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STUDENT HANDBOOK



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YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP
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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

What is Youth Apprenticeship?

Youth Apprenticeship (YA) provides high school juniors and seniors with the opportunity to gain real-world career experience while still in school. This one- or two-year program combines academic learning with hands-on technical skills training, helping students build essential competencies for the workforce.

YA not only prepares students for the jobs of tomorrow but also supports businesses in developing, attracting, and retaining a highly skilled workforce. Upon graduating high school, participants will receive:

- A high school diploma
- A **State of Wisconsin** certificate of proficiency in their program area
- Potential credits toward post-secondary education
- Valuable work experience and training in a specific career field

These achievements will strengthen your resume and job applications, setting you apart in your future career pursuits.

Youth Apprenticeship Checklist

- ✓ **Complete a Youth Apprenticeship application**
- ✓ **Secure YA placement** (on your own or with the help of a YA Coordinator)
- ✓ **Communicate regularly with your YA Coordinator** regarding job status
- ✓ **Sign enrollment paperwork**, including the Education Training Agreement and employer forms
- ✓ **Inform your school counselor** about your participation and confirm your school schedule
- ✓ **Attend monthly meetings** with your YA Coordinator at school and/or individual check-ins
- ✓ **Complete required student reflections**
- ✓ **Participate in progress meetings** with your employer, coordinator, and parent (if applicable)
- ✓ **Master required employability and skill competencies** for your YA program area
- ✓ **Complete the YA program survey and closeout process** to receive your final grade and certification

EXPECTATIONS

Student Expectations

The Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program is a **significant commitment** that provides valuable experience for your future. To successfully complete the program and earn credit, all students must meet the following expectations. Your participation holds you accountable to your **YA Coordinator, school, and employer**.

- ✓ **Attendance is essential.**

- You must attend both school and required work hours to remain eligible for the program.

✓ **Maintain employment** with your YA employer for the full school year while completing a minimum of **450 hours per program year**.

- Up to **200 summer hours** can count toward this requirement.
- **Quitting or being terminated** may result in a failing grade—communicate any concerns with your YA Coordinator immediately.

✓ **Enroll in and pass related coursework.**

- **One-Year YA Students:** 1 high school credit of related instruction or 3 college credits.
- **Two-Year YA Students:** 2 high school credits of related instruction or 6 college credits.
- Your YA Coordinator and School Counselor can help guide you in selecting the appropriate courses.
- **Failing grades may result in losing release time from school.**

✓ **Monitor your email** and complete required assignments to receive course credit.

✓ **Meet regularly with your YA Coordinator** at school for check-ins.

✓ **Understand “student learner” laws and key program rules.**

- All students must be aware of relevant employment laws and program expectations.
- Refer to the **Wisconsin Employment of Minors Guide** for details.

Student Hours

Just like missing assignments can cause you to fail a class, not completing your required 450 apprenticeship hours can result in removal from the program.

YA is a professional commitment, not just an extracurricular activity. Employers count on you to show up and contribute—missing hours affects your progress, their trust, and your success.

It is important to talk with your YA Coordinator if you are struggling with meeting the work hour requirements.

Incomplete hours can affect:

- Your grade & credits
- Your release time privileges
- Your learning & career opportunities

Parent/Guardian Expectations

As a parent/guardian, your support is crucial to your student's success in the YA program. Expectations include:

- ✓ Supporting your student in their **school and workplace skill development**.
 - ✓ Ensuring your student has **reliable transportation** to and from work and any off-site courses.
 - ✓ Directing students to the appropriate **adult contact** for program-related issues:
 - **School Counselor**
 - **YA Coordinator**
 - **Class Instructor**
 - **Employer/Mentor**
 - ✓ Encouraging students to **demonstrate responsibility and communicate directly** with the YA Coordinator.
 - ✓ Participating in **progress reviews and meetings** when necessary.
 - ✓ **Avoiding direct communication with the employer** outside of performance evaluations unless in case of an emergency.
-

School District Expectations

The school district plays a vital role in supporting Youth Apprenticeship students by:

- ✓ **Advocating** for both the student and the YA program.
 - ✓ Providing **flexibility in class scheduling** to accommodate work and coursework.
 - ✓ **Scheduling meetings** as needed to support student success.
 - ✓ **Monitoring high school grades** to ensure students remain on track for graduation.
 - ✓ **Recording grades** to reflect worksite evaluations and secondary education coursework on student transcripts.
-

