

# TRADES FUTURES



North America's **Building Trades** Unions



## Apprenticeship in the Building Trades: A Different Career Path

A Student's Guide

# Introduction

Are you looking for an alternative to college?

Would you like the opportunity to have a career with good pay and benefits?

Where you can work with technology and your hands?

Would you like to be part of building America's highways, bridges, green infrastructure and buildings?

**If so, consider joining a Building Trades Registered Apprenticeship Program.**



# What is Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship is a centuries old concept for developing skilled construction tradespersons. The three main pillars of union Apprenticeship are:

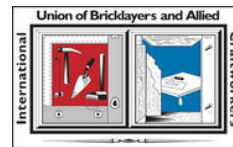
1. **Learning by Doing:** Apprentices acquire knowledge and skills through on-the -job training.
2. **Mentorship:** Apprentices work directly with, and learn from, skilled crafts persons, with low student to instructor ratios
3. **Earning While Learning:** Rather than paying for their training, Apprentices get paid while doing on the job training.



# What are the Trades?

The construction trade unions are made up of 15 specialized crafts, each requiring special skills unique to that trade. Check out their national union websites to learn more about what each does.

- **Bricklayers** (bacweb.org)
- **Boilermakers** (boilermakers.org)
- **Carpenters** (carpenters.org)
- **Electricians** (ibew.org)
- **Elevator Constructors** (iuec.org)
- **Insulators** (insulators.org)
- **Ironworkers** (ironworkers.org)
- **Laborers** (liuna.org)
- **Operating Engineers** (iuoe.org)
- **Painters** (iupat.org)
- **Plasterers and Cement Masons** (opcmia.org)
- **Plumbers/Pipefitters** (ua.org)
- **Roofers** (unionroofers.com)
- **Sheet Metal Workers** (smart-union.org)
- **Teamsters** (teamster.org)





# What are the overall advantages of Apprenticeship?

The advantages of Apprenticeship are numerous including:

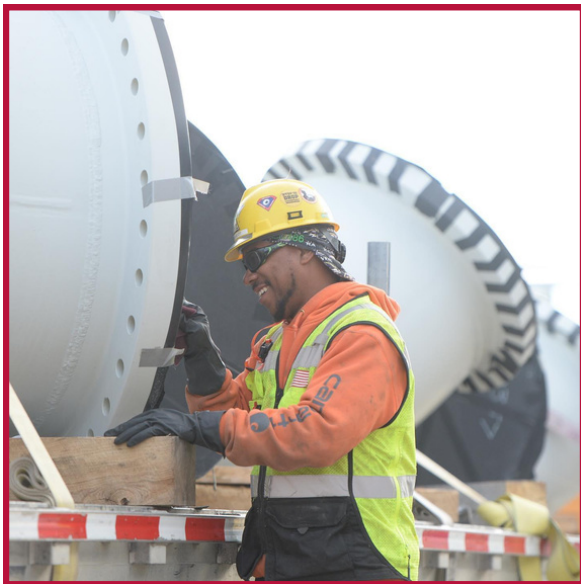
- World class skills training, often with college credits
- Good pay and benefits (including health insurance and a real pension)
- Opportunities for advancement
- Pride in the craft and in the work
- A sense of community: a proud Union Brotherhood and Sisterhood
- A launch pad to several additional careers: contractor, safety inspector, instructor and more.



# What are the requirements for getting into Apprenticeship?

Each trade has slightly different Apprenticeship requirements, but most require applicants to:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Possess a high school diploma or equivalency
- Have a driver's license and/or proof of reliable transportation
- Pass a drug test



# What are the obligations of an Apprentice?

Participation in a program of this value comes with responsibilities. **Apprentice students are expected to be:**



Prepared to come to work and class on time



Willing to work hard



Open to learning and correction that comes with professional instruction



Mindful of health and safety requirements



Respectful of their co-workers and fellow students

# Does the education end when Apprenticeship is over?

As in other careers, **education in construction is a continuing process.** The construction trade unions offer more than Apprenticeship training. They also offer upgrade training for their journey workers. These programs allow for workers to keep their certifications and licenses current or learn new skills to match industry needs and new technology. These programs, too, are at no cost to the workers; they are negotiated by the unions and construction employers.



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# What else should I know about getting into Apprenticeship?

Each Apprenticeship Program has its own application process including different requirements and timing for accepting applications. Some are more rigorous than others. Some are year-round and others have specific application dates.

In general students should expect to be ready for the following:

- **A “portfolio” of documents:** The trade’s Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC) will tell you what is required, such as a high school transcript.
- **Entrance exam:** Many, but not all, trades include an entrance exam that centers on math skills and aptitude.
- **An interview:** Nearly all JATCs include an interview process before a panel of a 3-4 representatives from that trade. Note they are not looking for students who already know how to do that trade or construction! The schools will teach you the trade! They are looking for candidates who show interest in the field, demonstrate responsibility and are willing to learn.



# Where is an Apprenticeship Program near me?

Apprenticeship Programs are run through Joint (Labor-Management) Apprenticeship Training Committees (JATCs) located throughout North America. You can use [NABTU's Apprenticeship and Training map](#) to locate a Training Center location near you.

You can use the link below to watch a short video about Apprenticeship:

[NABTU Recruitment Video](#)

Use the link below to download the North America's Trade Unions (NABTU) brochure to learn more about Building Trades Registered Apprenticeship:

[NABTU Apprenticeship Brochure](#)



# How do I enter an Apprenticeship Program?

You can contact your State or Local Building and Construction Trades Council to inquire more about Apprenticeship Programs in your area. You can use [NABTU's Official Council Directory](#) to find the contact information for your Council.

Another option is to apply to an **MC3 Apprenticeship Readiness Program** (ARP) in your area. These programs teach the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) which is an apprenticeship readiness curriculum designed to prepare you for Apprenticeship in the Building Trades. The MC3 is administered by TradesFutures, a non-profit created by the Building Trades to expand and improve ARPs across the country. You will learn about apprenticeship and the Trades and learn basic skills and knowledge necessary to be a successful apprentice. After graduation, an ARP can assist in placing you into an Apprenticeship Program.

To find an ARP near you, you can refer to the [TradesFutures ARP map](#) or email [program@tradesfutures.org](mailto:program@tradesfutures.org).



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