

Gov. Evers, DWD: Celebrate record-breaking apprenticeship numbers

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers, together with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), today announced Wisconsin has achieved a state record of more than 15,900 apprentices during 2022 thanks to strong growth in traditional sectors, including construction and manufacturing and innovative opportunities in fields such as IT and healthcare.

“We’ve worked hard over the past four years to ensure Wisconsinites have access to the resources and training to pursue the high-quality, family-supporting jobs they need to be successful, and our economy shows it, as we’ve seen record low unemployment, record high labor force participation, and record high participation in our apprenticeship programs,” said Gov. Evers. “We are excited to see a record number of 15,937 registered apprentices earning while they’re learning on the job, and we’re going to keep making smart, strategic investments to help this program continue to succeed and grow and to ensure our state’s economic momentum continues.”

[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.

The record-high total of 15,937 apprentices in 2022 topped the previous record of 15,757 apprentices in 2001.

“Wisconsin Apprenticeship is stronger than ever with more than 183 registered apprenticeship pathways and 75 youth apprenticeship pathways,” said DWD Secretary Amy Pechacek. “These record-breaking numbers exemplify the program’s success in connecting employers to skilled workers and job seekers to family-sustaining careers.”

David Polk, director of DWD’s Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards, credited the program’s success to its partners.

“The entire apprenticeship system—employers, unions, job seekers, educators, and other partners—works in partnership to expand the program while remaining true to its core principles,” Polk said. “I want to thank all of the stakeholders who made this record possible. With the continued help of these visionary leaders and the added engagement of employers in emerging industries, apprenticeship in Wisconsin will continue to grow.”

In collaboration with industry partners, DWD added seven new registered apprenticeship pathways in 2022: diesel technician, supply chain specialist, yacht service technician, lab animal care technician, medical lab technician, caregiver, and human resources specialist. This expansion will continue in 2023, with plans to add six new pathways in the healthcare, transportation, and service industries.

The increasingly diverse mix of career pathways is also drawing a more diverse pool of apprentices, including more women and people of color.

Wisconsin was the first in the nation with a registered apprenticeship program and is unique among the 50 states in requiring employers to pay their apprentices for both time worked and time spent in required classroom instruction, recognizing the equally important weight of both aspects of apprenticeship training.

Another important piece of the apprenticeship ecosystem is youth apprenticeship. Youth apprenticeship integrates school-based and work-based learning to instruct students in employability and occupational skills defined by Wisconsin industries. Many of the youth apprenticeship occupational pathways bridge to registered apprenticeship, offering students a clear path to a skilled career.

Wisconsin’s Youth Apprenticeship program reached a record with more than 6,400 youth apprentices and more than 4,500 employers in the 2021-2022 school year. The program also recently added [14 new pathways](#).

More information about apprenticeship opportunities in Wisconsin is available [here](#).

Gov. Evers also highlighted his 2023-25 biennial budget proposals that will help support and expand apprenticeship opportunities in Wisconsin, as well as strengthen Wisconsin's workforce. A breakdown of those proposals is available below.

Expanding Apprenticeship Opportunities

Gov. Evers' 2023-25 Biennial Budget includes several provisions to bolster apprenticeship opportunities in Wisconsin, including:

- Enhancing pathways to information technology careers by providing \$9 million in one-time funding to expand registered apprenticeship within the information technology sector in Southeast Wisconsin;
- Establishing a clean energy and reemployment program with \$10 million to connect workers with employers that will utilize apprenticeship and technical college programs to deliver training for clean energy jobs;
- Providing \$500,000 for capital equipment and supplies, information technology equipment, equipment for student learning infrastructure, and to support staffing at a new Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering Technology, and Apprenticeship (AMETA) Center at Mid-State Technical College; and
- Increasing the state's healthcare workforce by providing DWD: (a) \$500,000 on a one-time basis to support healthcare profession apprenticeship curriculum development; (b) \$200,000 on a one-time basis to implement licensed practical nurse apprenticeships at state-run care facilities; and (c) \$236,000 and 1.0 full-time employee position over the biennium for outreach to potential stakeholders and partners and to develop new collaborations related to the healthcare workforce.

Strengthening Wisconsin's Workforce

The governor is proposing a \$200 million investment to continue the state's successful Workforce Innovation Grant Program to provide long-term solutions for businesses to find workers and individuals to obtain family-supporting jobs, with a specific focus of \$100 million to bolster the state's healthcare workforce. In addition to the governor's \$200 million investment in the Workforce Innovation Grant Program, he is also proposing:

- \$12 million for job training initiatives through the Worker Advancement Initiative;
- \$4.5 million for outreach to populations disconnected from the labor force through a new Reengaging Out-of-Work Barrired and Underserved Individuals Through System Transformation (ROBUST) Program;
- \$8.8 million for enhanced youth service programs conducted by local workforce development boards;
- \$5 million annually for talent attraction and retention efforts at the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC);
- Nearly \$900,000 for job centers within correctional institutions;
- \$1.7 million to expand the Transitional Jobs and Transform Milwaukee Jobs Programs; and
- More than \$21 million over the biennium to address the teacher shortage plaguing schools across the state, including funding for “grow your own” initiatives and incentives for student teachers.

More information regarding Gov. Evers’ 2023-25 Biennial Budget investments to support working families and expand Wisconsin’s workforce, including providing paid family and medical leave, ensuring child care is affordable and accessible, and developing affordable housing across the state is available [here](#).

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