



PHCC Supports Pathways to Careers in Skilled Trades

WHAT ARE WE ASKING OF POLICYMAKERS?

Support and reinforce federal workforce education programs providing pathways to highly skilled, well-paid and in-demand careers in the building trades such heating, ventilation & air conditioning (HVAC) and plumbing.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR OUR INDUSTRY?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 94,300 plumbing and HVAC (combined) job vacancies annually through 2034, a decrease from 2023 projections of 118,300; the rate of job placement remains constant at approximately 6.5% during that timeframe.¹ The sharp decrease in projected vacancies demonstrates more jobseekers are entering the plumbing and HVAC trades, but demand for skilled plumbing and HVAC technicians continues to outpace placement. Federal workforce programs provide avenues for jobseekers to fill these roles, which will always require skilled hands in an otherwise evolving job market where technology is increasingly supplanting workers.

MORE DETAIL

Current federal programs provide resources for jobseekers to develop their skills to meet the needs of the plumbing and HVAC industry:

- **Registered Apprenticeship** programs have been an effective means for almost a century to equip tradespeople with a complete skillset providing a lifetime of job security and entrepreneurial opportunities. Costs are a fraction of college tuition and generally offset by employers while apprentices receive *paid* on-the-job training (OJT), allowing those apprentices to enter the field as journeymen with little or no student loan debt. *The administration must continue its work to promote and enhance registered apprenticeship programs to ensure a skilled workforce.*
- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** grants provide training providers with resources to administer workforce education programming (including apprenticeships), thus reducing financial barriers to entry by offsetting costs for both jobseekers and employers while allowing more financial resources for paid OJT and training materials. *The administration and Congress can enhance WIOA by making it more accessible to employers while ensuring determinations for “in-demand” career fields are in line with economic needs.*
- **Workforce Pell** grants implemented under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 provide a new and efficient pathway for those seeking work in high-demand fields (particularly HVAC), while more prudently using taxpayer resources for workforce programs with a much higher potential for post-education job placement and therefore a better return on investment for Americans. *With the Workforce Pell program in its early stages of implementation, we must monitor its progress to ensure it is working as intended.*
- **Perkins Career and Technical Education (Perkins CTE)** grants are effective in raising early awareness of careers in the skilled trades for secondary school students. With ever-increasing interest in skilled trades as a viable career option, *more resources must be invested in Perkins CTE to accommodate higher enrollment and ensure students stay on track in their chosen field.*

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Projections Data 2024-2034. (August 2025).
<https://data.bls.gov/projections/occupationProj>