

Electrical Apprenticeships - Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is Apprenticeship?

A. Apprenticeship is not a job it is a career opportunity! It is occupational training that combines both supervised on-the-job training experience with related classroom instruction. Apprenticeship is the method most skilled trades use to train new workers for a particular craft. The apprentice and the sponsoring parties sign an agreement, called an indenture, which sets forth the length of the apprenticeship and responsibilities of each to the other. The electrical apprenticeship will consist of a minimum of 8,000 hours on the job training for the commercial/industrial apprenticeship. In addition to the OJT work hours, a minimum of 180 hour per year in the classroom for all years of commercial/industrial apprenticeship program are required. The training will be conducted in accordance with Standards registered with the Division of Voluntary Apprenticeship, Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry. Apprentice will progress through training and receive wage increases as they become more skilled and knowledgeable and productive workers.

Q. Which classification takes the most new applicants?

A. The inside wireman or commercial apprenticeship program currently has the most new hires.

Q. Which classification makes the most money?

A. The inside wireman or commercial apprenticeship program currently has the highest pay scale and benefit package.

Q. Do I have to join the Union?

A. Yes, You will become a proud member of IBEW Local Union #292, and you will pay union dues for the representation you receive.

Q. How long must I serve as an apprentice?

A. Typically, electrical apprenticeships last five years, this gives enough time to complete minimum 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and minimum 900 hours of related instructional training. If you qualify for credit this can be reduced accordingly.

Q. What occupations are available after apprenticeship?

A. There's a wide range of occupations available, from foreman to owner of your own shop. Highly trained journeyman are sought by industry for well paying jobs. Many journeyman advance to become supervisors or superintendents. Others, with additional years of advanced studies, go on to become technicians and engineers. There are many opportunities for advancement, depending on the abilities, attitudes and ambitions of the individual.

Q. Can I expect steady work as an apprentice?

A. An apprentice works about as much as the average industry worker does. And, like fellow workers, an apprentice may be subjected to industry layoffs. Most employers, however, make an effort to have the apprentice work as steadily as possible.

Q. How much pay does an apprentice receive?

A. The starting wage of a 1st period apprentice is 40 percent of a journeyman's rate of pay. ([See Wage Rate sheet](#)).

Q. How often are raises given?

A. Apprentices will earn a five % percent raise every six months if training OJT and school performance is satisfactory, (maintaining a 75% grade average).

Q. Do I work and attend classes at the same time?

A. Yes, during the week you would work on a job site 4 (four) days per week and 1 (one) day per week for 20 (twenty) weeks, approximately 5 months of the year, you would attend classes.

Q. Are there age limits for electrical apprentices?

A. Yes, you must be a minimum of 18 (eighteen) years old at the time of indenture coming into program.

Q. What are the minimum educational requirements for apprenticeship?

A. We require applicants to have a high school diploma or GED certificate, also completion of high school algebra with a passing grade "C" or higher. ([See Application Info](#)).

Q. Who pays for the classroom training?

A. There is a jointly funded training program that does not require you to pay any tuition costs for your apprenticeship training.

Q. What other costs must be paid by the apprentice?

A. Costs vary depending on the program. It's important for apprentices to have reliable transportation available in order to get to a job on time, travel from job site to job site associated with the job. We require that apprentices have a [basic tool kit](#) and appropriate work clothes, work boots with a safety toe, and safety equipment such as gloves or goggles or glasses will be provided by the contractor

Q. What if I am accepted and indentured, then decide I want to quit?

A. You will need to contact the JATC all voluntary quits may be required to pay for any physicals, books, and any outside classes that might have fees associated with them, and repay any part of your [Scholarship Loan Agreements](#). You also would get a classification of NONE and be eligible to change your classification until 2 (two) years after you would have completed your apprenticeship program.

Q. Does the apprenticeship program enforce a drug fee policy?

A. Yes, we require the apprentice to follow our drug policy as well as Industry wide drug policy, and any contractors approved drug policy. ([See Drug Abuse Policy](#)) .

