

All-Time Record-High Number of Registered Apprentices Reached

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/jobs-plumbers-s429.jpg>



A 112-Year record 16,384 apprentices to participate in state program to ‘earn while they learn’.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today, together with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), celebrated “National Apprenticeship Week” by announcing that [Wisconsin’s Registered Apprenticeship Program](#)

has reached a record 16,384 enrolled apprentices, an all-time record in the program’s 112-year history and surpassing

[last year’s record-high participation](#)

. Gov. Evers announced the new record during the Apprenticeship Career Day and Fair held by WRTP | BIG STEP of South Central Wisconsin and the Building Trades Council of South Central Wisconsin at the Plumbers Union Local 75 Training Center in Madison. The governor’s “National Apprenticeship Week” proclamation is available

[here](#)

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“For over a century, Wisconsin has been a national leader in apprenticeship, which will continue to play a critical role in addressing our state’s generational workforce challenges and building a 21st-century workforce for a 21st-century economy,” said Gov. Evers. “Today, apprenticeships are more popular than ever for workers seeking a pathway into high-demand, family-supporting careers and employers seeking highly skilled talent. It’s exceedingly important that we invest in apprenticeships and getting folks the skills and training they need to participate in our workforce while continuing to be a model of innovation and flexibility to meet evolving workforce needs.”

Wisconsin Apprenticeship pairs structured, on-the-job training with classroom instruction, allowing apprentices to be paid to “earn as they learn.” 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. This recognizes the importance of a dual training system that combines skills obtained on the job site with technical knowledge in the classroom.

“Even as we are thrilled to see Wisconsin Apprenticeship’s participation reach an all-time high, we remain laser-focused on the program’s continued growth and success in the modern economy,” said DWD Secretary Amy Pechacek. “To this end, the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council and other partners will remain critical to ensure the program meets employers’ needs and continues to power the state’s economic momentum.”

Wisconsin has more than 200 apprenticeship occupations with over 2,600 employers. While traditional construction trades apprenticeships continue to be strong, emerging employment sectors and occupations, including healthcare, are building the depth of offerings and growing apprenticeship opportunities.

“It’s clear that apprenticeship continues to be more important than ever. We’re leading the way with new opportunities in fields such as IT and finance, childcare, and arborist, bringing apprenticeship to more diverse participants and new industries,” said David Polk, director of DWD’s Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards. “We reached this new historic milestone by building partnerships, working across the state to provide technical assistance and resources.”

In April, Gov. Evers and DWD celebrated record-breaking Youth Apprenticeships during the 2021-2022 school year with 8,357 participants and 5,719 employers. Youth Apprenticeship, which started in 1991 also as the first program of its kind in the nation, is a strong connector to registered apprenticeship programs.

During National Apprenticeship Week, the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) is joining DWD and other partners in building awareness about apprenticeship. Specifically, DFI wants to share that funds saved in the Wisconsin 529 College Savings Plan— [Edvest 529](#) or [Tomorrow’s Scholar](#)

—can be used to pay for qualified expenses associated with apprenticeship programs registered with the Secretary of Labor’s National Apprenticeship Act and state apprenticeship agencies.

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“Tools and equipment that are considered qualified expenses and need to be purchased by apprentices out of pocket can be covered through funds saved in an Edvest 529 plan for apprenticeship programs that are registered with the U.S. Secretary of Labor and state apprenticeship agencies,” said DFI Secretary Cheryl Olson-Collins. “During National Apprenticeship Week and throughout the year, we want to make sure Wisconsin families know that funds they may have saved in an Edvest 529 plan can be utilized for qualified expenses.”

The state’s record-high apprenticeship numbers further cement apprenticeship as a time-tested, proven solution to meet employers’ needs for skilled workers in traditional and emerging industries. Gov. Evers has made it a priority to address Wisconsin’s workforce challenges and called a special session of the Legislature earlier this fall to take up his comprehensive workforce plan to increase access to affordable child care and prevent the child care industry’s collapse, expand paid family leave, educate and train future workers, and support high-need workforce sectors statewide. More information about Gov. Evers’ comprehensive workforce plan is available [here](#).