

How to Set Up a Building Trades Apprenticeship Readiness Program Using the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum

Introduction

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.

Step 1 - Asset Mapping

The first step in the process of implementing a Building Trades Apprenticeship Readiness Program (ARP) using the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) is to develop a list - or "asset map" - of local community groups, workforce development agencies, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, philanthropies and other groups that might partner with the state or local Building Trades Council in a program designed to recruit and train well-qualified local residents for careers in the construction industry. These groups included in the "asset map" would perform essential services such as applicant screening, educational assessment, drug testing, and the provision of day care, transportation and other vital services for apprenticeship program candidates.

As part of this process, the local Training Directors should develop a summary document to share with stakeholders at their initial meeting, which explains the basic entrance requirements

for each of the Trades: age, educational requirements, reliable transportation, ability to pass drug test, and so on.

Step 2 - Convene the Stakeholders Table

Once the local assets are mapped and analyzed, the Building Trades Councils and key community partners will convene a meeting of all relevant stakeholders to discuss the implementation of the ARP and identification of case management issues - such as those discussed in the previous paragraph - and which groups would provide these services in partnership with the Council. NABTU can support these efforts by providing examples of best practices from over 100 Building Trades ARPs currently in operation across the US.

Step 3 - Write an ARP Implementation Plan

Working with its community partners, the Building Trades Council would then submit an ARP Implementation Plan to the national Building Trades. This plan would answer the following six questions:

- Who will teach the MC3 and where will the program be located?
- What organizations are 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)
- Most importantly, where and how will successful MC3 graduates, assuming that they meet all other requirements, be placed in Building Trades registered apprenticeship programs?

Step 4 – Complete the Logistics for the ARP

- Develop an ARP program budget and a class schedule.
- Identify and secure a training site.
- Recruit instructors and train them to use the MC3's online learning management system.
- Locate transportation services to facilitate visits to Building Trades training centers.
- Recruit participants through community partners and other sources.
- Plan a graduation ceremony. You should invite family and friends of the graduates and the media.

Step 5 - Convene a Screening Committee to Admit Candidates to the ARP

Once the training center, budget, instructors and class schedules have all been identified, the Building Trades Council and its community partners would then convene a screening committee composed of Building Trades Training Directors and selected representatives of community partners to admit qualified candidates to the ARP.