



Apprenticeship Guide

PATHWAYS FOR SUSTAINABLE LONG-TERM CAREERS



workforce
SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

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Letter from the CEO

Apprenticeship programs are an integral workforce development tool. Apprenticeship is employment and requires a combination of supervised, structured, on-the-job training coupled with classroom education focused on learning the work of a specific occupation.

Apprentices get paid to learn on-the-job as they receive valuable training and mentorship, further their education and develop the deep skills and knowledge that will help them become valued professionals.

This guide was created to fill a need: residents of Southwest Washington and Oregon and career counselors and other experts often struggle to find apprenticeship programs.

My hope is that the apprenticeship opportunities accessible through this guide can be used as a trusted resource by career counselors, CTE directors, teachers, service providers and apprenticeship applicants. It can also be used as a resource for businesses that are interested in starting their own apprenticeship programs.

We developed this guide with the help of partners and businesses in six counties—Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas.

At Workforce Southwest Washington, our mission is to lead a regional workforce development system where every individual has access to high-quality employment and every business has access to a highly-skilled workforce. Since 2003, we've invested more than \$134 million to get people working and help businesses retain a skilled workforce. This guide is another investment toward that end—connecting people with good jobs for a thriving economy. We also help businesses recruit, train and retain a skilled workforce.

I wish you success as you take a step toward advancing your career and realizing your own potential.

Miriam Halliday
CEO, WORKFORCE SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON



WORKFORCE INVESTMENT

**\$134
million**

Why Seek An Apprenticeship?

In today's uncertain employment market, people are looking for more than just a job. They are seeking engaging, fulfilling work that pays well and builds skills that will be needed long into the future. One of the best ways to invest in *your own* future is to apply for an apprenticeship.

An apprenticeship puts you on a clear path toward a long-term, sustainable career. In this guide, you'll find links to apprenticeship opportunities offered by employers and organizations throughout Southwest Washington and Northwest Oregon. Traditional apprenticeships—in trades such as carpentry, masonry and plumbing—have long been popular, and you'll find many construction and industrial trade apprenticeships. There are some other fields that also offer apprenticeships. Are you interested in working in the manufacturing, technology, healthcare, transportation, food service, hospitality or retail sectors? Even if you currently have little or no experience, there are a wide variety of apprenticeships that can help you build the skills you need to break into your chosen field.



STARTING PAY

\$23.91
per hour

Apprentices get paid for their work, and often receive a free education.

Paying tuition to attend college is one way to receive an education, but it doesn't make sense for everyone. Apprenticeships offer something different: an earn-and-learn model that pairs paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction. When you begin an apprenticeship, you'll be working full-time and taking classes taught by experienced instructors who are eager to share their deep knowledge with a new generation of aspiring professionals. In many cases, this coursework is entirely free, and participants can receive credit from local community colleges. In Washington, registered apprenticeship programs require a minimum of 144 hours of related supplemental instruction (IE – classroom learning) each year.

As an apprentice, your starting pay will be above minimum wage—the average starting pay of an apprentice is \$23.91 per hour—and it is common for apprentices to receive a raise every six months as they learn new skills. You'll typically receive close mentorship at work, along with a host of resources that can help you succeed.

After completing your training, you'll be able to command a high-wage job in a high-demand field.

As an accredited professional, you will have acquired valuable skills and knowledge and developed close relationships with other professionals and employers in your industry. What's more, the credentials you earn are often transferable if you move to another state, which helps to ensure your long-term career success.

Not all apprenticeships are the same, so choose the path that works for you.

Depending on the occupation, some apprenticeships require a five-year commitment, while others can be completed in two. All provide thousands of hours of on-the-job experience and include hundreds of hours of coursework. Though most programs require applicants to have a high school diploma or GED and be 18 years of age, there are also shorter pre-apprenticeship programs that are available for those seeking to explore registered apprenticeship. These are typically not paid, but offer participants a chance to build experience and gain a leg-up as they prepare to apply for registered apprenticeships.

To learn more or find a program that works for you, explore this book or contact WorkSource Cowlitz/Wahkiakum at 360.577.2250 or WorkSource Vancouver at 360.735.5000 to get started.

Why Offer An Apprenticeship?

More and more employers in a wide variety of fields—including construction, manufacturing, healthcare and technology—are recognizing the advantages of offering apprenticeships. Those who do see a significant return on their investment. In Washington, for every \$1 invested in registered apprenticeship, the return on investment is \$7.80. On top of financial benefits, employers see benefits in how well their employees perform at work and how long they stay in their jobs.

Train employees the way that you want them to be trained. It pays to have an efficient, well-trained workforce, as the skills and abilities of your employees greatly impact the success of your business. When you join or create an apprenticeship program, you have the opportunity to carefully assess and formalize training practices so that your employees are prepared to face complex challenges, make informed decisions and succeed in the workplace. If there are particular skills or knowledge that are essential for your business, you can customize the training or educational components of an apprenticeship to match these specific needs. Occupations that are apprenticeable involve progressive attainment of manual, mechanical, or



LONG-TERM
APPRENTICESHIPS

6
years

technical skills and knowledge, which in accordance with the industry standard for the occupation would require the completion of at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and at least 144 hours of related classroom instruction per program year. These occupations are also clearly identified and commonly recognized throughout an industry and involve sufficient skill to establish career sustaining employment. Cultivating a strong skills and knowledge base among a new generation of employees will ensure that your business continues to thrive well into the future, even as older, more experienced workers retire.

Retain a skilled workforce. Apprentices make a significant commitment to an employer in return for a good-paying position, along with comprehensive on-the-job training, mentorship and education. As an employer, you are also making a commitment to the personal growth and development of your apprentice. So it is no surprise that establishing this kind of long-term, trusting relationship means that workers are more engaged, have higher morale and are more productive.

Invest in your community. Apprenticeships make economic sense for many employers. And they also make sense for the long-term health of communities. When you invest in our workforce development system, you are investing in the economic growth, education and stability of your entire community—helping to ensure that family-wage jobs remain available to people from a diverse array of backgrounds.

Knowledgeable partners will guide you every step of the way. If your business is interested in offering an apprenticeship, Workforce Southwest Washington (and other workforce development boards) will be your partners. We see the benefits of keeping people in sustainable careers, and work with a network of community colleges, industry and labor groups, government agencies, community organizations and others to help develop apprenticeship programs that benefit both you and your employees.

Whether you are interested in creating your own apprenticeship program, or partnering with an existing program, contact Darcy Hoffman at dhoffman@workforcesw.org or 360.608.4949 to get started.



INVEST IN COMMUNITY

When you invest in our workforce development system, you are investing in the economic growth, education and stability of your entire community.



Looking for additional apprenticeship opportunities?

Washington's Department of Labor and Industries maintains a statewide [online database of apprenticeship programs](#) that is fully searchable.

Washington State Building & Construction Trades Council offers a [Construct a Career Program](#) to help those interested in building trades registered apprenticeships get connected.

Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries also offers an [online database of apprenticeship opportunities](#) in that state.

[Career Launch](#) lists state-endorsed programs at Clark College and WSU Vancouver and registered apprenticeships.

[WorkSource Skilled Trades Workshop](#) is a two-part workshop that takes place all from the comfort of your own home.



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WSW is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay 711.

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