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DWD Secretary Newson Announces Request for Proposals for Nationally-Regarded Youth Apprenticeship Program

\$2.2 million in Youth Apprenticeship grants available in 2014 – 15 school year

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today announced that \$2.2 million in grants are available to operate the program and enroll students during the 2014 – 2015 school year in Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship program.

"The Youth Apprenticeship program is a key component in Governor Walker's workforce agenda, preparing students for careers after high school and providing a key insight into in-demand careers," said Secretary Newson. "The increase in employer and student interest in this program is a testament to the Governor's continued focus on private-sector job creation and the importance his administration has placed on ensuring students can gain the experience and education they need to be successful and enter the middle class."

Wisconsin's YA program operates as a partnership between DWD, local consortiums which operate the program, employers who train students, school districts, and students. Consortiums may include chambers of commerce, technical colleges, University of Wisconsin colleges, registered apprenticeship programs, labor unions, employers, and other non-profit organizations.

Key changes to the program include:

- Adding explicit scoring criteria to ensure objective grant scoring;
- Increasing the representation of critical stakeholders on the local YA steering committee;
- Aligning curriculum with industry standards, industry-recognized credentials and/or dual enrollment opportunities;
- Increasing scoring for grants that exceed performance standards and/or articulate a clear plan to meet performance standards; and
- Outlined local coordinator responsibilities in running the YA program.

The number of youth apprentices enrolled in the program has increased by approximately 25% since Governor Walker took office. As of March 2014, there are 2,083 students enrolled in the program, including 482 in Manufacturing; 397 in Health Care; 385 in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources. Additionally, there are 1,513 employers with at least one enrolled student, an increase of 11% over the prior school year, and 217 school districts with at least one enrolled student. In the 2012 – 2013 school year, 84% of expected graduates successfully completed the Youth Apprenticeship program.

Governor Scott Walker signed 2013 Act 112 in December 2013 as part of his fall workforce agenda. The legislation increases the amount of funding for youth apprenticeship by \$500,000 in the 2013 – 14 and 2014 – 15 school years, for a total increase of \$1 million. This increase will enable the program to serve more than 1,100 additional students over both school years.

(more)

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In 2011, the Wisconsin YA program was noted as an "Exemplar of Employee Engagement" by the Harvard Graduate School of Education in its "Pathways to Prosperity" report. The report noted that 75% of YA graduates enroll in a post-secondary institution and 60% complete their degree. Additionally, 98% of employers participating in the program would recommend it to others.

Request for Proposal document: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/youthapprenticeship/rfp.htm>

For more information on Youth Apprenticeship: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/youthapprenticeship/>