

Where Need Meets Opportunity

Are Apprenticeships the Answer to Your Talent Challenges?



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It's tough to find the right talent these days.

According to recent research by SHRM, nearly 7 in 10 organizations (69%) report [difficulties recruiting for full-time positions](#). This number has remained stubbornly high in recent years. The same SHRM research found that 33% of HR professionals cannot fill open positions because candidates lack the right technical skills.

If your company is facing challenges hiring skilled employees, apprenticeships might offer a pathway to develop the talent you need to succeed.

Let's start with some definitions.

Apprenticeships are a workforce development strategy to train individuals in a specific occupation using a combination of on-the-job training and related instruction. The occupations with the largest number of apprentices tend to be in the skilled trades — and the list is growing. In the growing electric vehicle (EV) sector, Rivian and Panasonic have established apprenticeship programs for the role of [Industrial Machine/Maintenance Mechanic](#), and Tesla has established a [Tool and Die Maker](#) apprenticeship program.

Registered Apprenticeship programs have met [national standards](#) for registration with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) or an approved State Apprenticeship Agency. Organizations that register their apprenticeship programs have access to a nationwide network of expertise, tax credits, and funding opportunities.

How do employers benefit from apprenticeships?

- 1) More Talent:** Apprenticeships widen the pool of talent available to fill key skilled positions, including the key EV manufacturing roles outlined above.
- 2) The Right Skills:** Apprenticeships develop the right set of skills to ensure you achieve your business goals. For example, EV apprenticeships routinely train on core manufacturing skills like blueprinting, machining and preventive maintenance.
- 3) Increased Productivity:** Apprenticeships improve employee retention and the overall productivity of your organization.

The proof is in the numbers.

SHRM found that 82% of participating employers report that their [apprenticeship programs](#) have been somewhat or very effective at addressing talent shortages. Importantly, today's apprenticeships now exist in a wide range of fields and areas of expertise — including sectors as diverse as the automotive industry, the medical field, and human resources.

Apprenticeships will be critical to meeting the job demands of the growing EV manufacturing sector. The [National Governors Association](#) projects approximately 4.7 million EVs will be produced in the United States annually by 2028, fueling demand for charging stations, infrastructure, batteries, supply chain operations, and more – all of which require skilled employees.

Intrigued? Here are three questions to help determine if you should take the next step:

- 1) **The Need:** Do you struggle to find enough job candidates who possess a defined set of job skills?
- 2) **The Opportunity:** Is there a pool of motivated talent in your area looking for job opportunities but lacking the right skills or credentials?
- 3) **The Solution:** Can your operation provide structured workplace training and direct job experience to your apprentices?

If you answered yes to these questions, apprenticeships might be right for you.

So now what do you do?

Find a Partner: For almost any field in the modern economy, there are training organizations, education providers (like community colleges), and professional associations (like trade organizations and labor unions) ready to work with you. Some already offer apprenticeship programs, and some are ready to partner with you to create one.

Work With Government Agencies: [State labor agencies](#) can provide information on existing apprenticeship programs or resources to help develop a new program that works for you. Local workforce development boards are particularly suited to connect you to the information and contacts you need. The DOL provides information on apprenticeships ([Apprenticeship.gov](#)) and maintains an updated list of Registered Apprenticeship programs.

Activate Your HR Team: Human resource professionals are key to apprenticeship success, so it is important to bring them into the effort early. Many HR professionals are members of SHRM, which offers a [wealth of information](#) and practical advice on how to stand up a program that works for your company. Check out this [free resource](#) on how apprenticeships address

Electric Vehicle Apprenticeships in Action

When Rivian Automotive Inc. acquired a plant in Normal, Illinois, the electric vehicle manufacturer faced a workforce gap. Rivian and Normal's Heartland Community College worked together, with the support of state leaders, to build three-year tool-and-die and industrial maintenance apprenticeship programs, with 43 total completions as of July 2025. Rivian is looking to open additional apprenticeships in fields including mechatronics and paintless dent repair in the future. Read their story [here](#).

workforce challenges and read some of the [latest research](#) on what apprenticeships can do for your organization.