

A Profile of **Apprenticeship**



Mt. Hood Community College
February 2020

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Apprenticeship at Mt. Hood Community College

Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) has supported Registered Apprenticeship (RA) for over 30 years. The college serves a large geographic area—about 1,000 square miles just outside Portland, Oregon. This area is home to about 500,000 residents who live in densely populated communities to the west and sparsely populated cities and towns east to the tip of Mt. Hood, after which the college is named.

About the College

Overview

Total Enrollment: 26,000
Average Student Age: 25
Number of Campuses: 3
County Served: Multnomah County
Accredited by Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Apprenticeship Occupations

- Bricklayer
- Carpenter
- Cement mason
- Electrician
- Glazier
- Ironworker
- Roofer
- Plasterer
- Sheet metal worker
- Floor coverer

The college offers Registered Apprenticeship in the construction and building trades and industrial technologies. Although specific programs shift with employer demand, the standard programs train apprentices for a wide range of occupations. All MHCC apprenticeship programs are registered with Oregon Labor and Industries (OL&I), which has statutory authority over RA in Oregon and collaborates with the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council (OSATC) to establish new programs and oversee existing ones.

Most apprentices enrolled in Mt. Hood Community College train as sheet metal apprentices, carpenters, or electricians. Together, these occupations claim approximately 80% of enrolled apprentices. MHCC's apprenticeship employers tend to be large firms experienced in apprenticeship-based training. These employers have systems and processes in place to track apprentices' hours, provide quality mentoring, partner with the education and training providers to keep curricula current, and meet all other requirements of Oregon's Registered Apprenticeship programs.

The combination of On-the-Job Training and Related Training (classroom or technical instruction) Registered Apprenticeship requires can be sequenced in different ways—providing one component for a few months and then the other component for the

subsequent few months or alternating between the two components. All MHCC programs blend On-the-Job and Related Training for the duration of the programs.

All apprentices who complete their programs with Mt. Hood Community College earn apprenticeship journeyworker certificates together with college credit that can be applied toward an Associate of Applied Science degree. They may also earn one of five Certificates of Completion. These certificates are recognized statewide and confer additional credit toward an Associate of Applied Science degree at any college in the state that offers the same degree.

Credentials Apprentices Can Earn
3 Associate of Applied Science Degrees Construction Trades Electrician Technologies Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology
5 Certificates of Completion Construction Trades (2) Electrical Trades (2) Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology

Last year, about 500 apprentices in Mt. Hood Community College’s RA programs became journey-level workers. All of them earned college credit, and 20 earned degrees. They are building careers with companies like Boeing, TriMet (the mass transit agency serving greater Portland), and many of their contractors and suppliers.

Structure of Registered Apprenticeship at Mt. Hood Community College

A team comprising four part-time staff in the Office of Instruction, led by the Director of Apprenticeship, manage Mt. Hood Community College RA programs. Fifteen regional training centers, such as NECA-IBEW and Pacific Northwest Carpenters Institute are critical partners. The training centers and partners define industry-recognized and approved competencies and develop and approve curricula. The college accredits their programs so that students can receive academic credit.

While accreditation is a key role for the college, MHCC RA program staff also support apprentices, employers and programs by:

- **Providing information about Registered Apprenticeship** to high school students, parents, employers, and aspiring apprentices who may be interested in participating in programs, and to faculty and workforce partners interested in expanding or otherwise supporting RA;
- **Coordinating and providing apprentice support** for those in need, including translation services, tutoring, and referral to community resources; and
- **Facilitating partnerships** between the college, OL&I, and workforce organizations, including the State of Oregon’s WorkSource Centers, adult education agencies and programs, vocational rehabilitation services, career and technical education, pre-

apprenticeship programs, as well as organizations that support women and people of color in pre-apprenticeship or other workforce training programs for which Registered Apprenticeship may offer a next step.

Benefits for the College, Students, and Employers

For Mt. Hood Community College, Registered Apprenticeship programs provide a range of benefits. First, they foster working relationships between college staff and employers, labor unions, and industry partners. These relationships help the college understand regional labor market dynamics and respond to changes in the demand for education and training programs and services.

“The idea of attending college in a program that leads to a high-wage career, with no student debt, really sells the idea of apprenticeship to students.”