Q. Describe the school curriculum I will receive throughout the 5-year Apprenticeship?

A. The curriculum is fully developed and being constantly updated by the National Joint Apprenticeship Committee ([NJATC](#)). ([See Curriculum Guide](#)).

Q. Can training and education received during military service or prior work experience be credited towards apprenticeship requirements?

A. We give credit for prior training as long as it can be properly documented to the committee. The committee will have to review and see if and how to award credit for prior work experience will be granted. If you have prior training at any level you have the ability to take a Proficiency Test based on the 5 (five) years of curriculum to seek advanced standing in the classroom. This test will help to show where to properly place you in our related classroom training.

Q. Are there any benefits for apprentices, if so, at what point?

A. After working approximately 130 hours and the associated paper work is complete, you, and your dependents will receive health and welfare coverage (includes eye, dental, chiropractic, prescriptions, and mental health, loss of time benefits). This is an \$8.21 per hour employer contribution. Vacation and Annuity benefits are available starting in your 2 (second) year. Your pensions start immediately following your admittance into the program. You also have the ability to contribute into a 401k plan (no employer matching).

Q. Can I use veterans' benefits as an apprentice?

A. Yes, if eligible, an apprentice may use veterans' benefits while registered in our approved apprenticeship program. Contact your local Veterans Administration office or call 1-888-442-4552 for more information.

Q. How much money will I make?

A. A beginning apprentice, depending on what classification they enter, will earn 40% of journeyman's wage as set forth in current agreement. With each progression of 750 hours work experience, and maintaining a 75% grade in classroom you will receive a 5% wage increase. ([See Wage Rate sheet](#)).

Q. How do I receive my on-the-job training?

A. After being indentured as an apprentice, you'll be given a work assignment to an employer who is registered with the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) as a participating employer with the committee. Such employers have promised to provide the [on-the-job training \(OJT\)](#) and [personal supervision](#) according to approved industry standards. The employer evaluates progress and makes recommendations to the apprenticeship committee regarding your advancement in the program.

Q. What is my relationship with the apprenticeship committee?

A. As an apprentice, you sign an indenture agreement with your apprenticeship committee. The committee's responsibility is to provide the opportunity for you to become a skilled journey worker in the occupation you've chosen. The committee must assure that you're treated and evaluated fairly during your apprenticeship. You have the responsibility to fully participate in the apprenticeship program by working cooperatively with the

employer or contractor you've been assigned to , to complete all of you related training classes and to follow the committee's rules and policies.

Q. Do I work and attend classes at the same time?

A. Yes, during the day you would work on a job site 4 days out of a week and 1 day per week 8 hours per day for approximately 20 weeks of the year you would attend classes. [\(See Class Schedules\)](#)

Q. When do you hire?

A. Typically in March as road restrictions come off and new projects tend to be starting up, and through out the year as needed, and don't start too many after October. The committee meets monthly to determine the correct number of applicants to select based on the economy, the number of calls in for apprentices, the number of apprentices becoming journeymen, and the number of journeymen retiring. There is no set time or number.

Q. How many do you hire?

A. The committee meets monthly to determine the correct number of applicants to select based on the economy, the number of calls in for apprentices, the number of apprentices becoming journeymen, and the number of journeymen retiring. There is no set number.

Q. How do I get a job?

A. Once you have completed all the requirements of application and you are interviewed and on the eligibility list you can be called and offered an apprenticeship. This again is based on contractor demand. If a contractor places a request for an apprentice and all of our current apprentices are employed then the JATC will then start a new apprentice. The contractor requests are filled in the order they are received. The committee reviews this monthly through out the year, typically we start to hire in March and don't start too many after October.

