

Table of Contents

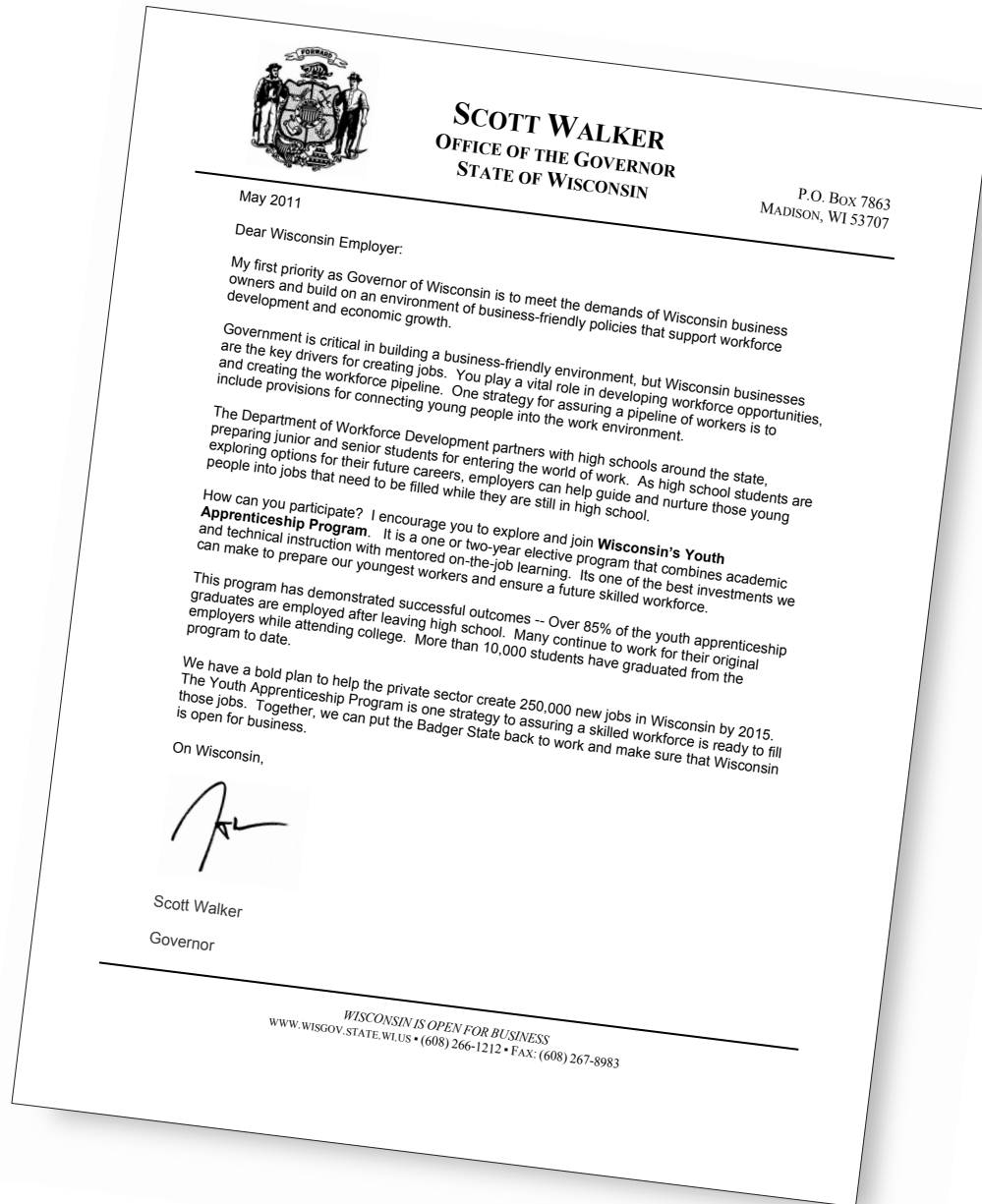
Introduction

This booklet is designed to introduce employers to the requirements of the Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Program. It is intended as a reference guide for those employers who have hired a youth apprentice and for those who are considering hiring a youth apprentice. Specific questions can be directed to your local youth apprenticeship coordinator.

Contact information for youth apprenticeship coordinators may be found at http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/youthapprenticeship/consortiums_directory.htm

Table of Contents

1	General Information	2
2	Employer & Youth Benefits	4
3	Program Design Features	6
4	Responsibilities of Employers	8
5	Role of the Mentor	10
6	Child Labor Laws	11
7	Liability & Insurance	13
8	Questions & Answers	15
9	Planning for Your Youth Apprentice	17



Connecting Education & Work

Employers often express concern that the education system does not prepare young people with the type of work readiness and technical skills that meet their business needs. The Youth Apprenticeship Program provides businesses the opportunity to address this issue head on by working with schools to educate Wisconsin's future workforce.

