

# Local 75 Ironworkers Apprenticeship Training Center recruits from all walks of life

The leadership at the Ironworkers Apprenticeship Training Center knows the importance of investing in workforce skills development. That is why the center accepts new apprentices into the program year-round.

While the program does not require an applicant to take a test when they sign up, that doesn't mean it's going to be an easy job.



Ironworkers Local 75 apprentices practice cutting wire at the training center.

Alan Ruda, Ironworkers Local 75 apprenticeship coordinator, says apprentices have to have a high level of agility and discipline. Plus, because of the high temperatures here in the Southwest, the work is physically and mentally demanding.

"I've had apprentices come here from other states, and they quickly find out they have to push themselves a little harder to make it in the craft here." Ruda explains.

But he also points out the learning-while-earning program is worth it.

"We buy their books and pay their tuition, so all in all we are investing about \$1,200 a year on every student," Ruda says. "That is more than many of the other programs out there where you actually have to pay for them."

Signatory contractors value the training and safety involved because it makes their ironworkers on jobs much more skilled – keeping work on schedule and done right. Ruda emphasizes that training is helpful for Local 75's contractors to be competitive in landing construction contracts. That's important to keeping everyone involved working.

Apprentice training is only one aspect of the center.



Ironworkers Local 75 represents Arizona's most skilled iron craftsmen and is essential to building the state and supporting the economy. *Story and photos by Brenda Yanez/Torres Consulting & Law Group.*

While apprentices take classes ranging from safe rigging techniques to reading and interpreting drawings for reinforcing ironwork, the center also offers journeymen-upgrade classes in safety and welding.

One of the most recent developments is the partnership between the Ironworkers Apprenticeship program and the Navajo Department of Workforce Development. Ruda says these applicants will complete a very challenging five-week training course at the Ironworker Training Facility in Phoenix.

“But when they are done with the program, we are offering them membership into a local union apprenticeship program and job placement,” Ruda says. “We’re very excited about providing these opportunities.”

Not only is the Local 75 Ironworkers Apprenticeship Center recruiting from different walks of life, the leadership also prides itself in serving youths. Local 75 members supported the 2013 SkillsUSA event which consists of students from various high schools and junior colleges looking to improve their work skills.



Ironworkers Local 75 training center welcome sign.

hire out of the union, they'll know they're getting a guy with the skills they want and need.”

The students compete by building fabrication tables. Local 75 members assist in getting local contractors to donate material for the student projects and serve as judges in the competition.

Ruda also emphasizes that the Ironworker leadership encourages continuous learning. Ruda wants his guys to continue learning no matter their stage in life or career.

“It’s easier for them to find a job if they keep up with their skills,” Ruda explains. “And when subcontractors

## [Learn More

**Address:** 330 E. Maricopa Freeway  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

**Phone:** (602) 276-6055

**Number of apprentices:** 98

**Apprentice wages:** Starts around \$15.91 an hour plus \$8 an hour in fringe benefits.

**Number of class hours and work hours required to turn out:** The program takes four years to complete and requires 800 classroom hours plus 5,600 to 8,000 on-the-job training hours, depending on previous work experience.

**Website:** [www.ironworkers75.org](http://www.ironworkers75.org)