FREE FIELD GUIDE

TRADE JOB STARTER PLAYBOOK

How to pick a high-paying trade, find real openings near you, and get seen by the people who actually hire.

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START HERE

THE QUESTIONS I GET ASKED MOST

Almost every message I get boils down to the same few questions. This playbook gives you the short answers and the first moves, with links to official sources so you're not guessing.

1 WHAT JOBS ACTUALLY PAY WELL?
Real pay and training numbers. Page 3.

2 HOW DO I GET IN WITH NO EXPERIENCE?
The three ways in. Page 4.

3 HOW DO I GET MY APPLICATION SEEN?
The direct route most people skip. Page 5.

4 WHAT DO I DO THIS WEEK?
A 7-day starter plan. Page 6.

> **QUICK DEFINITION:** A **TRADE** is a skilled hands-on career you learn by working, usually through a paid **APPRENTICESHIP** (a job where you earn while you train, with classroom hours on the side).

STEP 1 · WHAT JOBS

PICK A TRADE

Pay below is the **median** (the middle paycheck, half earn more, half less) from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2025. Apprentices start lower and rise as they train.

TRADE	MEDIAN PAY	TRAINING
ELEVATOR INSTALLER / REPAIRER	**$109,910**	4-year paid apprenticeship
ELECTRICAL POWER-LINE WORKER	**$95,320**	Paid on-the-job training; apprenticeships up to 3 years. Projected growth 10% (2025–35)
TELECOM TECHNICIAN	**$66,200**	Varies by employer; check the BLS page
ELECTRICIAN	**$63,190**	4–5 year apprenticeship. About 72,700 openings a year. Growth 9% (2025–35)

Source: BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook. Pay varies by state, union contract and overtime. Entry requirement for all of these is typically a high school diploma or GED.

RAILROAD SIGNAL WORK

This is my trade: keeping train signals and crossing gates working. Railroads hire for signal and electrical trainee roles, and you learn on the job. I leave out pay figures here because they depend on the railroad and your location. Check each railroad's posting.

HOW TO CHOOSE

- **Want the highest pay path?** Elevator or power-line.
- **Want the most openings in every town?** Electrician.
- **Want to travel and work outdoors?** Power-line or railroad.
- **Don't like heights or weather?** Electrician or elevator, mostly indoors.

STEP 2 · HOW TO GET IN

THREE WAYS IN

A. UNION APPRENTICESHIP

A joint program run by a union and its employers. You are paid while you train, and the program places you with contractors. Examples: **IBEW/NECA** for electricians and linemen, **IUEC** for elevators. Usually involves an application, an aptitude test and an interview.

B. DIRECT HIRE

You apply straight to a utility, railroad or contractor, which trains you in-house. This is how many linemen and railroad signal people get started.

C. PRE-TRAINING FIRST

If you need a boost before applying: a community college lineworker or electrical program, or Job Corps, a free federal program for ages 16–24 that covers training, housing, meals and basic medical care.

> **EXAMPLE, ELEVATOR APPRENTICESHIP (NEIEP):** be at least 17 to apply (18 to be registered), have a high school diploma or GED at hire, and be authorized to work in the U.S. After you apply you take the Elevator Industry Aptitude Test and an interview.

WHAT MOST PROGRAMS ASK FOR

- High school diploma or GED
- Minimum age (often 18)
- Government ID and work authorization
- Basic math and reading (the aptitude test)
- Many utility jobs also ask for a valid driver's license, sometimes a CDL

Requirements vary by program and local. Always confirm on the program's own page.

STEP 3 · GET SEEN

THE DIRECT ROUTE

This is the part almost nobody does. Applying online is step one. Then you make sure a human knows your name.

1 **APPLY ON THE OFFICIAL SITE**

Not through a repost. Save a screenshot of the confirmation.

2 **FIND THE RIGHT PERSON**

Look for the training coordinator, the apprenticeship director or the local's business manager. Their contact info is usually on the program's or company's website.

3 **SEND ONE SHORT MESSAGE**

Email or call within a day of applying. Keep it to four sentences.

4 **FOLLOW UP ONCE**

Wait a week, then check in. Polite and brief. Then wait for their window.

Template

Hi [Name], my name is [Your name]. I just applied for the [apprentice / trainee] position in [city]. I'm [age], I have my [diploma / GED] and a valid license, and I'm ready to start on the next class. Is there anything else I can send to help my application? Thank you for your time. [Phone number]

If you're calling, say the same thing slower. Be on time and be respectful. Showing up reliably is what hiring managers in the trades value most.

STEP 4 · THIS WEEK

YOUR 7-DAY PLAN

DAY 1	Pick your top two trades from page 3.
DAY 2	Gather your ID, diploma or GED proof, driver's license and Social Security card. Put them in one folder.
DAY 3	Search the U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship finder (apprenticeship.gov) with your zip code and trade.
DAY 4	Look up the union apprenticeship program for your trade in your area and sign up for alerts.
DAY 5	Check the careers pages of the utilities and railroads near you. Apply to anything open.
DAY 6	Send your message using the template on page 5.
DAY 7	Start practicing basic math and reading for the aptitude test. Free practice: khanacademy.org.

> **REALITY CHECK:** Most people don't get hired on the first try. Programs fill slowly and open rarely. Keep applying and keep following up.

QUESTIONS?

Reply to any of my emails, or DM me on TikTok (@ksgsasn), and tell me which trade you're looking at. I read every one.

NEXT STEP

WHAT THIS PLAYBOOK DOESN'T COVER

This playbook gets you started. The hard part comes after you apply, and that's where most people get stuck:

- Passing the medical, the drug test and how far back it looks, color vision, and the background check
- Studying for the aptitude test (20 practice questions with answers)
- Finding the hiring manager for your trade and the exact message to send, word for word
- The 15 interview questions they ask and what they're really checking
- What to do if you get rejected
- Getting through your first 90 days
- A 30-day plan, day by day, from deciding to applications in

> **THE TRADE JOB BLUEPRINT** covers all of it, in order. $27 PDF, 30-day money-back guarantee. See what's inside at nd6figures.com/blueprint

Educational guide. Not a job offer. No job or income is guaranteed.

SOURCES & NOTES

WHERE THIS CAME FROM

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook. Electricians (median pay $63,190, May 2025): bls.gov/ooh/construction-and-extraction/electricians.htm

BLS, Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers ($95,320): bls.gov/ooh/.../electrical-power-line-installers-and-repairers.htm

BLS, Elevator and Escalator Installers and Repairers ($109,910): bls.gov/ooh/.../elevator-and-escalator-installers-and-repairers.htm

BLS, Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers ($66,200): bls.gov/ooh/.../telecommunications-equipment-installers

U.S. Dept. of Labor, Apprenticeship Finder: apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-job-finder

NEIEP, National Elevator Industry Educational Program: neiep.org

Electrical Training Alliance (IBEW and NECA): electricaltrainingalliance.org

Job Corps: jobcorps.gov

Khan Academy, Algebra: khanacademy.org/math/algebra

Links and requirements checked October 2026. Programs change their rules and application windows, so confirm details on each official page before you act. This guide is general information, not a guarantee of any job or income. Pay figures are national medians and will differ where you live.