



NORTHWEST MEAT PROCESSORS ASSOCIATION

Apprenticeship Handbook

2023 Edition

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Introduction

Welcome to the trade of Meat Cutting and Butchery! It is our hope that this course you are about to embark on is one of the most rewarding of your life. We believe that providing food for America's families is one of our greatest joys of this job and we take it seriously. As a journeyman meat cutter, you will rarely find yourself out of work. This is a job that is always in demand somewhere in your area and a trade that is universal in its application. No matter where your life takes you, people are seeking out the skills that you will learn in this course.

The sponsor of this program is the Northwest Meat Processors Association. The NWMPA has existed since 1966 as a trade association for the meat cutting and butchery trade for the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Our association is recognized nationally by the American Association of Meat Processors (AAMP) as a trade organization dedicated to the growth and advancement of the needs of our profession for the three states we manage.

As an association, we have noticed a change over the past few years and that is for the need for training qualified meat cutters for the future of this business. Our goal in operating this apprenticeship program is that we will be able to help train and advance the skills we have learned in our decades of work in this industry to help the continuation of these skills for the decades to come.

The purpose of this manual is to outline what each member of this apprenticeship agreement is expected to complete. From the apprentice, to the training agent to the sponsor, you will see what the expectations are for each person in this and will help you understand your role better. This manual will also outline what it takes to complete this program and will also spell out what will happen if deadlines are not met with the disciplinary procedures that will proceed should they not be met.

We are all very excited to have you aboard! Welcome to the meat cutting profession.

Apprentice Expectations

Finding a Training Agent

Now that you have decided that you want to be an apprentice as a meat cutter/butcher, you will need to find a training agent. What is a training agent? A training agent is simply a business that has signed on with our organization as a meat processor that has been qualified and certified by our organization to train apprentices. You are likely joining this program because you already work for a company that has been qualified as a training agent by this organization. It will not be possible for you to become an apprentice in this program if you are not working for a training agent. If you desire to be a part of this program and you are not currently working for a training agent, please reach out to the NWMPA offices and we can direct you to an employer who is.

There will be no interview from the NWMPA Apprenticeship Oversight Committee to determine your qualifications for this program. The Oversight Committee will accept any apprentice that an approved training agent puts forward.

Qualifications for an Apprentice

The qualifications for being an apprentice are these:

- Must be 18 years of age or older
- Have completed your high school with a diploma or GED equivalency
- Must be able to meet the physical demands of the industry with or without reasonable consideration.

Time Expectations for Apprentices

Apprentices should also consider the time required to complete this program. This program is scheduled for 6000 hours, approximately 3 years. Your training agent employer is required to offer “reasonably full time employment”. This means that they need to offer you employment that is mostly full time. In this industry, there are times of the year when you will be asked to work more than 40 hours a week. There are other times of the year when you may not be able to work a full 40 hours a week. However, you will easily average out to 2000 hours a year, if not more. You will need to ask yourself, can I commit to that time to put make this program work?

Apprentices will also be required to go through an education course managed by Montana State University North (MSUN). This will work out to be 150 hours a year, an average of 3 hours a week. This time is not to be paid time by your employer. You will be expected to go through this course on your own time either at home or on your lunch breaks. The professors at MSUN will provide hours that they are in office so you can call or email them questions. They can also be available via Skype if you require a video call. Can you commit yourself to the time requirement for the education portion of this apprenticeship course?

Financial Expectations for Apprentices

Wages

One of the many benefits to choosing this apprenticeship program is that you get paid to learn. Your employer has a schedule that they need to follow to stay in compliance with this program. For the 6000 hours of this program, the pay steps are divided into 6 groups, every 1000 hours. The actual pay that you will receive is based upon the journeyman wage that is determined by this Oversight Committee. To see what that is please refer to the current Journeyman Wage.

Wage increases will be determined by hours worked. It is expected that the six courses you will be taking with MSUN will coincide with the steps of the wage increases, but they can be completed at different intervals. Keep in mind, though, that the Oversight Committee will be looking at your progression with MSUN and will expect that you are progressing at the same rate. If you get too far behind with your education portion of this apprenticeship program, you can expect disciplinary action. For more on that, please refer to the disciplinary action portion of this handbook.

Education

It is the responsibility of the apprentice to pay for their education in this program through MSUN. Your training agent can help walk you through getting enrolled with MSUN or the Training Director can also assist with your enrolment in this program. The fees for this are kept at a reasonable rate and should not be burdensome to anyone in this program. We do require you to go through the education program in the order we have designated. It is important that you are completing 150 hours per year and we have organized the courses so that it worked out perfectly in that way. You will not be allowed to take these courses we have designated in any other order other than what we have designated.

