

# The Other Side of Higher Education

## Skilled Labor Apprenticeships Another Form of Higher Education

In today's new economy, the term "higher education" means different things to different people. While the traditional view has meant attending a two-year or four-year college or university, there is another side to higher education well worth considering – the skilled labor trades.

At the International Training Institute for the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Industry, apprentices at more than 160 unionized training centers across the U.S., Puerto Rico and Canada attend classes, participate in labs, earn grades and receive on-the-job training in four to five-year programs. Apprentices are paid while they work to become journeymen and graduate with no tuition debt, a major benefit when so many traditional graduates are burdened with student loans often amounting to five or even six figures.

The apprenticeship program isn't for individuals who failed at college or need a fallback position. Instead, it is a rigorous, cutting edge curriculum for serious students with a strong aptitude for math, problem solving, mechanical skills and spatial relationships.

#### **Careers Start Here**

Just as the world needs doctors, lawyers and CPAs, it also needs heating, ventilation and air conditioning designers and technicians; welders to build schools and plants; certified fire life safety professionals to ensure a building doesn't place lives in jeopardy; professionals to create building systems to keep occupants safe, comfortable and breathing clean air; industrial workers who construct plants for power and sustainable energy; and technicians to conduct energy audits to keep buildings operating efficiently.

These high-tech skills take education, dedication and talent. They are necessary career paths important to the proper functioning of the country and are there for those who take interest in a different kind of work.

The International Training Institute offers nine well-paying, in-demand career paths to choose from:

- Commercial Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)
- Architectural Sheet Metal
- Detailing/Building Information Modeling (BIM)
- Testing, Adjusting and Balancing (TAB)
- Service & Refrigeration
- Residential HVAC
- Sign Industry
- Industrial/Welding
- Roofing

#### **Your First Choice**

In May 2011, Mike Rowe of Discovery Channel's "Dirty Jobs," testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, calling for more attention to be paid to the jobs that need to be done by the skilled labor force. He told listeners these jobs should not be looked upon as "vocational consolation prizes" for those "not suited for a four-year degree."

"We talk about creating millions of shovel-ready jobs for a society that doesn't really encourage people to pick up a shovel," Rowe added. "People are surprised that high unemployment can exist at the same time as a skilled labor shortage, but they shouldn't be. We've all but guaranteed it."

It's time to reconsider the skilled construction trades. In fact, an education as a skilled union craftsperson has never looked more appealing:

- College Accredited (American Council on Education)
- Graduate with No Tuition Debt
- Curricula Materials Free of Charge
- Earn While You Learn
- Classroom and On-the-Job Instruction
- High Rate of Pay
- Life and Health Insurance Benefits
- Pension Plan
- High-tech and Management Career Options

#### A New Way to Learn

At the International Training Institute, we know that today's students respond to instruction in a variety of ways. That's why we offer a wide range of leading edge curricula materials free of charge, from traditional texts to e-books, and CD-ROMs to web-based training. Our goal is to keep the unionized sheet metal industry at the forefront of the skilled trades by graduating highly skilled professionals who can be productive from the first day on the job. Together, our curricula options make life and learning easier and more efficient for our students.

Curricula formats include:

- Student Manuals
- E-books for iPad
- DVDs
- CD-ROM
- Web-based classes
- Labs
- On-the-Job
- BIM Training



For more information on high-tech careers in the unionized sheet metal industry, contact Michael Keane of the International Training Institute at 703-678-7716 or mkeane@sheetmetal-iti.org.





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