

MANUFACTURING

in Lehman's Terms

What is an Apprenticeship?

According to Merriam-Webster, apprenticeship is an arrangement in which someone learns an art, trade, or job under another. Registered apprenticeship programs are approved by the U.S. Department of Labor. With this approval in place, the apprentice will obtain workplace-relevant knowledge and a nationally recognized certificate upon completion.

An apprenticeship is a system for training a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training and often some accompanying a course of study. Apprenticeships can also enable practitioners to gain a license to practice in a regulated occupation. The on-the-job training provides an affordable pathway to in-demand careers and essentially “fast-tracks” a career path. High-demand jobs continue to shift and advance as our economy evolves, and apprenticeship provides an excellent opportunity to grow your own talent in a rapidly changing environment.

More than 90% of apprentices retain employment where they received their apprenticeship. Apprenticeship programs are considered full-time work, and the apprentice gets paid. This “Earn While You Learn” model increases both the skills and salary as they gain experience. It allows an apprentice to have a better chance of entering a high-paying occupation without student debt. All registered apprenticeship programs need to meet national standards and are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor. Depending on the complexity of the occupation, and the type of program, completion of a registered program can be accomplished in one to six years. Community colleges, technical training schools, and even some employers provide job-related educational courses. After completion, the apprentice will earn a national recognized certificate. Apprentices can start as young as 16 years of age, depending on the occupation. Individuals must be 18 years of age to be an apprentice in a hazardous occupation.

There is a catalog of over 24,000 approved apprenticeship programs nationwide. Every program is customizable to meet your needs. If the program is missing some training that you require at your company, we can add it, or if there is training that is not relevant to your company, we can modify that, too.

Internships are a great solution to establish a very valuable pool of future potential hires to meet the day-to-day operations or special project needs of manufacturing. Internships are not an apprenticeship. An internship is typically for post-secondary students, or high school juniors and seniors looking for real-world experiences. It's a professional learning experience that offers meaningful, practical work related to a student's field of study or career interest. An internship is a tool to explore what career path they may be interested in.



Dave Lehman
dlehman@nd.gov
701-226-0309

Apprenticeship incentive: One program which has proven to be very effective in helping manufacturers defray the cost of apprenticeships and internships is [Operation Intern](#). Operation Intern is a grant program offered through the North Dakota Department of Commerce designed to encourage internships, work experiences, and apprenticeships with North Dakota companies. The program allows for reimbursement up to \$4,000 (1:1 match) to subsidize the student's/apprentice's employment compensation per program year.

Manufacturers can utilize the program for up to five participants per funding window (twice per biennium), for a maximum reimbursement of \$40,000 per biennium. The program's primary focus is employers in the state's targeted industries: energy, advanced manufacturing, value-added agriculture, tourism, and technology-based businesses. In-demand occupations may also be granted. Government entities and charitable non-profits are not eligible.

To qualify, the student must be:

1. Enrolled in a North Dakota college or university taking at least six credits during the internship, or the semester prior to the internship.
2. A high school junior or senior, or
3. Enrolled in a registered apprenticeship program, or
4. In very limited cases, Commerce may approve students from a course of study not being offered in North Dakota or a North Dakota high school graduate attending an out-of-state school.

Operation Intern is a flexible program and can be used in a variety of ways:

1. **Apprenticeship example:** The program can be used to subsidize apprenticeships as well for in-demand occupations as identified by North Dakota Job Service. With respect to manufacturing, this could be for welding, maintenance mechanics, technicians etc. This can also be a great way to upskill your current employees!

Regardless of how you plan to utilize Operation Intern, please keep in mind the position must be aligned with the student's career aspirations or field of study. All up-to-date information is available on the Commerce Workforce [webpage](#). Or for additional questions and assistance, contact Kerri Kraft, work-based learning program coordinator at Commerce at kkraft@nd.gov

For additional information regarding incentives programs or general manufacturing inquiries in North Dakota please feel free to contact me, and best of luck during the career fair season!

National Apprenticeship Week is Nov. 15-21, 2022; check out the Apprenticeship.gov to find an [event](#).

David Lehman is the Advanced Manufacturing Business Development Manager at the North Dakota Department of Commerce. He can be reached at (701) 226-0309 or by email at dlehman@nd.gov. To access past Lehman's Terms content, please visit the archive at <https://www.impactdakota.com/news/lehmansterms/>