



On behalf of the New Jersey State Ironworkers, Ron Repmann, Northern New Jersey District Council of Ironworkers Training Director, and Mark Docie, Ironworkers Local #68 Training Coordinator, accept a certificate of recognition from the American Council on Education for completing the evaluation process.

NJ PLACE: From Apprenticeship to College Degree

Imagine earning college credits while you complete your apprenticeship in the union building trades.

NJ: Pathways Leading Apprentices to a College Education (NJ PLACE) will help you do just that. As a result of an exciting collaboration among community colleges, organized labor and several state agencies, a statewide program has been developed to award college credit for registered apprenticeships. The pilot program evaluates apprenticeships for college credit, initially focusing on the union building and construction trades' apprenticeship training programs, with the expectation it can grow to include other apprenticeship programs throughout the state.

A program unique to New Jersey, the NJ PLACE model connects college-level learning in local union apprenticeships to degree programs in New Jersey's community colleges, senior colleges and universities. NJ PLACE demonstrates how apprenticeships can serve as more than just an alternative to a college education. In fact, they can become a pathway to a college degree. The dual opportunity allows an individual to gain the valued skill and earning power of a craft plus the additional benefit of a college degree.

To date, five New Jersey unions -New Jersey Regional Council of Carpenters; the International Association of Ironworkers; Heat & Frost Insulators & Asbestos Workers; New Jersey State Association of Pipe Trades; and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - have had their apprenticeship training programs evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE), a third-party association that assesses the viability of college credit for organizations not traditionally affiliated with a college or university. The evaluation is thorough, with ACE scrutinizing trainers, curriculum, training instruction, and classroom and field experience. ACE has recommended college credits totaling from 45 to 70 for the evaluated union programs.

In response to the NJ PLACE model, all 19 New Jersey community

colleges have committed to creating a new Technical Studies degree that will allow apprenticeship participants to apply their ACE credits toward an Associate Degree in Applied Science. More than half of the colleges had the degree program in place by the end of October.

"We never dreamed we'd have such a positive response from the academic community," related Maureen King, NJ PLACE Director. "We had set our expectations at getting commitments from half-a-dozen. To have every community college actively setting up a Technical Studies program is very positive. Apprentices will be able to transfer their credits and continue their pursuit of a college degree even if their jobsite changes from one location to another within the state."

The Applied Science degree combines general education requirements with customized course work that allows New Jersey apprentices to specialize in one of three areas: construction management, business management or technology.

NJ PLACE is currently helping in the development of formal articulation agreements between the unions and academic institutions. NJ PLACE has identified a liaison at each of New Jersey's 19 community colleges specifically dedicated to assisting the apprentice transition from apprenticeship to a college degree.

"We're so pleased with the support we've received from both the unions and the colleges," Ms. King commented. "The program gives apprentices the opportunity to leverage their apprenticeship and college training to achieve a higher level of success in their professions."

For more information, please contact Jeanine Nagrod, NJ PLACE Director, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 50 Labor Center Way, New Brunswick, NJ 08901, (732) 932-7925, j.nagrod@rutgers.edu.