



» NEWS

Teamsters Joint Council 25 Training Fund Launches Apprenticeship Program

16 Students Begin Four-Year Program

Teamsters Joint Council 25 Training Fund began its new Apprenticeship Program on May 21. Out of 84 applicants, 16 students were chosen to complete the four-year program.



Sixteen students make up the first class of the Teamsters Joint Council 25 Training Fund Apprenticeship Program.



During the three weeks the students spend in the classroom, they take daily tests to prepare for the state's written exams.

The program's objective is to give students basic skills required to become a safe, professional commercial driver and help gain an entry-level job in the construction industry.

"The Teamsters have created an excellent program that offers the highest quality training; instruction on tests, forms and procedures; connections with good union companies; and hands-on training," said Robert White, Program Director of Teamsters Joint Council 25 Training Fund. "The program is a great idea for anyone interested in beginning a career in construction truck driving."

The program begins with three weeks in the classroom at the Joliet center to prepare for the permit written exam. Once the permit is obtained, the students will spend four to five weeks on the range and the road learning to drive.

"We want to give these drivers top notch skills, so they are ready for anything," said Joseph Costello, Teamsters Joint Council 25 Training Fund Trainer. "That might mean practicing backing up until it is perfect, but we are here to give them the time and skills to be prepared."

After the instructors decide students are



» NEWS



Students also receive practical lessons on driving the trucks.

ready, they spend a minimum of 44 hours behind the wheel dealing with real life situations. After successful completion of the skills and driving road test, students will be issued a CDL-A and placed with a contributing employer.

“We have many companies very interested in working with the center,” said Greg Stroud, Teamsters Joint Council 25 Training Fund Trainer. “It’s a great deal for them because they know they are hiring well trained, safe drivers who have been drug tested and had their licenses and records verified.”

It also allows employers to have a hand in molding a new employee.”

The apprenticeships were chosen based on meeting minimum qualifications including:

- Being 18 years of age;
- High school diploma or GED equivalent;
- Class “D” drivers license for at least one year;
- Clean driving record as shown on a State Motor Vehicle Driving Report;
- Passing a physical exam; and
- Clean drug test.

The first group of apprenticeships is from a wide range of backgrounds. A few have some experience driving trucks but most of the class has none.

“My husband works in the construction field, and I have always been interested in driving a truck,” said Tracy Berthold, a former administrative assistant. “When I found out about the program through the Chicago Women in Trade organization, I decided this was too good of an opportunity to pass up.”

There are eight men and women ranging in age from 19 to 58 participating in the program.

“I wanted to do this program because I have always wanted to drive a truck,” said Damon Wilson. “I have been working at a trailer store and know some stuff, but this program gives you great training and sets you up with a good union job.”



» NEWS

When the students are placed with employers they will be paid 60 percent of scale. As they gain more experience each year, they pay will go up. They are also eligible for the same benefits that the employer offers its regular employees.

The Teamsters Joint Council 25 Training Fund will be conducting the Apprenticeship Program once every year. To find out about the next session or for other questions, please call 815-773-0700. The Teamsters Joint Council 25 Training Fund also provide IBT instruction on safety and health training to students throughout the US.

Teamsters Joint Council 25 is the governing body of 22 local unions in the greater Chicagoland area. The Joint Council assists its local unions in coordinating Teamster activities, solving problems and organizing.