

Employer Partners in Plumbing and Pipefitting

School districts across Texas can offer Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs of study in 63 different career fields. As a local employer you can **connect with** school districts to ensure they consider pathways in plumbing. With your **partnership**, school districts can develop and implement high-quality programs that will support your workforce needs and create excellent opportunities for students.

Who you should talk to about initiating a partnership - District decision-makers about CTE programs may include the CTE director, chief academic officer, high school principal, and/or superintendent. Each district is also required to assemble a CTE Advisory Committee that convenes regularly throughout the year. General school district contact information can be accessed by selecting the “Search By” feature at <https://tealprod.tea.state.tx.us/Tea.AskTed.Web/Forms/Home.aspx>

What you should tell them - Let district contacts know that you are interested in partnering to create a [program of study](#) in [Plumbing and Pipefitting](#).

When you should initiate conversations - Districts plan well in advance to implement new programs and typically publish course catalogs in February for the following school year, so planning should begin at least a year in advance of the start of a school year.

Why you should pursue a partnership - Districts may be influenced by a variety of factors when considering what programs to offer. Consider the following:

- **Student Opportunities:** Share data about your hiring needs. What local job opportunities will be available to a student who completes a CTE program of study in plumbing? Familiarize yourself with the [expedited pathway](#) available to students who complete a high school program of study rather than taking a traditional apprenticeship path.
- **Student Interest:** Districts must generate student interest in high-wage, in-demand, high-skill occupations such as plumbing. Students may have misconceptions about plumbing. Consider how you might engage with school counselors and even directly with students to build a positive perception of this career.
- **Upfront Costs:** Purchasing equipment and materials pose additional barriers to offering a new program of study. How can you, as an employer partner, help mitigate those upfront costs? Equipment donations and grant opportunities such as the [JET program](#) can help districts secure start-up equipment and materials.
- **Implications for Course Scheduling:** To implement a new program of study, a district must integrate a 3-4 year sequence of courses into their master schedule. Some courses are designed to engage students in work-based learning. Students who must leave campus to work at a training site need to be able to use their time efficiently. In most cases, work-based learning courses should be scheduled at the end of the day so that once a student leaves campus they can continue to work after the school day ends.
- **Curriculum and Instructional Materials:** A school district may collaborate with industry partners to identify appropriate textbooks, lesson plans, and other instructional materials. Institutions of higher education such as Texas State Technical College and plumbing professional organizations may be able to provide assistance with identifying relevant instructional materials.

School districts must employ a person who is licensed as a master plumber, journeyman plumber, or plumbing inspector in order to provide instruction to high school students in courses in the plumbing trade.

- **Staffing:** Often, finding a qualified teacher is a barrier to offering a program of study focused on plumbing. This program requires a person to be licensed as a master plumber, journeyman plumber, or plumbing inspector in order to provide instruction to high school students. Individuals must also possess appropriate teaching credentials. Consider how plumbing professionals can help districts identify qualified plumbers to serve as instructors on a part-time or full-time basis as district employees or contracted employees. Salaries and hiring practices are independently negotiated with the local school district.

How Can A Plumber Become A Teacher?

1. Check with the school district to see if they have an approved District of Innovation Plan that includes the flexibility to hire a teacher based on experience without a teaching certificate;
2. Check with the school district to see if they can use the [Teacher Certification Waiver](#) that allows a person to teach without the necessary certification requirements; or
3. Complete an approved [Educator Preparation Program](#)
 - a. Hold current licensure, certification, or registration by a state or nationally recognized accrediting agency in any approved occupations for the classes you will be teaching
 - b. Have two to five years of full-time wage-earning experience within the past ten years documented on a Statement of Qualifications form
 - c. Eligible military experience may be used in lieu of civilian licensure and wage-earning experience; an Educator Preparation Program will review for eligibility
 - d. Pass current certification exam - contact an Education Preparation Program for exam approval; or

For more information, review the Certification Assignment Flexibility Webpage:

<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/superintendents/certification-assignment-flexibility>

- **Work-based learning opportunities:** A critical component of CTE programs is hands-on learning, both in the classroom and in the workplace. The Practicum in Construction Technology course serves as a capstone experience in which students spend at least 10 hours per week working with a master plumber to apply the skills they have learned in the classroom to a real-world experience. The students who are completing a program of study have had at least two years of hands-on training and can be valuable assets for your company's current and future projects. Consider how you can partner with the district to structure a jobsite learning opportunity for students.

Considerations for Work-based Learning (WBL) Partnerships

- **Logistics:** Schools may need assistance to address logistics including transportation, scheduling, and procurement of necessary supplies and/or equipment.
- **Supervision:** The teacher overseeing the WBL course is required to visit the student at their training site at least 6 times a year. Students participating in a WBL experience must be at least 16 years old. Students who are 16 -17 years old need direct supervision while at the training site.
- **Insurance:** As with any employee, the employer takes on risks and responsibilities when hiring a student. To help mitigate these risks a school district may provide liability insurance, accident insurance or both. Learn more about work-based learning insurance [here](#).
- **Compensation:** Work-based learning experiences for students can be paid or unpaid. The employer has the option to make this decision and the district will complete the appropriate documentation.

Employers that are willing to partner with school districts will help ensure Texas has a strong plumbing workforce for years to come and will have the opportunity to support training for their own future employees.

For additional information, contact the CTE team at TEA: CTE@tea.texas.gov