

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Powered by the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance



TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF POOL PROFESSIONALS

PHTA is helping the industry grow with a nationwide apprenticeship program

By Seth E. Ewing

THE POOL AND SPA industry is facing a shortage of skilled workers who can service and maintain aquatic environments. To address this challenge, the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA) launched a nationwide apprenticeship program that offers a comprehensive and flexible training pathway for aspiring pool technicians. The PHTA Registered Pool Maintenance and Service Technician Apprenticeship Program is registered with the U.S. Department of Labor and uses industry-developed competency and ANSI-approved standards developed by PHTA.

The program combines paid on-the-job training with online education,

allowing apprentices to learn and earn at the same time. Apprentices receive a skills-based education that prepares them for good-paying jobs in the pool and spa profession. They also earn a nationally recognized credential from the Department of Labor upon completion of the program.

PHTA Chairman of the Board Charlie Claffey, president of Claffey Pools, says it best, "The PHTA apprenticeship program was developed to provide a career path for individuals interested in our industry. As much as we need more skilled labor, apprentices need and want a path to grow and develop a trade that will serve them well into the future. With the education and training, the apprenticeship program is the right fit

for any apprentice.

"I love our industry, and it has provided me with opportunities that I never could have dreamt of. Now the time is right to train and develop the workforce for the future, not only for my business, but for the industry as a whole. The PHTA apprenticeship program is the right program for anyone interested in our great and thriving industry."

The program benefits both employers and employees in the pool and spa industry. Employers can recruit, build and retain a highly skilled workforce that meets their specific needs and standards. They can also access various incentives and tax credits for hiring apprentices. Employees gain

valuable work experience, mentorship, and career advancement opportunities. They can also access scholarships, grants, and other financial assistance to support their education.

The PHTA apprenticeship program is designed to be accessible and adaptable to different regions, markets and business models. The program has a flexible duration of 12 to 24 months, depending on the employer's preference and the apprentice's progress. The program also has a modular curriculum that covers topics such as water chemistry, filtration, circulation, sanitation, safety, electrical systems, automation, troubleshooting, customer service and more.

Dave Thompson, CEO of Swimming Pool Services in Wisconsin, is an active employer in the program. "The PHTA apprenticeship program is helping us take inexperienced service technicians and grow them into lead technicians much faster," he says. "Their growth is allowing Swimming Pool Services to take on more business and meet the demand in our area."

The PHTA apprenticeship program is a valuable investment for the pool and spa industry. It helps to create a pipeline of qualified service professionals who can meet the growing demand for pool and spa maintenance and service. It also helps to elevate the pool and spa profession as a skilled trade that offers rewarding career opportunities.

The PHTA Service Council was instrumental in the development and launch of the apprenticeship program. Council Chair Alexa Blanda of Mill Bergen Pools explains, "The PHTA Service Council was focused on delivering a program built by members, for members. We are excited to see the growth of the program since its launch and to serve our industry's greatest need. In partnership with the US DOL, our industry has a program that delivers and creates a pathway for employers to train their staff and attract their future workforce."

Employers interested in hiring apprentices through this program can visit apprenticeship.phta.org to sign up. The apprentice program is open to anyone in the industry, and participation is free for PHTA members. There is a fee for the additional education provided by PHTA.

The apprenticeship program is a cornerstone of the new PHTA workforce development initiative called Work In Aquatics. Work In Aquatics includes a consumer-facing career website, workinaquatics.com, that discusses all of the benefits of working in the pool and spa industry, as well as career pathways, case studies, facts and figures, and real-world testimonials from people currently working in the industry. Work In Aquatics also provides an overview of the apprenticeship program and the jobs that qualify for apprenticeships.

Another key feature of Work In Aquatics is the online job board, careers.workinaquatics.com, which allows PHTA members to upload any open job positions, including those that could be a fit for the apprenticeship program. This industry-specific job board will attract thousands of viable candidates who are specifically looking to work with pools, spas and aquatic facilities. PHTA members are able to post as many job listings as they would like for free through the end of 2023.

"The only barrier limiting the growth of our industry is a lack of new talent; otherwise, the sky's the limit," says Sabeena Hickman, CAE, president and CEO of PHTA. "We're ready to welcome a fresh generation of skilled professionals to join this exciting industry and those already in the workforce who may be looking for something new. With endless opportunities for career progression and a place for truly everyone, we want to remind jobseekers that a rewarding career in a thriving industry is within reach, and especially for those without a college degree."

The workforce development program will continue to grow and develop new tools and resources for both employers and jobseekers in the industry.

PHTA is proud to have worked closely with its membership in order to develop these programs and offer new ways to help grow and educate a skilled workforce for its members and the industry as a whole.

If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please contact the PHTA Workforce Team at workforce@phta.org. ~

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