

# ARBORIST APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

## **Employer Guide to Apprenticeship**

Developed by the Tree Care Industry Association

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## Introduction - Purpose

The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) developed a **National Guideline Standard for the Arborist Apprenticeship Program** in order to offer a recruitment and training tool for employers in the tree care industry. The National Guideline Standards are registered with the **US Department of Labor – Office of Apprenticeship**. Tree care companies may use the Guidelines to register and sponsor their own apprenticeship program with the US Department of Labor. The mission of the arborist apprenticeship is to connect motivated workers with experts in the tree care industry; to provide comprehensive training to advance skills and earn credentials; and to build a trusted workforce of professional arborists.

This Employer Guide to Arborist Apprenticeship provides guidance to employers, journeyworkers, and apprentices. It establishes policies and procedures in the application and administration of arborist apprenticeships to complement the National Guideline Standards of Apprenticeship.

## Introduction - What is an Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship is a nationally recognized training and education program in which an individual completes a combination of **on-the-job training, classroom instruction, and professional development** to earn a Certificate of Completion in Apprenticeship, awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor. The certificate is commonly referred to as a journeyworker credential. The apprentice is extended the privilege of earning income as a full-time employee while learning a skilled craft. The apprentice works with a journeyworker for **three years** where knowledge is acquired by the apprentice. Apprenticeships are a partnership between the **employer** who offers on-the-job training, the **apprentice** who agrees to work for the employer, and the **related instruction provider** who provides the “classroom” instruction. TCIA offers related instruction through our **TCIA Arborist Apprenticeship Training program**. Some select community colleges offer related instruction as well.

### 1. TYPE OF OCCUPATION

Time-based       Competency-based       Hybrid

### 2. TERM OF APPRENTICESHIP

The term of the occupation is 3 years with an OJL attainment of 5400-6000 hours, supplemented by the minimum required **440** hours of related instruction.

### 3. RATIO OF APPRENTICES TO JOURNEYWORKERS

The apprentice to Journeyworker ratio is: 1 Apprentice(s) to 1 Journeyworker(s).

#### Introduction - Options for accessing an Arborist Apprenticeship program for your employees:

**1) Become a Formal Arborist Apprenticeship Program Sponsor.** To do this you must follow this guide and adopt the National Guideline Standards. In this case you officiate your program by registering it with the US Department of Labor.

**Pro:**

- Your company is recognized by the US Department of Labor as an Arborist Apprenticeship program sponsor.
- Your apprentices receive a certificate of completion and journeyworker credential awarded by the US Department of Labor upon completion of the program.
- You can use this guide and the TCIA Arborist Apprenticeship Training program to help you set up and administer the program as well as provide the related instruction.

**Con:**

- You must follow the policies and procedures outlined in this guide in accordance with the National Guideline Standards.

**2) Access an existing Arborist Apprenticeship Program.** There are a select number of Arborist Apprenticeship programs in the USA sponsored by local community colleges.

**Pro:**

- If you have a community college with a program near you, then it is already set up and ready to go and you do not need to become a program sponsor.
- The community college provides the required related instruction.
- The community college provides support for the administration of on-the-job learning.

- Your apprentice is awarded a journeyworker credential from the US Department of Labor upon completion of the program.

**Con:**

- This is generally going to have the highest cost per apprentice, assuming you choose to cover the cost of tuition.
- You must adhere to the rules, policies, and procedures of the college's program.
- You still need to have a minimum of one journeyworker at your company to administer and train the apprentices through on-the-job training.

# Arborist Apprenticeship Policies and Procedures Guide

## Apprenticeship Requirements

To become an eligible apprentice, applicants must:

1. Be 18 years or older
2. Provide proof of completion of high school, GED, or equivalent
3. Be eligible to work in the U.S.
4. Be able to pass substance abuse screening with the employer
5. Be physically able to perform duties of an arborist

Additionally, apprentice applicants must have a reliable method of transportation to and from work. A driver's license is not required at the time of application, but the applicant must have the ability to get a driver's license. Employers may require a valid driver's license at the time of placement as an apprentice.

Substance Abuse Test - Apprentices are subject to the substance abuse policies of their employer. Most employers screen applicants during the interview process and administer random substance abuse testing.

The requirements for the arborist apprenticeship are described in the National Guideline Standards and Appendix A. The arborist apprenticeship requires documentation of 5400-6000 hours of on-the-job training with a participating employer, under the supervision of a journeyworker, with an additional 440 hours of related instruction. For an overview of the work process schedule and related instruction outline, please refer to Appendix A of the Standards.

