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Youth with Disabilities Entering the Workplace through Apprenticeship **Looking To Future Opportunities In Apprenticeship**



An Overview:

Current projections of employment growth reveal opportunities to expand the number of apprenticeship program sponsors and training slots over the next decade, both within the traditional building and construction base of apprenticeship, and in newer apprenticeship occupations. Job demand in the building and construction trades is likely to remain strong through a combination of job growth and the replacement of workers who retire. Some of the newer apprenticeship occupations, particularly some of those that provide for recognition of a specific set of skills within an apprenticeship occupation, are expected to grow. Future high demand occupations are important considerations in career planning and in pursuing new apprenticeship programs.

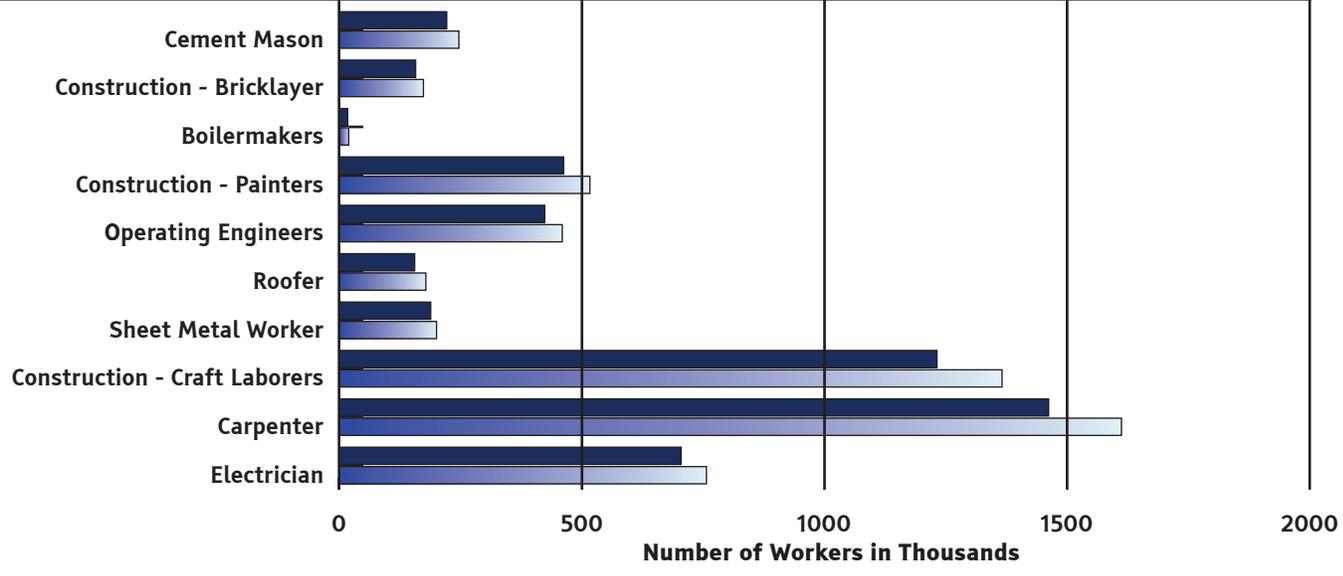
Recent changes to the federal apprenticeship regulations allow greater flexibility in how related technical instruction can be provided and allow program sponsors to utilize competency-based, hybrid, as well as traditional time-based apprenticeship training approaches. As a result of these changes, it is likely that more employers will participate as program sponsors of apprenticeship training. In addition, the availability of interim credentials in selected apprenticeship occupations is also likely to make apprenticeship an attractive employment option for many more people, including people with disabilities.

What You Need to Know:

Many high-growth technical occupations, particularly those in the medical services fields, are recognized for apprenticeship. Though registered apprenticeship has made progress in expanding beyond the traditional trades to these high-growth, high-demand occupations, most apprentices still come from building and construction. The good news is that current labor market projections indicate that traditional apprenticeship occupations will remain in demand. Two factors dictate the future of occupational demand: growth in the industry or occupation; and the number of replacement workers needed as individuals leave the workforce due to retirement or disability. In the skilled craft trades particularly, replacement is a significant factor as long-time, “baby boomer” journey level workers leave the labor force. Employers who are constantly seeking new workers or who experience a high turnover of staff are good candidates for sponsoring new apprenticeship programs.

