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Apprenticeship Resources for Northwest Michigan Employers:

Why construction employers should create apprenticeship programs and where to start.

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Executive Summary

What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a program that runs the course of a designated period of time, where an apprentice receives income while learning what it takes to be successful at your business and in the field.

A Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) must include:

1. Paid income
2. On-the-job training
3. Classroom learning
4. Mentorship
5. Post-apprenticeship credentials

Value of an Apprenticeship?

For employers, an apprenticeship shows the community and industry that you are committed to the development of the future workforce. This apprentice is also likely to stay on staff for an extended period after their apprenticeship ends, providing you with trained talent as a return on your investment. In Northwest Michigan, the rate of retention of at least one year as a result of work-based learning is 95-98%.

For apprentices, you have the ability to learn while being paid, working on site and alongside a mentor to help you expand your skills and familiarity with the career path you have chosen. Not only will you be paid during the apprenticeship, but over the course of your lifetime you will earn more than your peers on average because of your apprenticeship commitment.

How to Register an Apprenticeship?

This can largely be done by our supporting network of apprenticeship experts locally. At Northwest Michigan Works!, there is a team

of Apprenticeship Specialists dedicated to helping you build your apprenticeship program. The help they provide continues beyond creation. An Apprenticeship Specialist will regularly check-in with your apprentice and your staff to ensure that goals are being met and that the program is on the path to success.

Resources for Financial Support?

At the state and local level, financial support is available to employers of apprentices. While the grant funds available for training have timelines that expire soon, the team at Northwest Michigan Works! will be connecting you with additional financial support among other resources for apprentice employers. This grant funding presents itself in many ways and on many schedules, but Build Your Life and NW MI Works are focused on connecting you with this assistance.

How can Build Your Life support you?

Build Your Life is here to connect you with resources, information, and talent. We are here to guide your apprenticeship program from idea to reality through local partnerships and a commitment to the future workforce of the construction industry.

What is next?

Contact Christian Berry (christian@hbagta.com) to discuss your apprenticeship goals. From there, Christian will connect you to the network of apprenticeship experts locally to work with you in creating a program that addresses your workforce goals while also empowering future industry talent.



What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a position that provides on-the-job training as well as classroom learning to a worker in an effort to prepare them for a highly-skilled career. A registered apprenticeship program is industry-driven; centered around the competencies that make someone on that career path an effective contributor to the team.

For an apprenticeship to be registered with the Department of Labor (DOL), it must meet certain criteria:

1. The job must be **paid**.

It is pretty easily understood; a paid employee is a happy employee. Consider the situation your apprentice is in. They are likely in the midst of a major transition; from high school to the workforce, from military service to civilian life, from incarceration to resettling. To find their footing, an individual needs income that can cover basic living expenses. If you want an employee that is committed to your business, the first step is in showing your commitment to their well-being.

For a recent graduate, deciding between college and the workforce can be difficult. Northwestern Michigan College, a verified local apprenticeship educator, can help someone develop the core skills needed for success in construction trades. An apprentice can get right to work, learning on the job while supplementing this with classroom education.

By receiving an income, an apprentice will contribute to the local economy via rent and personal spending. This investment in your workforce may not return to your own pocket directly, but bolsters the economy of Northwest Michigan by providing a footing for individuals in a transition period.

2. The job must include **on-the-job learning**. (The DOL provides a list of recommended on-the-job training for each occupation, but this is up to the employer's discretion.)

As a college graduate, I can confirm that the majority of my learning has happened on-the-job. Both hard and soft skills can be developed through an apprenticeship program if done correctly. On-the-job training is the quickest way to develop hard skills necessary for a job site. At the same time, it displays the commitment of your team to the development of your apprentice.

3. The position must be complemented with **classroom learning**. Northwestern Michigan College is an approved educator.

Classroom learning for an apprenticeship can range from foundational concepts to soft skills.

4. The apprentice must have an **internal mentor**, someone dedicated to supporting the apprentice while they learn skills on the job.



Mentorships are a large piece of the apprenticeship program. By creating an internal mentorship program, your staff has a structure behind forming connections and supporting one another. While your mentorship program can be isolated to the apprenticeship, it may be worth considering ways to mentor new employees in any role. As your apprentice receives valuable mentorship, it is reasonable to expect them to give back in the same way after their apprenticeship is completed. They have now become an ideal mentor for future apprentices through their experiences.

