

# TRADEFUTURES

## TradesFutures Apprenticeship Readiness Programs (ARPs): *Frequently Asked Questions*

In 2007, North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) Standing Committee on Apprenticeship and Training created a multi-craft training curriculum for use in Building Trades' Apprenticeship Readiness Programs (ARPs). Building Trades ARPs were designed to prepare interested young people and transitioning adults to enter and succeed in registered apprenticeship programs, which are gateways to good middle-class jobs in the US construction industry. Almost 300 ARPs across the US are sponsored by State or Local Building Trades Councils, Training Coordinators and Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees (JATCs) in partnership with local community groups, construction contractors, government agencies and schools. As of January 2023, TradesFutures, a non-profit established by the Building Trades and other stakeholders, has assumed the responsibility of administering the curriculum to ARPs.

The goals of the TradesFutures ARPs are to (1) increase the number of qualified candidates for apprenticeship across all crafts, (2) to increase the inclusivity of apprenticeship candidates by recruiting women, people of color, and veterans, and (3) to increase the retention rate among apprentices by providing them with a deeper understanding of both the industry and the role of craft unions in construction.

The educational foundation for the TradesFutures ARPs is the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum, or MC3, a standardized, comprehensive, 120-hour [minimum] construction curriculum designed to help young people and transitioning adults choose and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program appropriate for them. In 2012, the US Department of Labor recognized the MC3 with its Registered Apprenticeship Innovator and Trailblazer Award.

### There are nine Units in the MC3:

- Construction Industry Orientation
- Tools and Materials
- Construction Health and Safety
- Blueprint Reading
- Basic Math for Construction
- Heritage of the American Worker
- Diversity in the Construction Industry
- Green Construction
- Financial Literacy

# TRADEFUTURES

## *Questions and Answers*

### ***Q: What is the format of the MC3?***

A: **The MC3 is available in two online formats.** The first format is traditional face-to-face delivery, with the educational materials (readings, assignments, videos, lesson plans) delivered through a web-based learning management system (LMS). The second, and more recent, format for the MC3 is asynchronous (fully online), with the educational materials delivered through the same web-based LMS. Approved ARPs now have the option of teaching the MC3 (1) using the traditional face-to-face format; (2) using the new virtual or asynchronous format; or (3) using some combination of these two formats (blended learning). **The curriculum is also available in Spanish.**

### ***Q: How do we get access to the MC3?***

A: **To gain access to the MC3, a Building Trades Council or their partner organization(s) must first submit an MC3 Implementation Plan and Intellectual Property Agreement to the TradesFutures Office ([program@tradesfutures.org](mailto:program@tradesfutures.org)) for approval. A Building Trades Council can request temporary guest access for themselves or their partner organization prior to submitting an implementation plan to preview the curriculum.**

**The MC3 Implementation Plan must answer six simple questions:**

- What Building Trades Council are you working with?
- Who will teach the MC3 and where will the program be located?
- Please list all organizations partnering with the Building Trades Council in this ARP.
- How will the program be funded and what is the source of these funds?
- How many people will be trained and what is the start/end date for the training? How many cohorts are planned per year?
- What is the name of the Council or Council partner representative who will attend the required Train-the-Trainer course, which is designed to prepare coordinators/instructors to set up and teach the MC3? (These Train-the-Trainer classes are offered by the Building Trades Academy – see <https://tradesfutures.org/initiatives/apprenticeship-readiness-program/> for the schedule and location of these classes); and
- Most importantly, where and how will successful graduates of the MC3, if they meet all other requirements, be placed in Building Trades registered apprenticeship programs? How/Who will track, record and

# TRADES FUTURES

report placement updates?

Once TradesFutures has approved of your MC3 Implementation Plan, you will receive usernames and passwords for your instructors to access the MC3. You will also receive instructions on how to register your students and generate reports on your students' work in the MC3.

[It is important to note that any organization partnering with a Building Trades State or Local Council must get prior approval from the Council before applying for additional grant funding that could be used to fund additional student cohorts].

***Q: What is the cost of the MC3?***

**A:** TradesFutures does not charge tuition for the MC3, however effective July 2025, TradesFutures implemented a tiered annual curriculum licensing fee. Existing programs will sign the [Addendum on New Fee Structures](#) and will select the tier most appropriate for their program through the Annual Tier Selection Form. Once programs have made their selection, payment of the annual fee is expected within 30 days. When payment has been received, programs will receive a link to enroll students in the MC3 learning management system.

