

CONSTRUCTION CONNECTIONS

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Collaborating for Success: Apprenticeship Orientation in Oregon

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The Portland Metro Area Regional Workforce Alliance held its first orientation sessions in July and August to prepare 31 potential apprentices for entering careers in heavy highway construction on the OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program.

ODOT collaborated with the Oregon Employment Department, Bureau of Labor and Industries, and WorkSystems Inc. to develop orientation classes helping candidates meet apprenticeship requirements to enter into the heavy highway construction labor pool. Those requirements include academic and skills testing, registration in a job database, and viewing an ODOT-produced video designed to prepare people for a career in highway construction.

Apprenticeships in heavy highway construction trades such as ironworking, carpentry and equipment operation provide occupational training that combines on-the-job experience with classroom instruction. Students can also apply these credits toward an associate degree. Typically, these paid apprenticeships last two to five years and allow people to earn a livable wage while they learn.

"Apprenticeships start at approximately \$16 per hour, or 60 percent of what a certified journey worker makes, and we'll prepare you to manage your money," said David Dixon of ODOT's Office of Civil Rights. "If you look at this as a career, the opportunities for financial and professional growth are limitless."