

TRADEFUTURES



Is a Career in the Building Trades right for your child?

A Parent's Guide

Introduction

Transitioning from school to career. It is an exciting but sometimes confusing time for young people...and their parents. What will set your son or daughter on the path to a financially rewarding and personally fulfilling career?

College, of course, is one option. But not everyone wants to go to college. Not everyone thrives in an academic setting. What, then, for the smart, ambitious and hardworking young person who likes to work with their hands and wants to make something of their life without going to college? We suggest an apprenticeship in the Building Trades.

This guide covers the opportunities apprenticeship in the construction trades offer as well as the requirements and responsibilities necessary to succeed in apprenticeship.



What is Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship is an age-old method for learning a skilled craft through instruction, mentorship, on-the-job training, and learning by doing. “Registered apprenticeship” in the construction trades dates back nearly a century and means that an apprenticeship program must meet standards for training, skills acquisition, compensation, health and safety, and non-discrimination protections established by the U.S. Department of Labor and/or State Apprenticeship Agencies.

Depending on the trade, apprenticeship programs run from three to five years.



Apprenticeship Facts and Figures

Each of the 15 construction trade unions in North America offer apprenticeship: electricians, plumbers, carpenters, painters, ironworkers, sheet metal workers, operating engineers, bricklayers, cement masons, roofers, insulators, boilermakers, elevator constructors, laborers, and teamsters.

Together, the construction trades offer roughly 1,600 apprenticeship programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as well as Canada, though not all trades operate everywhere. At any given time, there are roughly 250,000 men and women in apprenticeship programs. Collectively, the construction trades spend nearly \$2 billion annually on apprenticeship training.



\$100K CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED & REGISTERED TRAINING



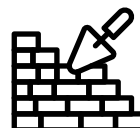
GOOD WAGES & BENEFITS AS A STUDENT



COLLEGE CREDIT



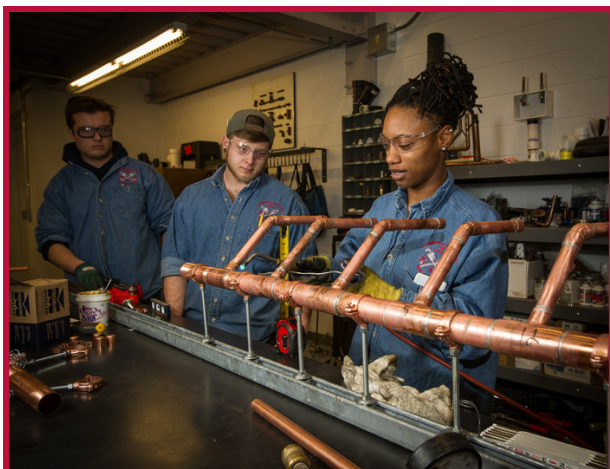
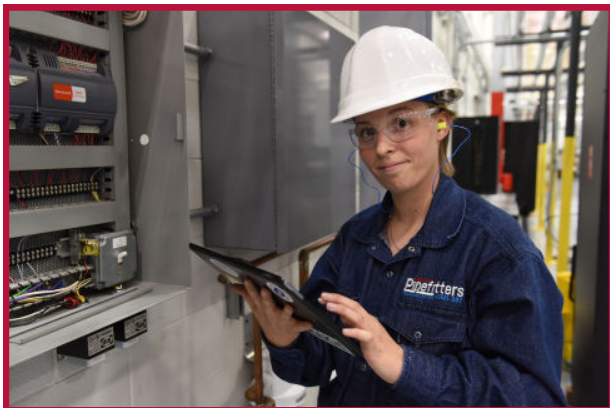
DEBT-FREE EDUCATION



STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY

Who can be an Apprentice?

Apprenticeship is open to everyone, regardless of gender, background or any previous involvement with the justice system. But there are a few basic requirements. Most trades ask for a high school diploma or GED and that an applicant be at least 18 years of age. Because construction job sites are often in out of the way locations, reliable transportation is a must. And due to the hazards associated with construction, drug use is not tolerated and most apprenticeship programs include drug testing.



How to Become an Apprentice

The first step to becoming an apprentice is to choose a trade, with several things for your son or daughter to consider. Some trades work more outdoors, some indoors. Some work up high and some in enclosed spaces. Some require greater math fluency than others. And, of course, you need to consider what trades operate in your area and which ones have openings at a given time. To heighten their chances of getting into an apprenticeship program, we recommend your son or daughter consider at least a few trades.

