

industry, it is obviously apparent that the reality of the shortfall in today and the future workforce is staggering at best. The IEC and similar organizations dedicate themselves to preparing young men and women to be the next leaders of our industry. But still, 10,000 apprentices with over apprenticeship registered programs and working member contractors, our industry is slowly approaching a crisis mode. Around the country and within each Chapter of the IEC, the topic of workforce development is of the utmost importance. Most importantly though is how we take this topic, and what we know to be the best solution for workforce development, and reach out to those entities that are harboring the future of our industry.

It all begins with a commitment. Apprenticeship is just that, an agreement between parties, that everyone is an integral part in ensuring that the future infrastructure is developed with the highest level of skill, training

trade. For those that are up to the challenge, apprenticeship offers an opportunity to embark upon not only a career path, but an educational opportunity that is unparalleled. No other schooling, internship or work-study program will provide an individual with paid, on-the-job training, related instruction and an environment that promotes excellence through encouragement and Apprentices begin a program that is structured in all aspects. From beginning to the end, apprentices are aware of their exact course of action, what is required of them to progress from one level of training to the next, and a wealth of resources to ensure that success is met along the way. Incentives are offered throughout the program in the form of regular and substantial wage increases; therefore apprentices constantly motivated to continue their efforts. For those considering apprenticeship, or for those who have the unique opportunity to have an influence on the decision of another, apprenticeship offers

an individual with little or no experience an opportunity to enter into a dynamic industry. The wages are extremely competitive with, and in many cases, exceed those of other entry level positions. Additionally, with the completion of the apprenticeship program, it guarantees the individual a skill in a trade that no one can remove.

For years, apprenticeship has been coined by many involved as the "Other 4-Year Degree" and in many cases it's true. Because an apprenticeship program is so essentially tied to education, apprentices are often completing not only their required apprentice classes, but receive college credits as well. Many IEC Chapters around the country have agreements with local colleges offering apprentices a path to an Associates degree and beyond. An apprenticeship certificate. completion version of the college diploma, is transferable and recognized across the country via the American Council on Education (ACE). As the electrical industry has evolved so has the IEC. Chapters now offer diverse 2 and 3 year Low Voltage

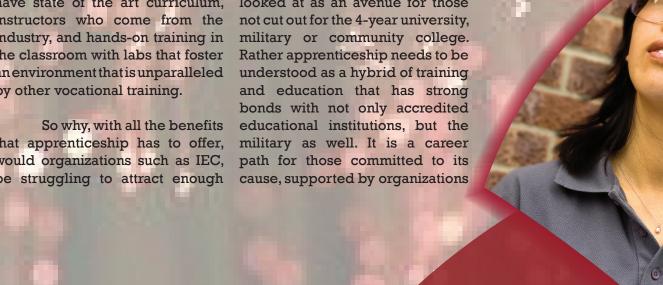


Apprenticeship **Programs** addition to the traditional 4-year Electrical Apprenticeship Program. only do apprenticeship programs focus on the educational aspect, but equally important is that the apprentices receive on the job training. Additionally, apprenticeship programs typically have funding available from the industry sponsoring it. This means apprentices "earn while they learn". Also what make apprenticeship so attractive is that apprentices are not faced with the burden of the high cost of today's college pricing and placing themselves in an overwhelming position that upon graduation they owe a great deal in student loans. Apprenticeship programs have state of the art curriculum. instructors who come from the industry, and hands-on training in the classroom with labs that foster an environment that is unparalleled by other vocational training.

that apprenticeship has to offer, would organizations such as IEC, be struggling to attract enough young people into the electrical industry? All misconceptions aside, those of us that are involved in apprenticeship programs at its very roots, simply believe that it is the best kept secret out there. This belief of "we never heard of...". supports our cause to educate teachers. counselors. parents. students and anyone else who will listen about the opportunities that the IEC and apprenticeship are providing around the country. It will be through this education of awareness that a new generation of the workforce will leave the K-12 school system, inclusive of public, private and charter schools, and have apprenticeship in the forefront of their minds. No longer will apprenticeship be looked at as an avenue for those Rather apprenticeship needs to be

excellence committed to education and training, and made possible by an industry that has a dire need for skilled employees at all levels.

For whatever reasons an individual leaving High School chooses not to go to college, there are proven and successful opportunities available for adults to receive an education, a career, and wages ALL at the same time, and an apprenticeship program is that opportunity.





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