You will be asked to take quizzes and tests throughout your courses that are part of that course. However, at the end of the course when it is time to take your final, this will be done at a local WorkSource location if you are in Washington or Oregon or a WorkForce location if you are in Idaho. Your professor at MSUN will email a copy of the test to that location that you designate for you to take your test at. The personnel at the WorkSource or WorkForce location will oversee the taking of the test. The test will be sent back to MSUN for grading. You will be required to pass the test with a 70% or better in order to progress to the next course.

Work Processes

As a part of the apprentices training, it is the requirement of this program that the apprentice is working with a journeyman meat cutter/butcher 75% of the time they are working. It is also the requirement of this program that the ratio in the processing facility you are working is one journeyman to one apprentice. You should expect that this journeyman is working with you a majority of the time during your 6000 hours of progression through the apprenticeship program. Should you feel that your work processes are not under the supervision of a journeyman 75% of the time or more, we would like you to bring this to the attention of the Training Director. The Training Director will log this information with the Oversight Committee and will determine if further action is needed.

Work Processes that each apprentice should be expected to complete are:

1. Safety – 200 hours
2. Pre-Inspection of Livestock for Slaughter – 500 hours
3. The Slaughter of Livestock – 600 hours
4. Sanitation – 600 hours
5. Preparation of Merchandise – 400 hours
6. Beef – 1300 hours
7. Pork – 1400 hours
8. Smoking and Curing – 600 hours
9. Poultry – 200 hours
10. Offals – 200 hours

It is possible that the Training Agent that you work for does not work in every aspect of these areas. It is required that your training agent work in 6 of the 10 areas described above in order for them to be a

qualified training agent. It is possible that your training agent will not be able to perform all of these sections and that is ok. It is the belief of this apprenticeship training program that our training program trains to industry. Therefore, through the education portion provided through MSUN, it is the expectation of this program that you will learn all aspects of these work processes.

In order to at least give you some experience in all areas of the work processes outlined above, your training agent will arrange for you to work in another plant that does the work processes that your training agent does not perform for the purpose of you having a well rounded training experience. The requirement will be that you will work in those areas a minimum of 40 hours at an alternate training agent location. Your primary training agent will be responsible for your wages while you are working at the alternate location. You may be asked to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) for the purpose of protecting sensitive information that might be held at the alternate training agents location.

It is still expected that you will complete the 6000 hours required for this program. Therefore, hours from an area that your Training Agent does not work in will be moved to areas that they do work in. The way these hours will be allocated for your Training Agent will be decided by the Oversight Committee. The way these hours are allocated will vary from Training Agent to Training Agent.

Related Supplemental Instruction (RSI)

A major component of this apprenticeship program will be the college level education portion which the apprentice will receive from Montana State University North (MSUN). Once the apprentice is enrolled into the program, the Training Director/Coordinator will provide the apprentice with the information needed to get enrolled with MSUN into our RSI program. This program will be all correspondence. Once enrolled and tuition for each class is paid, the class materials and books will be sent via US Postal Service to the apprentices home for them to begin classes. There may be online portions of the class available but that will depend on the course. For all classes, the professor will have office hours posted in which each person could call in for questions about class material.

It is expected that the apprentice will pay for their own classes from MSUN. It is also expected that the hours required to complete these courses will be on the apprentices' own time. The employer is not expected to pay for the time that the student/apprentice is working on these studies for this program.

This material can be completed at each person's own pace. It is required that each apprentice complete 150 hours of class time per one-year period. There should be two 6-month long courses per year, totaling 150 class hours. If the student is able to complete each course in less than 6 months, that is fine. If the student is progressing more slowly than 6 months per class, the apprenticeship program may take disciplinary action to correct this. Options for disciplinary action may include:

- Freezing pay at current wage level
- Expulsion from apprenticeship program

It is at the discretion of the Oversight Committee as to what disciplinary action needs to be taken.

Administrative and Disciplinary Procedures

The NWMPA Apprenticeship Committee has put certain requirements on each Training Agent to report the progress of the apprentice at their shop on a monthly basis. The only reporting required by each Apprentice is that they complete their RSI in a timely fashion and that they complete their training with MSUN as each professor requires. All other reporting of their progress in the shop is done by the employer/Training Agent.

