

EMPLOYER HANDBOOK

Eau Claire Area Youth Apprenticeship Consortium Schools

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Welcome to the Eau Claire Area Youth Apprenticeship Employer Handbook, a comprehensive guide designed to support new and existing Youth Apprenticeship Employers in their engagement with the next generation of skilled workers. This handbook serves as a valuable resource for businesses to participate in youth apprenticeship programs, offer insights, best practices, and practical advice to optimize experiences for both employers and youth apprentices alike.

Purpose

- To provide employers with a clear understanding of the significance and benefits of youth apprenticeship programs.
- To equip employers with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively engage Youth Apprenticeship with the ECAYA Consortium.

Significance

Investing in the next generation of talent is essential for long-term sustainability and growth. Youth apprenticeships offer a solution to the challenges of skills shortages and unemployment by providing a structured pathway to employment, education, and career advancement. By engaging with youth apprenticeship programs, employers not only secure a pipeline of skilled workers but also play a crucial role in shaping the future of their industries and communities.



YA PROGRAM DETAILS

Youth Apprenticeship (YA) serves as a vital link between education and the workforce, providing high school students with hands-on training and real-world experience in their chosen career fields.

YA PROGRAM GOALS



Youth Apprenticeship (YA) programs offer significant benefits, including the development of industry-specific skills and competencies that align with employer demands. They provide students with opportunities for career exploration, allowing them to make informed decisions about their future. Through work-based learning at participating businesses, apprentices gain valuable hands-on experience under skilled mentors, reinforcing classroom learning and enhancing employability. Additionally, successful completion of the program can lead to industry-recognized credentials, bolstering resumes and increasing job market competitiveness.

*"Our High School Tellers are a **HUGE** asset to our company and required for our school branches! They make a huge impact on the branches they are assigned to as well and our members enjoy interacting with them!"*

Royal Credit Union, Current YA Employer

YA EMPLOYER BENEFITS

- **Attract Better Applicants:** Attract high-potential candidates who are motivated to learn and contribute to your organization's success.
- **Cultivate Loyal Employees:** Nurture a sense of loyalty and commitment among youth apprentices, leading to higher retention rates and reduced turnover costs.
- **Benefit from Skilled Workers:** Benefit from the skills and knowledge acquired by youth apprentices, enhancing your workforce's capabilities and performance.
- **Increase Safety:** Promote a culture of safety and compliance within your organization through comprehensive training and mentorship for youth apprentices.
- **Enhance Competitiveness:** Position your business as an industry leader by investing in youth apprenticeships, demonstrating your commitment to innovation and excellence.
- **Instill Company Values:** Instill your company's values, work ethic, and professional standards in youth apprentices, aligning them with your organizational culture.
- **Develop Knowledgeable Workforce:** Develop a knowledgeable and adaptable workforce through structured training and hands-on experience provided to youth apprentices.
- **Replenish Skilled Workforce:** Ensure the continuous replenishment of your skilled workforce by grooming talent from within through youth apprenticeship programs.
- **Boost Productivity:** Increase productivity and efficiency within your organization by harnessing the energy and potential of motivated youth apprentices.
- **Earn Return on Investment (ROI):** Realize a tangible return on your investment in youth apprenticeship through improved performance, reduced recruitment costs, and enhanced competitiveness.

CAREER CLUSTER PATHWAYS

CLICK ON THE CAREER CLUSTERS BELOW TO VIEW THE 83 DIFFERENT PATHWAYS!



**AGRICULTURE,
FOOD AND NATURAL
RESOURCES**



**ARCHITECTURE &
CONSTRUCTION**



**ARTS, AUDIO
VISUAL TECH AND
COMMUNICATIONS**



**BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION**



EDUCATION



FINANCE



**GOVERNMENT &
PUBLIC ADMIN.
(NEW)**



HEALTH SCIENCE



**HOSPITALITY AND
TOURISM**



**HUMAN SERVICES
(NEW)**



**INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY**



**LAW, PUBLIC
SAFETY,
CORRECTIONS &
SECURITY (NEW)**



MANUFACTURING



MARKETING



**SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY,
ENGINEERING AND
MATHEMATICS**



**TRANSPORTATION,
DISTRIBUTION, 4
AND LOGISTICS**

EMPLOYER COMMITMENT

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Interview and hire the youth apprentice
- Provide enough working hours (min. 450 per year) for the apprentice to meet the work hour requirements
- Pay the youth apprentice at least minimum wage
- Provide workers compensation or comparable liability coverage
- Ensure the youth apprentice is trained in the required competencies from the on-the-job learning guides (OJLs)
- Provide a workplace mentor
- Ensure all Employment of Minors laws are followed
- Ensure the safety instructions are provided
- Sign and comply with the Education/Training Agreement for each youth apprentice



