

APPRENTICE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) includes leaders from state, business, industry, labor, education, and community-based organizations with the goal of evaluating and meeting the workforce needs of Illinois employers and workers. The IWIB's Apprenticeship Committee, one of five IWIB committees, is dedicated to expanding and diversifying apprenticeship programs and apprentices throughout the State. The IWIB Apprenticeship Committee is starting an Apprentice Ambassador Program to create a network of diverse apprentices and apprentice graduates of all ages and backgrounds, from all economic development regions within the state, and from multiple industries.

PROGRAM GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

The Apprentice Ambassadors will serve as champions for apprenticeship programs by sharing their success stories and promoting apprenticeships to career seekers and employers. It also provides them a platform to feature their stories, share their perspectives, highlight how apprenticeships increase opportunities for underserved populations, and bring awareness to other career seekers and employers.

Serving as an Apprentice Ambassador is a professional development opportunity. Apprentice Ambassadors will exercise valuable teamwork, leadership, and public speaking skills. Individuals chosen to join the Apprentice Workgroup will collaborate with IWIB members, who were appointed by Governor Pritzker, and members of the IWIB Apprenticeship Committee to aid in the strengthening of Illinois apprenticeship programs through innovation and creativity. Duties range from event planning, business/apprentice engagement, community outreach, and more. The IWIB Apprenticeship Committee seeks hard-working, passionate leaders to progress the continuous growth of Illinois workforce and apprenticeship programs.

The IWIB Apprenticeship Committee is interested in hearing from all apprentices/graduates regarding ideas and suggestions on how to continue to promote, expand, diversify, and strengthen apprenticeship programs based on their experience.

CORE EXPECTATIONS

The Apprentice Ambassador meetings will be virtual and in-person; we encourage all apprentices and graduated apprentices to apply. If selected as an Apprentice Ambassador, the Apprentice Ambassador must agree to meet these core expectations:

- Apprentice Ambassadors will commit to a one-year term, beginning January 2024 and ending December 2024.
- Apprentice Ambassadors will attend an in-person kickoff event in January/February 2024, either in Springfield or Chicago, Illinois.
- Apprentice Ambassadors will attend up to three in-person meetings in Chicago or Springfield, Illinois. The kickoff event will be the first.
- Apprentice Ambassadors may be asked to attend quarterly virtual meetings with the IWIB Apprenticeship Committee.
- Apprentice Ambassadors will attend up to three virtual meetings for professional development.
- Apprentice Ambassadors are expected to complete at least one regional outreach activity.
- Apprentice Ambassadors may have their photo, name, title, and the name of their apprenticeship employer publicized on the www.ApprenticeshipIllinois.com website and included in press releases.
- Apprentice Ambassadors will be able to share their perspectives on apprenticeship programs and their experiences.
- Apprentice Ambassadors will work closely with the IWIB Apprenticeship Committee's Apprentice Workgroup leader, who will oversee their participation in the Apprentice Ambassador Initiative and help coordinate the completion of any selected outreach activities and these core expectations.

- Apprentice Ambassadors are expected to maintain professionalism, open communication, and transparency with their apprenticeship employer with respect to their participation in this Initiative.

PROGRAM RECRUITMENT AND APPLICATION DEADLINE

The initial goal is for the IWIB Apprenticeship Committee to identify at least one Apprentice Ambassador from each region within the State of Illinois to join the Apprentice Workgroup as an Apprentice Ambassador. Members of this workgroup will have the opportunity to work alongside government appointed IWIB leaders ranging from business to state employees to help shape the public workforce policy.

- The “ask” of Apprentice Ambassadors is to (1) provide feedback and experience as an apprentice, (2) be an advocate and example to other individuals and companies, and (3) be a mentor to other current or future apprentices.
- The “ask” for employers is to (1) identify potential apprentices, (2) provide overall support to the apprentice for ambassador activities (see employer commitment), and (3) be identified as a champion for apprenticeships in Illinois.
- The deadline to apply is **OCTOBER 20, 2023**. Click [HERE](#) to access the Apprentice Ambassador application. For employers, click [HERE](#) to access the Apprenticeship Employer Ambassador Commitment Form.