“Of those with a mentor, 97% say they are valuable ([Sage.com](https://www.sage.com)).”

At the organizational level, 67% of businesses reported an increase in productivity due to mentoring ([mentorsme](https://mentorsme.com)).

According to [Forbes](https://www.forbes.com), mentors are 6 times more likely to be promoted and mentees are 5 times more likely to be promoted than those not in a mentoring relationship.

5. The apprenticeship must result in the apprentice being awarded a national **credential**, certifying their training and skill development.

A national credential empowers an apprentice by providing them with verifiable evidence of their experience, something that can provide them the ability to receive promotion or to relocate. Much like a diploma is recognizable nationwide, an apprenticeship credential symbolizes a commitment to work, learning, and development throughout their time at your business.

Value of an Apprenticeship?

For Employers:

By recruiting and training talent through your own designed apprenticeship program, you can create a workforce tailored to the needs of your business. At the same time, you provide a commitment to your apprentice that you will support their learning and development. In Northwest Michigan, the rate of retention of at least one year as a result of work-based learning is 95-98% (Northwest Michigan Works!). This commitment to your employees resonates beyond the apprentice themselves. One piece of a registered apprenticeship is a mentorship program. This is a way to further engage your staff by creating connections, learning by teaching, and giving mentors the knowledge that they are helping someone improve their skills and foundation. Many mentorships last well beyond the designated ‘end’ of an apprenticeship or mentorship program, as the relationship has grown strong and the mentee has someone to go to for advice and support.

As the host of a registered apprenticeship program, benefits include:

- The ability to recruit and develop a highly-skilled workforce over an extended period of time.

- Reducing turnover by further investing in workforce development, reaffirming your commitment to employee success.
- The ability to create a flexible training program for specific career paths and roles within your organization.
- A demonstrated investment in the community and future talent.
- Government grants and sponsorship funding for apprenticeship programs, as well as other potential state tax credits.

For Apprentices:

As an apprentice, your benefits are numerous. You know you have an employer committed to your success, which is evident by their investment to train and incorporate you into their team. Not only is the employer committed to you, but so will your team members. Some may mentor you and others will offer help on the jobsite, connecting you to a team that is there to support your growth. You will also receive a nationally-portable credential that verifies your experience as an apprentice. Not to mention, you will be paid for your work, helping you save for additional education plans or helping you find your footing as you transition from school and your parent's home to a life of your own. But the benefits related to pay do not end there. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, former apprentices earn between \$200,000 to \$300,000 more than their peers throughout their career.

How to register an Apprenticeship?

In Northwest Michigan, you have a support system to guide you in setting up an apprenticeship program and a promotional arm to help you recruit and identify talent. Networks Northwest has staff dedicated to evangelizing and forming registered apprenticeship programs, meaning an expert will be available to answer your questions and do the legwork of paperwork and registration. They have the right connections to coordinate classroom learning, advice for recruitment and program structure, and for sourcing grant funding.

Resources for Financial Support?

In the short term, financial support is available through a Regional Implementation Consortium (RIC) of apprenticeship experts, educators, and employers. This Consortium is applying for grant funding through a State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) which lasts from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2023. To get access to available funds, which are for training related expenses in an apprenticeship, we need a commitment from you before February 1, 2021. This commitment is that:

- You will be engaged with the Consortium on developing pre-apprenticeship program outcomes related to career skills that all employers look for. (Ex. communication, customer service, basic math, etc.)
- You will create an apprenticeship program and hire apprentice(s) within the 2 year timeline for the SAE.

This is not the only way to receive financial support related to your apprenticeship program. At the state and local level, grant funds are available at different times and specific programs (electrical, carpentry, etc.). Through connections with local apprenticeship experts, you will not



need to worry about finding grant funding. These experts at Northwest Michigan Works! will help connect you to funds throughout the creation and ongoing management of your apprenticeship program.

How can Build Your Life support you?

Build Your Life can support you in a handful of ways, from connecting you to resources, advisors, and talent to promoting your apprenticeship program and your commitment to workforce investment and development.

Build Your Life receives regular requests for career resources and job opportunities. As many of these requests come from individuals without construction experience, an apprenticeship is the perfect path for them. They can secure an income that is much needed, while developing the skills in a career path that they hope to excel in.

For employers, Build Your Life is here to help you create an apprenticeship from scratch, and will also promote your business and apprenticeship program through promotional content and regular check-ins to ensure success.