



# Unlock Your Potential with Apprenticeships

## Empowering Job Seekers with Disabilities

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### What are apprenticeships?

A registered apprenticeship is a structured program that combines 1) paid work, 2) hands-on training, and 3) related classroom construction in a specific trade or career. Apprenticeships provide a dynamic pathway to successful employment and personal growth. Here's how a registered apprenticeship can transform your career journey:

- **Earn While You Learn:** Receive steady pay and scheduled wage increases while gaining industry-recognized credentials and qualifications through a structured program.
- **Hands-On Training:** Develop valuable skills through practical, workplace-based experience guided by professionals' mentorship, tailored to your strengths and needs in fields like construction, healthcare, or technology, and more!
- **Related Technical Instruction:** Participate in coursework, typically at a local college or university, that serves as a supplement to your on-the-job training.
- **Personalized Support:** Benefit from mentorship and accommodations designed specifically for job seekers with disabilities, ensuring a supportive learning environment.

exploring a career change or mastering a specific trade, much like studying a discipline in school.

- **Hands-On Enthusiasts:** Ideal for reliable individuals who enjoy hands-on tasks, thrive in teamwork, and are curious and persistent in their learning journey.
- **Supported Career Starters:** Great for anyone looking to join the workforce with structured guidance, mentorship, and access to opportunities in areas with active programs such as cities or towns.

### What would I gain by completing an apprenticeship?

You will earn wages that increase over time, gain job-steady skills through guided training, and receive an industry-recognized credential upon completion. This certificate proves your expertise and opens doors to better job opportunities.

Further, registered apprenticeship programs often have pipelines to employment upon completion, and in many cases, you can end up employed full-time by the place that provided your training! Apprenticeship programs also help you build confidence and independence in a supportive work environment.

### Who are apprenticeships for?

Apprenticeships are for individuals ready to dive into practical experience and build a rewarding career. Novices or beginners are welcome and encouraged to join! Here's who can benefit from a registered apprenticeship:

- **Eager learners:** Perfect for those motivated to develop new skills or enhance existing ones, whether

### What is required of the apprentice?

- **Time Commitment:** Apprenticeships typically demand 20-40 hours per week, often spanning 2-4 years, requiring regular attendance on the job site and in the classroom and sustained effort to complete.
- **Diligence and Skills:** A strong commitment to active participation, a willingness to learn, and the ability to handle job tasks—potentially including physical work or basic math and reading skills—are essential, along with a positive attitude.
- **Workplace Readiness:** Reliable transportation, basic workplace preparedness, and flexibility to accommodate individual needs through available scheduling options are key to meeting program expectations.



Feature/Benefit	Traditional Employment (Entry-Level)	Traditional Employment (Skilled)	Apprenticeship Programs
Paid from Day One	✓	✓	✓
Structured On-the-Job Training		✓	✓
Classroom Instruction Included			✓
Increasing Wages Over Time		✓	✓
Industry-Recognized Credential			✓
No Educational Debt			✓
Immediate Job Placement	✓	✓	✓
\$84K Average Salary at Completion		✓	✓
Long-Term Career Pathway		✓	✓
Skill Development Guarantee			✓
Employer Mentorship			✓

### Ready to pursue an apprenticeship?

- **Explore Opportunities:** Visit [apprenticeship.gov](http://apprenticeship.gov) to browse a national database of registered programs or contact local workforce agencies, community colleges, trade unions, or employers offering apprenticeships to find openings aligned with your career goals.
- **Seek Guidance:** Reach out to an apprenticeship professional at the **DRS Workforce Development Unit** ([dhs.drsworkforcedevelopment@illinois.gov](mailto:dhs.drsworkforcedevelopment@illinois.gov)) or the **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign** ([contact-iirer@illinois.edu](mailto:contact-iirer@illinois.edu)) to discuss available programs in your area and receive personalized support.
- **Apply with Support:** Review apprenticeship programs, select one that fits your aspirations, and seek assistance from a workforce development team member to navigate the application process and coordinate discussions with employers. Connect with the [apprenticeship.gov](http://apprenticeship.gov) team for additional resources to ensure success.

### One more thing ...

An apprenticeship is not just a stepping stone—it’s a valuable employment outcome in its own right. These are *paid* positions, with apprentices earning a wage from *day one* from both their work and their learning. Plus, the pay is substantial: the average starting salary for an apprenticeship ranges from \$45,000-\$52,000 per year, and by the time apprentices complete their program, their average salary rises to \$84,000, thanks to built-in wage increases.

