

Dept. of Workforce Development: Launches “Welcome to the Workforce” initiative with webinar, speakers series for teens, parents, and employers

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 28, 2023

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

MADISON – Teens are an important part of Wisconsin’s labor force – with nearly 60% of state teens aged 16-19 working. Meanwhile, April marks a significant uptick in job-seeking activities for teens, and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development has planned a month-long “Welcome to the Workforce” outreach initiative for students, parents, and employers.

DWD kicks off [Welcome to the Workforce](#) April 4, 2023, with a virtual panel discussion from 2-3 p.m. featuring representatives from the U.S. Department of Labor, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development’s Equal Rights and Youth Apprenticeship programs. Register for the panel on [Eventbrite](#).

This effort to educate students, parents, and employers on their rights and responsibilities comes as Gov. Tony Evers declares April “Welcome to the Workforce Month” with a proclamation marking key historical achievements in regulating child labor.

Following the April 4 panel discussion, DWD will partner with community stakeholders to educate parents and students on minor worker rights, and employers on their responsibilities when employing minors. The outreach will occur through job fairs, educational forums, and other events. Requests for DWD speakers

on the Welcome to the Workforce topic may be sent to erinfo@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

“Important life skills can be learned on the job and the participation of teens in the workforce helps businesses succeed while our economy thrives,” said DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek. “The Welcome to the Workforce webinar and speaker series will help teens, parents, and employers understand the rights, roles, and responsibilities covering those just starting out in the workforce. The sessions also will touch on ensuring safety at work and keeping school a priority when classes are in session.”

DWD continues to improve its customer service offerings for young workers and employers to expand the state’s talent pool. Work permits are required for employing minors under 16 years of age. Exceptions are jobs in agriculture or domestic service work.

“Work permits are a vital tool to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of minor workers,” said Equal Rights Bureau Director Matt White.

Employers, students, and their parents should know that Wisconsin, like the federal government, has rules that determine how long younger employees can work and when. Students of any age cannot work during school hours unless they are youth apprentices participating in a school-based work training program.

Employees who are 14-15 years old may work up to three hours each school day and eight hours on weekends or days when school is not in session. This maximum number of work hours applies regardless of how many jobs the teen has. Shifts of six or more hours require a 30-minute unpaid break. In addition, a [work permit](#) is needed for those under age 16. Exceptions are jobs in agriculture or domestic service work.

State and federal laws also permit minors 12 and up to work up to seven days per week in the delivery of newspapers, as caddies, and in agriculture. In most other types of labor, minors under 16 may only work six days a week.

Work hours are mostly unrestricted for older teens age 16-17. Like younger students, they also should receive a 30-minute unpaid break during a shift lasting six hours or longer. To work after 11 p.m., this group needs eight hours between one shift ending and the start of another.

As the school year winds down, DWD wants to remind everyone of labor standards for younger workers that promote a safe and productive work environment year-round. For more information, visit [Wisconsin Employment of Minors Guide](#). DWD also has created a [video library](#) featuring frequently asked questions about teens in the workplace.