

About Ironworkers Local 75

Chartered in 1910, the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Ironworkers Local 75 has more than 1,000 active members and retirees.



Local 75 contributes to Arizona's economic development, not only in building key projects, but also in workforce training. Key projects include Sky Harbor Control Tower, Tempe Town Lake Bridge, Grand Canyon Skywalk, Tempe Centerpoint Towers, Phoenix Convention Center, Chase Field, University of Phoenix Stadium, and Jobing.com Arena.

Ironworkers are skilled in structural, reinforcing, ornamental, rigging/machinery-moving and welding/burning. Adherence to a strict substance-abuse policy helps ensure a safe work environment for Local 75's Ironworkers and the contractors that employ them.

Key Leadership

Terry L. Wright

Business Manager & Financial Secretary/Treasurer

Wesley Frier

President, Business Agent

Gene Ryan

Organizer, Southern Arizona

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Alan Ruda

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What is an Ironworker?

Ironworkers build the skyline of every great city – erecting the steel frames of soaring skyscrapers. Ironworkers also help build highways, bridges, hospitals and sports stadiums – weaving the reinforcing steel bars essential to concrete construction.



- There are four types of ironworkers:
 - **Structural ironworkers** erect and connect fabricated steel beams, often at great heights.
 - **Reinforcing ironworkers** install steel bars, known as rebar, and post-tensioning cables to reinforce concrete structures. Sometimes called *rodbusters*.
 - **Ornamental ironworkers** install metal windows, metal stairways, catwalks and railing.
 - **Rigging and machinery-moving ironworkers** load, move and set machinery, structural steel and curtain walls. Operate cranes, forklifts and aerial lifts.
- Union ironworkers complete a rigorous apprenticeship program. The four-year work-study program includes 160 hours in the classroom each year. The requirements for the apprenticeship program include:
 - Minimum age of 18
 - High school diploma or GED certificate
 - Good physical condition, agility and sense of balance
 - Drug and alcohol free
- The median pay for ironworkers nationwide is \$22.18 an hour, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. Ironworkers with Local 75 earn \$26.52 to \$33.02 an hour.
- Employment of ironworkers is projected to grow 22 percent from 2012 to 2022, faster than the average for all occupations, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- The starting pay for apprentices is 60 percent that of fully trained ironworkers, known as journeymen. Apprentices earn more as they become more skilled.



What is an Ironworker apprentice?

Shaping steel takes skill and smarts. The apprentice program of Ironworkers Local 75 prepares workers for a career that offers good

wages and excellent benefits. And while many in college sink into debt preparing for a career, ironworker apprentices earn while they learn.

- The requirements for the apprenticeship program include:
 - Minimum age of 18
 - High school diploma or GED certificate
 - Good physical condition, agility and sense of balance
 - Drug and alcohol free
- Apprentices get 160 hours of instruction every year – including college-level classes.
- Classes such as structural steel, architectural steel and welding are each 50 hours – 30 hours of classroom instruction, 20 hours of hands-on lab or shop training.
- Classes in structural steel cover topics such as history of structural-steel erection, tools, equipment and plumbing and aligning structural steel, installing metal decking, erecting bridges and erecting wind turbines.
- Classes in architectural steel cover topics such as constructing curtain walls, skylights, storefronts and entranceways.
- The starting wage of apprentices in the Ironworkers Local 75 is 60 percent that of an experienced journeyman — \$15.91 an hour, plus health insurance and pension benefits.
- The wage increases as an apprentice advances in the program.
- Employment of ironworkers is projected to grow 22 percent from 2012 to 2022, faster than the average for all occupations, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Labor lingo:

A glossary of common terms in the world of labor unions.

Apprentice – An individual in training for a skilled trade such as a structural or reinforcing ironworker. An apprenticeship may have four to five years of on-the-job training and classroom instruction. An apprentice earns good wages, health insurance and retirement benefits while earning skill certifications and, oftentimes, an associate's degree.



Business agent – A full-time representative of a local union whose job is to represent members. Often elected by the members, business agents participate in contract negotiations and handle grievances.

Business manager – The chief administrative officer of a union local. The duties of this elected office include recruiting more dues-paying members, handling grievances and negotiating and enforcing collective bargaining agreements.

Davis-Bacon Act – A Republican-sponsored federal law first enacted in 1931 that requires contractors on public works projects to pay laborers and mechanics a *prevailing wage* set by the U.S. Department of Labor. Compliance problems sometimes arise, including misclassification of workers and failure to pay the full prevailing wage, including fringe benefits, for all hours worked.

Joint Apprenticeship Training Center – A building complex with workshops and classrooms funded by contributions from union members and signatory contractors, where apprentices learn and practice the skills of the trade and journeymen receive continuing education and training.

Journeyman – A skilled and experienced tradesman who has successfully completed an apprenticeship that includes four or five years of on-the-job training and classroom instruction.

