

The Building Trades Apprenticeship Readiness Program Q and A

Q: What is a Building Trades Apprenticeship Readiness Program (ARP)? And what is the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3)?

A: In 2007, North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) Standing Committee on Apprenticeship and Training created a multi-craft training curriculum for use in Building Trades' Apprenticeship Readiness Programs (ARPs). Building Trades ARPs were designed to prepare interested young people and transitioning adults to enter and succeed in registered apprenticeship programs, which are gateways to good middle class jobs in the US construction industry. The more than 100 ARPs currently in operation across the US are sponsored by State and Local Building Trades Councils, Training Coordinators and joint apprenticeship training committees (JATCs) in partnership with local community groups, construction contractors, government agencies and schools.

The goals of the Building Trades ARPs are to (1) increase the number of qualified candidates for apprenticeship across all crafts, (2) to increase the diversity of apprenticeship candidates by recruiting women, people of color and veterans, and (3) to increase the retention rate among apprentices by providing them with a deeper understanding of both the industry and the role of craft unions in construction.

The educational foundation for the Building Trades ARPs is the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum, or MC3, a standardized, comprehensive, 120-hour construction curriculum designed to help young people and transitioning adults choose and succeed in an apprenticeship program that is appropriate for them. In 2012, the US Department of Labor recognized the MC3 with its Registered Apprenticeship Innovator and Trailblazer Award.

Q: What topics are included in the MC3?

A: There are nine sectors or chapters in the MC3:

- Construction Industry Orientation
- Tools and Materials
- Construction Health and Safety
- Blueprint Reading
- Basic Math for Construction
- Heritage of the American Worker
- Diversity in the Construction Industry
- Green Construction
- Financial Literacy

Q: What is the format of the MC3?

A: In 2015 the MC3 was revised and updated; it is now available in an online format. The MC3 curriculum is still taught face-to-face, but it is now delivered to all approved ARP programs in a web-based learning management system. All of the student and instructor materials for the updated MC3 are now available in one integrated format. If you want to print materials located in the new MC3 online platform, you may do so only with the permission of NABTU's National Office.

Q: How do we get access to the MC3?

A: In order to use the MC3, a Building Trades Council or their partner organization(s) must first submit an MC3 Implementation Plan to the Building Trades National Office.

The MC3 Implementation Plan must answer six simple questions:

- Who will teach the MC3 and where will the program be located?
- Please list all organizations partnering with the Building Trades Council in this ARP?
- How will the program be funded and what is the source of these funds?
- How many people will be trained and what is the start/end date for the training?
- What is the name of the Council or Council partner representative who will attend the required Train-the-Trainer course, which is designed to prepare coordinators/instructors to set up and teach the MC3? (These Train-the-Trainer classes are offered by the Building Trades Academy – see www.bt-academy.org for the schedule and location of these classes); and
- Most importantly, where and how will successful graduates of the MC3, assuming that they meet all other requirements, be placed in Building Trades registered apprenticeship programs?

Once NABTU has approved of your MC3 Implementation Plan, you will receive user names and passwords for your instructors to access the MC3. You will also receive instructions on how to register your students and generate reports on your student's work in the MC3.

[It is important to note that any organization partnering with a Building Trades State or Local Council must get prior approval from the Council before applying for additional grant funding that could be used to fund additional student cohorts].

Q: What is the cost of the MC3?

A: NABTU doesn't charge tuition for the MC3, but there is a \$75 per student cost (per class) for online access and tech support. This \$75 per student payment should be included with your MC3 Implementation Plan.

Q: What steps are required to set up a successful ARP?

A: The basic steps in the checklist below are based upon best practices from the more than 100 Building Trades ARPs currently in operation. Each ARP, will be different, however, because they are based on your local needs and preferences. We can provide a more complete list of best practices, including application forms, program schedules and budgets upon request.

The Checklist:

- Discuss ARP placement plans and employment commitments with JATCs, local Building Trades Apprenticeship Trainers and employers.
- Secure agreements with local partners, including roles and responsibilities for local partners.
- Develop an ARP program budget.
- Submit an MC3 Implementation Plan to the national Building Trades; develop an MC3 Program budget, schedule and timetable.
- Identify and secure a training site.
- Recruit instructors.
- Locate transportation services to facilitate visits by participants to Building Trades training centers.
- Recruit participants.
- Plan a graduation ceremony. You should invite family and friends of the graduates and the media.

Q: Are some parts of the MC3 required and others optional?

