

HOUSE No. 4974

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, January 20, 2026.

The committee on Labor and Workforce Development, to whom were referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2085) of Marjorie C. Decker and others relative to providing opportunities for apprentices to complete their training and for ensuring a skilled workforce; the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2121) of Ryan M. Hamilton relative to providing opportunities for apprentices to complete their training and for ensuring a skilled workforce; the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2126) of Daniel J. Hunt and others for legislation to include certain bona fide apprenticeship and training programs under the prevailing wage law; and the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3375) of Michael P. Kushmerek, Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr., and Aaron L. Saunders relative to apprenticeship programs for career paths in construction, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4974) ought to pass.

For the committee,

PAUL MCMURTRY.

HOUSE No. 4974

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act Preparing Apprentices through Training, Hiring, and Skills in Massachusetts.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. For purposes of sections 5 and 6, the following words shall, unless the
2 context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:—

3 “Bid”, any bid, proposal, or quote submitted by a contractor at any tier to a public agency or to
4 another contractor for the performance of work on a public works project.

5 “Construction contract”, any public works contract with an estimated construction cost in excess
6 of \$10,000,000.

7 “Public agency”, any department, agency, board, commission, authority, or other instrumentality
8 of the commonwealth or of a political subdivision thereof, including any person contracting or
9 subcontracting for public works.

10 “Public works”, the construction, reconstruction, alteration, remodeling, repair, or demolition of
11 any public building or other public work by a public agency.

12 SECTION 2. Section 26 of chapter 149 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the
13 following paragraph at the end thereof:—

14 For any public works project with an estimated construction cost in excess of \$10,000,000, a

minimum percentage of the total hours worked, by trade, by employees receiving an hourly wage who are directly employed at the project site by the awarding authority, contractor, or subcontractor and who are subject to the prevailing wage law, shall be performed by apprentices. Such apprentices shall be registered in bona fide apprentice training programs approved by the division of apprentice standards within the executive office of labor and workforce development pursuant to sections 11H and 11I of chapter 23, and shall be employed in compliance with applicable apprentice-to-journeyman ratios established by a trades licensing board or by the division.

The required percentage of apprentice hours shall be phased in as follows:

- (i) one year after the effective date of this act, not less than 5 per cent;
- (ii) three years after the effective date of this act, not less than 10 per cent; and
- (iii) 4 years after the effective date of this act, not less than 15 per cent.

SECTION 3 (a) Chapter 149A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following subsection (f):—

(f) For any public works project with an estimated construction cost in excess of \$10,000,000, the apprentice utilization requirements set forth in section 26 of chapter 149 shall apply to all covered work performed under this chapter.

(b) Section 39M of chapter 30 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following subsection (f):—

(f) For any public works project with an estimated construction cost in excess of \$10,000,000, the apprentice utilization requirements set forth in section 26 of chapter 149 shall apply to all contracts awarded pursuant to this section.

SECTION 4. (a) Section 26 of chapter 149 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting

after the words “pension plans” the following words:—

, bona fide apprenticeship and training programs approved by the commonwealth and operated in compliance with sections 11E to 11L, inclusive, of chapter 23 of the General Laws.

(b) Section 27 of chapter 149 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after each occurrence of the words “pension plan,” “pension plans,” “health and welfare funds,” or “welfare funds,” the following words:—

, bona fide apprenticeship and training programs approved by the commonwealth and operated in compliance with sections 11E to 11L, inclusive, of chapter 23 of the General Laws.

SECTION 5. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a public agency shall require, as a condition of bidding on a construction contract for public works, that all construction managers, general contractors, and subcontractors at any tier maintain or participate in a bona fide apprentice training program for each apprenticeable trade or occupation represented in their workforce.

Such apprentice training programs shall be approved by the division of apprentice standards within the executive office of labor and workforce development pursuant to sections 11H and 11I of chapter 23 of the General Laws. Contractors and subcontractors shall register all apprentices with the division and shall comply with applicable apprentice-to-journeyperson ratios established by a trades licensing board or by the division.

