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Big Industrial Projects Start to Pay Off for PA Families, Communities

Union apprenticeship programs expand to build power plants, data centers

Don't listen to the naysayers.

The launch of new power plants, data center projects, and manufacturing facilities is creating new family-sustaining careers for Pennsylvania residents. You just need to look at the apprenticeship numbers for some of the skilled building trades that are building that infrastructure.

Union Local	Before	Today
Boilermakers 154	No new apprentices 2020-2024	150 new apprentices in the last 18 months
Operating Engineers 66	80-90 per year	198 in latest class, possible expansion of training facility
Iron Workers 3	55 three years ago	171 in latest class
Steamfitters 449	25 in 2024	48 in 2025, 85 in 2026
Insulators 2	0 in 2023, 0 in 2024	24 in 2025, 60 in 2026

Other skilled-trade unions in the region are showing similar growth in their apprenticeships.

Some projects are underway – the TECfusions data center at the reclaimed Alcoa research park in Westmoreland County, the 4.3 GW Homer City generation project on the site of an old coal-fired power plant in Indiana County, Aligned Data Centers redeveloping part of a former coal-fired power plant complex.

Others are moving through the approval process including the U.S. Steel hot strip mill in Braddock, Vistra's expansion of the Beaver Valley Nuclear Plant, NextEra's proposed 3.75 GW gas-fired power plant complex in Fayette County, the Prime Data Centers power-and-data campus in Washington County.

Together, those projects alone could total \$40 billion or more in heavy construction over the next 10-20 years. And thousands and thousands of new manufacturing, energy, and data jobs.

Tens of billions in investment.

Thousands of jobs.

Across multiple counties.

If we stay focused on the goal.

“We are proud to have our local members playing a leading role in building a project that will support jobs, economic growth, and energy development for decades to come,” Shawn Steffee, business agent for Boilermakers Local 154, said about the Homer City project. “The future could not be brighter for our members and our apprentices.”

Pittsburgh Works Together is a business-organized labor-workforce-economic development alliance working to grow jobs and expand the industries that are the foundation of our economy, including energy, manufacturing, and construction, to provide opportunity for all residents.

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