Q. What is an inside wireman?

A. Inside Wireman are electricians who install and repair electrical wiring and related equipment in buildings. Because electricity is used for a variety of purposes including climate control, security and communications, electricians need to be proficient in many applications of electricity. They are employed by electrical contractors, maintenance departments of large institutions; such as hospitals or industrial plants, or they may be self-employed (own their own shop). Inside Wiremen work on new construction sites and on renovations to existing buildings. They ensure that all electrical connections are safe and meet the electrical code. Electricians interpret architectural drawings and electrical code specifications at sites. They pull wire through conduits and through holes in walls and floors. They install, replace and repair lighting fixtures and other electrical equipment such as switches, relays and circuit breaker panels. They splice, join and connect wire to fixtures and components to form circuits, according to the plans. As well, they test circuits to ensure the compatibility and safety of systems as well as to connect sound and visual communication equipment, signaling devices and heating and cooling systems. At some sites, they conduct preventive maintenance programs.

Q. Can I transfer from another IBEW local?

A. Yes, contact the JATC office for approved method of asking for a transfer to another IBEW JATC.

Q. How much does the apprenticeship cost me?

A. The Minneapolis Electrical JATC covers the cost of training for each apprentice. You are expected to pay for your books each year of apprenticeship, approximately \$300.00. You will not be paid for the day you are attending school, so you need to plan for that ahead of time. You will receive a stipend check of approximately \$300.00 after you successfully pass the year.

Q. I am an IBEW apprentice and recently changed my contact information. What do I need to do?

A. It is important that we can stay in touch with you during the course of your apprenticeship. Please notify the following offices if you change your name, telephone number, address or any other contact information. ([See Related Business Offices](#)).

Q. When does school start?

A. Depends on what month of the year you are hired in, and the availability of classes you need to progress. ([See Class Schedules](#)).

Q. Who sponsors or supports the apprenticeship program?

A. The Minneapolis Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC), representing the parties to the local Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) - The National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). There are approximately 300 electrical contractors represented by NECA that are working in the local jurisdiction that guarantee their installations and perform quality work on time and on budget. The IBEW is the largest electrical union in the world, it represents workers rights in all areas of the electrical industry. Both parties have dedicated time to develop an efficient training program so the apprentice can, through a systematic program of schooling and on-the-job training, become a well-qualified electrical worker. This unique blend of JATC committee members allows for a wide range of experience and foresight to be utilized in the forecasting of the apprenticeship programs present and future needs. The degree of success the JATC has in its operation will depend entirely upon the willingness of all local parties of the electrical industry to cooperate in this joint activity. Quality training remains a high priority with the IBEW and NECA.

Q. Is college credit available from attending an apprenticeship program?

A. Yes, those apprentices who graduate from the commercial/industrial JATC program can earn up to 60 semester hours of college credit. This accreditation is from the American Council on Education ([ACE](#)). Many colleges accept these credits towards related or other appropriate program areas.

Q. Where are the jobsites located at?

A. The majority of the jobsites are located in the seven county metro area, but you are entering the construction industry and you will need to go to where ever the work is located at. ([See Jurisdictional Map](#)) .

Q. **Can I attend classes without attending OJT training?**

A. No, generally we would require you to be working as you attend classes you need to progress in both areas together to complete your apprenticeship program in a timely fashion. The committee might grant exceptions to this on a case by case matter.

Q. **Do electricians make more money than doctors?**

A. No, our journeyman currently make \$31.30 per hour and can expect some time off work due to construction market conditions in a typical year.

Q. **Do electricians wear white coveralls and spend all their time in front of a power or control panel connecting a variety of pretty colored wires?**

A. No, journeymen spend most of their time doing a variety of physical labor. Much of their hard physical work is often done outside or semi-outside in the exposed elements and weather. An electrician should expect to have dirty hands and clothes at the end of a productive work day.

Q. **Is being a journeymen is something to consider if your grades are not good enough to go on to college?**

A. No, an electrician must be physically and academically sound to succeed in our program. It is a good alternative for anyone who wishes to further their education and gain a great career. Applicants may wish to choose this field because it is a very satisfying way of earning a substantial living while pursuing an education, rather than paying for an education and then hoping to be able to make a living at it later on, and having to re-pay those large student loans off.