

Pre-Apprenticeship Partnerships with Trade Unions

Earning While They Learn: Trade Pre-Apprenticeships Open Doors for El Pasoans

A TWC-funded program from Workforce Solutions
Borderplex.

www.borderplexjobs.com

Why Pre-Apprenticeships?

Pre-apprenticeships are an effective way for individuals to learn skills and gain experiences while working for an employer and earning a salary. Historically, pre-apprenticeships have been one of the few ways students can earn while they learn as opposed to other more traditional routes. Seeing this connection, leaders at Fort Davis High School – based in Fort Davis, Texas, an unincorporated territory in West Texas – saw the need to introduce apprenticeship programs, particularly in the agricultural and vocational fields, to their students. They hoped for their students to learn trades like basic plumbing, basic electrical, and agricultural practices that they could use to obtain employment in the region.

To enact these programs, these individuals reached out to Workforce Solutions Borderplex and together, these apprenticeship opportunities were made available to Fort Davis High School students. From there, Workforce Solutions Borderplex's partnership with trade unions was borne.

Through these partnerships, WSB and local trade unions have launched pre-apprenticeship programs designed to give students the opportunity to learn about different building trades while earning a salary and supporting local employers.

How it Works

Through strategic partnerships with local trade unions, individuals in the El Paso region have the opportunity to complete pre-apprenticeships in all areas of building trades, including plumbing, electrical, piping, construction, and more. Individuals who participate in pre-apprenticeship programs follow a multi-craft core curriculum, MC3, designed to help them succeed. These individuals earn while they learn and later have the opportunity to complete apprenticeships and obtain employment in their trade.

Organizations within these unions also participate in Workforce Solutions Borderplex's Job Con events, which give participants to explore careers and meet with employers, expanding their reach.

Workforce Solutions Borderplex works closely with the unions to develop the curriculum that the employers teach, increasing access to hands-on experience for local students. These individuals work 40 hours a week, completing 2000 hours a year of on-the-job training. They also complete 144 hours per year of schooling. As a pre-apprenticeship program, these individuals do not need to have prior experience to begin these jobs. While they may not start welding or working on electrical fixtures their first day, they start working immediately, gaining hands-on experience from the beginning.

What Comprises Building Trades?

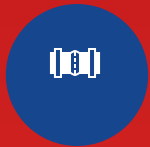
The term building trades encompasses every all trades related to building construction. Some trades individuals can learn include:



Construction



Plumbing



Sheet metal laying, iron working, welding



Piping



Painting and carpentry



Roofing

About the North America's Building Trade Unions

The North America's Building Trades Unions is a labor organization comprised of 14 unions and 330 trade councils throughout North America, protecting the rights and supporting the success of employees in the building trades field. The organization advocates on behalf of more than three million national and international building trade employees in support of fair wages and benefits, on-the-job safety, and supporting historically excluded employees – including women, people of color, and veterans.

Through the union, they also work to increase access to employment and educational opportunities for individuals in the field, including pre-apprenticeship programs utilizing the multi-craft core curriculum.



Partnerships

Workforce Solutions Borderplex has developed strategic partnerships with unions in order to successfully deploy pre-apprenticeship programs. These include:

- The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- UAE Local 263
- Fort Davis High School



New and Future Partnerships

Seeing the success of the building trades union partnerships, Workforce Solutions Borderplex is actively working to expand this pre-apprenticeship model into other industries within the region. Some newly successfully launched partnerships include:

- Information technology apprenticeship with El Paso Community Foundation, allowing individuals to gain experience in the IT field, and
- Teacher apprenticeships with Region 19 Education Services Center, allowing individuals to gain teaching experience and learn on the job.

Program Goals



About the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3)

The multi-craft core curriculum is a pre-apprenticeship training curriculum that was developed by the Building Trades National Apprenticeship and Training Committee in 2008. Unions and organizations that make up the North American Building Trades Unions employ this curriculum when working with their pre-apprenticeship students, allowing them to obtain hundreds of hours of education and training both in the classroom and on the job.

Funding

Funding for this program comes from a grant received from the Texas Workforce Commission. It covers materials used for pre-apprenticeship courses, tools, and instructor salaries.

Challenges Overcome

One challenge that arose throughout these partnerships is the lack of supply versus the demand for pre-apprenticeships. Because building trades work on-demand, it was difficult to find placement for every interested individual. However, Workforce Solutions Borderplex is actively working to build these partnerships into other industries to help counteract this issue.

Successes & Outcomes

In addition to launching pre-apprenticeship programs with new partners, Workforce Solutions Borderplex saw a number of pre-apprenticeship participants move onto apprenticeships in order to further learn and later gain employment in their trades.