

LOOK FOR THE MI-YDA

A Credential for Staff in Before/After School Programs



Michigan is one of the few states with a recognized credential appropriate for employees of afterschool programs—the Michigan Youth Development Associate (MI-YDA). While a MI-YDA may not be required for positions available in your program, there are good reasons why you should prioritize recruitment of job candidates who hold the MI-YDA credential.

The job candidate with the MI-YDA credential has gained knowledge and skills through at least 120 hours of relevant training. When you hire a job candidate with a MI-YDA credential, you can be sure he or she has recent experience working with young people in a supervised setting for at least 480 hours—the equivalent of a full year of afterschool and summer programming.

References will be able to speak to specific competencies.

Perhaps most important, a job candidate who has pursued the MI-YDA has demonstrated a commitment to professionalism in your field and a deep interest in serving youth.

Hiring a job candidate with the MI-YDA credential brings you an employee who:

- has passed a health and safety course
- has learned what to expect from children of different ages
- has developed competencies in lesson planning and classroom management
- knows how to communicate and interact with students' family members
- has proven abilities to interact with children in a positive manner by fostering teamwork, cultivating empathy and raising up youth voice
- has the skills to be a site supervisor in an afterschool program



LOOK FOR THE MI-YDA

A Credential for Paraprofessional and Support Staff



While Michigan does not have a specific credential for paraprofessional staff, there is a state-created credential that can increase your confidence in the knowledge and skills of applicants for paraprofessional roles—the Michigan Youth Development Associate (MI-YDA). The Michigan Department of Education recognizes the MI-YDA as a credential for positions that serve school age youth in educational, recreational and enrichment programs.

An applicant with the MI-YDA credential may also have special training in STEM, recreation/sports, arts enrichment, and early learning. Some have attained the credential as a steppingstone to becoming a licensed teacher. Depending on the specific paraprofessional role, other requirements will apply; for example, there are specific additional requirements for paraprofessionals who serve special education and Title I students.

The job candidate with the MI-YDA credential has gained knowledge and skills through at least 120 hours of relevant training. When you hire a job candidate with a MI-YDA credential, you can be sure he or she has recent experience working with young people in a supervised setting—often in elementary school settings-- for at least 480 hours, the equivalent of a full year of after-school and summer programming. References will be able to speak to specific competencies.

Perhaps most important, a job candidate who has pursued the MI-YDA has demonstrated a commitment to professionalism in the field and a deep interest in serving youth.

Hiring a job candidate with the MI-YDA credential brings you an employee who:

- has learned what to expect from children of different ages and abilities
- has demonstrated professionalism in working with colleagues
- has developed competencies in lesson planning and group management
- has proven abilities to interact with children in a positive manner by listening, cultivating empathy, supporting a sense of belonging and building peer relationships
- is trained in culturally responsive practices
- has passed a health and safety course



LOOK FOR THE MI-YDA

A Credential for Camp Counselors and Youth Group Staff



We know that hiring the staff you need to serve as camp counselors or manage youth group activities can be challenging—you want to hire staff who can relate well to young people and who are both responsible and responsive. Michigan is one of the few states that offers an appropriate credential for staff interested in working with school age youth--the Michigan Youth Development Associate (MI-YDA). Looking for candidates with the MI-YDA can save you time during the hiring process by guaranteeing that certain knowledge and skills have been mastered. Some applicants with the MI-YDA are on their way to becoming teachers as they continue their studies.

The job candidate with the MI-YDA credential has gained knowledge and skills through at least 120 hours of relevant training. When you hire a job candidate with a MI-YDA credential, you can be sure he or she has recent experience working with young people in a supervised setting for at least 480 hours, the equivalent of a full year of after-school and summer programming. References will be able to speak to specific competencies.

Perhaps most important, a job candidate who has pursued the MI-YDA has demonstrated a commitment to professionalism in the field and a deep interest in serving youth.

Hiring a job candidate with the MI-YDA credential brings you an employee who:

- has passed a health and safety course
- has developed competencies in planning activities for different environments
- has skills in group management
- understands how to build healthy supportive and mentoring relationships
- has proven abilities to build community, cultivate a sense of belonging and empathy, foster teamwork, and deal with bullying
- is trained in culturally responsive and equity practices



EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND THE MI-YDA



The Michigan Youth Development Associate (MI-YDA) credential is targeted for those who work with youth in settings such as out-of-school time programs. Consider how your school district or community organization could acknowledge your employees who have attained the MI-YDA credential and/or support your employees to further their knowledge and skills and strengthen the quality of your out-of-school time program by obtaining a MI-YDA.

Research in similar settings has demonstrated that more highly educated staff provide better services; they increase the potential for positive youth outcomes and contribute to a healthier work environment. Youth workers who have earned credentials have an increased sense of professionalism, stronger identities with the out-of-school time field and enjoy an enhanced sense of worth and competence. Credentialed workers are more likely to remain in their jobs—and reduced turnover could be a real bonus for your program!*

If you have employees who have earned the MI-YDA, let them know you value the attainment by providing a salary upgrade or an annual stipend for those who hold credentials.

The MI-YDA is a flexible option which allows staff to demonstrate and gain recognition for competencies they have already achieved through their work in out-of-school programs. Completing the credential ensures that they have developed a level of knowledge and skills in important areas such as safety and health, child development, lesson planning, working with families. The credential requires 120 hours of training and 480 hours of supervised work with young people (which can be carried out in your program). This supervised work is the equivalent of a full year of after-school and summer programming. In some cases, work toward the MI-YDA credential may translate into postsecondary credits.

How can you encourage your staff to earn the MI-YDA credential? Options include providing some paid time for participating in the required training, offering mentoring to support development and demonstration of competencies, and underwriting the cost of applying for the credential. If you have several interested staff, your program might also support a professional learning community to apply for and complete the credential requirements together.



*Dennehy, J., Gannett, E., & Robbins, R. (2006). Setting the stage for a Youth Development Associate credential: A national review of professional credentials for the out-of-school time workforce. Paper from the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Wellesley Centers for Women.