Through this program, employers can hire high school juniors and seniors to prepare for a career while still in school. It is a one or two-year elective program that combines academic and technical instruction with mentored on-the-job learning.

Program Goals

The goals for this statewide program are to:

- ◆ Help young people acquire the skills needed for the jobs of tomorrow
- ◆ Help business and industry develop a highly skilled workforce to remain competitive in the world economy

Program Origin

The Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Program was authorized by the Wisconsin State Legislature in 1991 in an effort to improve the job readiness skills of high school graduates.

Program Administration

The Youth Apprenticeship Program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development in cooperation with the Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Technical College System and the University of Wisconsin System.

Program Funding

Funding for the program is provided through state grants to local youth apprenticeship partnerships, as well as funds provided by local school districts and businesses participating in the program.

*"We have gained valuable entry level employees through the apprenticeship program. With the shortage of labor it is more important than ever for companies to provide job training."
-Jill Kammerer, Panoramic, Inc*

*"This [program] provides a safe environment for the students to learn and grow in the fields they have chosen as careers. It also enables them to decide whether the chosen career is right for them."
-Franciscan Villa, South Milwaukee*

Benefits To Employers

Employers play an active role in shaping the quality of their future workforce when they participate in the Youth Apprenticeship Program. Youth Apprenticeship can help businesses:

- ◆ recruit and screen potential employees
- ◆ improve the skill level of future workers
- ◆ reduce employee turnover by hiring program graduates
- ◆ help develop skill standards geared to industry's needs
- ◆ improve their competitive position in the world market place
- ◆ partner with local schools to prepare students for their future
- ◆ improve community relations by helping local youth with employment and education

Benefits To Youth

Education is more relevant to the real world when youth apprentices combine learning and thinking in the classroom with the application of knowledge and skills in the workplace. Youth apprentices will:

- ◆ see first hand the connection between classroom education and work
- ◆ strengthen their academic skills
- ◆ explore their interest in a particular career area
- ◆ earn wages while learning from skilled professionals
- ◆ earn a state skill certificate upon completion of the program
- ◆ earn advanced standing credits in a technical college
- ◆ increase their career options and future employability

Youth Apprentices Also Learn Responsibility!

For a youth to participate in the Youth Apprenticeship Program, he or she must:

- ◆ be interviewed and hired by the employer
- ◆ maintain academic standing and acceptable attendance in school
- ◆ maintain acceptable performance on the job
- ◆ observe rules and requirements established by the company
- ◆ master the skills/competencies in the youth apprenticeship curriculum

"It is a win-win program. The student has a great opportunity to learn and for the bank we have a part-time employee with excellent training."

-Coulee State Bank, La Crosse

Program Design Features

Many features of the Youth Apprenticeship Program distinguish it from similar youth education and training programs. Among them are:

- ◆ Youth Apprenticeship is a two year program for high school juniors and seniors with an interest in a particular field. Some students choose the one-year option because academic demands or extracurricular activities limit their availability to participate in the program.
- ◆ Youth apprentices, parents, employers and school districts enter into a written agreement with regard to each party's responsibilities.
- ◆ Statewide skill standards are established by Wisconsin industries to ensure the work-based experience is relevant to the state's employers.
- ◆ Training focuses on broad occupational clusters within an industry. The skills obtained by the youth apprentices are transferable to most businesses in the industry throughout the state.
- ◆ Youth apprentices are trained at the workplace by skilled mentors and are paid at least minimum wage or higher for their work.
- ◆ Upon successful completion of the program, DWD issues a Certificate of Occupational Proficiency to youth apprenticeship graduates. All two-year youth apprentices must complete high school as a requirement of the program.
- ◆ Youth apprentices may receive advanced standing credits in related programs in Wisconsin technical colleges and may receive admission credit at some four year colleges.

Program Design Features

- ◆ Local partnerships representing employers, school districts, technical colleges and other groups apply to DWD to operate the Youth Apprenticeship Program. While the skills and competencies apply statewide, program implementation and oversight occurs through local committees to assure programs address the needs of local employers.

Employer Involvement

Employers play a vital role in the Youth Apprenticeship Program at all levels. You may be invited to participate in developing a program and/or to hire a youth apprentice. Or both! The level at which you participate is up to you.