YA Coordinator Expectations

YA Coordinators serve as a key resource for both students and employers. Their responsibilities include:

- ✓ Assisting businesses in **securing student placements** in the YA program.
 - ✓ **Maintaining regular communication** with mentors to monitor student progress.
 - ✓ Conducting **onsite worksite visits** in accordance with state guidelines.
 - ✓ **Compiling employer-provided grades** and reporting them per grading timelines.
 - ✓ Meeting with students at school to **discuss academic and workplace progress** as needed.
-

Employer/Mentor Expectations

Employers and mentors play a critical role in student success. Expectations include:

- ✓ Providing students with opportunities to **experience different aspects** of the business and industry.
- ✓ **Completing quarterly worksite evaluations**, skill standards checklists, and verifying hours worked.
- ✓ **Maintaining communication** with the YA Coordinator regarding student progress and any

concerns.

✓ Managing YA students as **regular employees**, including adherence to:

- Pre-employment screenings
 - Random drug testing policies
 - Workplace dress code
 - Cell phone and internet usage policies
-

Communication Expectations

To ensure effective communication, please note the following:

✓ **YA Coordinators' work hours align with school operating hours.**

✓ Expect a response to emails **within 24-48 hours** during normal working hours.

✓ If your coordinator is out of the office or working limited summer hours, they will respond during their next available office hours.

✓ Emails sent over the **weekend** will be answered upon return to the office.

✓ For **urgent matters**, please indicate this in the subject line (e.g., **URGENT: [Brief Description of Situation]**).

PLANNING YOUR SCHEDULE

Managing Your Schedules

During your Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program, you will be responsible for managing multiple schedules. It is essential to **adhere to the schedule established for you** and proactively address any potential conflicts. If issues arise, discuss them as soon as possible with your **YA Coordinator, School Counselor, or Employer**.

High School Schedule

Each school district has its own rules regarding attendance and the number of hours required to meet graduation requirements. To ensure you stay on track, schedule a meeting with your **School Counselor or YA Coordinator** to review your academic schedule.

Employer Site Schedule

Your employer will develop a training schedule that accommodates your **high school and/or post-secondary education** commitments. Be sure to communicate any changes or conflicts in advance.

Post-Secondary/College Programs

If you are enrolled in off-site courses, review your class schedule and **share it with both your employer and YA Coordinator** to ensure alignment with your work responsibilities.

EVALUATION POLICY

Evaluations and Assessment

Evaluations for the Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program are determined at the discretion of your school. They are issued in consultation with the YA Coordinator and based on the following criteria:

- **Employer Feedback** – Evaluations from your worksite mentor on job performance and employability skills.
- **Communication & Engagement** – Your responsiveness and professionalism in interactions with your YA Coordinator and employer, including attendance at required check-ins.

Employer Skill Evaluations

Youth Apprentices will be assessed by their worksite mentor on essential employability skills and on-the-job technical competencies specific to their program area.

To earn a **Certificate of Occupational Proficiency** from the Department of Workforce Development, apprentices must:

- Successfully complete all required competencies outlined in their job guide at a **satisfactory level** meeting entry-level industry standards.
- Maintain proactive communication with their YA Coordinator and worksite mentor throughout the program.

Note: It is your responsibility to stay informed about your progress and address any questions or concerns with your YA Coordinator and worksite mentor.

PROGRAM COSTS

Students enrolled in the YA program should check with their school and/or employer to verify any potential costs related to required instruction, uniforms, tools, physical exams, testing, and other incidental expenses. Public school students taking classes through a local college partner may qualify for tuition assistance through the Start College Now program. For details on registration deadlines and required paperwork, please consult your school counseling office. If you have questions about financial assistance, reach out to your School Counselor or YA Coordinator.

DROPPING THE PROGRAM

Student Request to Drop

Enrollment in the YA program is recorded as a full-year course on your schedule and transcript. If you are considering dropping the program or changing employers, you must first discuss your decision with your YA Coordinator. Dropping the program is treated similarly to dropping a class, which may affect your credits and GPA. If the drop is approved, the student may be subject to tuition reimbursement and grading policies. Students dropping at semester may also receive a

failing grade. If you drop the program, work with your School Counselor to maintain a full class load at your high school and submit a resignation letter to both your YA Coordinator and employer once approval is granted.

