

As I sit here and listen to the waves crash onto the African coast, I reflect back on what happened more than a decade ago. At the age of 16 I dropped out of high school and had multiple arrests under my belt. Now I have a job that pays me over \$160,000 a year, while only working 8 - 10 months a year. I have worked for employers that have sent me all over the world for work. The great thing is that the job doesn't require a degree, thousands of dollars in student loans, or even a crazy amount of experience. In fact, if you do the process correctly, you will get paid on the job training, and schooling provided to you at no cost. How do you ask? By becoming an electrician. Yes, you need to get an apprenticeship to obtain a license, but by doing so you can bypass losing years of time and money required for a college degree. A successfully completed apprenticeship can give you exponential returns in life, such as time, money, and confidence. Here's how to pin an amazing job opportunity to create your window to an outstanding future!

This is how to get your foot in the door for an apprenticeship, which can build your bridge to a high-earning income once completed. When I was first offered an apprenticeship, I was asked to relocate to downtown Denver and be paid \$10.00 an hour. I was living on my own and could not even afford to relocate better yet pay my bills. This rate would not cut it. However, I was able to receive an apprenticeship that paid 29.85 an hour starting.

First, look up pay rates of electricians or even other trades in your area like carpentry, plumbing, and HVAC. You can find the pay rates for electricians [.https://www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes472111.htm](https://www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes472111.htm). You can also google search "(insert trade job name here) pay rate maps" and note where the highest paid states are. If you are looking for a higher paying apprenticeship, then you may have to consider relocating. Rates will vary by state and city. If moving is not an option, and you can get by on a lower paying apprenticeship,

go for it. The lower paid areas also are more likely to have less competition to enter the apprenticeship program. The higher paying apprenticeships will have more competition. So, you can always start your apprenticeship, save money, and then move to the higher paying areas with more experience under your belt.

Second, look up all the union halls in your area, do not limit yourself to just your town. Unions have great benefits, high pay rates, and a pension. Check out cities nearby; they may not be too far from a commute. Search the internet for "electrician's union (enter city here)" or "electrician local union (enter city here or your current location)". There you will get a treasure chest full of information. How to apply and the benefits for joining the local are all on the web-page. Follow the steps online to apply, but do not just stop there. Call the office and ask what it would take to get an union apprenticeship. Then one of the best tactics you can use is to call the hall and see if you can set up a meeting with a representative. Show your face to the people there and then they can link a face to your application. Just being another piece of paper in an application pile lowers your chances of getting in. The next best thing is to see if you can volunteer. Ask about how you can volunteer either at the office, events, or even meetings. Giving your free time will show them how serious you are about joining, but also build incredible contacts on the inside. After you apply, always follow up with a phone call and ask how the process is going. If you do not have prior experience in the field you're applying for it may be hard to get in. I was horrible with using tools, so I volunteered at habitat for humanity some weekends to learn how to use some tools and familiarize myself with the construction environment. Volunteering construction also looks amazing on your application, and shows your willingness to learn. If you do not get in, do not get discouraged. There are many of my

co-workers who had to apply and interview multiple times at multiple places. Be driven and do not give up. Keep repeating the process until you get in.

However, that is not the only route to go. Head over to your local union's website and click on the "Employer" tab, and look through the signatories. There you will find all the contractors in your area who are union members and what trades the contractor shops are. You will witness a treasure trove of leads at the point. Systematically research each company listed. Read the front page of their website and memorize what they are and what they do. Call them, introduce yourself, and say:

"I am interested in applying for your company, I love what your company does (electrical commercial contracting). What would it take for me to get an apprenticeship with you?" Make sure to ask questions like "What is your ideal version of an apprentice" or "What are the qualifications required to become an apprentice in your company".

Write down the company's answer and make sure that you list what they are looking for in a person and note all of their answers. If the company or contractor says they are not taking applicants at the time, ask them when they will. If a date is provided make sure to add the date and company name to your phone's calendar. Make sure to follow up when that date arrives.

When I got my apprenticeship, I called the contractor who I work for and asked if they were hiring. They asked if I was a journeyman or possessed a license. I honestly answered "no", but asked them if they offered an apprenticeship. They said yes. They actually just started their very own program and asked me to come in for an interview. Just like that I got to show my face to them. If I had just ended the conversation after telling them I was not a journeyman, I would never have gotten the job. Make sure you have the right questions in front of you just for that reason. Always take feedback from these companies/employers and mold yourself into what

they are looking for. Check out www.thebluebook.com to see a complete list of contractors in your area. Start calling and asking. Make sure to document your responses and identify patterns of requirements. If they give you a date or time when applications will be accepted, add it your calendar.

Next check your local utility companies. Check your electric bills, water bills, internet bills. Write down the names of the utilities. Repeat the same system as you did for the union hall. Call the utilities in your area and see if you can set up a meeting. Ask about volunteering opportunities for the office or even at events. Also ask them dates for apprenticeship applications and see what it would take to a job. Making those connections to the people inside will help them favor you as a new hire.

Another way to find leads is quite simple. Keep your eyes open for any work vans or trucks with electrical contractors' names on it. Call the companies listed and ask about apprenticeship opportunities. If you see the person using the work van or work truck stopped in a parking lot or at a job site, simply ask them what it would take to join their company. Construction sites are focal points for job opportunities. Look up construction projects going on in your area, or take note of where on-going projects are. Show up and ask what it would take to become an apprentice. This way you're showing your face, drive, and confidence by going up to workers and seeing how you can be like them.

Meanwhile, if you run dry on leads, think deeply about where contractors may regularly visit. Perhaps electrical supply shops? Google search electrical supply shops near your location. Stop in and ask them what contractors regularly visit, and see if they have leads on anyone who is hiring. They frequently talk to electrical businesses and may be able to give you an inside scoop. Also, most of the time the customers in supply stores are contractors or electricians

themselves. Strike up a conversation and ask what it would take to get a job with them. You will never know the outcome unless you ask.

These tactics should give you plenty of leads and ideas generated for what it will take to get your apprenticeship rolling. Always take constructive criticism in a positive manner. Channel it and refine yourself to meet the qualifications required. Always remember not to give up, and when you turn down learn to love your failures. Keep cycling through union applications, contractors, utilities, electrical supply shops and work sites. It may take time, but the opportunity will show itself!

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