



APPRENTICESHIP WORKS

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SHARE THE BENEFITS OF APPRENTICESHIP

Know someone interested in becoming an apprentice? Or an employer who wants to start an apprenticeship program? Information and resources are available at apprenticeship.mn.gov.



APR 26-MAY 2

FEATURED STORIES



2 FIRST TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



4 HEALTH CARE APPRENTICESHIP GRADUATIONS

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK IS APRIL 26 TO MAY 2, 2026

Mark your calendars for National Apprenticeship Week this spring!

There will be many opportunities to learn more about registered apprenticeship and interact with programs during the celebration scheduled for April 26 to May 2.

If you would like someone from the Department of Labor and Industry speak to your classroom or organization or collaborate on an event during National Apprenticeship Week, contact Naomi Cowan at naomi.cowan@state.mn.us.

m APPRENTICESHIP MINNESOTA

NEW APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM HELPS TEACHERS START STRONG

When Michelle Seiger started her career 21 years ago teaching physical education and health in District 287, the first thing she did was join the teachers union. Her father, a long-time member of the steel workers union, had instilled in her the belief that unions make a difference for workers.

Now lead negotiator for Local 2209, she was among the teachers, administrators and employers who shaped and launched Minnesota's registered teacher apprenticeship program.

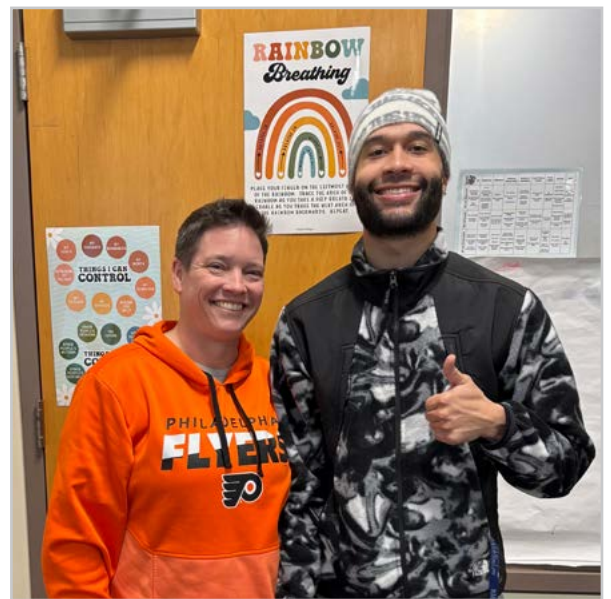
As a special education teacher for 10 years and a union leader, she was excited to help create and roll out the program in her school and district.

"As much as universities prepare you and give you the tools to learn how to teach and deliver content," Seiger said, "it's all those other things that go into teaching that you don't learn until you're actually in the classroom."

"The burnout rate in education is so high – up to 44% in the first five years, according to the University of Pennsylvania – and one of the reasons is because teachers spend their first years figuring out their way," Seiger said. "When you join a program like this, we're helping you get through those first couple of years and can help you land more softly."

A challenging shift

As a member of the district's design team, Seiger says the union played a crucial role in developing the apprenticeship program. Working with Minnesota State University, Mankato, the team figured out how the apprentices would fulfill the requirements to graduate, get a teaching license and complete the hands-on learning that fits the traditional earn-while-you learn training model.



Michelle Seiger and apprentice Miles Jackson.

"It's been challenging at times, because the union brings a different lens to the table than management does," Seiger says, "so we had to figure out how we could work together to make this a really quality program for our apprentices."

That involved asking and answering some difficult questions and setting goals such as:

- taking the things apprentices need to learn from traditional classes but make them on-the-job experiences;
- ensuring that the apprentices' university classes fulfill the requirements to graduate and earn a teaching license; and
- creating a learning experience that would prepare the apprentices to be ready to take on a classroom on their own.

"It really was a full team effort to try to get it there," says Seiger, who worked with her colleagues, district leaders, universities, state education and union specialists to map a new pathway to becoming a teacher. Together, they forged an entirely new path for emerging educators.

Embracing the journey

In addition to helping create the program, Seiger stepped up to be a journey teacher for the first cohort of teacher apprentices.

■ 'Teachers' continues on page 3

■ **‘Teachers’ continued from page 2**

“It seemed like a natural kind of transition into doing a program like this,” she said. “At heart, I’m a coach and I take pride in that.”

