

DENTAL ASSISTANT APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an apprenticeship program?

- An apprenticeship program is a structured training program that combines **on-the-job work experience** with **classroom instruction**, allowing individuals to gain hands-on skills and theoretical knowledge in a specific trade or profession **while working in the industry and getting paid**.

Who can be an apprentice?

- Current employees who are interested in becoming a Registered Dental Assistant.
- Individuals who are interested in dentistry and are new to the industry.

Who provides the education?

- Butte County Office of Education provides the courses and certifications for the program at **NO COST** to the apprentice.

What is the employer's responsibility?

- The employer will provide a journey-level (experienced) mentor to support apprentices in their office.
- Sign an Employer Partner Agreement with Butte County Office of Education.
- Provide at least one wage progression for the apprentice during the apprenticeship.
- Coordinate with the program sponsor to share data, including hours worked and pay rates.

What are the benefits to employers?

- Reduce turnover rates
- Customize training
- Enhanced talent pipeline
- Higher productivity

Who pays the apprentice's wages?

- The apprentice is a regular employee; therefore, the business or individual employer is responsible for paying the apprentice's wage.

How many hours of on-the-job Training (OJT) does the apprentice need?

- The program requires a total of 2,000 documented on-the-job training (OJT) hours for completion, which equates to approximately 16 months when averaging 30 hours per week.

What are the required hours of education?

- This apprenticeship program consists of 160 hours of instruction, combining independent coursework with hands-on classroom learning.
- The program emphasizes ensuring apprentices receive comprehensive foundational knowledge early on.
- Apprentices will participate in hands-on classroom instruction primarily on Fridays, with some sessions scheduled for weekends.

Can previous experience and/or learning count towards the completion of the apprenticeship program?

- Apprentices with previous work experience will complete a skills and experience assessment to evaluate their current level of competency.
- During the probationary period, prior learning will be evaluated using transcripts, certifications, course credits, and/or demonstrated skills.
- All credit decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, with supporting documentation required for each determination.

What are the requirements to be an apprentice?

- A **high school diploma**, General Educational Development (GED) equivalency or other high school equivalency credentials are required.
- An apprentice must be at least **18 years of age**, except where a higher age is required by law.
- An apprentice must be employed in their industry occupation by an Employer Partner to participate in the apprenticeship program.
- Applicants will be physically capable of performing the essential functions of the apprenticeship program, with or without reasonable accommodation, and without posing a direct threat to the health and safety of the individual or others.
- Applicants must have reliable transportation to the job and related instruction as appropriate; and must possess such speaking, reading, and comprehension abilities as may be essential for reading and understanding written and oral instructions applicable to their occupation.



Equal Employment Opportunity

The Butte County Office of Education will not discriminate against apprenticeship applicants or apprentices based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), sexual orientation, genetic information, or because they are an individual with a disability or a person 40 years old or older. The Butte County Office of Education will take affirmative action to provide equal opportunity in apprenticeship and will operate the apprenticeship program as required under Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 30.