

Lack of opportunities for people to train in skilled positions is a chronic issue in the labor movement and our economy. Many industries are difficult to enter without a personal connection or formal education. However, the high school to college pipeline is limited to individuals with a level of privilege that is not universal. Disconnected youth (defined as a non-institutional person between 16-24 that is not engaged in a formal education or labor position) hovered between 12-15% for individuals aged 20-29 before the COVID pandemic and has risen since (Youth Employment Report 2021-22). While there is a myriad of reasons why people chose to not work or go to school, a publicly supported pipeline into appropriate employment would be a valuable piece of the equation that needs to be constructed to support the economic structure we are in while also putting individual's needs at the forefront.

Currently all public works projects valued over \$1million must ensure that at least 15% of all labor hours are performed by a registered apprentice under RCW 39.04.320.

Creating a mandate that labor skill education is a valued part of any project creates a subsidized pipeline of trained employees into the workforce. These are labor force members who are motivated to learn a trade and because there is a supportive RCW that employers must adhere to, apprentices are given opportunities that they may not have had access to prior to the Apprenticeship Utilization Requirements Initiative of 2000.

Expanding the AUR to different fields of employment would revolutionize our workforce. Employers would be mandated to create structures where people could learn about a field from experienced members. These new workers would also add a needed layer of diversity, expertise, and equity into many workplaces. The subsequent positive economic opportunity would have a ripple effect on every aspect of our economy.

“Youth Employment Report 2021-22 .” 2022 *Washington Youth Employment Outlook*,  
[www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-Youth-Employment-Report-Final-Draft.pdf](http://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-Youth-Employment-Report-Final-Draft.pdf). Accessed 22 June 2023.

*Apprenticeship Utilization Fact Sheet*, Jan. 2020, [lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/apprenticeship/docs/AUR2020.pdf](http://lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/apprenticeship/docs/AUR2020.pdf). Accessed 22 June 2023.

*RCW 39.04.320: Apprenticeship Training programs—Public Works contracts—Adjustment of Specific projects—Report and Collection of Agency data—Apprenticeship Utilization Advisory Committee Created*. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=39.04.320>