



REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

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Earn While You Learn

Apprenticeship is not just a job — it's a career opportunity.

The basic components of apprenticeships are the same today as in 1937, when the National Apprenticeship Act set the foundation for apprenticeships in the United States. Apprentices enter into a structured training program of classroom and paid on-the-job training under the guidance of a mentor. As their skills increase, so do their wages. Upon completion of the program, apprentices earn an industry-recognized credential and usually are hired into a job that marks the start of a career.

The payoff for workers is clear: According to a U.S. Department of Labor study, 91 percent of apprentices find employment after completing their program, and their average starting wage is above \$60,000.¹

Because of these positive results, the department has invested millions to expand apprenticeships. Many states are increasing funding for technical assistance, tax credits to employers, and career and technical training to prepare students for apprenticeships.²

Apprenticeships in Washington

In Washington state, apprenticeships follow the national model. Apprenticeship combines classroom studies with on-the-job training supervised by a journey-level craft person or trade professional.

Classroom studies are offered by a variety of providers, including employer-sponsored schools, union-sponsored schools and community and technical colleges.

After successfully completing the program, apprentices earn a journeyworker-level certificate of completion from the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries Apprenticeship and Training Council. This certificate is one of the oldest and most highly portable industry credentials in use today.

Apprentices who take courses at community and technical colleges receive college credit and are eligible for lower tuition rates. At some colleges, apprenticeship studies can lead into a workforce associate degree³ or an associate degree that transfers to specific universities that have an agreement with the college.⁴

Results

Twenty-one Washington state community and technical colleges partner with 188 active apprenticeship programs. Seven colleges (Bates Technical, Columbia Basin, Olympic, Renton Technical, South Seattle, Skagit Valley and Spokane) provide 94 percent of instruction.

- Nine months after leaving college, 94 percent of apprentices were employed in 2015-16, with a median wage of \$34/hour.⁵
- Apprenticeship students who completed in 2015-16 were 11 percent more likely to be employed and had 31 percent higher earnings than all other participants.⁶

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In the 2017-18 school year, 13,255 students were enrolled in apprenticeship programs at community and technical colleges, a 7.35 percent increase from the previous year. Apprenticeships continued to grow through summer quarter 2018, marking 20 quarters of consistent growth.⁷

Apprenticeships are available in several sectors/occupations including: aerospace/advanced manufacturing, construction, early childhood care and education, energy, facilities management, fire fighting, allied health, machining, manufacturing, marine technology, meat cutting, and utilities.

Benefits to Employers

- By combining on-the-job training with classroom instruction, the apprenticeship model provides businesses with employees who are trained to industry standards.
- Employers get the customized skills they need, including soft skills like communication, work ethic, leadership, and professionalism.
- A mentor/mentee relationship keeps “mentor” employee engaged in their work. Apprenticeship graduates require less supervision than new employees.
- On average, the participant ROI to the dollar is \$106 to \$1.⁸

Benefits to Apprentices

- Apprentices develop a thorough understanding of employers’ needs, along with higher wages and opportunities for professional growth.
- Apprentices earn competitive wages from day one and can expect to see incremental raises as their skill level increases. The average wage for a fully proficient worker who completed an apprenticeship can expect to see an annual salary of about \$60,000. Over the course of their career, apprentices who complete their program earn about \$300,000 more than non-apprenticeship participants.⁹
- After successfully completing both educational hours and hands-on training, the apprentice will graduate to a highly skilled journey level worker with national accreditation.

What We Need from Congress

Washington’s community and technical college system encourages Congress to:

- Provide stable funding that incentivizes public/private partnerships in apprenticeship.
- Establish policy and provide funding to build further work-based learning programs.

Sources/notes:

1. Perez, Tom and Jeffrey Zients. “ApprenticeshipUSA is Upskilling America.” Department of Labor Blog. October 21, 2016. Available at: <https://blog.dol.gov/2016/10/21/apprenticeshipusa-is-upskilling-america/>.
2. Schulz, Kelly and Ken Peterson. “#ApprenticeshipWorks for States.” Department of Labor Blog. October 24, 2016. Available at: <https://blog.dol.gov/2016/10/24/apprenticeshipworks-for-states/>.
3. Associated of Applied Science (AAS)
4. Associate of Applied Science-Transfer (AAST)
- 5-6. SBCTC Data Warehouse, Data Linking for Outcomes Assessment files.
7. SBCTC Data Warehouse, Enrollment Monitoring for Apprenticeship
8. Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. “Washington Workforce Development Services.” January 2017. Available at: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/2018MatrixFINAL.pdf>.
9. U.S. Department of Labor. Frequently Asked Questions about the Apprenticeship Program. June 30, 2017. Available at: <https://www.dol.gov/featured/apprenticeship/faqs>.