## Responsibilities of the Apprentice

1. Perform at all times in a credible, ethical, and moral manner, realizing that much time, resources, and effort will be spent in affording this opportunity to learn a skilled occupation.
2. Perform diligently and faithfully in the apprenticeship, and in accordance with the provisions of the Standards.
3. Complete on-the-job training as described in the work process schedule and under the supervision of a qualified journeyworker.
4. Provide documentation of on-the-job training in partnership with the assigned journeyworker.

5. Complete the related instruction coursework as outlined in Appendix A of the Standards.
6. Provide documentation of related instruction and related work experience in the form of a certificate, official transcript, or other evidence.

### Applying for Apprenticeship

To enter an apprenticeship, individuals must apply for an arborist apprenticeship position with your company.

As candidates apply for jobs, they should follow your guidance using your normal interview and hiring processes. If the candidate is offered a position, the employer will provide the Apprenticeship Agreement.

### Apprenticeship Agreement

In order to become a registered apprentice, the apprentice must complete the Apprenticeship Agreement form with their program sponsor. This agreement requires contact information, demographic information, employment status, career connection, and the signature of the apprentice. The form provides the wage progression (apprentice wage rate schedule). It should be retained by the apprentice for future reference. See Appendix B of the Standards for the Apprenticeship Agreement form.

### Journeyworker

A journeyworker is an individual that possesses a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship issued by the US Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship. The Guideline Standards require the establishment of (a) journeyworker(s) at your company. Employers should self-identify individuals that meet the qualifications of a journeyworker. The journeyworker should have significant experience with the ability to teach an apprentice in the work processes described in Appendix A of the National Guideline Standards.

You should carefully examine the qualifications of individuals to serve as journeyworkers. While this list does not include all possible types of work experience, certifications, or credentials, it is a starting point for qualifying journeyworkers within your organization. Examples of evidence for qualifying journeyworkers without a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship issued by the US Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship:

1. Certificate of completion for completing any TCIA Tree Care Academy training programs:
  - a. Ground Operations Specialist

- b. Tree Climber Specialist
  - c. Chain Saw Specialist
  - d. Chipper Operator Specialist
2. ISA Certified Tree Worker Climber Specialist®
  3. TCIA Certified Tree Care Safety Professional (CTSP)

In addition to the qualifications listed above, the journeyworker should possess the ability to mentor and train others, demonstrate a strong work ethic, and pass the organization's culture to the next generation of arborists.

### Related Instruction

As part of the apprenticeship program, apprentices complete a career focused self-study instruction called the Arborist Apprenticeship Training program. It is developed by the Tree Care Industry Association. The related instruction is 440 hours of course work and accounts for ten percent of the program. Alternatively, tree care companies may opt to use select community colleges that offer Arborist Apprenticeship courses to complete the related instruction requirement.

### Reporting On-the-job Training of Work Processes

Apprentices are required to regularly update their Training Log Book to accurately reflect their progress toward competency in the work process schedule. Proficiency in a competency requires journeyworker approval and signature. If you use the TCIA Arborist Apprenticeship Training program, a Journeyworker Guidebook will be provided. The Journeyworker Guidebook guides the journeyworker in the administration of the Arborist Apprenticeship and explains specifically how to use the TCIA Arborist Apprenticeship Training program. It also contains helpful tools the journeyworker can use when training apprentices and performing assessments, such as Training Log Books, assessment forms for competencies, and related forms.

If you decide to add any duties or work processes not included in the Journeyworker Guidebook, or substitute comparable work process not available during training, this must be documented.

The employer will review the Training Log Book during probationary reviews, disciplinary reviews, and the final exit interview, if applicable. You may also want to review the Training Log Book during routine performance reviews. Failure to keep an updated and current Training Guide & Log Book can be used as a reason for delaying pay increases.

## Apprentice Wage Schedule

You must set a wage schedule for the apprentice based on percentages of your journeyworker's wage rate. The wage schedule is stepped to award the apprentice as they proceed through the apprenticeship program. It is a great way to encourage the apprentice to continue with the process. The first apprentice wage rate on the schedule is for the probationary period. See the chart below to help you calculate the apprentice's wage schedule.

### 3-Year Term Example:

1 <sup>st</sup>	12 months + hours = 70%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	12 months + hours = 80%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	12 months + hours = 90%

## Probationary Period

Every applicant selected for apprenticeship will serve a minimum 90-day probationary period. The probationary period allows you a period to assess the apprentice and makes sure the apprentice is a good candidate to follow through and become a Journeyworker. It also gives you an opportunity to terminate the apprenticeship if it appears to be a bad fit for the employee, thereby also avoiding the first wage rate increase.

