

News Release



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The Arkansas Department of Workforce Services Observes National Apprenticeship Week

LITTLE ROCK —The Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (ADWS) is pleased to announce that the first annual National Apprenticeship Week will take place this week, November 2-9, 2015. We at ADWS greatly value the opportunities apprenticeship can bring to our state, by combining paid, on the job learning from employers along with technical career education from our local community colleges.

Apprenticeship not only benefits those who enroll in the programs, but also provides substantial advantages to the business that participate in apprenticeship programs, such as increases productivity and profitability, reductions in training costs and employee turnover, as well as tax credits. For every dollar taxpayer invest in apprenticeship programs, we see \$27 in returns.

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Services was recently awarded \$4 million dollars from the United States Department of Labor to fund the Arkansas Apprenticeship Pathway Initiative. This initiative will create as well as expand apprenticeship programs in high-growth industries across the state, including healthcare, information technology, and advanced manufacturing.

ADWS has supported several other initiatives involving apprenticeship, one of which being the Arkansas Pipe Trades Association Accelerated Welder Training Program. This 18-week pre-apprenticeship program has directly led to over 70 participants starting jobs, with many continuing on to receive further training. Currently, the per hour pay rate for a 3rd year apprentice of Plumber and Pipefitter Local Union 155 is \$17.16 plus health insurance benefits and pension.

Several other past initiatives have been successful in providing otherwise unemployed or underemployed individuals with apprenticeship opportunities, such as the Arkansas Energy Sector Partnership, which created pathways for energy efficiency and renewable energy job skill training, and the Arkansas Veterans Education & Training Partnership, which provided training for qualified Veterans in the skilled trades.

To learn more about the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services role in apprenticeship, or a list of available trainings, please contact ADWS Discretionary Grants Coordinator Lisa Ferrell at 501.371.1024 or Lisa.Ferrell@arkansas.gov.

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