

Supporting Union Construction Workers

High Supply of Union Construction Workers in WA

There is no workforce shortage for construction in Washington. With only 75% of the unions affiliated with the State Building and Construction Trades reporting so far, as of the start of 2025, there are nearly **9,955 construction workers out of work**ⁱ.

Over **1,700 of the workers reported out of work are apprentices**. New apprentices cannot be enrolled when there are so many already in the system who cannot finish their training because there are not enough job sites for them.

There are apprentice utilization requirements (AURs) on public works projects, but a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) or Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) ensures these requirements are met. A PLA is a pre-negotiated contract that sets terms and conditions for a construction project, particularly regarding labor. It's a tool designed to streamline project execution, reduce conflicts, and ensure quality standards. PLAs result in fewer work stoppages, a stable pool of highly skilled labor (including apprentices), better cost management, and higher quality outcomes.

PLAs & CWAs Uphold Workers Rights

Prevailing Wages are Minimum
Wages for Highly Skilled Workers

Apprenticeship Expansion Requires Jobsites & Training Agents

In Construction, union apprenticeships are funded by employer and employee contributions. This is a large private sector investment in WA's workforce development system. To expand the number of apprentices, we don't need additional apprenticeship programs, we just need current apprentice utilization requirements (AURs) upheld and additional training agents. Upholding AURs creates jobsite placements for apprentices to complete their on-the-job training (OJT) portion of their apprenticeship, which is the majority of their education. Training agents are employers who have an agreement with one or more state-registered apprenticeship programs to provide oversight of apprentices' OJT. Just like expanding college capacity, providing more job sites is equivalent to adding more classrooms and increasing the number of training agents is like adding faculty.

In addition to the number of apprentices out of work, there are **more than 8,000 Washingtonians on wait lists** to get into union construction apprenticeship programsⁱⁱ. Unlike other post-secondary training, open enrollment is not part of the union apprenticeship model. Instead, new apprentices

Promote Apprentice Utilization

Increase Training Agent Supply

are enrolled in alignment with industry demands. There is no apprenticeship without a job. When WA needs more apprentices, the apprenticeship programs will meet this need.

Please support clarifications about our apprenticeship programs:

Apprenticeship IS Postsecondary Education

State Policy & Funding Must Only Support

- State-Registered Apprenticeship
- State-Recognized Apprenticeship Preparation

- Apprenticeship IS Postsecondary Education, and it should be included when bringing awareness of education options to all Washingtonians.
- Construction apprenticeship programs average four years in length and completers should be recognized for the skills attainment they have achieved.
 - Apprenticeship programs consist of On-the-Job Training (OJT) of at least 2,000 hours per year and Related Supplemental Instruction (RSI) of at least 144 hours per year.
- It is very important to uphold our state's apprenticeship standards and not support lower federal standards with state funds or policy.
 - Our programs are managed by Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees (JATCs) comprised of 50% Labor and 50% Employer representatives and, therefore, directly connected to industry needs.
- Building Trades apprenticeship programs are privately funded by employer and employee contributions and, therefore,
 - Apprenticeship funding to community colleges DOES NOT support building trades apprenticeships.
 - Our programs cover all costs associated with delivery (facilities, instructors, curriculum, consumables, equipment and support services), and some may contract with community colleges to attain credit transcription.
 - New state financial support for apprenticeships should go directly to apprenticeship programs.
 - Apprenticeship programs should be listed as eligible applicants on all state grant opportunities directed to support postsecondary education.

Visit www.constructacareer.org for more information about apprenticeship pathways.

Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council

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ⁱ Thirty-five (75%) of the unions affiliated with the WA State Building and Construction Trades Council have reported their out of work numbers as of January 1, 2025. This number will grow as the remaining affiliates report.

ⁱⁱ Twenty-six (55%) of the unions affiliated with the WA State Building and Construction Trades Council have reported their apprenticeship waitlist numbers as of January 1, 2025. This number will grow as the remaining affiliates report.