



Apprentice Guide

Whether you're new to the workforce, a student exploring career pathways, or an experienced worker looking to jump into an exciting new opportunity, there's never been a better time to pursue registered apprenticeship in Illinois.

As new possibilities arise for apprentices in Healthcare, Education, and Information Technology alongside traditional programs in Construction, Manufacturing, and Maintenance occupations, apprenticeship could be your key to a fulfilling role in a thriving career field!

So, what does it mean to be an apprentice, and how can you connect with employers and organizations offering this unique and innovative form of employment?

In this guide, we'll explore:

- 1) What is a registered apprenticeship?
- 2) Where can I find an apprenticeship?
- 3) How can I get apprenticeship-ready?
- 4) What other resources can help me?

What is a Registered Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are a **paid job** where you earn while you learn: On-the-job training from a qualified mentor is combined with classroom learning or other specialized instruction to give you the very best combination of theory and practice for all the skills you need to succeed.

Training

Your training might happen at your jobsite, at a local community college or trade school, or even virtually! This training is most often paid for entirely by the employer, providing you with a low-cost or entirely debt-free education!

The training you receive will depend on the occupation of your apprenticeship program; you may only need a handful of classes towards a career certificate like a CDL or CNA, or you may work towards a college degree as in the case of a Registered Nursing or K-12 Teacher apprenticeship. Regardless, you will be supported throughout the program by your employer, who will often provide additional compensation for classroom hours, or create a schedule for you that balances your work and school responsibilities to make sure both of your commitments are met.

Compensation

Throughout your apprenticeship, you'll work with your assigned mentor to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in your chosen career. As you begin to gain these competencies, you'll earn raises to your hourly or salaried wage that are equivalent to the growth of your skills! By the end of your apprenticeship, you'll be a highly skilled worker earning competitive pay.

Credentials

In a registered apprenticeship program, you may earn credentials such as certifications, licenses, or degrees that are necessary to fulfill your role as a full-time employee upon completion of your apprenticeship. In addition to these potential credentials, you will also learn a Department of Labor Journeyworker certificate that is recognized by employers nationwide.

Where can I find an apprenticeship?

While some larger employers may offer many spots in their apprenticeship program, most apprenticeships offer between 2-5 spots in their program per year. This means that apprenticeships can be somewhat competitive to get into, but don't let that discourage you! As more and more Illinois employers begin to adopt registered apprenticeships as a means of finding talent for their organization, the opportunities available to you are increasing year by year.

To see a list of current registered apprenticeship opportunities available in your area, visit

<https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-job-finder>

Additionally, you may be able to pursue an apprenticeship program through your local community college or organized labor organization. For a list of the labor organizations in the state of Illinois offering apprenticeships, visit

https://ides.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/ides/ides_forms_and_publications/List%20of%20Skilled%20Trade%20Labor%20Unions.pdf

You can also search for apprenticeship opportunities on any of the leading job board websites but be careful; non-registered apprenticeships may not offer the same level of benefits and compensation, so be sure to read the fine print on any positions you apply for.

How can I get apprenticeship-ready?

Employers will have a baseline set of requirements for acceptance into their apprenticeship program. These may include, but are not limited to the following:

- ✓ High School Diploma/GED Completion
- ✓ HS-Equivalent Reading/Math Skills
- ✓ English Speaker Fluency
- ✓ Basic Computer Skills
- ✓ Valid Driver's License

There are free Adult Education classes located throughout every part of the state to help you reach these requirements, offering a variety of scheduling options to fit your needs. To explore Adult Education options in your area, visit

https://www2.iccb.org/adult_ed/adult-ed-connect/

Some employers or local community-based organizations may even offer specialized training programs that help prepare you for specific apprenticeship occupations. These programs are called “pre-apprenticeships” and can best be learned about by contacting your local community college or American Job Center.

What additional resources are there for my career search?

By creating an account with IllinoisWorkNet.com, you can access the following:

- Resume Building
- Virtual Job Fairs
- Search for Training Providers
- Business Start-Up Guide for Entrepreneurs
- Local Data on Career/Salary Trends
- Skills and Interests Surveys
- Digital Literacy/Computer Skills Training



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