

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.

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

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

23 The required percentage of apprentice hours shall be phased in as follows:
24 (i) one year after the effective date of this act, not less than 5 per cent;
25 (ii) three years after the effective date of this act, not less than 10 per cent; and
26 (iii) 4 years after the effective date of this act, not less than 15 per cent.
27 SECTION 3 (a) Chapter 149A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following
28 subsection (f):—
29 (f) For any public works project with an estimated construction cost in excess of \$10,000,000,
30 the apprentice utilization requirements set forth in section 26 of chapter 149 shall apply to all
31 covered work performed under this chapter.
32 (b) Section 39M of chapter 30 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following
33 subsection (f):—
34 (f) For any public works project with an estimated construction cost in excess of \$10,000,000,
35 the apprentice utilization requirements set forth in section 26 of chapter 149 shall apply to all
36 contracts awarded pursuant to this section.
37 SECTION 4. (a) Section 26 of chapter 149 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting

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

39 , bona fide apprenticeship and training programs approved by the commonwealth and operated in

40 compliance with sections 11E to 11L, inclusive, of chapter 23 of the General Laws.

41 (b) Section 27 of chapter 149 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after each

42 occurrence of the words “pension plan,” “pension plans,” “health and welfare funds,” or “welfare

43 funds,” the following words:—

44 , bona fide apprenticeship and training programs approved by the commonwealth and operated in

45 compliance with sections 11E to 11L, inclusive, of chapter 23 of the General Laws.

46 SECTION 5. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a public agency

47 shall require, as a condition of bidding on a construction contract for public works, that all

48 construction managers, general contractors, and subcontractors at any tier maintain or participate

49 in a bona fide apprentice training program for each apprenticeable trade or occupation

50 represented in their workforce.

51 Such apprentice training programs shall be approved by the division of apprentice standards

52 within the executive office of labor and workforce development pursuant to sections 11H and 11I

53 of chapter 23 of the General Laws. Contractors and subcontractors shall register all apprentices

54 with the division and shall comply with applicable apprentice-to-journeyperson ratios established

55 by a trades licensing board or by the division.

56 A public agency may grant a waiver of the requirements of this subsection solely upon a written

57 determination that, after good-faith solicitation, no qualified and responsible bidder maintaining

58 or participating in a bona fide apprentice training program is reasonably available for a specific

59 trade or scope of work.

60 Such waiver shall:

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

68 Nothing in this section shall be construed to require an apprenticeship program to qualify as an
69 employee welfare benefit plan under the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of
70 1974, 29 U.S.C. §§1001–1461.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 100 (i) the secretary of labor and workforce development, who shall serve as chair;
- 101 (ii) the commissioner of the division of apprentice standards;
- 102 (iii) the secretary of housing and economic development;
- 103 (iv) the secretary of transportation;
- 104 (v) the commissioner of elementary and secondary education;
- 105 (vi) the president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, or a designee;
- 106 (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.