

## Tri-C's Apprenticeship Programs Provide Blend of Technical and Academic Coursework



More than 200 types of jobs are offered via apprenticeship training programs in Northeast Ohio, but Cuyahoga Community College's (Tri-C®) construction apprenticeship program is one of the few affiliated with an institution of higher learning. Tri-C's program proves there are benefits to melding classroom instruction with the theory and practice of skilled training.

"Our setup allows us to provide great skills training and additional education options, as Tri-C student apprentices can pursue a degree if they wish," says Dave Grabski, Tri-C director of the Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC). "As a college-based program, we can also offer the general education requirements in math, communications,

IT and management which can improve the student's potential for career advancement. All of our instructors are journey-level workers, so they challenge our students to apply proven state-of-the-art industry practices and techniques."

The results speak for themselves – in cooperation with 15 Northeast Ohio Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee partners, more than 11,000 student apprentices have participated in the program since 2000.

Tri-C's apprenticeship program meets national standards for skilled trades in bricklaying, carpentry, cement masonry, construction laborer, electricians and telecommunications, ironworking, operating engineer, painter and allied trades, plumbing, pipefitting and sheet metal. Tri-C utilizes customized curricula for each trade, and all technical training is conducted at the AFL/CIO Local's training center.

Student apprentices also have the advantage of Tri-C's faculty and facilities, and they can apply the 30-35 credit hours they earn toward an Associate of Applied Science degree in 19 different trade programs.

"Tri-C's program brings credibility because our apprentices perform college-level work and our certificates offer opportunities locally and nationwide," says Gene Stepanik, Tri-C program manager for building construction training. "After completing our apprenticeship program, journeypersons can make a very respectable living, or may pursue additional educational opportunities in areas such as sales, engineering, inspection or construction management through our partner programs at University of Akron and Kent State University."