

What is Apprenticeship?

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Apprenticeship is a system in which workers train on-the-job – earning wages and doing productive work – while also taking courses. When someone completes an apprenticeship, they'll have valuable work experience and a recognized industry credential that allows them to continue in the field and advance their career over time.

Apprenticeships generally last from one to four years, though some last up to six. Apprentices (who must be at least 16 years old) work full-time and must be paid at least minimum wage. As the apprentice advances through the program, his or her wages increase according to a predetermined schedule agreed to between the employer and the apprentice.

Apprenticeship Types

There are three types of apprenticeship:

- **Time-based:** the apprentice's progress is measured by the number of hours spent on the job and in the classroom.
- **Competency-based:** the apprentice's progress is measured by his or her ability to demonstrate the application of relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- **Hybrid:** the apprentice's progress is measured through a combination of hours spent in the program and competencies demonstrated in the workplace.

The apprenticeship can be hosted by an employer or a sponsoring organization, such as a trade association, a labor organization, or an independent apprenticeship organization. Sponsors work with either the U.S. Department of Labor or their State Apprenticeship Agency to develop and register their program. The sponsor may provide all elements of the program themselves (on-the-job training and related technical instruction), or they may partner with career schools, community colleges or other education providers to deliver a comprehensive, apprentice-focused experience.

Advantages of Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship has advantages for both apprentices and employers.

For apprentices, successfully completing an apprenticeship provides:

- a pathway to a dynamic career in a high-demand field such as:
 - information technology

- allied health
- transportation
- communication
- energy
- banking and finance
- advanced manufacturing
- sales
- management
- hospitality
- skilled trades (construction, plumbing, carpentry, etc.).
- training that pays wages
- wages that increase as new skills are mastered;
- an alternative to an expensive college degree;
- possible college credits based on classroom or on-the-job learning; and
- a way to move to a higher level job in one's current field or transition between careers while still earning an income.

For employers, apprenticeship training brings tremendous value to the organization, including:

- the cultivation of a well-trained, talented workforce that is productive from the start;
- the ability to diversify the workforce by bringing new talent to the organization;
- the opportunity to train workers using the exact pieces of equipment, protocols and procedures that are relevant to the employer;
- an increase in high performance among employees and a decrease in error and accident rates;
- an added sense of loyalty between employers and employees;
- increased employee retention and advancement;
- an opportunity to fill challenging vacancies;
- an opportunity to maintain institutional knowledge when soon-to- retire workers and recent retirees serve as instructors and mentors to new workers; and
- a financial return on investment that averages around \$1.40 earned for every dollar spent on the program.