YA EMPLOYER TIMELINE

February - Mid March – Sign up and attend Youth Apprenticeship Interview Days if you are looking to fill open positions with YA students. *(not required but encouraged)*

May – If you hire a YA, attend the Signing Day hosted by the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce. *(not required but encouraged)*

June 1 – Youth Apprenticeship hours may start being recorded

Upon Hire (or within two weeks of hiring)– sign the Education Training Agreement (ETA)

June 1 – August 30th – Maximize your YA's availability. Double check they are on track to cover the competencies required in the On-the-Job Learning Guides (OJL)

August 30th-End of May – Scale back to your YA's availability

After the completion of Year 1 Hours – Complete & Sign the Employer Verification Form, return to school-based coordinator

After the completion of Year 2 hours – Complete & Sign the Employer Verification Form for year 2, return to school-based coordinator

BEST PRACTICES

YA Job Descriptions

Crafting a job description for your Youth Apprenticeship (YA) position ensures clear expectations and aligns the apprentice's learning with company needs. This transparency fosters a productive and supportive work environment.



Job Description

Position: Youth Apprentice
Department of Labor Classification:

Pay Status: Hourly
Non-Exempt

Look for All Career Opportunities in Your Business

Reviewing all careers within your business allows you to identify roles that can benefit from fresh perspectives and new skills brought by youth apprentices. By considering a broad range of opportunities, you can then create a more dynamic and adaptable workforce, fostering innovation and long-term growth.

Pathways you may want to consider beyond what your business is known for:

- Graphic Design
- Administrative Professional
- Human Resource Professional
- Marketing Communications
- Merchandising
- IT
- Accounting



Advocacy

Youth Apprenticeship started in 1991 and has continuously evolved to offer 80+ Career Pathways from 16 Career Clusters. Advocating to legislators for the support and improvement of Youth Apprenticeship is crucial for building a skilled workforce. Through highlighting success stories regarding hands-on learning experiences and reducing skills gaps, we can encourage policymakers to invest in and enhance these initiatives.



You are the experts. We encourage all employers to provide feedback for changes that can be or need to be made to improve Youth Apprenticeship.



Annually, there is a YA Day in the Capitol event hosted in Madison typically around mid-March. This is an important time to meet with legislators regarding the Youth Apprenticeship program. Employer participation is encouraged, although not required.