Failure of the Training Agent to complete these forms may result in further disciplinary action by the Committee towards the Apprentice and/or the Training Agent.

All disciplinary actions taken against the Training Agent or the Apprentice will be done in writing from the Oversight Committee.

The Apprentice has the right to file complaints with the Oversight Committee. The apprentice must have completed their probationary period (1200 hours) in order to file a complaint. Complaints regarding non-disciplinary matters must be filed with the NWMPA Oversight Committee within 30 days from the date of the last occurrence. Complaints must be in writing. They may be sent by post office or by email to the Training Director/Coordinator.

Training Agent Expectations

Becoming a Training Agent

For each shop that would like to become a training agent in the NWMPA Apprenticeship Program, there are a few steps that they will need to take to get that certification from the association. This program is offered at no charge to all members in good standing with the NWMPA. There will be a form you can fill out which will be the first step in letting the Apprenticeship Program know you intend to become a Training Agent. This same form will also be available at our website, www.nwmpa.com or is available by calling the NWMPA training director. Their information is also available at the end of this form.

Once this document is turned in to the training director, the shop will be notified of its receipt within 72 hours. Please allow up to two weeks to process this request. At the end of processing, the shop will be contacted by the Training Director with notification that the basic requirements have been met or if they have not. Once the basic requirements are met, the Training Director will set up a time when one or two of the members of the Oversight Committee can reach out by phone, video conference or with a personal visit. The purpose of the Oversight Committee having a conference with the owner/manager of the shop is to determine more closely what the qualifications are of the shop, what their goals are in having an apprentice in their shop and other questions which will help them determine the fit of this shop in the apprenticeship program. It will be the sole discretion of the Oversight Committee as to whether or not to approve each shop that applies for the program.

Once the Training Agent is approved, they now have the right to approve their own apprentices. The requirements for apprentices will be a part of the agreement the Training Agent makes with the Apprenticeship Program. Therefore, the burden rests with the Training Agent as to who they hire and bring into the program. As soon as a Training Agent authorizes a new apprentice, they are approved in our program. All they need to do is to register the new apprentice with the Training Director for the apprentice to be registered.

Expectations for On the Job Training (OJT)

It is important for each Training Agent to remember that the burden rests with them to provide Journey Level workers to train the apprentice on a daily basis. The requirement of the program is that they spend 75% of their day with a Journey Level worker working with each apprentice. The ratio is at least one to one from Journey Level worker to apprentice.

The requirement of the program is that each Training Agent provide “reasonably full-time employment”. This means that if your shop is working 50 hours a week plus at certain times of the year and 30 hours a week plus at other times of the year, then you are ok. If your shop is only open for 6 months a year, this might not be the right program for you. We do require that each Training Agent provide reasonably full-time employment.

Requirements for Reporting

It is required that each Training Agent report to the Training Director the hours that the Apprentice has worked to complete their hours required for this Apprenticeship Program. When the Training Agent is made an official participant in our program, they will have their hours defined that they need to complete in their shop. They could include:

1. Safety – 200 hours
2. Pre-Inspection of Livestock for Slaughter – 500 hours

3. The Slaughter of Livestock – 600 hours
4. Sanitation – 600 hours
5. Preparation of Merchandise – 400 hours
6. Beef – 1300 hours
7. Pork – 1400 hours
8. Smoking and Curing – 600 hours
9. Poultry – 200 hours
10. Offals – 200 hours

It is possible that the Training Agent cannot complete all of the tasks involved here so the Oversight Committee will determine, based on that shop's abilities, what the hours required are going to be. For example, if a shop does not process poultry, those 200 hours would be moved to another area, let's say Beef, making that area 1500 hours.

The NWMPA Apprenticeship Program will also require that every apprentice complete a minimum of 40 hours of On the Job Training for each of these processes. This means that if you don't have this process at your shop, it will be your responsibility to find another training agent for your apprentice to train with for those hours. For example, if your shop does not provide OJT hours for slaughter, then any apprentice in your shop would have 2 areas that they need to receive a minimum of 40 hours each of training. It would be your responsibility to find an alternate training agent where those work processes can be filled out. It will still be your responsibility to pay your apprentice for those hours worked and to report those hours worked in your quarterly report. Again, following this example, your apprentice would work 40 hours of "pre-inspection of livestock for slaughter" which would leave 460 hours remaining. It will be up to your discretion as to how those hours are redistributed in other areas that you do perform in your shop. This does not need to be defined at the beginning of the apprenticeship agreement but can be changed as the apprentice works their 6000 hours in your shop. These changes are expected to be reflected in the quarterly report provided to the Training Director.