Student Request to Change Program Area

Changing program areas mid-program is not allowed due to the specific requirements for related instruction. However, students may switch to a different pathway if both the YA Coordinator and school agree to the change.

Failing Grades

To remain in the YA program, students must pass their classes at both their high school and secondary education institution. If a student is not passing their classes, the following actions may occur:

- Loss of release time, with the student being pulled from the worksite until grades improve
 - Referral for tutoring support at their high school or secondary education provider
 - The student may be dropped from the program and subject to the tuition reimbursement policy
-

Termination from Employment

If a student is terminated by their employer due to performance and/or attendance issues, both the student and their family may be subject to the tuition reimbursement policy and may receive a failing grade.

POLICIES

Attendance

Youth Apprentices are both students and employees, balancing intensive learning and training at high school, related classes, and the worksite. We encourage students to participate in school activities, understanding that work will need to be made up.

If a student is unable to attend their high school classes due to illness, injury, or other reasons, they should also refrain from attending any off-site class or work that day. In the event of illness, injury, or similar situations, the following steps must be taken:

- The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) must contact the student's high school.
 - The student must inform their employer prior to the scheduled start time, following company policy regarding absences.
 - If the student requires time off, they must request it from their employer well in advance, adhering to the employer's time-off request process. Employers/mentors will decide if time off from work can be granted.
-

Inclement Weather / Snow Days / Virtual Learning Day

High schools may close or switch to virtual learning when weather conditions prevent safe

transportation. However, secondary education facilities and businesses rarely close due to weather. Do not assume that a high school closure, delay, or virtual learning day means that work and related classes are canceled. Each situation is handled individually. If unsafe weather conditions prevent travel to work, it is the student's responsibility to communicate with their employer and follow the employer's attendance policy.

Requesting Time Off

Students must arrange time off with their employer in advance. Advance notice is required, and students must follow the employer's time-off request process. Employers/mentors will determine whether time off is granted. Students must request time off for:

- Family vacations
- Sports or school activities
- Non-school days
- Holidays and school breaks
- Academic support to make up missed work or prepare for ACT/AP testing

Discuss any time-off requests with your worksite mentor as early as possible. Keep in mind that employers may not be familiar with specific school schedules, so communicate clearly if you plan to work on non-school days and ensure your employer can adjust your hours if needed.

Off-Site Related Instruction Courses

If you are taking classes outside the high school for required YA related instruction, attendance is mandatory. For unavoidable absences, contact your instructor promptly to discuss the situation.

Suspension or Expulsion

If a student receives disciplinary action at school (e.g., suspension or expulsion), they are not permitted to work during this time. It is the student's responsibility to inform both the YA Coordinator and employer about the temporary absence and work with them until the situation is resolved.

Attire

Students must wear clothing suitable for the type of work they perform. Professionalism is expected, and apprentices should dress accordingly. If unsure about whether clothing is appropriate, students should ask their worksite mentor.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The YA program is committed to maintaining a safe and productive work environment. The use or influence of drugs or alcohol, on or off the job, can be dangerous. To ensure safety, students may be required to undergo drug screenings prior to employment, randomly, or following a work-related injury. If a student is suspected of drug or alcohol use, they will face disciplinary action in accordance with school and employer policies.

Cell Phone and Internet Usage

Students must adhere to both school and workplace policies regarding cell phone and internet usage. Please refer to your student and employee handbooks for more details. If you do not have a copy of the policies, ask for one.

Safety

The safety of students and others is a top priority. Employers are responsible for instructing students on fire safety and evacuation procedures. Students may encounter potentially harmful agents in the workplace, such as toxic chemicals. Refer to the employer's procedure manual for safe handling and emergency treatment. Always follow safety regulations and rules to ensure the safety of yourself and others at the worksite.

Grievance Procedure

If students, their parent(s)/guardian(s), or worksite mentors have concerns about the program, they should contact the YA Coordinator first. The YA Coordinator will work to address the issue, involving the worksite mentor if needed. If further discussion is necessary, a meeting will be scheduled with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), worksite mentor, and YA Coordinator.

