



Join the Fight to Stop Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs) from Destroying Union Construction

Apprentice and Apprentice Coordinator Comment Guide

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) wants to change the way apprenticeships work. They want to make it easier for employers to establish their own programs and decrease oversight, which would harm new craftworkers. The new rules do not provide progression requirements in either wages or skills. Apprentices would only need to earn the minimum wage and could be classified as apprentices permanently.

We need your help!

Right now, the DOL might exempt construction industry programs. We need you to let the ETA know will hurt new craftworkers, like you.

Please take a moment to [submit a comment to the ETA](#) to share your positive experiences with your apprenticeship program and to encourage ETA to create a permanent exemption for our programs. The comment period closes on August 26, so we need to act fast!

For your convenience, we've offered prompts below and inspirational quotes to help guide you in drafting a persuasive comment.

If you need assistance or have questions, don't hesitate to reach out.

Apprentice Instructors

- State your name, what JATC you work for, and how long you've been an instructor
- Share your success stories as an instructor in connecting students with middle-class jobs that provide good wages and benefits
- Explain how the wage and skill progression works to recognize apprentices' increasing experience and help them build a strong foundation for themselves and their families
- Include any building and construction projects your students have worked on that help better your local community (e.g. with local schools, churches, or organizations like Habitat for Humanity and Veterans for America)
- Talk about the importance of safety training and strong apprenticeship standards to protect students, and the craft

"I tell my students, 'being a bricklayer changed my life. If it can change mine, it can change yours, too.' I love my job and this trade...Being able to inspire and change a life – that's the benefit of what I do."

-Jackie Townsend



Apprentices

- State your name, the Local Union or ADC to which you belong, and your current year of apprenticeship
- Share the personal success and enjoyment you've found in your career as a BAC member since graduating the program
- Explain how your time in the program has helped you build critical job skills and prepare you for your career
- Note that you have not had to pay out of pocket for your apprenticeship, including for classroom materials and some tools
- If you previously worked non-union, talk about the differences in training

“My program’s progressive wage schedule keeps me motivated to keep going. Without these safeguards, the industry would see a race to the bottom in safety, quality and wages.”

“In registered programs like mine, we get the best training in the construction industry. In the classroom and on-the-job, we get years of state-of-the-art construction skills training and the best safety training in the business.”

“Registered Apprenticeship Programs are a proven system for workforce development in construction. In fact, construction apprentices like me make up almost 50% of all registered apprentices in the country. From a worker’s perspective, there is absolutely no room for experimental models like the proposed Industry Programs in this high-hazard industry, especially not ones that are allowed to dilute safety standards and wages.”

“BAC apprenticeship and training programs helped me get good-paying jobs and the benefits that my family needs. I started in the program at a good wage rate that’s progressing as I work my way up the program. When I get my journey status, my wages and benefits will increase again, guaranteeing a bright future for my family. There’s not a lot of good paying jobs around here, especially that come with the best training, good pay and benefits.”

“In our world, the only thing they say that matters is my training and how hard I work. So, if workers in training programs that aren’t held to the same standards as my program are paid the minimum wage, good-paying apprenticeships are going to disappear and future apprentices won’t have the same opportunities that I’ve had.”



“This career has provided me with the things I’ve always wanted in life. I love being outside and working with my hands. There’s a skill to our craft. Plus, I have a good wage, a pension, and healthcare. I have a house now and a family I can provide for. It’s a great stepping stone to get you where you want to be in life” –Steve Householder, Cleveland Job Corps Center Grad

While a personal comment is the best way to help out, if you don’t have time, we can make sample letters available. Just reach out to your Apprentice Coordinator.

Thank you for your help on this critical issue!