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# LEGISLATIVE SPOTLIGHT

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH STATE SENATOR ★★★★★ 18  
**LISA BOSCOLA**



## Building & Construction Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Initiative

By Senator Lisa Boscola

Recently, I introduced legislation, Senate Bill 1343, that would address one of the Commonwealth's most pressing workforce challenges.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, Pennsylvania faces a shortage of more than 300,000 skilled trade workers by 2030. At the same time, young Pennsylvanians are increasingly seeking alternatives to traditional four-year degrees and pathways that lead to good-paying, in-demand careers and allow them to build their lives, contribute to their communities, and support their families.

My legislation would create a workforce development partnership between the Building & Construction Trades, PA's community colleges, and career and technical centers to offer students meaningful pathways into skilled trades and pre-apprenticeship programs. Together, we can prepare rising generations of Pennsylvanians for good-paying jobs in industries like construction, manufacturing, technology, and sustainable energy while responding to the workforce needs of our growing economy.

Key Features of this Initiative:

**Work-based learning:** Combine theory with hands-on training in trades such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing, and masonry.

**Direct Entry pathways:** Successful completers earn referrals to registered apprenticeship programs, often with "earn-while-you-learn" opportunities.

**Diversity focus:** Many programs target underrepresented communities, veterans, and women to diversify the skilled trades workforce.



**Career development:** Include life skills, career planning, and industry standards training aligned with national and state skill frameworks.

### Construction Pre-Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships

Pre-apprenticeships prepare individuals for Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) in construction, while apprenticeships provide hands-on, earn-while-you-learn training to become skilled tradespeople.

What is a Pre-Apprenticeship?

A pre-apprenticeship is a program or set of strategies designed to prepare people to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship Program. In construction, these programs often integrate with high school or community college career and technical education, sponsored by contractors or unions.

Several U.S. states have active building and construction trades pre-apprenticeship initiatives that prepare individuals for Registered Apprenticeships in the construction industry. These programs are often run by unions, workforce development agencies, nonprofits, or public/private partnerships.

### Examples of states with notable programs:

**Pennsylvania** - The Pennsylvania Building & Construction Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Initiative is a collaborative effort among PA's 15 community colleges to help meet the urgent need for skilled labor. The program was spearheaded by Luzerne County Community College, Lehigh Carbon Community College, Northampton Community College, and Bucks County Community College – SB 1343 looks to build upon this effort and expand it statewide.



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