ECAYA Local Legislative Districts



**ASSEMBLY
91**

**ASSEMBLY
68**

**ASSEMBLY
93**

**ASSEMBLY
92**

**SENATE
23**

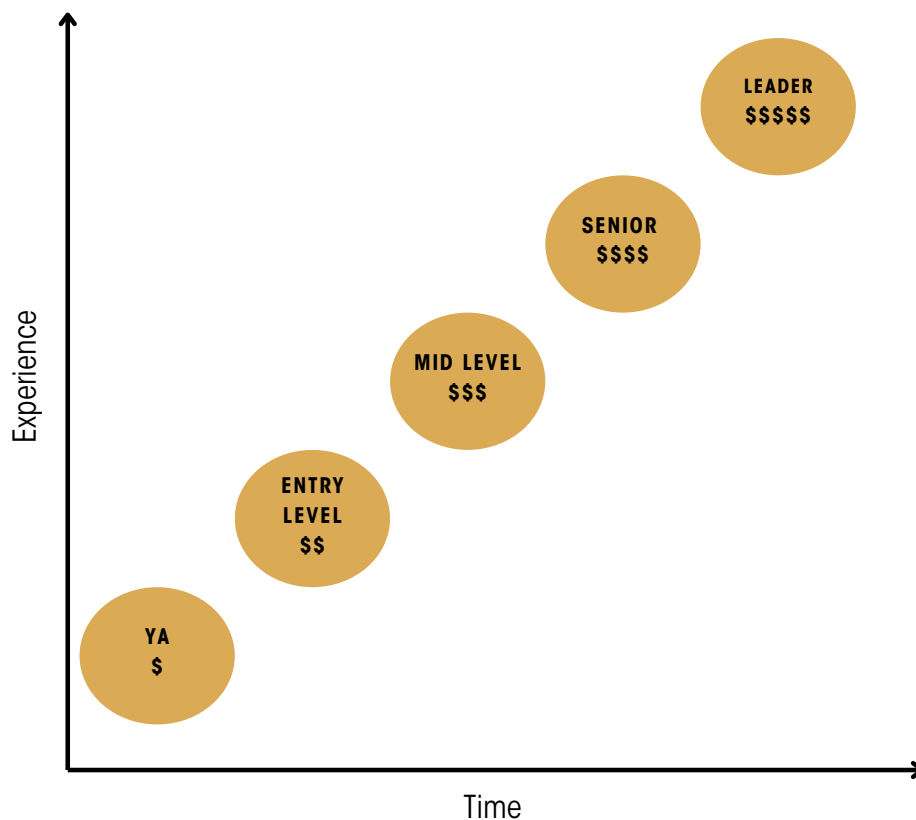
**SENATE
31**

Build a Career Path for YA's

Defining career paths for youth apprentices beyond the initial 1-2 year program is essential for fostering long-term growth and commitment. It provides young workers with a clear vision of their future, encouraging them to invest more deeply in their roles and develop their skills over time. This approach not only benefits the apprentices by offering them stability and a sense of direction but also enhances the overall talent pool within the organization. By laying out a structured career path, employers can retain motivated employees who are equipped with the knowledge and experience to contribute significantly to the company's success.

Helpful tips:

- Communicate ongoing skill development opportunities - such as financial assistance for continuing education your business may provide.
- Highlight career progression milestones such as benchmarks needed to achieve before progressing to next level.
- Illustrate the different roles and responsibilities they can transition into over time. These could include lateral moves to gain diverse experiences within the organization.
- Review the rewards and recognition systems in place with information about performance bonuses, salary increments, and other incentives tied to career growth.
- Be sure to communicate the organization's commitment to long-term career development and stability.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the eligibility criteria for participating in the youth apprenticeship program?

To be eligible to participate in youth apprenticeships, employers must first be willing to provide meaningful work experience and on-the-job training to students 15+ years old. Businesses should review the [16 Career Industries and 80+ Pathways](#) to determine a position that meets the pathway competencies and hour requirement (450 hours min). Employers can contact the regional YA Coordinator and/or school-based coordinators to advise on pathways. Additionally, employers must comply with state and federal laws related to the employment of minors.

What is the YA to RA Bridge?

The Youth Apprenticeship to Registered Apprenticeship (YA to RA) Bridge program provides a pathway for youth apprentices to transition smoothly from high school-based apprenticeships to registered apprenticeships in various industries. It aims to facilitate the seamless integration of youth apprentices into more advanced apprenticeship programs, offering them opportunities for further skill development, career advancement, and long-term success in their chosen fields.

In Wisconsin, there are 9 industries that offer [Registered Apprenticeships](#) – Agriculture, Construction, Finance, Healthcare, Industrial & Manufacturing, Information Technology, Service, Transportation, and Utilities.

How are Youth Apprentices matched with employers, and what is the process for recruitment and selection?

There are several ways that students are matched with employers!

- The ECAYA Consortium hosts YA Interview Days in the spring at Eau Claire North & Memorial High School. Employers meet with interested students to start a conversation about employment with YA.
- Employers may already have juniors and seniors employed with their business. If this is the case, it would require a conversation with the school-based coordinators to determine if their current position can meet one of the 80+ YA Pathways and if the school offers related instruction courses to support the requirements of the program.
- Students may find you! Students may reach out to employers or the Chamber for assistance finding an employer in their desired career field. Encourage YA!

Hiring Youth Apprentices is no different than hiring regular employees. Employers should follow their established hiring procedures to onboard a YA.



What happens if a situation arises where a student needs to be let go?

Unfortunately, this situation is possible. We highly encourage good communication between the school-based mentor and the workplace mentor regarding challenges. The hope is that the partnership can provide support on both sides to offer guidance to the student in addition the to direction from the business regarding employment challenges.