There are two avenues to getting into an apprenticeship program. Some programs simply ask you to apply at a Joint (Labor-Management) Training Center and put your name on a list. We call the entities that operate these training centers Joint (Labor-Management) Training Committees (JATCs). Some programs may ask you to get a sponsor first before putting you on a list. This can be a local contractor that hires union apprentices, a community college, a high school or a community-based jobs organization.

Once on the list, you will be called in for an interview with the training director or his/her staff at the JATC. Some locals and trades may also require applicants to take an exam, which may focus on basic math skills, reading comprehension, mechanical and spatial reasoning, knowledge of the trade, and other relevant information.

To learn more about how to become an apprentice in your area, see the “Learn More” section at the end of this flyer.

What are the advantages of Apprenticeship?

There are many benefits to a union construction trade apprenticeship. **First**, your son and daughter will receive world class skills training in a craft--on the jobsite and in labs and classrooms at a Joint (Labor-Management) Training Center, mentored along the way by contractors and skilled craftspeople. In some programs, you can also earn college credits. **Second**, the training is free. You heard that right--no cost to you or your child, no student loans, no student debt. In fact, your son or daughter will be paid while they learn at wages significantly above the minimum. And as long as they perform to standards, they will get bumps in pay as they accumulate hours in the classroom and on the job, as well as meet other milestones. **Third**, they will start accruing benefits, including health care and a head start on a pension. **Fourth**, they will become part of a union brotherhood and sisterhood that encourages a sense of belonging, solidarity and mutual self-help. **Fifth**, they will enjoy pride in their skills and the satisfaction of helping to build their communities. **Finally**, once they become a journey worker, they will earn significantly more in their lifetime than non-union construction workers and even many jobs requiring a college degree. A construction trades apprenticeship can be the ticket to the middle class, home ownership, raising a family, and realizing the American dream.

And it's all transferable. Being a union apprentice in a trade means your son or daughter can work anywhere in the country where there is an apprenticeship program in that trade.

What are the responsibilities?

If the advantages sound too good to be true, remember they come with responsibilities for your son or daughter. A successful apprentice must demonstrate a strong sense of personal responsibility—on time every day, ready to work, being part of a team. A successful apprentice has a solid work ethic—taking initiative, giving their all, performing any task required of them, putting in an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. A successful apprentice is open to learning, asking questions, taking instruction, following directions. And a successful apprentice gets along well with others, treating everybody on the jobsite with the dignity and respect they deserve.



Where can Apprenticeship take your son or daughter?

The sky's the limit. First, after their apprenticeship is up, the successful apprentice transitions into journey worker status, with higher pay and responsibilities, including the training of the next cohort of apprentices. From there, a journey worker can enter into supervisory jobs, such as foreman, general foreman, construction supervisor or superintendent. There are positions in the union, such as stewards, training instructors, and officers. There are government positions such as inspectors. Or the private sector may beckon. Many skilled construction workers open their own contracting and sub-contracting businesses. And should college become more attractive later to your son or daughter, a skilled trade is a great steppingstone to a career as a civil engineer, urban planner, or architect.

Building Trades
**Registered
Apprenticeship**



- **Craft Careers:** Journey-Level specialized skilled careers
- **Management Careers:** Construction Manager, Estimator, Contractor, Superintendent
- **Industry Careers:** Developer, Dispatcher, Foreman, Instructor, Legislative Rep
- **Related Careers:** Architect, Inspector, Designer

To Learn More

To learn about the apprenticeship programs in your area, you can use NABTU's [Official Council Directory](#) to find the contact information for your Local/State Building and Construction Trades Council. Your State or Local Council will be able to provide more information about Apprenticeship Programs in your area.

Another option to learning about apprenticeship is to enroll in a **Multi-Craft Core Curriculum, or MC3**, program created by TradesFutures, a non-profit organization affiliated with North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU). MC3 programs are apprenticeship readiness programs (ARPs) administered locally by high schools, community colleges, and community workforce development organizations. MC3 programs teach the basic skills and knowledge necessary to become a successful apprentice and, most importantly, guide MC3 graduates into local apprenticeship programs.

To find an MC3 program in your area, you can use the [Apprenticeship Readiness Program map](#) on the TradesFutures website. To learn more about the MC3, you can email contact@tradesfutures.org.



TRADES FUTURES