She and her apprentice, Miles Jackson, are in their second year as a team. Seiger says Jackson has developed his teaching style, connected with the students and has taken on 75% of teaching in the classroom. By the end of the school year, he will be 100% in charge of the classroom under Seiger’s supervision.

“It’s just super cool to watch him grow and how much kids gravitate to him,” Seiger said.

Seiger is excited about how well the apprenticeship program is working. The design team has continued to meet and work to make the program more meaningful for apprentices. “We’re paving the road as we’re driving on it,” she said. “We’ve identified some places where we can do better, and we’ve really worked hard to make sure that for the next cohort, we’ve worked those things out.”

The other positive outcome has been the growing interest in the program. Seiger says it has become a great recruiting tool. The question she is asked a lot these days is, “How do I get myself into this program?” That alone is validation that the hard work to create the registered teacher apprenticeship program offers a new route to becoming a teacher.

MULTI-EMPLOYER REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP GRANT OPENS JAN. 23

A new grant launching Jan. 23, 2026, will support employer associations and apprenticeship committees in developing new multi employer registered apprenticeship programs.

Multi-employer sponsors are organizations that manage a registered apprenticeship program for multiple businesses. These sponsors will allow more small and medium-sized businesses to host registered apprentices at their businesses, helping expand registered apprenticeship training opportunities throughout the state. Organizations interested in becoming multi-employer sponsors can apply for competitive funding starting Jan. 23. Application materials will be available on the [department’s grant web page](#).

APPRENTICESHIP MINNESOTA BY-THE-NUMBERS

Apprentices, as of Jan. 7, 2026

Total	11,793
Women	965
People of Color	3,116
Veterans	589
Disability	241

Apprentice participation by age

18-24 years old	51%
25-34 years old	32%
35 years old and over	17%

New apprentices by month

October	146
November	253
December	228

Completions by month

October	111
November	97
December	123

Sponsors, as of Jan. 7, 2026

Active sponsors	151
New sponsors	4
Participating employers	4,877

Apprentice participation by race/ethnic group

American Indian/Alaska Native	3%
Asian	3%
Black/African American	8%
Hispanic	12%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<0.5%
Multiple race	2%
White	72%
Did not self-identify	14%

This newsletter was funded as part of a \$3.3 million grant through the U.S. Department of Labor to support the expansion of registered apprenticeship in Minnesota.

HEALTH CARE COMPANY CELEBRATES GRADUATIONS

Essentia Health recently celebrated the graduation of a new cohort of journeyworkers this winter.

Essentia Health, a health system serving patients in Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin and headquartered in Duluth, Minnesota, marked the graduation of two surgical technologists. The health care provider created the registered apprenticeship program to address staffing shortages within their departments.

The new graduates will continue to work for their employers as journeyworkers with the skills and hands-on knowledge they learned throughout the surgical technologist apprenticeship program.



Essentia Health's two surgical technologists are recognized for graduating from the registered apprenticeship program.

PROGRAMS ACCEPTING APPRENTICE AND PRE-APPRENTICE APPLICATIONS IN JANUARY

See which registered apprenticeship programs and job training services open registration in January. To view training center locations, application requirements and other program-specific resources, view the programs' websites.

Plumbers Local 15 Apprentice Program

- Applications are accepted Jan. 12 to Jan. 23, 2026.
- All applications for both the Minneapolis and St. Cloud programs must be submitted in person at the Local 15 Training Center in Maple Grove.
- Visit [Local 15's website](#) for more information about this five-year training program.

Minneapolis Pipefitters Local 539 JATC Apprenticeship Program

- Applications are accepted Jan. 5 to Jan. 16, 2026.
- All applications must be submitted in person at the training center in Brooklyn Park, between 7:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Visit [Local 539's website](#) for more information on the application process and relevant dates.

MN/ND Bricklayers and Allied Crafts (BAC) Pre-Apprenticeship Training Programs

- BAC offers six-week apprenticeship preparation training programs for individuals who are new to the trades.
- Applications for the spring 2026 bricklaying pre-apprenticeship program are open through mid-February.
- Visit the [BAC training center's website](#) to learn more and sign up for their contact list.

Goodwill Easter Seals Minnesota's (GESMN) Solar Installer Training Program

- This four-week training program offers hands on training for careers in clean energy.
- For more information about the training course, visit [GESMN's website](#).

LEARN MORE: The [registered apprenticeship program application directory](#) includes application processes, hiring schedules and minimum qualifications for some of Minnesota's most frequently requested registered apprenticeship programs.