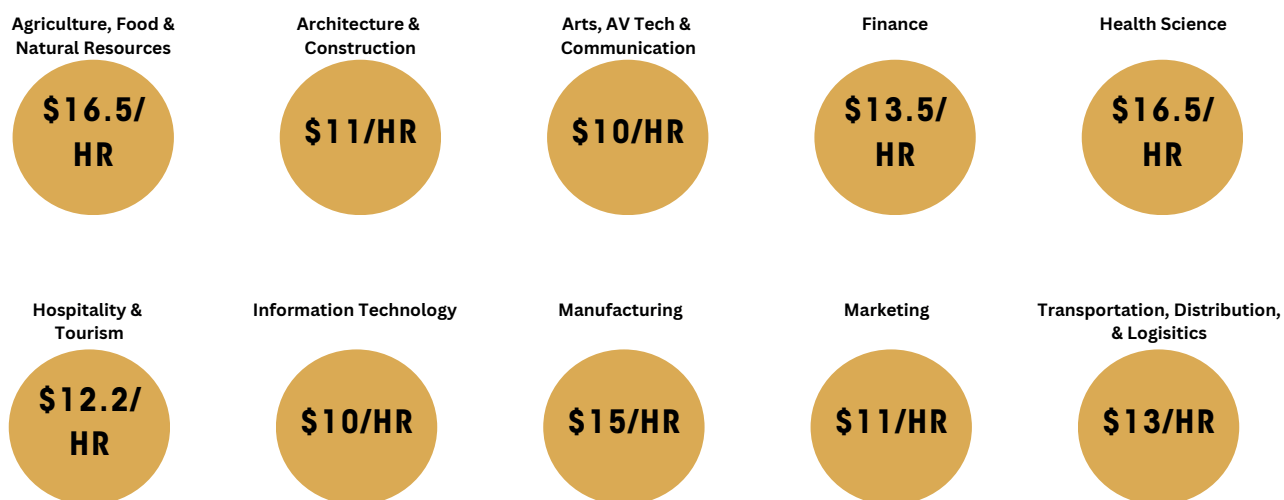
If the employer needs to take immediate action to terminate a Youth Apprentice, please contact the school-based coordinators to notify of the termination and reasoning. The consortium submits documentation to DWD regarding completion or termination of each student.



Is there a wage recommendation for Youth Apprentice positions?

Competitive wages not only attract talented young individuals but also demonstrate the employer's commitment to investing in the development of the next generation of the workforce. Employers should strive for fair compensation that is competitive within their industry and region.

In the graphic below, we demonstrate the average wage for Youth Apprentices based on the last year in the Eau Claire Area Youth Apprenticeship Consortium. While competitive wages are encouraged to attract and retain top talent, employers have the autonomy to determine appropriate compensation levels based on their discretion, budget, and individual circumstances.



Business Administration & Education & STEM yielded no data from the 23/24 school year

My business is in Manufacturing and/or Construction where there are limitations on equipment usage for minors. How do we know what we can allow the student to do?

Wisconsin's employment laws prohibit minors under 18 from using certain hazardous equipment in manufacturing and construction. The Department of Workforce Development has created a list to help simplify the laws regarding hazardous equipment.

Youth apprentices are classified as "student learners" and are permitted to do some work that is otherwise prohibited if a student learner is performing service with a bona fide school-work training program. Youth apprenticeship meets that standard.

For more thorough information we encourage you to review [Manufacturing & Construction Equipment & Wisconsin's Employment of Minors](#).



ECAYA Consortium Contacts

Regional Coordinator - Tina Probst,
probst@eauclairechamber.org

Fiscal Agent - Danielle Kummer,
kummer@eauclairechamber.org

How do we get started?

Contact us at ya@eauclairechamber.org. We would be excited to begin the conversation for how Youth Apprenticeship can look for your business.

Pages 12-14 are the Employment of Minors Laws. They are the regulations and protections for businesses which employ minors. These laws are written verbatim from the [Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Manual, Regulations, Policies, and Procedures](#).

EMPLOYMENT OF MINOR LAWS

FORMERLY KNOWN AS "CHILD LABOR LAWS"

Youth Apprentices are employed by the businesses involved in the program and are thus bound by all state and federal laws governing the employment of minors if they are under 18 years of age.