Steps to follow for student/parents	Issues at Work Site	Issues with High School Courses
1	Speak with your work site mentor (if not resolved move onto step 2)	Speak with your high school classroom instructor or school counselor (if not resolved move onto step 2)
2	Speak with your Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator (if not resolved move onto step 3)	Speak with your Youth Apprentice Coordinator (if not resolved move onto step 3)
3	Fill out grievance form and send to CESA 6 regional coordinator within 30 days after completing step 2	Fill out grievance form and send to CESA 6 regional coordinator within 30 days after completing step 2
Actions Taken Once A Grievance is Filed		
1	Form reviewed within 30 days of receiving and email confirmation will be sent upon receipt	Form reviewed within 30 days of receiving and email confirmation will be sent upon receipt
2	Written response through email to inform applicant within 30 days, all parties notified	Written response through email to inform applicant within 30 days, all parties notified

Worksite Employment and Alternate Jobs

Once assigned to a worksite, students are not allowed to pursue alternate employment for their apprenticeship experience without consulting their YA Coordinator (refer to the section on Dropping the Program). If a student's employment is terminated, they will be removed from the YA program, and it will be the responsibility of the student's school district to arrange for an alternative program of study.

Harassment Policy

The YA program strictly prohibits harassment in any form as a condition of employment, whether explicit or implicit. This includes bullying, emotional, racial, religious, and sexual harassment, as well as hazing, retaliation, stalking, and mobbing.

If you believe you are being harassed by another employee, customer, or any individual within the scope of your employment, follow these steps:

1. Politely, but firmly, tell the individual to stop the behavior. Express how you feel about their actions and ask them to cease the harassment.
2. If the harassment continues or you feel uncomfortable confronting the individual, immediately report the situation to your supervisor, manager, YA Coordinator, or your high school instructor.

EMPLOYMENT OF MINOR LAWS

Work Hours for Youth Apprentices

Wisconsin and federal laws do not restrict the hours that 16 and 17-year-olds may work, other than preventing them from working during required school hours. However, as student learners in a work-based learning program, YA students are allowed to work during school hours.

Minors under the age of 18 are not allowed to work more than 6 consecutive hours without a 30-minute, duty-free meal break. Additionally, if a 16 or 17-year-old works past 11:00 pm, they must have 8 hours of rest between shifts.

As student learners, Youth Apprentices may perform certain tasks that would generally be considered hazardous, but only if the work is incidental to their training and occurs for short, intermittent periods under the direct supervision of a qualified, experienced person. The work must be part of a structured, organized training schedule. Wisconsin's Employment of Minors Laws governs the number of hours and times of day that apprentices can work, and the company will determine the type of work, tools, and machinery used in accordance with child labor laws, OSHA regulations, and the company's insurance policies.

Health and Safety

Employers prioritize the health and safety of their employees. Youth Apprenticeship employers are required to provide safety training and ongoing support during the program. It is essential that you take all safety training seriously to prevent accidents or injuries on the job. Be sure to discuss accident procedures with your worksite mentor and report any injuries, no matter how minor they may seem.

Steps to Follow if an Injury Occurs at the Job Site:

1. Seek immediate medical attention if necessary.
2. In an emergency, call 911.

3. For non-emergency situations, transport the injured person to a medical facility.
4. Immediately inform your supervisor, employer, or mentor of the incident.
5. Secure the accident site and preserve evidence if needed.
6. Report the incident to your YA Coordinator within 24 hours.
7. Complete any required incident reports with your employer within 24 hours.
8. Establish a return-to-work timeline.
9. Stay in regular communication with your YA employer and YA Coordinator on your return-to-work progress.

Physical or Emotional Health Concerns:

If a student has physical or emotional health concerns that may affect their ability to work, they should promptly notify their YA Coordinator and employer. The student will need to communicate weekly with both the YA employer and YA Coordinator regarding their health status and readiness to return to work. Medical documentation will be required if significant time off is needed due to illness or injury. Check with your employer to find out how many absences require a doctor's note. Please be sure to follow your employer's policies and procedures regarding any workplace safety requirements that may be in place. Adhering to these guidelines is essential to ensuring your safety and the safety of others in the work environment.

Unemployment Insurance

If a YA student is enrolled full-time in a public educational institution and earns school credit for their participation in the YA program, they are **not** eligible to file for unemployment compensation from their YA employer. However, YA students who **do not** meet these criteria may be eligible for unemployment benefits if they are terminated from their job. For more information on the requirements, visit the Department of Workforce Development's Unemployment Insurance Division website: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui/>.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Once a YA student becomes a paid employee, they must be covered by the employer's workers' compensation insurance. Schools cannot cover YA students under their own workers' compensation policies.

