

Gov. Evers: Gov. Evers, DWD announce youth apprenticeship offerings, 14 new occupational pathways for students

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced that Wisconsin high school juniors and seniors heading back to school this fall will have 14 new occupational pathways that local employers can support, thanks to ongoing modernization efforts by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD).

“We have to make sure our kids have apprenticeship opportunities and different pathways to get the jobs and skills training they need to join our state’s workforce,” said Gov. Evers. “These latest youth apprenticeship pathways will help strengthen the connections among employers, educators, students, and communities, provide new opportunities for our young people to build their futures, and foster our own home-grown talent in critical industries that support local economies across our state.”

Working in collaboration with school consortiums, employers, the Wisconsin Technical College System, and other partners, DWD has modernized the framework for a total of 75 Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program pathways to help industries like construction, health sciences, marketing, science and engineering, and transportation find and develop home-grown talent. “Wisconsin’s registered apprenticeship system has been a model for the nation since 1911, and DWD’s YA program has been connecting employers with high school student workers for over 30 years, creating a scalable and successful training program that reflects the needs of industry,” DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek said. “For the past three years, we have been working closely with industry leaders to review and update the YA training framework to ensure students continue to learn the skills employers are looking for now and in the future.”

DWD’s YA Program Modernization Initiative resulted in 14 new occupational pathways in which local employers can offer apprenticeship opportunities to students. These include:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources, new pathways: Arborist and Dairy Grazier.
- Architecture and Construction, new pathways: Gas Distribution Technician, Heavy Equipment Operator/Operating Engineer, and Utilities Electrical Technician.
- Arts, Audio Visual Technology and Communications, new pathway: Media Broadcast Technician.
- Health Science, new pathways: Phlebotomist and Resident Aide.
- Information Technology, new pathway: IT Broadband Technician.
- Manufacturing, new pathway: Electro-mechanical/Mechatronics.
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics, new pathways: Airport Operations and Management, Aviation Maintenance Fundamentals, Aviation Airframe and Powerplant Technician, Aviation Avionics Technician.

“For years, our industry has been asking the question, ‘How can we reach youth and get them interested in trees and the arboriculture industry?’” said August Hoppe, co-chair of the Wisconsin Registered Arborist Apprenticeship Advisory Committee and Wisconsin Arborist Association workforce development coordinator. “It was a no-brainer to work with DWD to help create the nation’s first youth arborist apprenticeship. It’s exciting to see the program now gaining traction. The YA is yet another pathway for new people to obtain the skills necessary for our industry. We are excited for the future.”

To update existing program curricula, DWD staff reached out to YA participating employers, industry associations, and other relevant stakeholders to gather feedback and input regarding the training and education needs.

“Thank you for the opportunity to participate in updating the Youth Apprenticeship pathways for Transportation,” said Dan Klecker, State Education Director of the Foundation of the Wisconsin Automobile and Truck Dealer Association. “It was encouraging to see the input from our dealer members be taken seriously and implemented in the new task lists. Youth Apprenticeship is a valuable workforce development component to grow the next generation of technicians for the transportation industry. Youth Apprenticeship is also an effective on-the-job training process for Wisconsin secondary students to begin their journey to a rewarding career.”

The YA program is coordinated and provided around the state by consortia that often consist of school districts, technical colleges, and chambers of commerce. Of the 421 public school districts, 321 districts, or 76.2 percent, had students enrolled in YA for the 2021-2022 school year.

“The North Central WI School-to-Career (STC) Youth Apprenticeship (YA) consortium is excited about the YA Modernization Project because it will allow us to offer 75 career pathways, with 14 of those being new to the YA program, school districts, students, and employers we serve,” said Dina Kilinski, Career Services and Youth Apprenticeship Manager at Northcentral Technical College. “These career pathways allow students to gain first-hand experience in a career field they are interested in pursuing after high school graduation. The YA Modernization Initiative will ensure we are also meeting the needs of our industry partners by exposing students to skills that are essential for entry level employment into the industries the YA program serves.”

Dana Leikness of the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board said the modernization effort included the creation of learning guides for new companies starting to develop youth apprenticeship opportunities in new career fields. “The modernization process has also expanded into new youth apprenticeship programs, allowing more local companies to participate in the Youth Apprenticeship Program,” Leikness said. “By expanding into new industries, students have more opportunities to explore and discover careers they might not have been able to participate in prior to the modernization process.”

Employers interested in becoming a youth apprenticeship sponsor can find more information [here](#).

Students interested in becoming a youth apprentice can find more information [here](#).



An online version of this release is available [here](#).