Number of Students Enrolled	Annual Licensing Fee
0-20	\$700
21-50	\$1900
51-80	\$3700
81-150	\$5700
151-250	\$10100
251+	Inquire

***Q: What steps are required to set up a successful ARP?***

**A:** The basic steps in the checklist below are based upon best practices of close to 300 TradesFutures ARPs. Each ARP will be different, however, because they are based on your local needs and preferences. We can provide a more complete list of best practices, including application forms, schedules, and budgets upon request.

# TRADEFUTURES

## The Checklist:

- Discuss ARP placement plans and employment commitments with JATCs, local Building Trades Apprenticeship Trainers and employers.
- Secure agreements with local partners, including roles and responsibilities for local partners.
- Develop an ARP program budget.
- Submit an MC3 Implementation Plan to TradesFutures; develop an MC3 Program budget, schedule, and timetable.
- Identify and secure a training site.
- Recruit instructors.
- Locate transportation services to facilitate visits by participants to Building Trades training centers.
- Recruit and screen participants for the program.
- Plan a graduation ceremony. You should invite family and friends of the graduates and the media.

**Q: Are some parts of the MC3 required and others optional?**

**A:** Yes, some MC3 Units are required, and some are optional.

**Table Notes:** All MC3 programs must contain a minimum total of 120 classroom hours. The 104- hour core is required for all programs. Building Trades Council representatives and their partners may add additional hours to the MC3 at their discretion.

## TRADEFUTURES

### Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) Units/Hours Overview

<b>Unit 1 – Orientation and Industry Awareness – 16 Hours (Required)</b> Construction Industry Overview – 8 HRs The Building Trades & Apprenticeship – 8 HRs
<b>Unit 2 – Tools and Materials – 8 Hours (Required)</b> Must include hand-on component
<b>Unit 3 – Construction Health and Safety – 20 Hours (Required)</b> CPR/First Aid – 8 HRs OSHA10 – 10 HRs Women's Health & Safety – 2 HRs
<b>Unit 4 – Blueprint Reading – 4, 8, or 16 Hours (Elective)</b>
<b>Unit 5 – Construction Math – 40 Hours (Required)</b>
<b>Unit 6 – Heritage of the American Worker – 8 Hours (Required)</b>
<b>Unit 7 – Diversity in the Construction Industry – 12 Hours (Required)</b> Diversity Awareness – 4 HRs Sexual Harassment – 8 HRs
<b>Unit 8 – Green Construction – 8 Hours (Required)</b>
<b>Unit 9 – Financial Literacy – 4 or 8 Hours (Elective)</b>

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**Total Required Instructional Hours = 120**

All school-based MC3 programs should refer to requirements in their local jurisdiction and add units/hours accordingly.

# TRADEFUTURES

***Q: Is there specific language that must be included in the ARP student application?***

**A:** Yes. The following language must be included in all TradesFutures Multi-Craft Core Curriculum/ Apprenticeship Readiness Program Applications:

**NOTE: THIS PROGRAM IS AN APPRENTICESHIP READINESS PROGRAM ONLY. PARTICIPATION IN AND/OR COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM DOES NOT GUARANTEE ADMISSION INTO A UNION OR EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. DECISIONS ON SUCH ADMISSIONS OR EMPLOYMENT ARE MADE BY THE INDIVIDUAL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, UNION, OR EMPLOYER AND NOT BY THIS PROGRAM. BY SIGNING THIS APPLICATION AND PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM, YOU INDICATE YOUR AGGREEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING THAT NO PROMISES OR GUARENTYES OF ADMISSION TO AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM OR A UNION OR EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY HAVE BEEN MADE TO YOU AND THAT NO ONE REPRESENTING THIS PROGRAM HAS THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE SUCH PROMISES OR GUARANTEES.**

A recent decision out of NYC (Apple vs. Atlantic Yards Dev Co.) illustrates why it is important that the TradesFutures pre-apprenticeship (or apprenticeship readiness) programs make it clear to participants in the program in writing that there is no ***promise/guarantee*** that they will enter an apprenticeship program, a union or be given employment. In this case, the court denied summary judgement to contractors seeking to dismiss a claim by participants in a pre-apprenticeship program who alleged that they were promised membership in a construction union and union construction jobs.

***Q: Is there a final exam for the MC3?***

**A:** Yes. In 2019 a multiple-choice final exam for the MC3 was developed, which is currently being verified for EEO compliance. The MC3 Final Exam is optional for all MC3 programs except for those ARPs in New York, Florida, and Louisiana. Questions for the MC3 Final Exam were drawn from the required sections of the curriculum.

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<sup>i</sup> Edited August 2025