It is at the discretion of each training agent if they will require a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to be signed by each apprentice and the Alternate Training Agent site they are going to. This will not be managed by the NWMPA Apprenticeship Program but will be the responsibility of each Training Agent to come up with their own agreement and manage the signing of such agreements. It is possible that sending an apprentice to another shop to earn training hours in an area that your shop does not cover could pose a hardship to you and/or the apprentice. For example, the Alternate Training Agent could be a day's drive away from the host Training Agent site. In these cases, the Apprenticeship Program asks that each Training Agent write a letter explaining the hardship that this is creating and send that to the Training Director. These concerns will be evaluated by the Oversight Committee at their next meeting and it will be up to them to decide the validity of the claim and if that Training Agent's hours need to be allocated differently.

These hours need to be recorded with the Training Agent, therefore each shop will be required to report these by the 10th of each quarter. Failure to do so in a timely fashion could result in disciplinary action by the Oversight Committee. It is the goal of the NWMPA and of this Apprenticeship Program to make this reporting as easy as possible. Therefore, a form will be given to each shop for each apprentice for them to easily report each apprentice's hours completed weekly. This form is online and should be easy to operate. If this does not work for a particular Training Agent, other forms can be provided and other methods for getting those reports in can be provided upon request.

The other recording that will need to be done on this same form is the Related Supplemental Instruction (RSI) completed by each Apprentice. While the Apprentice does not do this study on company time, it is still the requirement of the Training Agent to report to the Training Director the hours of study the Apprentice has completed each month. Each Apprentice is required to complete a minimum of 150 hours a year of study.

Training Agents and RSI

Each Training Agent is not required to aid their apprentice in any way regarding the study portion with MSU-North. The Training Agent should provide contact info to the Apprentice when they first come into the program but it is the responsibility of the Apprentice to register with MSU-North, pay the tuition, complete the course and pass the test. The study hours of the Apprentice are to be done on their own time.

That having been said, it is still the Training Agents duty to report to the Training Director the hours completed by the Apprentice monthly. It is expected that each Apprentice will be completing each of the six courses required every 1000 hours, approximately every six months. The Oversight Committee will not require that each Apprentice is completing their studies strictly within that six month period, they retain the right to administer disciplinary action if the Apprentice is not fulfilling their required studies in a reasonable timeframe. It is also not required that the Apprentice finish a course inside of the six month time period in order to get a raise to the next level of their Apprenticeship Program but the Oversight Committee retains the right to hold an Apprentice back from getting a pay raise if they determine that studies are not being completed in a timely fashion. The pay freeze can last until these studies are caught up. This can be determined by the Oversight Committee and such judgements will be passed along to the Training Agent with the understanding that they will agree with and comply with the Oversight Committee's decision.

Minimum Wage, Journey Level Wage and Pay Increases

One of the great things about this Apprenticeship Program is that it spells out very clearly what each Apprentice is required to do and, that when they complete it, they get a raise in wages. The pay scale that has been determined for the NWMPPA Apprenticeship Program is as follows:

Step	Hour Range or competency step	Percentage of journey-level wage rate
1	0000 – 1000 hours	67%
2	1001 – 2000 hours	71%
3	2001 – 3000 hours	76%
4	3001 – 4000 hours	81%
5	4001 – 5000 hours	85%
6	5001 – 6000 hours	90%

Journey Level Wage Rates – 2022

Washington:

- Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Mason, Kitsap, Thurston, Pacific, Lewis, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Clark, Skamania, Pierce, King, Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom Counties - \$25.00/hour from January 2022 on.
- Okanagan, Chelan, Kittitas, Yakima, Klickitat, Benton, Grant, Douglas, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln, Spokane, Adams, Whitman, Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield and Asotin Counties - \$22.00/hour from January 2022 on.

Oregon:

- Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Baker, Grant, Wheeler, Jefferson, Deschutes, Crook, Malheur, Harney, Lake, Klamath, Jackson, Josephine, Curry, Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, Lincoln, Lane, Douglas and Coos Counties - \$18.00/hour from January of 2022 on.
- Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas, Marion, Yamhill, Polk, Benton and Linn Counties - \$25.00/hour from January of 2022 on.