Please Note: The Apprentice Workgroup is limited to current or graduated apprentices in the State of Illinois only. The apprenticeship programs do not have to be registered with the U.S. Department of Labor. However, the apprenticeship programs must meet the following criteria: (1) the program employs and pays the apprentice for full-time work with a structured on-the-job learning plan, (2) the program is at least one year in length, (3) the program provides the apprentice with a mentor, and (4) the program has supplemental coursework or training in addition to the on-the-job learning.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Apprentices will be selected based on the sectors they represent, their location within the State, and their responses to the application. To be an Apprentice Ambassador, an applicant must:

- Be a current apprentice in an apprenticeship program in Illinois for at least 6 months or a graduated apprentice from an Illinois program within the past 2 years from the date the application is submitted.
- Be an apprentice/graduate from an apprenticeship program in good standing who has shown exemplary leadership, mentoring, teamwork, promotional activities, and/or has a transformative story as an apprentice.
- Make a year-long commitment to promote apprenticeship programs from the date of appointment as an Apprentice Ambassador.
- Be currently working in an industry/occupation similar to that in which they completed their apprenticeship program (if an apprentice graduate).
- Submit a complete application with responses to all required fields.
- Have your employer complete the Apprenticeship Employer Ambassador application/commitment.
- Have a parent/legal guardian provide written authorization for the apprentice/graduate to participate in the Initiative (if the apprentice/graduate is under 18 years of age and is not emancipated).

Additional criteria for selecting candidates: the Apprenticeship Illinois Committee’s goal is to choose one apprentice from each region. The Committee wishes to engage apprentices from diverse industries, genders, and racial/ethnic backgrounds. **Note:** Only one application will be accepted per company. Please coordinate with your mentor or supervisor to determine who from your company will apply.

At any time, the apprentice/graduate, the apprentice/graduate's apprenticeship employer, or the apprentice/graduate's parent/legal guardian (if the apprentice/graduate is under age 18 and not emancipated) may request to remove the apprentice/graduate's application from consideration or request the apprentice/graduate's withdrawal from participation in the Initiative. All applications require signatures from the

apprentice/graduate, their Registered Apprenticeship sponsor, and their parent/legal guardian if applicable.

EMPLOYERS

APPRENTICESHIP EMPLOYER AMBASSADOR COMMITMENT

- The Apprenticeship Employer Ambassador agrees to support the apprentice/graduate's participation in the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Apprenticeship Committee's Apprentice Workgroup as an Apprentice Ambassador. "Support" will include the following:
 - Providing paid time off for their meetings. Arrange suitable time off for the apprentice/graduate to attend the IWIB Apprenticeship Committee's quarterly virtual or in-person meetings.
 - Arranging suitable time off for the apprentice/graduate to attend regional outreach events where they will be promoting apprenticeship programs.
 - Providing access to a computer and internet to join virtual meetings.
- The Apprenticeship Employer Ambassador will be invited to in-person meetings and may be invited to join industry groups or other apprenticeship events, where appropriate.
- The Apprenticeship Employer Ambassador's name, company name, company logo, and photo may be publicized on the www.ApprenticeshipIllinois.com website and included in press releases. Success stories highlighting the apprentice/graduate and their apprenticeship experience may also be featured on the website and shared with State leadership.
- The IWIB Apprenticeship Committee may invite the Apprenticeship Employer Ambassador to speak at events with their apprentice/graduate to share the employer's perspective.
- The Apprenticeship Employer Ambassador affirms that their apprenticeship program is either registered with the U.S. Department of Labor or it meets the following criteria: (1) the program employs and pays the apprentice for full-time work with a structured on-the-job learning plan, (2) the program is at least one-year in length, (3) the program provides the apprentice with a mentor, and (4) the program has supplemental coursework or training in addition to the on-the-job learning.

Click [HERE](#) to access the Apprenticeship Employer Ambassador Commitment Form.
Any questions or concerns? Feel free to contact Jennifer Foil at jfoil@niu.edu.