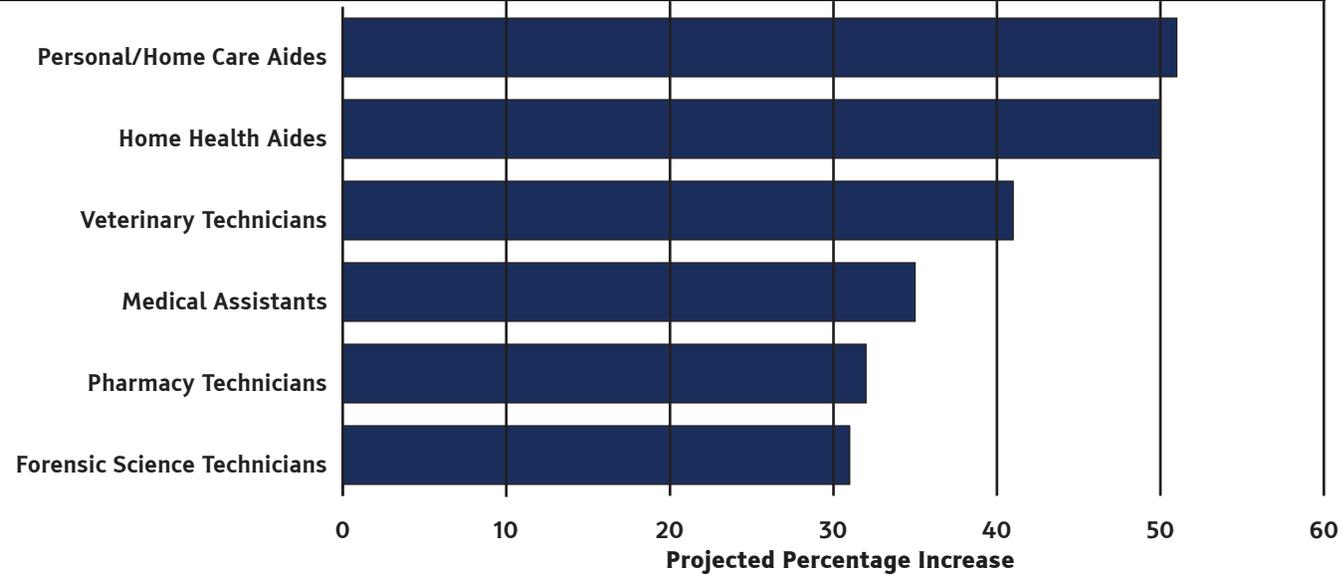
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publishes data on projected growth in employment by occupation, that includes projected job openings as a result of growth in the occupation and through replacement of existing workers that are projected to leave their jobs. Using this data measure, BLS data indicates that demand for workers in the traditional apprenticeship occupations that employ the most apprentices will remain strong. The chart on the following page, “Projected Job Growth in Top Apprenticeship Occupations,” highlights projected job growth for selected occupations in the building and construction trades. For each of these occupations, the demand is above or near the national average for all occupations.

Projected Job Growth in Top Apprenticeship Occupations



Source: Data in graph is from the appendix to the November 2007 Monthly Labor Review, BLS

Percent Change in Employment in Occupations Projected to Grow Fastest, 2006-16



Source: Graph derived from: Percent change in employment occupations projected to grow fastest, 2006-16. "Tomorrow's Jobs," Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09. p. 5.

