about the work which may be asked of minors.

**Hours Allowed** Youth apprentices and their employers work out their schedules, ensuring that students may continue working toward high school graduation and that any relevant "release" policies of the school board are followed. Also, Wisconsin no longer limits the number of or which hours youth ages 16 and 17 may work.

**Wages** As employees, youth apprentices must be paid at least the minimum wage.

**Workers Comp** Once employed, youth apprentices are covered by their employer's workers compensation insurance policy, a program requirement. Note that workers compensation rates are not impacted by the age of employees, but rather the industry in which the employer operates.

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefits** If a youth apprentice is enrolled full-time in an educational institution and receives school credit for their participation in the YA Program, they are not eligible to file for UI benefits from their YA employer.

**Get Started!** Start your journey with youth apprenticeship by emailing DWD YA staff at [ya@dwd.wisconsin.gov](mailto:ya@dwd.wisconsin.gov), or by contacting your local YA consortium directly. A directory of consortia with contact information can be found at <http://ya.wi.gov>.



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