

Dept. of Workforce Development: Announces new partnerships to advance mentorship training and resources

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MADISON – When considering the main elements of an apprenticeship, hands-on training or related instruction are often the first things to come to mind. However, another integral component to the apprenticeship program structure is mentorship.

“Mentorships are the heartbeat of Wisconsin apprenticeship,” said David Polk, director of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development’s (DWD) Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards. “We want apprentices to have all the resources available to them to promote completion of apprenticeships at a high level. If apprentices have a positive mentorship experience, they will, in turn, become better mentors for the next generation of apprentices.”

DWD’s new partnership with MENTOR Greater Milwaukee and EmpowHER will expand the apprenticeship mentorship framework and provide statewide training and resources for mentors. Mentoring is imperative to the success of the apprenticeship model, ensuring that apprenticeship sponsors pass on the knowledge and skills necessary for the apprentice to succeed. With these new partnerships, DWD will expand mentorship processes, preparing apprenticeship sponsors for mentorship relationships and improving mentorship relationships for apprentices to encourage program completion.

“Mentorship is the key to success for many apprentice and employer partnerships,” said Amy Pechacek, DWD secretary-designee. “DWD’s work with MENTOR Greater Milwaukee and EmpowHER will sustain our ability to connect job seekers to stronger

mentoring relationships through apprenticeship.”

[MENTOR Greater Milwaukee](#) believes that mentoring relationships change lives and communities. The organization, based in Milwaukee, will expand its expertise in mentorship to the more than 90 apprenticeship committees and over 1,200 sponsors statewide. The partnership will provide strategies and training resources to mentor apprentices both on the job and outside the workplace, to improve apprenticeship completion rates. In addition, MENTOR Greater Milwaukee will train committees and mentors, so they’re prepared to better connect to their apprentice(s).

“MENTOR Greater Milwaukee is excited to partner with DWD to create a mentoring strategy that supports apprentices on their journey to becoming journeyworkers,” said LaNelle Ramey, executive director at MENTOR Greater Milwaukee. “MENTOR Greater Milwaukee looks forward to working alongside the DWD team to increase and improve mentoring relationships for all apprentices.”

The nonprofit [EmpowHER](#), a partner with the AFL-CIO Building-Construction Trades Councils statewide, supports mentorship, leadership, and solidarity for women in the trades. This group includes women with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and varying levels of expertise – from apprentices to journeyworkers and project engineers to managers. Together they share a passion to move the needle for women in construction and leave a lasting impact on the industry. DWD’s partnership with EmpowHER will expand mentorship services to women apprentices statewide.

“I am grateful for the male mentors I have had in my career who assisted me along the path to achieving journey status,” shared Christina Breitlow, president of EmpowHER. “With this grant, we have the chance to be deliberate in our efforts to connect to women in nontraditional industries and pair them with female mentors. We look forward to seeing the positive effects of this new project.”

Wisconsin’s Registered Apprenticeship program is an earn-while-you-learn model that connects apprentices with high-skill, high-wage employment with sponsors across the state. In addition to learning the hands-on skills of the occupation from the sponsoring employer, apprentices gain knowledge specific to the occupation through an area technical college or private training center. A key component of apprenticeship is employment, and there is no apprenticeship without a respective job opening.



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