At the [state level](#), skill standards are developed and specific competencies identified for each industry area. Participating employers may be asked to assist DWD in developing and/or revising the statewide standards and competencies so that they reflect the needs of the industry.

At the [local level](#), you may be invited to hire and train a youth apprentice. You may also have the opportunity to become a member of a local steering committee that oversees the program.

*“Because of our involvement in the Youth Apprenticeship Program, we are able to custom-design our future workforce.”
-Memorial Community Hospital, Edgerton*

Responsibilities of Employers

Responsibilities of Employers

Employers of youth apprentices are responsible for the following activities in the program.

Student Selection

Reviewing student employment applications, interviewing candidates and selecting the student(s) they wish to hire.

Work-Based Training

Providing youth apprentices a minimum of 10 to 15 hours of work per week during the school year. Students must complete a minimum of 900 hours of work for a two-year program and 450 hours for a one-year program. Child labor laws limit a student's work hours to a total of 26 hours per week while school is in session, but any hours worked during the school day as part of the Youth Apprenticeship Program do not count toward this total. Employers are encouraged to continue employment during the summer months.

Pay

Paying youth apprentices the minimum wage or higher. A pay schedule is agreed upon by the employer, the local consortium and the youth apprentice. Most employers grant periodic raises dependent upon performance or length of employment.

Workers Compensation

Providing worker's compensation coverage (or comparable liability coverage in agricultural programs).

Training Agreement

Signing the agreement, along with the student, parents, and school district before the student begins working. The agreement outlines expectations and responsibilities for each party, the rate of pay, and the length of employment for the youth apprentice.

Training to State Standards

Providing training in the areas identified on the skill competency checklist provided by DWD. These competencies are developed by industry experts to reflect the skills needed by Wisconsin businesses.

Mentors

Providing a mentor for each youth apprentice to assist with training. Additional details on the role of the mentor are covered later in this booklet.

Organized Labor

Including organized labor representatives (as applicable) in designing and operating the program at the worksite. The program may not impinge upon existing labor agreements, although agreements may be modified to reflect mutually agreed upon policies and procedures for the youth apprentices.

Job Performance

Reviewing, evaluating and reporting on a youth apprentice's job performance approximately every nine weeks to ensure they are learning the required competencies. Mentors are expected to participate in progress reviews with the apprentice, school personnel and the parent(s) on a regular basis.

Child Labor Laws

Agreeing to abide by all state and federal child labor laws and regulations that apply to minors in the workplace. Information on relevant child labor laws are covered later in this booklet.

One of the most critical elements which may determine the success of a youth apprentice is the involvement of the workplace mentor. Employers participating in the program are asked to assign a mentor to each youth apprentice. Mentors must be allowed time to attend program orientation and training sessions on working with youth. Workplace mentors are expected to:

- ◆ Work with school instructors to determine the sequence of instruction and try to integrate classroom and worksite instruction as much as possible
- ◆ Identify trainers throughout the company to train youth in the required competencies
- ◆ Regularly evaluate the progress of the youth apprentice in achieving the required workplace competencies on the state skills checklist
- ◆ Meet with the youth apprentice’s parents or guardians and school personnel at least once each grading period to review progress
- ◆ Help the youth apprentice avoid problems and errors in their work assignments
- ◆ Provide support, encouragement and direction as needed
- ◆ Help the youth apprentice build self-confidence and self-esteem
- ◆ Be alert to personal problems affecting work and guide the youth apprentice to seek help from appropriate sources
- ◆ Communicate regularly with the school liaison to discuss any problems the student is experiencing

“The Youth Apprenticeship Program has been beneficial to both parties involved. Our mentors are learning as well as the students in the program.”

-Dean Thoma, Bestprint, Inc., Waukesha

Youth apprentices enrolled in approved youth apprenticeship programs and their employers are subject to all state and federal child labor laws regarding the employment of minors. The Department of Workforce Development reviews the skills checklists for compliance with child labor laws and will clarify the laws whenever necessary to allow for program implementation. Youth apprentices are allowed to work in some prohibited occupations because they meet the criteria of “student learner” as defined in the law. However, they are not exempt from child labor laws by virtue of being enrolled in the Youth Apprenticeship Program. Refer to http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/er/labor_standards_bureau/child_labor_laws.htm for specific requirements and prohibitions for minors in the workplace. If a student turns 18 while enrolled in the program, they are no longer subject to the child labor laws.

Hours of Work

All apprentices age 16-17 years old are subject to the limits cited below with regard to daily/weekly hours, and time of day employment. Hours worked by youth apprentices during the day when school is in session do not count toward the limit of 26 hours per week.

