



# APPRENTICESHIP WORKS

ISSUE NO. 52 | SUMMER 2025

## 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](https://apprenticeship.mn.gov).

## FEATURED STORIES



**2** 'YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU'LL DISCOVER'



**3** HIGH SCHOOL WELDING COMPETITION

**m APPRENTICESHIP MINNESOTA**

## APPRENTICESHIP MINNESOTA PARTNERS WITH WORKFORCE BOARDS

Over the past year, Apprenticeship Minnesota hosted a training series for workforce development boards across the state.

The first half of the training included a three-part webinar series that provided an in-depth look at the registered apprenticeship system in Minnesota and detailed best practices for collaboration between the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-related services and the registered apprenticeship programs.

The second half of the training series included four in-person meetings that provided local workforce development boards time to plan and implement a registered apprenticeship strategy for their local area.

Participating workforce board partners include:

- Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services
- Duluth Workforce Development
- The City of Minneapolis and Building Strong Communities
- Workforce Solutions – Ramsey County
- Workforce Development Inc. Southeast Minnesota
- The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training

# GALLARDO FINDS A DREAM CAREER THROUGH BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES AND APPRENTICESHIP

From repetitive warehouse work to dreaming of operating cranes — Melanie Gallardo made a bold move toward a career she loves through registered apprenticeship.

Gallardo recently completed the 2025 Building Strong Communities (BSC) program, a 12-week apprenticeship preparatory program. The program provides a construction industry overview, craft-specific curriculum and hands-on exposure to the trades. Participants choose a trade of interest where they can spend time focused on a particular craft.

While in the BSC program, Gallardo participated in the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 49's four-week Apprenticeship Readiness Training to get hands-on experience in her trade of interest.

"I wanted something fun that wasn't indoors. I liked heavy equipment," she said.



Melanie Gallardo

With support from IUOE Local 49 and BSC, she discovered confidence, connection and a future filled with possibility. "It's like brotherhood, sisterhood — people who've got your back," Gallardo said.

Now that she is a registered first-year apprentice, her message to anyone feeling stuck is: "There is so much more to the trades. Just try it. You never know what you'll discover."

BSC received a Labor Education Advancement Program grant to help increase the participation and/or retention of people of color, Indigenous people and women in registered apprenticeship programs.

Learn more on the [Building Strong Communities website](#).

## FUNDING FOR APPRENTICESHIP OUTREACH TO STUDENTS AVAILABLE

The [Introduction to Registered Apprenticeship for Educators grant program](#) provides funding for the purpose of introducing Minnesota high school staff and students to registered apprenticeship.

Grant funding can be used to help cover costs related to presentations and transportation to events or activities focused on registered apprenticeship. This program is 100% funded by a State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula – Competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration.





# WELDING COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS SKILLED TRADES PATHWAYS

On April 30, 2025, Local 6 Plumbers and Pipefitters hosted their third annual Southeastern Minnesota High School Welding Competition. The event brought together over 170 high school students from area welding programs.

The competition attracted a total turnout of close to 600 students, including competitors and spectators. This participation provided an opportunity to educate local students about the job opportunities available in the welding trade.

“We have a lot of area high schoolers that are looking for a hands-on career. They want to get out there, they want a job that’s physical, where they can use their hands,” said Jeremy Thompson, Local 6 training coordinator. “This is a great way to earn a good living and there are tons of opportunities here for the kids to learn about.”

A career fair was also part of the event, where local trade unions, employers and technical colleges met with students. The fair aimed to discuss opportunities and entry points into hands-on careers.

This year’s winners, the Byron Bears welding team, saw Gavin Bartel, of Byron, Minnesota, winner of the individual competition, go on to join the Plumbers Local 6 apprenticeship program where he is currently working as a first-year apprentice.



Above, winners of the Southeastern Minnesota High School Welding Competition. At right, a welding competitor.



## APPRENTICESHIP MINNESOTA BY-THE-NUMBERS

Apprentices, as of July 7, 2025	
Total	11,587
Women	967
People of Color	3,073
Veterans	585
Disability	217
Apprentices by age	
18-24 years old	49%
25-34 years old	32%
35 years old and over	18%

April	May	June
New apprentices by month		
474	525	643
Completions by month		
152	257	160

Sponsors, as of July 7, 2025	
Active sponsors	156
New sponsors	3
Participating employers	4,849

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	71%
Did not self-identify	15%

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.

# CONSTRUCTION CAREERS FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF MINNESOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## Will host Blueprints to the Trades speaker series in fall 2025

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Construction Careers Foundation (CCF) — celebrating two decades of preparing Minnesota youth for successful careers in the building trades.

With support throughout the years from [Labor Education Advancement Program grants](#), legislative funding, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, the Opus Foundation and many other contributors, CCF has expanded access to construction career pathways through hands-on experiences, education and industry connections.



### Blueprints to the Trades virtual speaker series

As part of its anniversary programming, CCF will continue its Blueprints to the Trades virtual speaker series in fall of 2025. These sessions feature industry professionals highlighting apprenticeship opportunities, career pathways, and the steps to building a strong future in construction.

Topics include Apprenticeship 101 and spotlights on specific registered apprenticeship programs. The series is designed for students, parents, guardians and educators interested in learning more about opportunities in Minnesota's construction industry.

Visit the [Construction Careers Foundation website](#) for more information about the series and event dates.

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