

WORK CENTRAL AB

Apprenticeship Programs

Earn While You Learn a Skilled Trade

A Career Resource from Work Central AB

Apprenticeship Programs in Central Alberta

Apprenticeships remain one of the most direct, cost-effective paths into a stable, well-paying skilled trades career - you earn wages while training, rather than paying tuition with no income. This guide covers how apprenticeships work and how to get started in Central Alberta.

1. How Alberta's Apprenticeship System Works

- Alberta's apprenticeship and industry training system covers more than 50 designated trades, from electrician to welder to heavy equipment technician.
- Most apprenticeships take 3-4 years, combining on-the-job training hours with technical training terms (typically 6-8 weeks per year) delivered at institutions like Red Deer Polytechnic.
- Apprentices earn progressively higher wages as they advance through each period of their training.
- Upon completion, apprentices write a certification exam to become a certified journeyperson in their trade.

2. Finding an Employer Sponsor

- Apply directly to trades employers - construction companies, mechanical contractors, manufacturers, agricultural equipment dealers - and ask about apprenticeship openings.
- Attend trade-focused job fairs and career events across the region to meet potential employer sponsors.
- Connect with local union halls or trade associations, which often help place apprentices with sponsoring employers.
- Consider a trade foundation or pre-employment program first if you haven't yet secured a sponsor (see our Trade Schools guide).

3. Managing Prior Experience

If you have relevant work experience or training from another jurisdiction, ask about Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), which can sometimes credit existing skills and experience toward your apprenticeship, potentially reducing the time needed to complete your program.

4. Funding Support During Your Apprenticeship

Available Support

- Employment Insurance benefits are often available during technical training terms when you're away from paid work.
- Grants and tax credits exist at various stages of apprenticeship training - research current programs before starting, since they change periodically.
- Alberta Student Aid may apply to certain technical training costs, depending on your program and circumstances.
- The Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit gives employers a tax incentive to sponsor apprentices, which can make finding a sponsor somewhat easier.

5. After Certification

Once certified as a journeyperson, many tradespeople continue building their careers through specialization, supervisory roles, or eventually starting their own business. Red Seal certification, where applicable to your trade, also allows certified journeypersons to work across Canada without additional testing in most provinces.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Common Questions

What's the minimum age to start an apprenticeship? Requirements vary by trade and pathway - some high school registered apprenticeship programs allow earlier starts, so confirm specifics for your target trade.

Can I switch trades partway through an apprenticeship? It's possible, though you may need to restart certain requirements - speak with Alberta's apprenticeship authority about how prior hours might transfer.

Is apprenticeship training the same everywhere in Canada? Core Red Seal trades share national standards, which is what allows certified journeypersons to work across most provinces without additional testing.

Apprenticeship Program Checklist

- ✓ Identified a designated trade that matches your interests and regional demand
- ✓ Found or applied to a potential employer sponsor
- ✓ Explored PLAR if you have relevant prior experience
- ✓ Reviewed funding support available during technical training terms

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- ✓ Registered with Alberta's apprenticeship system once a sponsor is confirmed
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Keep Building Your Skills With Work Central AB

See our Skilled Trades Careers and Trade Schools guides for more on this pathway. Visit workcentralab.ca/resources.