—Dawn Loomis, Director of Apprenticeship, Mt. Hood Community College

Second, RA programs generate revenue for the college. In some cases, employers pay the college for Related Training, the classroom-based instruction portion of apprenticeship programs. When this occurs, apprentices are enrolled in courses alongside other students learning the same content as part of their own certificate or degree programs or for work or personal fulfillment. This boosts the demand for coursework and faculty instructors and allows the college to support a wider range of offerings more economically than if apprenticeship courses were offered separately.

In addition, apprentices earn academic credit through their programs. This provides an incentive for them to complete associate degrees concurrently with their apprenticeship journeyworker certificates either on their own or with help from employer-based tuition reimbursement programs. Employers, training centers, and other partners can also become customers of the college—by contracting for customized training, for example, or by participating in special industry-centered initiatives.

Registered Apprenticeship helps the college fulfill its core purpose—serving communities. Mt. Hood Community College’s mission is “transforming lives and building communities” through education, skill-building, and professional development. Program staff reported that Registered Apprenticeship is particularly relevant for today’s young people who know they need education beyond high school to succeed in the labor market. At the same time, they are aware of the challenges student loan debt has created for their parents and siblings. Increasingly, students seek economical pathways that allow them to work while pursuing post-secondary education. RA offers a solution rooted in community partnerships.

In addition, because college-supported Registered Apprenticeship programs can draw on other college services and programs, MHCC can help student apprentices who may need additional support to successfully complete their apprenticeships. For example, the college's [STEP UP](#) program provides low-income students receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits with supportive services, including case management, English-language learning and tutoring, tuition financial aid, and assistance with work-related expenses like tools, uniforms, and fees associated with licenses and testing they may need in order to secure employment. Student apprentices receiving SNAP may be eligible for these programs and services.

Colleges can also expand the participation of English-language learners, people of color, women, people with disabilities and other underrepresented populations in Registered Apprenticeship, improving diversity and inclusion in the workplace at the same time. For example, one employer asked MHCC for help with classroom training for two apprentices with hearing impairments. The college brought its knowledge and experience supporting people with disabilities in learning and work to the program by providing American Sign Language interpreters and designing accommodations into labs and learning activities so that the apprentices could successfully complete their programs.

These examples reveal the multiple and interconnected benefits of collaboration on Registered Apprenticeship for employers, colleges, and apprentices themselves.

What's Next?

Mt. Hood Community College's RA program is interested in new, high-value opportunities for collaborating with employers, educators, and workforce programs to:

- **Expand pre-apprenticeship.** The region's tight labor market has revealed the need for better pathways into apprenticeship, such as high school and non-profit pre-apprenticeship and career and technical education programs that build the skills and competencies apprentices need. The college sees opportunity to create better alignment and sustainable partnerships in this currently fragmented program environment.
- **Explore new high-demand occupations and sectors.** The college is experienced in building trades and industrial apprenticeships and anticipates opportunities for working with employers in new occupations adjacent to these current areas of expertise. Program staff have been cautious about expansion to date, seeking to balance the risks associated with taking on new programs with the opportunities the tight labor market provides.

- **Improve professional development for trainers and mentors.** Diversity and cultural competence continue to be areas of need within both the workplace and training environments. Because RA programs have found it challenging to attract diverse candidates, building these competencies into apprenticeship training itself offers benefits far beyond the life of a single apprenticeship program.

Mt. Hood Community College's RA program staff are enthusiastic about the future of apprenticeship, citing it as critical strategy for building the next generation of workers in construction, industrial transportation, energy and a growing number of industries that are key to the region's prosperity.

When asked what advice the college might offer to other colleges looking to participate in RA, the program director exclaimed, "I highly recommend it! There are so many existing partnerships in a college setting that can benefit student apprentices, employers, and the college itself."

Connect to Registered Apprenticeship:

For information about Registered Apprenticeship at Mt Hood Mountain Community College:

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26000 SE Stark St.
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503.491.7561 or dawn.loomis@mhcc.edu
mhcc.edu/Apprenticeship

For information about related services offered at Mt. Hood Community College:

Business Services
mhcc.edu/BusinessServices
Community Education
learn.mhcc.edu/modules/

To learn more about Registered Apprenticeship in Oregon:

Oregon Labor and Industries
oregon.gov/boli/Pages/contact_us.aspx
Apprenticeship in Oregon
oregonapprenticeship.org/