

Looking for a Fulfilling Career? Technical Education Can Get You There

Graduation season is around the corner.

For new graduates, this can be an exciting yet daunting time as they contemplate the next chapter in their lives. If you know a soon-to-be or recent grad seeking new opportunities, encourage them to explore technical education opportunities that can lead to professional and personal fulfillment.

Each February, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and industry leaders in our community celebrate Careers and Technical Education (CTE) Month. CTE includes fields such as information technology, advanced manufacturing, and construction. This nationally recognized month shines a spotlight on the educational opportunities available for high school students, college students, and adults. There are many reasons to steer someone toward technical education, including:

Promising career prospects.

Baby boomers currently fill many trade jobs. According to a recent Home Builders Institute report, a substantial portion of the construction labor market could retire in the near future. That means job prospects for CTE students are promising, especially in residential construction. According to the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics data and analysis by NAHB, the number of residential construction jobs available in November 2022 was 388,000.

Avoid crushing college debt.

For many individuals, the high cost of college outweighs the benefits. In the 2020-2021 school year, more than half of bachelor degree recipients from public and private nonprofit four-year colleges and universities graduated with an average debt level of \$29,100, according to the College Board's Trends in Student Aid 2022 report. Technical education offers an alternative to the four-year college track without the burden of sky-high student loan debt. And there are numerous "earn while you learn" apprenticeships

available, so you don't have to wait to complete a training program to generate income.

Escape the daily doldrums.

Professionals working in the trades are problem solvers and critical thinkers. Each day has new tasks and challenges that are an ideal match for any talented individual. For example, critical thinkers and detail-oriented individuals would excel as carpenters, ensuring materials are exact; and exceptional analytical skills are used by expert electricians and plumbers.

Trades are for everyone.

More women across the country are becoming a part of the residential construction industry. According to an NAHB analysis, the number of women employed in the construction industry increased to over 1.24 million in 2021. This is 11% of the construction workforce, the highest share on record. Generally, a pay gap exists between men and women across most industries in the United States, where women earn 80 cents for every dollar a man earns. However, the gap is much smaller in the construction trades. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women in the construction industry earn 97 cents for every dollar a man earns.

For more information on CTE or local jobs in construction, **contact Central Washington Home Builders Association at 509.454.4006.**

