Trades in Focus
COMMUNITY COLLEGE INITIATIVE

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE INDUSTRIAL TRADES

Skilled Trades and Community Colleges:
Your Pathway to High-Demand Jobs

An Initiative of the American Association of Community Colleges
Sponsored by GRAINGER.
You want to find a new job in a high-demand career. You need to train quickly. And it needs to be affordable. Where can you go? Community college.

**Why community college?**

» **It’s convenient.** Students at 41% of public community colleges can earn a degree entirely online and 92% of colleges offer at least one Internet-based course.

» **It’s affordable.** Average yearly tuition at a public community college is $2,713. The same tuition at a 4-year public college would be $7,605.

» **It prepares you for a well-paying career — not just a job.** Positions in the skilled trades can command high salaries and ensure security for you and your family.

» **It’s flexible.** If you have to work to support yourself or your family, are a little over the traditional age of a college student, or need to brush up, community college has options that will work for you.

» **It gets you working faster.** Community college certification and job training programs can get you to work in a few weeks, 6 months, or 2 years, depending on your course of study.
Skilled Trade Jobs: Your Path to a Good Living

Have you considered a career in one of these high-earning occupations that is in hot demand?

» **Electrical and electronics repairers, commercial and industrial equipment**
  Annual wage range
  $31,450–$72,290
  Median annual wages $50,730

» **Electricians**
  Annual wage range
  $28,690–$80,260
  Median annual wages $47,180

» **Forest and conservation technicians**
  Annual wage range
  $18,610–$46,520
  Median annual wages $25,580

» **Heating, air conditioning and refrigeration installers and mechanics**
  Annual wage range
  $25,570–$65,580
  Median annual wages $41,300

» **Plumbers, pipefitters, and steam fitters**
  Annual wage range
  $27,600–$79,470
  Median annual wages $46,320

» **Solar power photovoltaic cell installers and system designers**
  Annual wage range
  $29,400–$60,000
  Median annual wages $38,720

» **Welders, cutters, solderers and brazers**
  Annual wage range
  $23,420–$52,420
  Median annual wages $34,750
Getting Started: Plan Your Future

» **Check it out**
  Visit www.aacc.nche.edu and use the Community College Finder to locate the closest college to where you live.

» **Get to know it**
  Research the community college online and in person. Visit the admissions office and request a campus tour. Talk with college advisors about potential career paths and your interest in the skilled trades. Ask about financial aid opportunities.

» **Understand the business perspective**
  Look at what business and industry are saying about the role technical education and people in industrial skilled trades will have in their future success. Are there job openings available? What developments in the industry will affect the skills required for workers? Will the industry grow over the next 10 years? Or 20 years?

» **Drill down**
  Make a list of the programs that interest you. Ask questions about how many courses will be needed, how often classes are offered, and how long it will take you to complete a certificate or degree.

» **Examine the possibilities**
  Meet students who are currently studying in the program you are considering. Find out what they like about it and what they don’t like.

» **Get the lay of the land**
  Research what types of jobs are available after you complete the program you’ve selected. Are these jobs located where you live now? Is hiring projected to remain strong? The college’s workforce or job training center, or the county workforce development center, may be helpful for you.

» **Apply yourself**
  Fill out the application for admission to the college. Don’t forget to request financial aid. Many students qualify for additional help.

» **Sign up for your first class**
  Talk to your student advisor and register for your first course. Mark the date and time of your first class in your calendar, and get ready to start school!

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**HOT JOBS:**
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The Best Kept Secret: Demand for skilled workers is high. Carpenters, plumbers, stonemasons, electricians, cabinetmakers, welders, and many other skilled trade workers earn well above $50,000 per year.

The Grainger Tools for Tomorrow® Scholarship Program

The Grainger Tools for Tomorrow® Scholarship Program awards financial assistance for tuition and books to outstanding students earning an associate degree or certificate in electrical, plumbing, welding, construction, facilities maintenance, machine technology, electronic systems, automotive repair, and other industrial programs.

For the 2010–2011 academic year, Grainger has offered 75 community colleges two $2,000 scholarships for students enrolled in industrial trades programs. Each scholarship recipient receives a customized Westward® toolkit upon graduation containing specialized professional tools to match his or her skilled trade area of expertise.

Cyndy Patzman lost her business and her home amid the fallout of the economic recession. Now she’s getting a new start at Clover Park Technical College and training for a green career. “I honestly never pictured myself being here,” says Cyndy. But she’s glad she has the opportunity to go back to school and received financial aid to assist with costs. The independence of a job doing environmental monitoring and work is appealing to her. “I like people but I like to go out and do my job.” She can’t wait to graduate.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:
Training for a green job

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:
Pursuing a career passion

Alan Sihler has always had a passion for learning how things work. “Eventually I came to the conclusion that learning a trade is something that would fulfill my thirst for both knowledge and application,” said Sihler. He says that enrolling in Elgin Community College’s HVAC/R program is perhaps the best thing he has ever done. “In the first year alone I have acquired a vast practical knowledge of not only heating and air conditioning principles, but of electricity, motors, thermodynamics, controls, and many other topics,” he said. An instructor recognized his eagerness to learn and suggested he compete in Illinois SkillsUSA. “It has given me confidence in myself. I can succeed not only in an educational setting, but also in a real world environment.” The future looks bright to Sihler. “I am confident that with the knowledge and skills I am learning at college, I can graduate and secure a job.”
Trades in Focus Community College Initiative

Want more information?

The Trades in Focus Community College Initiative, sponsored by W.W. Grainger, Inc., is a year-long project at the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) to promote awareness about industrial trades professions and the opportunities they offer for good jobs, and about how community colleges are the nation’s training ground for careers in the industrial trades.

About Grainger and the industrial skilled trades

As North America’s leading distributor of industrial supplies, Grainger is committed to helping stem the growing shortage of skilled workers while supporting the increasing technical demands of today’s industrial workplace. Through programs such as the American Association of Community Colleges’ Trades in Focus initiative and the Grainger Tools for Tomorrow® scholarship program, Grainger is investing in the people and institutions that keep our businesses and communities working. For more information about Grainger and technical education, visit http://www.grainger.com/technicaleducation.

About AACC

AACC is the leading organization representing America’s 1,167 public and independent community colleges. To find your local community college, go to www.aacc.nche.edu and see the Community College Finder.
NOTE TO COLLEGES:

Insert here information about the skilled trades training programs your college currently offers. List courses of study, length of time needed to complete a program and get on the job, and potential costs/financial aid options. Mention any partnerships with employers that may lead to improved training or hiring.