




# More Popular Than Ever, Apprenticeships Deliver a Return on Investment for Wisconsin Learners and Employers

Across the country, more people are pursuing apprenticeships. Why?

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**Return on Investment:** Apprenticeships are an affordable path to earning an industry-recognized credential and landing a job that’s in demand and pays well.
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**Earn While You Learn:** You can earn a paycheck while training in industries ranging from construction and manufacturing to healthcare, education, and information technology.
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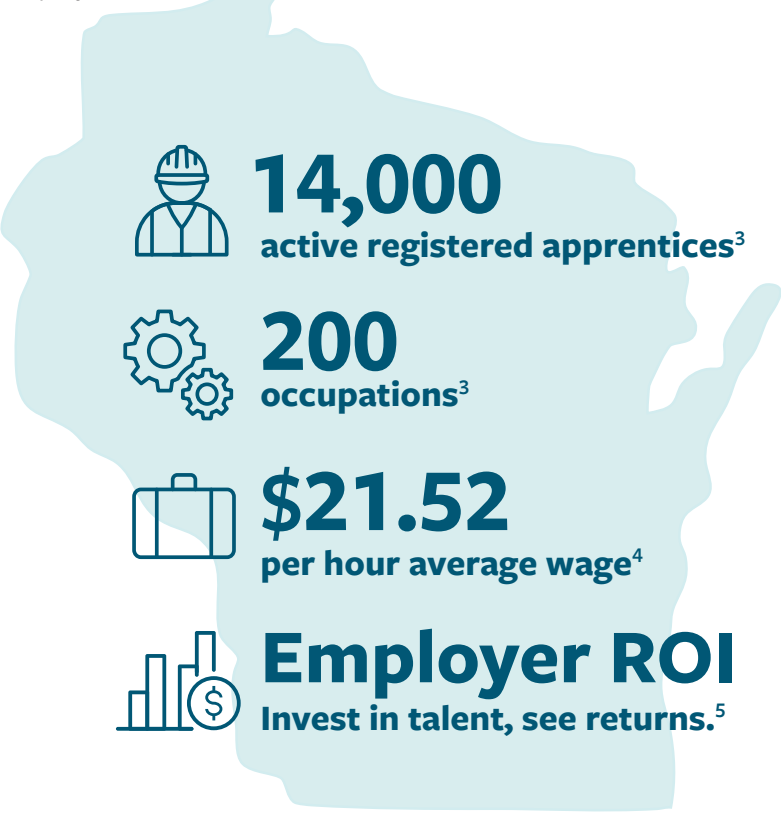
**Job Stability:** Those who complete an apprenticeship earn an average starting salary of \$70,000 and have a job retention rate of 94%.<sup>1</sup>

**680,000**  
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF ACTIVE REGISTERED APPRENTICES IN THE U.S. IN 2024.

**+89%** INCREASE IN REGISTERED APPRENTICES SINCE 2015.<sup>2</sup>

Apprenticeships play an important role in Wisconsin’s workforce development for learners and employers.

Employers benefit, too, by gaining skilled and knowledgeable workers who become loyal and productive employees. With apprentices, employers earn a return on their investment.<sup>5</sup>



**APPRENTICESHIP:**  
*A structured program that allows people to earn while they learn by combining paid, on-the-job training with classroom instruction. In Wisconsin, there are three types of apprenticeships: Registered Apprenticeships, Youth Apprenticeships, Certified Pre-Apprenticeships.*

Enrolling more Wisconsin residents in apprenticeships that could change their lives requires support and collaboration.

Ascendium’s support for apprenticeships in Wisconsin includes two major investments. The first recognizes that the cost of tools, clothing, equipment, and other expenses can keep people from pursuing apprenticeships. That’s why Ascendium offers \$2,000 scholarships to eligible construction and industrial trade apprentices through the Tools of the Trade Program in partnership with the Wisconsin Technical College System.

WRTP | BIG STEP in Milwaukee is developing Wisconsin’s future workforce by creating more opportunities for residents to pursue apprenticeships. They’re working across sectors to recruit, develop, and retain a qualified workforce in construction, manufacturing, and emerging industries. With support from Ascendium, WRTP | BIG STEP and their partners will significantly expand apprenticeship pathways in Wisconsin over the coming years.

Apprenticeships will continue to be a critical part of Wisconsin’s workforce development for years to come.

Industries offering apprenticeships have expanded to include high-demand jobs that pay family-sustaining wages like nursing, financial services, and cybersecurity. For the third year in a row, the state set a record for the number of registered apprentices, which helped to address local labor gaps.<sup>6</sup>

About Ascendium

Ascendium Education Group® is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization driven by the belief that learning after high school gives people the power to build better futures. Our national philanthropy focuses on increasing opportunities for learners from low-income backgrounds to achieve upward mobility through postsecondary education and workforce training. We partner with organizations whose objectives align with our core strategies to expand opportunity, support learner success, and connect and align systems. Our grantees include postsecondary education and workforce training providers, intermediaries, researchers, and media organizations from across the U.S.

To learn more, visit [ascendiumphilanthropy.org](https://ascendiumphilanthropy.org).



Cap Times  
Idea Fest '25  
September 8-13

Find out more at  
[captimesideafest.com](https://captimesideafest.com).

Ready to learn about the impact of apprenticeships on Wisconsin’s workforce?

Attend the free Cap Times Idea Fest panel on apprenticeship, sponsored by Ascendium.

High-Quality Apprenticeships:  
Addressing Workforce Needs in WI and Beyond  
Tuesday, September 9, 2025 | 6–7 p.m.

Panelists:

- Jennifer Krantz**  
SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital

**Michael Johnson**  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County

**David Polk**  
Department of Workforce Development
- Brittany Corde**  
Ascendium (Moderator)

**Darcy Willis**  
Madison College

Sources  
<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, “Discover Apprenticeship: Earn While You Learn Today,” Sept. 2020, [https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/Career\\_Seeker\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/Career_Seeker_Fact_Sheet.pdf). <sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, “Apprentices by State,” Jan. 31, 2025, <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/data-and-statistics/apprentices-by-state-dashboard>. <sup>3</sup> Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, “Registered Apprenticeship,” <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/ra/>. <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, “Apprentices by State,” Jan. 31, 2025, <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/data-and-statistics/apprentices-by-state-dashboard>. <sup>5</sup> Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, “Registered Apprenticeship Employers,” <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/ra/employers.htm>. <sup>6</sup> Joe Schulz, “Wisconsin Again Sets Record for Number of Registered Apprentices,” Wisconsin Public Radio, Dec. 5, 2024, <https://www.wpr.org/news/wisconsin-sets-record-jobs-number-registered-apprentices>.