The worker's compensation reporting requirements for youth are the same as for adults in the event of an injury or death while on the job. To learn more about these requirements, visit the Department of Workforce Development's Workers' Compensation Division website: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/ya/legal.htm>. Neither the Department of Workforce Development nor schools can absolve employers from liability if a Youth Apprentice is injured on the job and a lawsuit is filed.

Transportation Insurance/Liability

YA students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the worksite, as well as for their own insurance coverage. If the school provides transportation for the YA student, the school is responsible for insurance coverage during that travel. The employer is only responsible for transportation insurance if the employer provides transportation to and from the worksite.

UNIONS AND LAYOFFS

Worker Displacement

Employers are prohibited from hiring a YA student if it would result in the displacement of any currently employed worker. This includes reducing the hours of non-overtime work, wages, or employment benefits for existing employees.

Layoffs/Strikes

A YA student cannot be hired if any individual is on temporary layoff from the same or equivalent job, with the possibility of being recalled. Additionally, a YA student cannot fill a vacancy created by the termination of a regular employee or workforce reduction. Child labor laws also prohibit YA students from working in a company where a strike or lockout is actively in progress.

Collective Bargaining Agreements

The YA program should not interfere with existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements. If a YA program would be inconsistent with the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, it must be approved with the written consent of both the labor organization and the employer. The Department of Workforce Development recommends that employers with organized labor consult with the labor organization before hiring youth apprentices to ensure the program's full support.

- Local bargaining units should determine the status of YA students already working in the facility if a layoff occurs.
- YA students may be laid off or reassigned to different work areas to replace laid-off workers.
- YA students may be required to join a union if it is a condition of the employer's collective bargaining agreement or if it is mutually agreed upon by management and the union.

NEXT STEPS



Registered Apprenticeship (RA)

The Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program is supported by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards. As a YA student, there are pathways available that allow some or all of the work hours you earn during your YA experience to count toward the requirements of a Registered Apprenticeship (RA). To learn more about this opportunity, please review the bridge guide available. For further details, reach out to the Apprenticeship Navigator for your county.

Post-Secondary Education

Your participation in the Youth Apprenticeship program may also provide the chance to earn post-secondary credit. It is crucial that you keep a copy of your training agreement and completed skills checklist to document the skills you've acquired on the job. The [YA Programs TABLE](#) outlines which program admissions requirements are fulfilled by each program at UW System campuses.

VISIT US AT: YAWISCONSIN.ORG

Non-Discrimination Statement

The CESA 6 Youth Apprenticeship Consortium is committed to a policy of non-discrimination. We do not discriminate based on sex, race, color, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, religion, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or disability.

Inquiries regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, s.118.13, Wisconsin Statutes, or Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 should be directed to the home school non-discrimination officer or the CESA 6 Youth Apprenticeship Consortium Director at ya@cesa6.org. Please include 'Discrimination' in the subject line.

INTERESTED IN YA & SEEKING A PLACEMENT SITE?



We encourage you to reach out and find opportunities that fit your personal and career goals related to the youth apprenticeship program. While your YA Coordinator will offer assistance, going through the job seeking process is a great skill to learn prior to graduation.

WHERE DO I START?



- Visit a business and ask if they are hiring
- Family & friends - someone is likely to know someone in the field you are interested in
- Utilize online resources (indeed.com, linkedin.com) - make a list of local companies
- School staff - they may have connections for you
- Local business community - talk with the chamber of commerce & other social organizations



WHAT TO SAY?

- Keep it brief - they are busy
- Do your research on the company and find out what they do
- Share what skills you have that can be a benefit to their organization or why you want to work for them.



Most jobs are found through referrals, and people you know are often happy to assist!



HOW TO CONNECT WITH THEM

- When a company hears from a student who already wants to get professional experience, they're likely to be impressed that someone so young is taking so much initiative. Reach out to them via phone, email, in-person or through website chat features.



Take some time to explore options. Keep in mind that your first few jobs will provide a good opportunity to find out what you want to do... and what you don't.

Ask if they offer the opportunity to take a tour or job shadow!



YOU FOUND AN OPPORTUNITY/ INTERESTED EMPLOYER

- Please connect with your YA Coordinator to determine next steps and if any additional follow up is needed.

FAQ'S

A potential employer may ask about Youth Apprenticeship:

- Is it a paid position?
- How long is the program?
- When can you work?

If an employer needs more information, let them know your YA Coordinator can follow up with to answer any questions they have about the program.



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