The probationary period cannot exceed 25 percent of the length of the program. That means the maximum probationary period is 9 months for companies using the TCIA Arborist Apprenticeship Training program (three-year program).

Prior to the end of the probationary period, the apprentice's progression made in on-the-job training and related instruction will be reviewed. If the apprentice's progression is found to be unsatisfactory, you will determine whether the apprentice should continue in a probationary status and repeat a process before advancing to the next wage classification. Should it be determined the apprentice does not have the ability or desire to continue the training to become a Journeyworker, you may, after providing adequate assistance and opportunity for corrective action, terminate the apprenticeship agreement.

## Credit for Prior Learning

Apprentices may be granted credit for relevant college, university, or technical school courses, including instruction during a previous apprenticeship program. The apprentice must present documentation of education and training to you for approval prior to the end of the probationary period. If approved, credit will be granted for relevant course work, reducing the

remaining requirements for the apprenticeship. Any credits awarded shall advance the apprentice to the wage rate such credit entitles the apprentice according to your apprentice wage rate schedule.

### Credit for Prior Work Experience

Apprentices may be granted credit for prior relevant work experience, including work during a previous apprenticeship program. The apprentice must present documentation of experience to you for approval prior to the end of the probationary period. Documentation must include the nature of the work experience including duties, responsibilities, and tree care tasks performed. If approved, credit will be granted for prior work experience, reducing the remaining requirements for the apprenticeship. Any credits awarded shall advance the apprentice to the wage period such credit entitles the apprentice according to your apprentice wage rate schedule.

### Transfer Policy

The transfer of an apprentice between you and other apprenticeship program sponsors (such as other employers or community colleges that offer apprenticeship programs) must be based on an agreement between the apprentice, you, and the other apprenticeship program sponsor. It also must comply with the following requirements:

- 1) The transferring apprentice must be provided a transcript of related instruction and on-the-job learning from the original sponsor.
- 2) Transfer must be to the same occupation, so an arborist apprentice can only transfer to another Arborist Apprenticeship program.
- 3) A new apprenticeship agreement must be made when the transfer occurs.
- 4) The apprentice must receive credit from the new sponsor for the training already satisfactorily completed as noted on the transcript.

### Suspension

Suspension of apprenticeship is offered as a temporary solution in instances where the apprentice experiences a lay-off or loss of employment. The apprentice may immediately continue the program once they regain access to employment or related instruction courses.

## Cancelation

You may cancel the apprenticeship program at any time. You must notify apprentices of the cancellation within 15 days of making that decision. If you are approved as an Apprenticeship Program Sponsor you must also notify the US Department of Labor.

## Reinstatement

An arborist apprentice who voluntarily or involuntarily had their apprenticeship program suspended or cancelled may ask for reinstatement. This is permissible and often happens when the apprentice regains access to employment, or regains access to related instruction courses.

## Completion

Completion of the program occurs when the apprentice has:

1. Completed all their work hours
2. Completed the competency check lists
3. Completed all modules of the related instruction

## Extension

An extension occurs when an apprentice, who wishes to complete their apprenticeship, requires additional hours to finish their work competencies or related instruction modules.

Examples of situations that call for an extension may include:

1. The apprentice is not making satisfactory progress toward demonstrating competency and needs additional training time.
2. The apprentice fails a test and requires additional time to complete related instruction.

## Apprentice Complaint Procedures

If an applicant or an apprentice believes an issue exists that adversely affects their participation in the apprenticeship program or violates the provisions of the apprenticeship agreement or National Guideline Standards, the applicant or apprentice may file a formal complaint with your company. The complaint process you must follow is outlined in SECTION XX - ADJUSTING DIFFERENCES; COMPLAINT PROCEDURE – 29 CFR §§ 29.5(b)(22), 29.7(k), and 30.14 of the

National Guideline Standards. You must provide written notice of your complaint procedure to all apprenticeship applicants and all apprentices, per the National Guideline Standards.

### Exit Interview of Arborist Apprentice

Upon completion of all required on-the-job training and related instruction, you must review the apprentice's qualifications for completion. At the exit interview, complete the following:

- Verify the credential to ensure accuracy and review the registration date.
- Verify 6,000 hours of on-the-job training have been completed with Journeyworker approval
- Verify 440 hours of related instruction were completed through the TCIA Arborist Apprenticeship Training program or a local community college that offers Arborist Apprenticeship courses.

If the apprentice successfully meets the above criteria, make a formal recommendation of completion to the U.S. Department of Labor. They will issue a certificate of completion and journeyworker credential.

### Acknowledgement

I have read and understand this Apprenticeship Agreement.

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Apprentice Name

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Apprentice Signature

Date