



NEWS RELEASE

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170 Apprentices from Wisconsin Technical College System Awarded \$1,000 Scholarships *Expanded Great Lakes Commitment Helps Meet Need for More Skilled Workers in the Trades*

Madison, Wis.—With 83 percent of construction firms having difficulty finding qualified professional workers, as reported to the Associated General Contractors of America in a fall 2014 survey, training workers to alleviate this shortage is a critical priority for our country.

To fill these in-demand positions, apprenticeship programs throughout the [Wisconsin Technical College System](#) (WTCS) are preparing a new generation of workers for the construction and industrial trades. These programs provide on-the-job training for family-supporting careers and opportunities for upward mobility. But the road to program completion is long and often fraught with financial obstacles that can deter even the most motivated apprentices.

Apprenticeships combine several years of practical training with classroom instruction, and while apprentices earn modest wages on the job, they are not eligible for financial aid to help with program tuition. Additionally, the cost of specialized equipment, tools and clothing for their trades can present serious financial challenges. That's why [Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation](#) is supporting WTCS apprentices on their journey to professional certification.

"Great Lakes understands the apprentice's dilemma, and we don't want to see the cost of a welding helmet or steel-toe boots stand in the way of program completion," said President and Chief Executive Officer Richard D. George. "We created the [Tools of the Trade \\$1,000 Apprentice Scholarship](#) to help hardworking apprentices cover their program costs so they can help meet employer needs for skilled workers."

Great Lakes awarded \$170,000 in scholarships this month to 170 construction and industrial trade apprentices attending 14 WTCS colleges. Recipients have a diverse array of life experiences, including military veterans, single parents, recent high school graduates and displaced workers. Each received \$1,000 to help cover out-of-pocket expenses and keep them enrolled in their programs.

Terry Glasheen of Oshkosh worked in a mill for 31 years before it closed, and is now training in the Maintenance Mechanic/Millwright program at Fox Valley Technical College to improve his prospects in the job market. He said, "I'm not afraid of hard work, but in today's economy I need to have the knowledge and credentials that completing an apprenticeship will bring. This scholarship will help me deal with the loss of income and get me the tools I need to advance my career."

Great Lakes introduced this scholarship program in 2013 at Milwaukee Area Technical College, and expanded the opportunity to all 16 WTCS colleges in fall 2014. This year's Tools of the Trade \$1,000 Apprentice Scholarship attracted nearly 450 applicants.

"We look forward to learning the impact of this scholarship, as measured by the number of apprentices who complete their training and build rewarding careers in the construction and industrial trades," George said.

2014-2015 Tools of the Trade \$1,000 Apprentice Scholarships

Blackhawk Technical College
5 recipients

Milwaukee Area Technical College
20 recipients

Chippewa Valley Technical College
7 recipients

Moraine Park Technical College
5 recipients

Fox Valley Technical College
22 recipients

Northcentral Technical College
4 recipients

Gateway Technical College
2 recipients

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
11 recipients

Lakeshore Technical College
5 recipients

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
2 recipients

Madison Area Technical College
50 recipients

Waukesha County Technical College
12 recipients

Mid-State Technical College
9 recipients

Western Technical College
15 recipients

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About Great Lakes: Dedicated to making college education a reality since 1967.

Knowing that education has the power to change lives for the better, Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates was established as a nonprofit group focused on a single objective: helping students nationwide prepare for and succeed in postsecondary education and student loan repayment. As a leading student loan guarantor and servicer, we have been selected by the U.S. Department of Education to provide assistance and repayment planning to nearly 9 million borrowers – as well as assistance to colleges and lenders nationwide. Our group's earnings support one of the largest and most respected education philanthropy programs in the country. Since 2006, we have committed nearly \$130 million in grant funding to promote higher education access and completion for students of color, low-income students, and first-generation students. For additional information, visit home.mygreatlakes.org.