Idaho:

- Benewah, Latah, Nez Perce, Clearwater, Lewis, Idaho, Adams, Washington, Payette, Gem, Valley, Boise, Custer, Lemhi, Butte, Clark, Jefferson, Fremont, Madison, Teton, Bingham, Bonneville, Power, Bannock, Caribou, Oneida, Franklin, and Bear Lake Counties - \$16.25/hour from January of 2022 on.
- Canyon, Ada, Elmore, Camas, Blaine, Owyhee, Gooding, Twin Falls, Lincoln, Jerome, Minidoka, Cassia, Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, and Shoshone Counties - \$25.00/hour from January of 2022 on.

When the Apprentice has completed everything required of them and has received the approval from the Oversight Committee that they have completed the course, they should be making the Journey Level wage set up by this program. It will also be required that each Training Agent report wages to the Training Director monthly in order that the Oversight Committee can manage that each Apprentice is being paid at the appropriate wage.

If a Training Agent is in an area with a higher minimum wage than the minimum wage stated here, the Training Agent will be required to comply with their local laws regarding minimum wage. This agreement does not supersede local and state laws.

Each Training Agent is also not required to spend only this amount on each Apprentice for their wages. A Training Agent may not pay an Apprentice less than they amount listed here but there is nothing stating that they cannot pay more. If a Training Agent is in an area where the competitive market for workers is higher than the scale this program has set up, each Training Agent has the right to increase wages to what they feel is appropriate.

Wages, as is stated above, does not account for any other benefits that the employer/Training Agent may provide. A Training Agent might provide medical benefits, 401k or other benefits but those are not and should not be factored into this wage scale. Wages will also increase as state laws require us to. This

program will always make sure that the lowest wage here is never below minimum wage. It is expected that when a wage increase happens, that each Training Agent adheres to the new wage rate for all of their Apprentices in the program. This program will increase the Journey Level wage rate only but the percentage scale listed above will determine what each Step Level Wage Rate will be.

Granting Hours

It is acceptable for a Training Agent to “Grant” hours to an Apprentice. The program is set up with 6000 hours that each Apprentice is required to complete with On the Job Training (OJT) but what if a person has worked in the Training Agents shop for years? A form will be provided to the Training Agent for them to fill out for each Apprentice that they would like to grant hours to. It is also possible to grant RSI hours to an Apprentice who may have training in some of the areas covered.

The Application for Granting hours will be submitted to the Training Director who will then submit that to the Oversight Committee. The committee will determine if there are factors warranting the grant and then give their decision to grant the OJT hours or RSI hours to the apprentice. Their decision shall be final and will go into effect immediately. All questions about possible scenarios can be addressed to the Training Director. They can help assist each situation to help give direction to a Training Agent about the eligibility of each request.

Probationary Period

It is up to the Training Agent to determine if each Apprentice is going to be a good fit or not. The Training Agent has the right for the first 20% of the Apprenticeship Program to terminate the employment of the Apprentice without cause. Based on a 6000 hour program, that means the first 1200 hours of employment. If an Apprentice is terminated without cause after that probationary period this will require a review by the Oversight Committee and may also require a review from the State Oversight Committee.

If an Apprentice has been granted hours, keep in mind that this means that the total hours of probationary period also decreases because the determination is based on 20% of the total hours of the program.

If an Apprentice leaves their employer/Training Agent to move to another city or Training Agent, their probationary period comes with them. In other words, if an Apprentice has 1000 hours into the program and they need to move to another Training Agent, they would only retain 200 hours of probationary time. If they have completed 2000 hours of the program and move to another Training Agent, they have no probationary time remaining.

Apprentice Agreement

I, _____ PRINT NAME _____ have read the apprenticeship requirements detailed in this NWMPA Apprenticeship Handbook 2022. I agree to the conditions herein and will comply with these requirements throughout my participation in this program.

I have also received and read the Apprenticeship Program Standards adopted by the Northwest Meat Processors Association.

_____ Signed

_____ Dated

Training Agent Agreement

I, _____ PRINT NAME _____ with _____ NAME OF SHOP _____ have read the apprenticeship requirements detailed in this NWMPA Apprenticeship Handbook 2022. I agree to the conditions herein and will comply with these requirements throughout my participation in this program.

I have also received and read the Apprenticeship Program Standards adopted by the Northwest Meat Processors Association.

_____ Signed

_____ Dated

Contact Information

NWMPA Head Office

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Apprenticeship Training Director

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Director of Operations
Jack Mountain Meats
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apprenticeship@nwmpa.com

Please direct apprenticeship related questions to the Training Director. General inquiries about the association or membership information should be directed to the Executive Secretary.