

Background: A highly skilled workforce will forever be the paramount policy priority of PHCC. Skilled and qualified workers are necessary to provide critical services, such as plumbing and indoor climate control, but are increasingly hard to come by.

Why is it important? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, over 132,000 plumbing and HVAC jobs will need to be filled by 2032, which accounts for *nearly a fifth* of the construction jobs that need to be filled in that time frame.¹ This will only worsen as our industry will fall short of the skilled workers needed to fulfill the projects spurred through implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

PHCC's solution? We must maintain a robust job training framework that equips jobseekers with a critical lifetime skillset and pathways to secure employment.

PHCC Supports Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

- Apprenticeship programs have been an effective way for over a century to equip tradespeople with a holistic skillset providing a lifetime of job security and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Congress must continue to fund the Department of Labor's registered apprenticeship program at authorized levels and furthermore pass the National Apprenticeship Act of 2023 immediately.

PHCC Supports Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs.

- WIOA grants are a valuable resource for PHCC chapters that administer apprenticeship and job training programs.
- The Senate must pass H.R.6655 *A Stronger Workforce for America Act* which reauthorizes WIOA through 2030 and passed the House of Representatives in April 2024 by an overwhelming bipartisan 378-26 vote.

PHCC Supports Perkins Career and Technical Education (Perkins CTE).

- Perkins CTE is effective in getting secondary school students interested in technical career fields such as plumbing and HVAC.
- High school students that enroll in technical programs are at an advantage when entering a trade school or apprenticeship program after high school graduation and enjoy earlier success in their field of choice.

PHCC Supports H.R.6585, The Bipartisan Workforce Pell Grant Act.

- H.R.6585 amends the Higher Education Act to allow Pell Grant funds to be used for short-term education in high-demand job fields such as HVAC.
- Accreditation should not be a factor if programs are vetted through the same process state approval agencies use to determine eligibility to receive G.I. Bill funds and WIOA grants.

Cultural attitudes must change.

- The workforce shortage in the building trades is a direct result of the undue emphasis placed on four-year university under the false pretense that college is the only path to the middle class.
- Journeypersons who finish trade school or apprenticeship enter the job market with little or no student debt and substantial first-year salaries that put them on a pathway to the middle class almost immediately upon entry into the workforce.

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table 1.7 Occupational Projections 2021-2031. (May 2022).
<https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/occupational-projections-and-characteristics.htm#top>