MAXIMUM HOURS OF WORK

Daily:

School Days: Except last school day of week ----- 5 hours
 Last day of the week and non-school day ----- 8 hours
 Day during non-school week ----- unlimited

Weekly:

Full school week----- 26 hours
 Partial school week ----- 32 hours
 Non-school week ----- 50 hours

PERMITTED TIME OF DAY

School day (except last school day of week) ----- 7 am-11 pm
 Last school day of week ----- 7 am-12:30 am
 Non-school day preceding school day ----- 5 am-11 pm
 Non-school days in school week----- 5 am-12:30 am
 Days in non-school week ----- Unlimited
 Maximum days per week ----- 6 days

Please note these additional child labor laws regarding length and time of work:

- ◆ The requirements regarding hours of work for 14-15 year olds and allowable work activities are more limited than those cited above. Review the child labor provisions to determine allowable hours and work activities
- ◆ Following the end of work, 8 hours of rest is required before the start of work the next day.
- ◆ Work must be directly supervised by an adult between the hours of 12:30 am-5 am.
- ◆ Maximum hours and time of day restrictions apply to the total hours worked in a week, regardless of how many employers a minor works for.
- ◆ All minors must have a 1/2 hour meal period after 6 consecutive hours of work.

Work Permits

Youth apprentices with a signed Education/Training Agreement are not required to obtain a work permit for the work performed as a part of the Youth Apprenticeship Program, but it is highly recommended. A work permit is required for any work performed which is not necessary to accomplish the competencies on the checklist. To avoid confusion, DWD recommends that all youth apprentices acquire a work permit.

Industry Specific Regulations

Due to the nature of technology and safety requirements, some industries may have unique restrictions regarding minors in their industry. Some potentially dangerous equipment may be restricted to adults over 18 by the insuring company. Other work activities, while not specifically prohibited by the child labor laws, may nevertheless be inappropriate for minors. Employers are encouraged to use careful judgment when evaluating the safety of their workplace for minors.

Questions regarding child labor laws and their interpretation for particular industries and/or machinery should be directed to the Department of Workforce Development's Equal Rights Division/Labor Standards Bureau at (608) 266-6860.

Questions regarding liability and insurance frequently arise with sponsors of youth apprentices. The following areas generate the most common questions.

Transportation

In general, the party responsible for transportation is liable in case of an accident. For example:

- ◆ Youth apprentices who are responsible for their own transportation to and from work are responsible for their own insurance and would be covered by their insurance company in the event of an accident on the way to or from work.
- ◆ Schools that provide transportation to and from work are responsible for providing insurance coverage while in transit. Note: If students are released to work during the school day, the school district may be held liable for an accident on the way to or from work regardless of who provides the transportation.
- ◆ If the business provides transportation to and from work, the business is responsible for insurance coverage.

Note: Final determination for liability in any situation will be determined by a court of law after a review of the specific circumstances.

Workers Compensation

When youth apprentices become employees of the company, they are covered by the company's workers compensation insurance. For agricultural employers, youth apprentices must be covered under a general liability insurance policy in the absence of workers compensation coverage.

Unemployment Compensation

If a youth apprentice is enrolled full-time in a public educational institution and receives school credit for their participation in the Youth Apprenticeship Program, they are not eligible to file for unemployment compensation from the youth apprenticeship employer. Youth apprenticeship students who do not meet these criteria may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits.

General Liability

An employer is liable for the finished product produced at their business or for the service provided to customers. If an employer has adequate general liability and workers compensation coverage, no additional liability is required as a result of the Youth Apprenticeship Program. Before participating in the program, employers should consult with their insurance carrier to make sure there are no restrictions about minors operating specific machinery in their workplace.

“The students are a joy to work with, have high energy levels, and abundant enthusiasm that spreads to the regular staff.”
-Fennimore Community Good Samaritan Center, Fennimore

“It is fun! We just love our youth apprentice – he is part of our work family.”
-West Towne Amoco, Madison

Question: *Will the student do productive work?*

Answer: Yes. After appropriate training youth apprentices become productive employees of the company. However, since they are rotated throughout different departments they will require more training time than other employees. It is important to remember the youth apprentice is there to learn many skills and should not be assigned to one job the entire time.

Question: *Will I have to spend my entire time at work teaching the student?*

Answer: No. Youth apprentices need to be closely supervised and may require more training than the average adult but you are not required to “shadow” the youth apprentice. A supervisor or mentor should be in the general area with a youth apprentice at all times.

