

Wisconsin Reaches Milestone for Registered Apprentices

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Program reaches highest participation since 2001, reflects trust among employers, labor unions, technical colleges and individuals committed to mastering in-demand skills.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers, together with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), today announced that Wisconsin has surpassed 15,000 participants in the Registered Apprenticeship program—the highest participation rate in the program in two decades.



“We’re working to build a Wisconsin that works for everyone and with more than 200 registered apprenticeship pathways, including opportunities in everything from healthcare to IT and finance to construction, apprenticeship is connecting more Wisconsinites with more opportunities in industries across the state,” said Gov. Evers. “Our Registered Apprenticeship program is a model for the nation, providing a flexible pipeline of workers to respond to employers’ needs and ensuring Wisconsin’s workforce can grow for years to come.”

The Registered Apprenticeship program combines structured, on-the-job training with

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classroom instruction and allows apprentices to earn money while they learn, rewarding employers with a skilled workforce and providing participants with family-supporting careers. To mark the 15,000-apprentice milestone—a level of participation not seen since 2001—Gov. Evers and DWD celebrated with events hosted by the Wisconsin Laborers' District Council in DeForest and Northcentral Technical College in Wausau. The events featured employer and labor partners, as well as apprentices and tours of training facilities.

“The power of apprenticeship makes our economy, our communities, and our families stronger—one skilled worker at a time,” said DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek. “Our focus on apprenticeship is part of our larger strategy to leverage our homegrown workforce, tap underutilized talent, and connect employers with the skilled workforce they need to thrive.”

Wisconsin's Registered Apprenticeship program began in 1911 and has served as a national model for its innovation. The state's 2,600 participating employers include leading manufacturers, construction businesses, agricultural and food producers, and more recently, childcare providers, healthcare systems, and information technology (IT) services.

In another positive trend, Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship program recently reached a record 6,412 participants working at a record 4,478 employers. In August, Gov. Evers announced 14 new Youth Apprenticeship pathways for high school juniors and seniors heading back to school this fall. They include agriculture, natural resources, health science, manufacturing, aviation maintenance, [and more](#).

The milestone numbers reflect a path built on trust among employers, labor unions, technical colleges and individuals committed to mastering in-demand skills. Among the apprentices is Amber Risky of Madison, a third-year laborer apprentice who works for Payne and Dolan.

“Construction is challenging and I'm better every day,” said Risky. “I'm paving the way for females, helping to break down barriers, and I now am more confident than ever.”

Natalie Koller, Wisconsin's first human resources apprentice, is now working for the National Association of Tax Professionals in Appleton.

“This program is my new starting point for achieving my career goals,” said Koller. “I have the mindset and determination to make the absolute most of this opportunity.”

The 15,000 registered apprentices were all active during 2022, and the number is expected to grow as more apprentices are registered this fall. In 2001, the state set a record with 15,757 registered apprentices for the year.