"STUDENT LEARNER STATUS"

- Wisconsin's Administrative Code outlines the classification of "student learners" as employees. Youth apprentices fall under this classification, as outlined in Wis. Admin. Code § DWD 270.14(3) (a). As student learners, youth apprentices may engage in certain tasks that would otherwise be deemed hazardous, provided that such work is incidental to their training and occurs for short durations. Moreover, this work must be conducted under the direct and close supervision of a qualified individual, with organized and progressive work processes outlined. While some tasks are permitted for student learners, there are specific types of work that remain prohibited regardless of their status. For a comprehensive list of prohibited tasks and further details on the student learner classification, refer to Wis. Admin. Code § DWD 270.14, accessible at https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/dwd/270_279/270/14
- Although youth apprenticeship program curricula are reviewed for compliance with employment laws concerning minors, coordinators are encouraged to contact the DWD Equal Rights Division, Labor Standards Bureau at (608) 266-6860 or via email at erinfo@dwd.wisconsin.gov for specific concerns regarding tasks or equipment. To ensure clarity about the apprentices' activities at the worksite, a signed Education/Training Agreement (ETA) must be retained at the worksite.

WORK RESTRICTIONS AND WORK PERMITS

- Naturally as juniors and seniors, most students are sixteen years old or older. Wisconsin and federal laws do not limit hours that 16–17-year-olds may work, other than during hours of required school attendance. Student learners, however, may work during school hours since they are registered in a work-based learning program – youth apprenticeship.
- It is possible for YAs to be fifteen years old. See below for the limitations for 14- and 15-year-olds.
- Work Permits are not required for Youth Apprentices for work performed as part of their apprenticeship. If a student is engaged in other work from the employer outside of YA, the exception does not apply, and they should gain a work permit.

Maximum Hours of Work for 14- and 15-year old minors

WORKING HOURS

Labor Day-May
7AM-7PM

June 1 - Labor Day
7AM-9PM

DAILY HOURS

NON SCHOOL DAYS -

- Labor Day - May
8 hours
- June 1 - Labor day
8 hours

SCHOOL DAYS -

- Labor Day - May
3 hours
- June 1 - Labor Day
3 hours

WEEKLY HOURS

NON SCHOOL WEEKS -

- Labor Day - May
40 hours
- June 1 - Labor Day
40 hours

SCHOOL WEEKS -

- Labor Day - May
18 hours
- June 1 - Labor Day
18 hours

WAGES

The Fair Labor Standards Act requires employers to pay youth apprentices for all hours worked as part of their program, no less than minimum wage.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Wisconsin's unemployment insurance laws exclude certain types of work from its definition of "employment" for purposes of unemployment insurance eligibility. Youth apprentices, if enrolled full-time in a non-profit or public educational institution and receiving academic credit for their participation in the program are not eligible to file for unemployment insurance from their YA employer (Wis. Stat. § 108(15)(j)). Youth apprentices who do not meet these criteria may, under certain circumstances, be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits if they are terminated from their employment.

WORKER COMPENSATION/LIABILITY

Youth apprentices must be covered by a workers compensation policy. The employers should review their policies to ensure that there are no restrictions on employing minors or on coverage of minors operating machinery. Reporting workers compensation is the same for minors as adults for injury or death while on the job.

School districts are responsible for providing liability coverage for students in school facilities and school sponsored functions/activities. They are not responsible for and cannot provide liability coverage for work-based learning activities provided by a youth apprenticeship employer.

Youth apprentices who are responsible for their own transportation to and from the worksite are responsible for their own insurance coverage while in transit. Schools which provide transportation are responsible for providing insurance coverage for the students while in transit.

WORKER DISPLACEMENT

Employers may not hire youth apprentices who would displace a currently employed worker (including a partial displacement – reduction of hours in non-overtime work, wages, or employment benefits)

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ARRANGEMENTS

Hiring youth apprentices may not impair the existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements of an employer. The Department of Workforce Development also recommends that employers with organized labor obtain the concurrence of the labor organizations prior to hiring youth apprentices to ensure full support of participation in the program.

Youth apprentices may be required to become union members if that is a condition of the employer's collective bargaining agreement or that is agreed to by management and the union organization as a condition of hiring youth apprentices. It is recommended that the youth apprentice's pay rate be increased to cover the cost of union dues if that occurs.

LAYOFFS/STRIKES

Employers may not hire youth apprentices under either of the following circumstances

- If any other employee at the business is on temporary layoff, with the clear possibility or recall, from the same or any equivalent jobs
- If the employer has terminated the employment of any regular employee or reduced its workforce to fill the vacancy with a youth apprentice.

Bargaining agreements should determine the status of youth apprentices already working in the company in the event of layoffs. Youth apprentices may be laid off or transferred to work areas which are not experiencing layoffs. They may not continue to work or be transferred to work areas to take the place of laid-off workers. Employment of minors laws prohibit youth apprentices from working in a company where a strike or lockout is in active progress.