

# Post-Secondary Options: Apprenticeship Programs

## What are they?

An apprenticeship is a formal way of learning a skill or trade by working with someone who works at that particular job. Apprenticeship programs must meet specific criteria and almost always include class study along with a full-time (or nearly full-time) job. An apprenticeship is NOT just an entry-level position at any given company; the sponsor must be registered with the state and guidelines must be followed.

## How long do they last?

Apprenticeships usually cover periods of time specified by the government or labor unions. Time spent in an apprenticeship depends on the difficulty of the skill to be learned. While most programs are between three and four years, a few can be as short as two years or as long as five or six years.

## Can anyone become an apprentice?

Yes and no. The number of apprenticeship openings is limited and not all qualified applicants can enter such programs. Tests and personal interviews are often required. Trade specific criteria may apply.

## What are the advantages?

Rather than paying for the training him/herself, the apprentice is being paid while learning a skill. Often the apprentice can continue working for the company (usually for better pay) after the end of the apprenticeship.

## What happens next?

At the end of the apprenticeship, the apprentice can move on to the next level, which is referred to as a journeyman. Passing a trade-specific test is often required before an apprentice can become a certified journeyman.

## How do I find a local apprenticeship program?

The best way is to visit the website for the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training at <http://bat.doleta.gov/county.cfm?State=MI> and choose the county in which you are interested in pursuing an apprenticeship. This will bring up a list of registered program sponsors; however, their presence on this list does not signify that they are currently taking apprenticeship applications. You will need to contact them directly to check on availability.

## Which apprenticeship-related trades can I take courses in at the local community colleges?

*Additional programs may be available. For more information, contact the school's apprenticeship coordinator. Note: Taking trade-specific courses does not automatically make you an apprentice. Colleges and trade schools are not substitutes for a sponsor*

**Grand Rapids Community College** (616-234-3660): Auto Mechanics, CNC Machinist, Die Design, Die Maker, Die Repair, Electrician-Construction, Electrician-Industrial Maintenance, Heating and Air Conditioning, Machine Builder, Machine Repair, Machinist, Maintenance Mechanic, Millwright, Model Maker, Mold Design, Mold Repair, Pattern Maker, Pipefitter, Plastics Technician, Plumber, Product Designer, Quality Control, Sheet Metal, Stationary Engineer, Tool Designer, Tool Maker, Truck Mechanics, Welder, Welder Maintenance

**Kalamazoo Valley Community College** (269-488-4344): Electrician, HV AC, Machinist, Maintenance Mechanic, Millwright, Mold Maker, Tool and Die, Welding

**Kellogg Community College Regional Manufacturing – Tech Center** (269-965-4137 x2800): Electricity and Electronics, Machine Repair, Machine Tool, Millwright, Pipefitting, Plastics, Refrigeration and AC, Robotics, Sheet Metal, Tool and Die, Welding

**Lansing Community College** (517-483-1957): Automotive Body; Automotive Technician; Construction Electrician; Industrial Designer; Die Designer; Die Maker; Die Setter; Die Sinker; Hardener (Tool & Die); Heavy Equipment Operating Engineer; Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Technician; Industrial Electrician; Industrial Welder; Machine Builder; Machinist; Maintenance Mechanist; Maintenance Mechanic; Millwright; Model Maker; Residential Builder; Sheet Metal; Tool and Die Maker; Tool Designer; Tool Maker

**Muskegon Community College** (231-777-0418): Call for programs