Project Labor Agreement (PLA) – A collective bargaining agreement that sets wages and work rules for all tradesmen and laborers on large construction projects such as schools, stadiums and government buildings. The agreement does not mandate use of union labor. Many private companies – including Boeing, Toyota and Wal-Mart – use PLAs for major construction projects.

Prevailing wage – The pay scale established for government-financed projects. Federally funded projects are covered by the Davis-Bacon Act, and the wage scale is set by the Department of Labor based on a survey of area wages for each occupation. Some states and cities also set a prevailing wage for projects not covered by the Davis-Bacon Act.

Signatory contractor – A company that agrees to hire trained, drug-free union workers

What is prevailing wage?

Prevailing wage is the pay scale established for construction laborers and mechanics working on government-financed projects.



- Federally funded projects are covered by the Davis-Bacon Act and the wage scale is set by the Department of Labor based on a survey of area wages for each occupation.
- The prevailing wage is the wage paid to the majority of tradesmen on similar projects in the area.
- In areas where the majority of workers aren't paid the same wage, the prevailing wage is a weighted average of all the wage rates for each class of worker in the area.
- The prevailing wage for Davis-Bacon projects typically is not the wage set in labor union collective bargaining agreements.
- Some states and cities also set a prevailing wage for projects not covered by federal law.

Benefits of prevailing wage policies

The use of a prevailing wage standard on federal, state and local government construction projects does more than protect local builders from unfair competition.

Some less obvious benefits of a prevailing wage include:



- **Greater productivity.** High-skill workers are more productive than low-wage, low-skill workers. A study of highway and bridge construction in 10 states found that high-wage, high-skill workers built 74 miles of roadbed and 33 miles more of bridges for \$557 million *less* than low-wage, low-skill counterparts.
- **Safety.** Construction-related fatality rates were 25 percent lower among workers in states with prevailing wage laws, according to one study. Another study found states with prevailing wage laws experienced lower injury rates. It's thought that injury rates are lower in states regulated by prevailing wage laws because the regulation encourages training and retention of experienced workers.
- **Workforce development.** Stability in wages and benefits helps retain and recruit workers into the construction trades, where demand for workers is expected to exceed overall job growth. Union workers contribute to building trades training programs. States that have repealed prevailing wage laws have seen sharp loss in apprenticeship training programs that turn out skilled workers.

What is a Project Labor Agreement?

A project labor agreement – or PLA – is a contract that sets wages and work rules for all tradesmen and laborers on large construction projects such as schools, stadiums and government buildings. While most agreements cover public projects, many private companies – including Boeing, Toyota and Wal-Mart – use PLAs for major construction projects.



In most states, a PLA does not mandate use of union labor.

The benefits of a PLA include:

- **Efficiency.** A PLA establishes uniform work rules for the hundreds – if not thousands – of workers on a project. The different trades, for example, may have different rules about start times, the number of holidays and when the holidays are observed. A PLA puts everyone on the same page, making project management easier.
- **Stability.** A PLA prohibits any strike or labor disruption during the life of the project and sets wages and benefits for the duration of the project. The project managers don't have to worry about the expiration of a collective-bargaining contract of one of the many trades involved in a massive project.
- **Flexibility.** A project labor agreement can include work rules tailored for the specific project. For example, when working on schools or highways when construction is best done at night, a PLA may state that the first shift starts at 4 p.m.
- **Safety.** A PLA can establish a single safety program for the project, replacing the chaos of dozens of individual programs of the various contractors. Such coordination can reduce insurance costs.
- **Innovation.** Because each agreement covers a single project, a PLA can be used to experiment with job site changes to improve productivity.
- **Workforce development.** A PLA can include provisions for training, including the creation of apprenticeship programs. A PLA may also have provisions for hiring local workers from designated low-income communities.

What is the Davis-Bacon Act?

The Davis-Bacon Act is a Republican-sponsored federal law first enacted in 1931 that requires contractors on public works projects to pay laborers and mechanics a *prevailing wage* set by the U.S. Department of Labor.



The law is designed to protect local businesses bidding against transient contractors whose bids on federal contracts are based on below-market wages.

- The prevailing wage for Davis-Bacon projects is based on surveys conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- The prevailing wage is the wage paid the majority of tradesmen on similar projects.
- In areas where the majority of workers aren't paid the same wage, the prevailing wage is a weighted average of all the wage rates for each class of worker in the area.
- The prevailing wage for Davis-Bacon projects typically is not the wage set in labor union collective bargaining agreements.
- The prevailing wage is the union wage rate only in areas in which more than 50 percent of laborers and mechanics are paid union scale – about 25 percent of Davis-Bacon projects.
- A study of highway projects in Colorado found no significant difference in construction costs between Davis-Bacon projects and projects not subject to prevailing wage standards.
- Common compliance issues with Davis-Bacon projects include misclassification of workers and failure to pay the full prevailing wage, including fringe benefits, for all hours worked.