A public agency may grant a waiver of the requirements of this subsection solely upon a written determination that, after good-faith solicitation, no qualified and responsible bidder maintaining or participating in a bona fide apprentice training program is reasonably available for a specific trade or scope of work.

Such waiver shall:

be limited to the specific trade or scope of work for which no qualified bidder is available;
not apply to the entire project unless the public agency makes a separate written finding for each
affected trade;
be project-specific and non-transferable;
be retained as part of the public record for the contract; and
be reported by the public agency to the executive office of labor and workforce development, in
a form and manner prescribed by the office, within 30 days of issuance.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to require an apprenticeship program to qualify as an
employee welfare benefit plan under the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of
1974, 29 U.S.C. §§1001–1461.

(b) Any bidder for a public works project subject to this section who fails to maintain or
participate in a bona fide apprentice training program, and who has not been granted a waiver
pursuant to subsection (a), shall not be deemed a responsible and eligible bidder.

SECTION 6. (a) The eligible industry sectors within the Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education’s Innovation Career Pathways program shall be expanded to include
Building and Transportation.

(b) Within said sector, a Building and Transportation Innovation Pathway shall be established to
prepare high school students for high-demand careers across the built environment, including but
not limited to housing production and modern building systems; transportation networks;
infrastructure maintenance and public works; clean energy–driven technologies; and construction
management, project coordination, and civil engineering fields.

(c) The department shall develop a statewide program template that includes academic and
industry integration, STEM-aligned coursework, partnerships with contractors and public

agencies, including MassDOT and the MBTA, and a minimum of 100 hours of work-based learning. The pathway shall meet all additional Innovation Career Pathways criteria and shall be made available to all designated schools and districts.

SECTION 7. Subsection (a) of section 11K of chapter 23 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out the first sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentence:—

The ratio of apprentices to journeypersons shall not conflict with the ratio established for apprenticeable occupations licensed by the commonwealth, and notwithstanding section 11G, neither the deputy director, the director, nor the apprenticeship council shall establish training standards in conflict with such ratios.

SECTION 8. There shall be established a special commission on apprenticeships in the commonwealth to study, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning the development, accessibility, quality, funding, and utilization of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs across all industry sectors, with particular attention to public works, construction, transportation, infrastructure, and emerging industries.

The commission shall consist of the following members or their designees:

- (i) the secretary of labor and workforce development, who shall serve as chair;
- (ii) the commissioner of the division of apprentice standards;
- (iii) the secretary of housing and economic development;
- (iv) the secretary of transportation;
- (v) the commissioner of elementary and secondary education;
- (vi) the president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, or a designee;
- (vii) a representative of union apprenticeship programs, appointed by the senate president;

107 (viii) a representative of open-shop or non-union apprenticeship programs, appointed by the
108 speaker of the house of representatives;

109 (ix) a representative of construction contractors, appointed by the senate president;

110 (x) a representative of minority- or women-owned businesses engaged in apprenticeable trades,
111 appointed by the speaker of the house; and

112 (xi) one member with expertise in workforce development or labor economics, appointed jointly
113 by the speaker of the house and the senate president.

114 The commission shall meet not less than twice annually and may convene additional meetings or
115 public hearings as it deems necessary. The commission shall study, including but not limited to:

116 (a) the adequacy of existing apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs to meet current and
117 projected workforce needs;

118 (b) barriers to participation for workers, employers, and sponsors;

119 (c) alignment of apprenticeship programs with secondary and post-secondary education
120 pathways;

121 (d) funding mechanisms and appropriation strategies to expand and strengthen apprenticeship
122 programs; and

123 (e) statutory or regulatory changes necessary to improve apprenticeship utilization and outcomes.

124 Not later than December 31 of each year, the commission shall file a report of its findings and
125 any recommendations for legislation or appropriations with the clerks of the senate and house of
126 representatives, who shall forward the same to the house and senate chairs of the committees on
127 Ways and Means and the joint committee on Labor and Workforce Development.

128 The commission shall be supported administratively by the executive office of labor and
129 workforce development and shall exist until dissolved by act of the general court.