A: Yes, some sections of the MC3 chapters are required and some are optional. The table below explains this in detail.

The Multi-Craft Core Curriculum: Required and Elective Sections

Required Sections	Elective Sections - Select to complete the 120 hour requirement
Orientation and Industry Awareness- 8 hours	Construction Health and Safety- 22 hours (CPR and First Aid- 8 hours/Osha-10- 10 hours/Women’s Health and Safety- 4 hours)
Construction Trade Awareness- 8 hours	Blueprint Reading- 24 hours
Tools and Materials Hands on Training- 8 hours	Green Construction- 4-8 hours
Basic Math for Construction- 40 hours	Financial Responsibility- 4-8 hours
Heritage of the American Worker- 8 hours	
Diversity in the Construction Industry- 12 hours (Diversity Awareness- 4 hours/Sexual Harassment- 8 hours)	
Total 84 Hours	Total 54 Hours (Choose 36 out of 54)

Table Notes: All MC3 Programs must contain a minimum total of 120 classroom hours. The 84 hour core is required for all programs. Building Trades Council representatives and their partners may add additional hours to the MC3 at their discretion.

Q: Is there specific language that must be included in the ARP student application?

A: Yes. The following language must be included in all Building Trades' Multi-Craft Core Curriculum/Apprenticeship Readiness Program applications:

NOTICE: THIS PROGRAM IS AN APPRENTICESHIP-READINESS PROGRAM ONLY. PARTICIPATION IN AND/OR COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM DOES NOT GUARANTEE ADMISSION INTO AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, ADMISSION INTO A UNION OR EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. DECISIONS ON SUCH ADMISSIONS OR EMPLOYMENT ARE MADE BY THE INDIVIDUAL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, UNION OR EMPLOYER AND NOT BY THIS PROGRAM. BY SIGNING THIS APPLICATION AND PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM, YOU INDICATE YOUR AGREEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING THAT NO PROMISES OR GUARANTEES OF ADMISSION TO AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM OR A UNION OR EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY HAVE BEEN MADE TO YOU AND THAT NO ONE REPRESENTING THIS PROGRAM HAS THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE SUCH PROMISES OR GUARANTEES.

A recent decision out of NYC (Apple vs. Atlantic Yards Dev. Co.) illustrates why it is important that Building Trades pre-apprenticeship (or apprenticeship readiness) programs make clear to participants in the program in writing that there is no *promise/guarantee* that they will gain entry into an apprenticeship program, a union or be given employment. In this case, the court denied summary judgment to contractors seeking to dismiss a claim by participants in a pre-apprenticeship program who alleged that they were promised membership in a construction union and union construction jobs.

Q: Is there a final exam for the MC3?

A: No, but Building Trades Council leaders who work with high schools and community colleges must be clear and consistent regarding the issue of testing in the MC3.

It is important to pay close attention to the issue of testing in employment programs because of law and regulations law in this area. In brief, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent decisions by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) have held that tests ARE allowed in employment programs as long as they don't discriminate on the basis of "race, color, religion, sex or national origin." According to the EEOC, for a test to be found non-discriminatory it must be "validated," in other words, thoroughly tested to make sure it doesn't discriminate in practice, which is a lengthy and expensive process.

What does this mean for Building Trades' programs using the MC3? It means you should first understand why the Building Trades doesn't use an exit exam in the MC3. When the Building Trades National Apprenticeship and Training Committee created the MC3, they choose NOT to use an exit exam for a few simple reasons. First, the Committee wanted to avoid duplicating the aptitude test (entrance exam) that is required of all apprenticeship candidates in Building Trades joint programs. Second, the Committee and the Building Trades staff wanted to steer clear of this issue of test validation.

As a result, Building Trades programs may use some form of assessment of student learning, but these assessments must be qualitative and informal, rather than quantitative or numerical scores. I have attached, as a way to illustrate this, the assessment form used by the Augusta Georgia Building Trades, in their ongoing apprenticeship readiness programs. You will see that this assessment tool specifies whether the students have been fully engaged with the various sections of the curriculum (and thus completing the required hours specified), and even contains space for written comments from instructors, but avoids the issue of a numerical score for each participant.

Second, and perhaps most important, ***for those of you working with high schools and community colleges, you must make clear to your educational partners that if THEY choose to use an exit exam in any program using the MC3, that they must make sure that the tests they use have been validated under the guidelines set forth by the EEOC.*** This is a requirement if they are to partner with your Council.