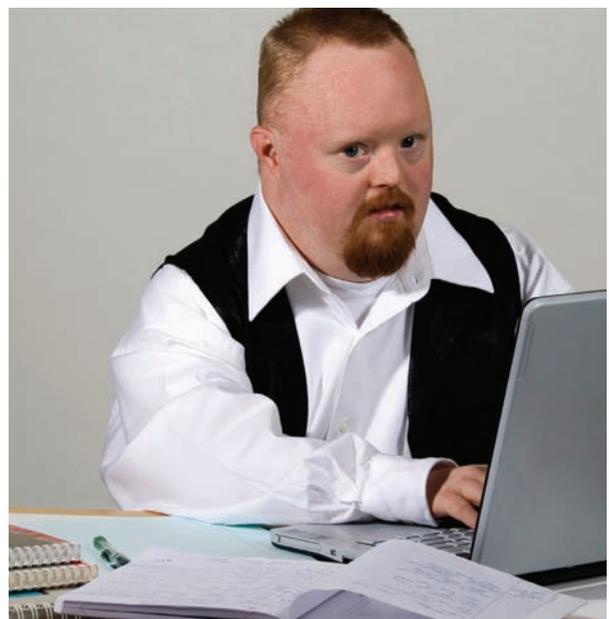
Many apprenticeship occupations outside the building and construction trades are also projected to be in high demand. For some, although the occupation is recognized, no apprenticeship programs have yet been registered. However, in most of these occupations, apprenticeship programs do exist albeit in relatively small numbers. National standards have been established for certain occupations with large employers and associations. National standards facilitate the registration of new apprenticeship programs because they provide a template that an affiliate business can use in putting together its training plan.

Other occupations provide interim certification opportunities through apprenticeship. The flexibility provided through such programs is likely to be useful in expanding apprenticeship opportunities to more people, including people with severe disabilities, because they allow for industry-related recognition of training skills acquired in a given occupational area, even if the individual does not complete the full apprenticeship program. Acquiring these skills will also allow workers who choose to do so to move incrementally towards completing an apprenticeship and still receive recognition for the skills that have been acquired. The interim credential can be useful in finding employment and may be particularly beneficial in designing customized apprenticeship programs for individuals with significant disabilities.

Apprenticeship occupations projected to grow by the largest percentages include personal and home health care aides, veterinary technologists and technicians, medical assistants, and pharmacy technicians. The medical service field is a high-growth industry that provides multiple pathways to certification through apprenticeship. For example, a certified nursing assistant apprenticeship is a three-year program, but there are four interim certifications, each of which requires less training to complete.

Pharmacy technician is another occupation that offers multiple pathways through apprenticeship. The occupation requires the equivalent of one year of work experience and training. However, there are related pharmacy support occupations that provide certifications based on fewer hours. The chart on the previous page, “Percent Change in Employment in Occupations Projected to Grow Fastest, 2006-2016,” shows the anticipated increase in employment occupations for six high growth occupations that are also apprenticeable.

In 2008, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued changes to the rules on apprenticeship. These changes were intended to update the apprenticeship system to meet the demands of the future. Many of the changes, such as the interim credentials described earlier, expand opportunities for all workers, but particularly for individuals with disabilities. Other changes are designed to make apprenticeship appealing to a larger universe of employers. For more information on these changes, see: www.doleta.gov/OA/pdf/Apprenticeship_Final_Fact_Sheet.pdf.



Where to Go For More Information:

Career Voyages, a partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education, provides young people with information on post-secondary education and employment. It gives a particular focus to high growth and emerging industries, in addition to discussing registered apprenticeship: www.careervoyages.gov.

A full list of occupations recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor as apprenticeable may be viewed at: www.doleta.gov/OA/bul08/Bulletin_2008_15.pdf. This bulletin was last updated in May 2008.

The **U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics** annually publishes the Occupational Outlook Handbook to inform readers of the training, earnings, and job prospects offered by various careers. A 2008-09 article, "Tomorrow's Jobs," showcases future opportunities in the labor force: www.bls.gov/oco/pdf/oco2003.pdf.

Learn More

1. Understanding Apprenticeship Basics
2. Preparing Youth and Young Adults for Apprenticeship Programs
3. Increasing Participation of Young Adults with Disabilities In Apprenticeship Programs
4. Establishing New Apprenticeship Programs
5. What Apprenticeship Employers Need to Know About Working with Young Adults with Disabilities
6. Looking to Future Opportunities in Apprenticeship



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