

Dept. of Workforce Development: David D. Polk to join DWD as the new Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards Director

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MADISON – A former apprentice and plumbing inspector who most recently served as director of Apprenticeship and Trade at Milwaukee Area Technical College developing non-traditional apprenticeship opportunities, David Polk will serve as the new director of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development’s Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards.

Polk’s 20 years of experience leading apprenticeship programs spans public, private, and academic sectors and includes developing comprehensive apprenticeship programs that focus on low-to-moderate income populations, Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

Polk’s leadership as director of Apprenticeship and Trade at MATC included managing more than 30 different Milwaukee-area apprenticeships and implementing six new sector apprenticeships, including the first ever arborist apprenticeship program in the U.S.

“We are excited for Polk to join our DWD team,” DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek said. “With Polk as our apprenticeship leader, we’re looking forward to building more apprenticeship pathways that lead job seekers to family-sustaining careers and offer employers a skilled workforce. His vision and communication skills will also allow us to further bridge both Youth Apprenticeship and Certified Pre-apprenticeship programs with Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.”

Polk has first-hand knowledge of the opportunities that come from working as an apprentice. In 2001, Polk completed his five-year plumbing apprenticeship with Plumbers' Local 75 out of Milwaukee and worked several years as a licensed plumber. He then worked in the trades as a meter technician and plumbing inspector before focusing on the training program aspect to help more people become aware of and build careers through apprenticeships.

"I am excited to transition to the Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards," Polk said. "In my previous role, I had the opportunity to develop creative employment options for Milwaukee's populations via apprenticeships. I have a history of apprenticeship in my family and in my own career. That being said, I look forward to helping provide statewide economic mobility opportunities through apprenticeships in my new role."

Apprenticeship is a post-secondary education that allows for both on-the-job training and traditional classroom learning. Classroom instruction is usually provided through the Wisconsin Technical College System. On-the-job training is conducted under the guidance and mentorship of an employer who pays for the apprentice's wages while training on site.

Learn more about [Wisconsin Apprenticeship](#).