Question: *Will I have to treat the youth apprentice differently than my other employees?*

Answer: Youth apprentices are expected to follow the company’s work rules (e.g. dress code, behavior, discipline, etc.) just like other employees. However, it is important to remember that high school students have limited work experience in an adult setting. Patience and guidance are required while they learn responsible work habits and rules of conduct. Part of the mentor’s role is to help the student avoid problems in the workplace and to contact the local coordinator if there are problems.

Question: *How much paperwork is required?*

Answer: Employers are required to sign an Education/Training Agreement at the beginning of the program. During the program employers are asked to verify the youth apprentices’ skills on the job by filling out a skills checklist. At the end of the training time, the employer signs the checklist and sends it to the local coordinator to submit to the state office so that the student can receive their state certificate.



Question: *What happens if I can not provide all of the skills required by the state at my business?*

Answer: In order to successfully complete the program and receive a Certificate of Occupational Proficiency, a youth must demonstrate the proficiency level specified in the Youth Apprenticeship Program Skills Checklist. If your business does not provide the full range of skills needed for certification, the local youth apprenticeship coordinator may be able to arrange for these skills to be provided by another company. This arrangement should be discussed with the coordinator before you hire the youth apprentice.

Question: *What costs will my business incur through this program?*

Answer: There are no costs to the employer other than the wages paid to the youth apprentice and to the mentor while they are training the youth apprentice.

Question: *What if the student is not working out or consistently violates the work rules?*

Answer: Youth apprentices are hired by the participating business and are expected to follow the same work rules and requirements as other employees. If for some reason they do not comply with the rules, an employer may terminate the youth apprentice's employment. Employers are encouraged to meet with the school coordinator to try to resolve the problem before taking this step.

Question: *If the student fails their related class, can I continue his/her employment?*

Answer: Students are required to complete all requirements for high school graduation and to pass all related youth apprenticeship classes. If they fail the class, or are failing in other classes, they can no longer participate in the program, including the work hours.

Question: *If I have any questions, who can I call?*

Answer: Call your local youth apprenticeship coordinator if you have any questions or any problems with the youth apprentice.

Most program activities follow a similar cycle whether you hire a one-year or a two-year youth apprentice. Timing of activities may vary to accommodate local and seasonal needs. In general, an employer can expect program activities to occur as follows:

Before You Hire A Youth Apprentice

- ◆ Discuss the program with the local coordinator to determine which program works best for your company
- ◆ Consult with company management and union officials
- ◆ Obtain approval from appropriate company officials to hire youth apprentices
- ◆ Identify possible mentors

April - May

- ◆ Interview candidates for the program
- ◆ Select youth apprentices
- ◆ Sign the Education/Training Agreement

Planning Calendar

Year One

June - August

- ◆ Participate in mentor training
- ◆ Secure work permit for the youth apprentice
- ◆ Orient new youth apprentice to the workplace, provide safety training, etc.
- ◆ Youth apprentices begin working at agreed upon time

September - May

- ◆ Provide training according to the state Skills Standards Checklist for year one
- ◆ Coordinate worksite training with classroom instruction
- ◆ Participate in progress reviews with youth apprentice, local program coordinator and parents on the agreed upon timetable
- ◆ Meet regularly with student to discuss performance and other issues

June - August

- ◆ Employ the youth apprentice full or part-time during the summer
- ◆ Continue to provide training per Skill Standards Checklist
- ◆ Consider hiring a new first year youth apprentice
- ◆ Complete and submit the Skill Standards Checklist for graduating youth apprentices

Planning Calendar

Year Two

September - May

- ◆ Provide training according to the state skills standards checklist for year two
- ◆ Participate in progress reviews with youth apprentice local program liaison and parents
- ◆ Provide guidance to youth apprentice in post secondary options
- ◆ Complete training and skill standards checklist
- ◆ Participate in recognition event organized by school for program graduates

Ongoing Activities

- ◆ Participate in regularly scheduled mentor meetings
- ◆ Serve on local youth apprenticeship advisory committees if possible
- ◆ Assist in recruiting other local businesses for the program

“From an employer’s standpoint, it is great to have people who are committed to our trade at such a young age. All of our youth apprentices have done an outstanding job for us and have bright futures.”
-W.G. Strohwig Tool & Die, Richfield

For More Information

For more information about Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship Program, contact your local high school or a local youth apprenticeship coordinator. You may also contact the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development at the web address below for a local coordinator in your area.



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Post Office Box 7972
Madison, WI 53707-7972
<http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/youthapprenticeship>

The Department of Workforce Development is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access this information in an alternate format, or need it translated to another language, please contact: (608) 266-2134 or (866) 864-4585 (TTY).

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**WISCONSIN YOUTH
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A Handbook For Employers