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Manufacturing Mentorship Program Trains Future Generations of Makers

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)— Friday, Oct. 1, is National Manufacturing Day, and to celebrate the Ohio Department of Commerce's Division of Industrial Compliance is highlighting the benefits of the Manufacturing Mentorship Program.

The program encourages minors to pursue their interests in manufacturing. This moment is an opportunity for students, parents, and teachers to take advantage of valuable training in the skilled trades. Commerce and other state agencies are working on workforce initiatives like this to support the projected 2 million manufacturing jobs that will go unfilled due to a growing skills gap over the next decade.

The Ohio Department of Commerce works in tandem with the Ohio Manufacturers Association to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to work in manufacturing settings under controlled conditions. The MMP acts as a stopgap for students who are not able to or ready to commit to a technical education program or a career center.

"We want to make sure kids have a chance to pursue careers and passions in a way that is safe and still allows them to focus on their number one job, which is to complete their education," said DIC Wage and Hour Bureau Chief Stephen Clegg. "By going through the Manufacturing Mentorship Program, they can get hands on experience in the field and make informed decisions about their next steps, sort of a 'try before you buy' deal."

Manufacturers who decide to participate in the program do not need permission from any agency to begin, they simply find the Manufacturing Mentorship Program [checklist](#) and adhere to the steps outlined by the division. Some of these steps include providing the minor with required training, assigning them to a mentor to provide direct supervision, and maintaining records showing all criteria was met during the minor's time of employment.

Not only do students benefit, but manufacturers are able to work with students to teach them exactly what they are looking for in an employee.

Jim Scheuing, General Manager of Extrudex Aluminum in North Jackson, participated in the program and went on to hire three students as permanent employees upon turning 18.

"The Manufacturing Mentorship Program has been great for us," said Scheuing. "I can't recommend it enough. It's great to get a younger generation to come up and do what we've been doing and to keep manufacturing alive."

For more information about the Manufacturing Mentorship Program, visit com.ohio.gov/dico

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The **Division of Industrial Compliance** is part of the Ohio Department of Commerce. The department is Ohio's chief regulatory agency, focused on promoting prosperity and protecting what matters most to Ohioans. We ensure businesses follow the laws that help them create jobs and keep Ohioans safe. To learn more about what we do, visit our website at com.ohio.gov.

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