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From Apprentice to Entrepreneur: How the Jumpstart Savings Program Supports Career Progression

The path from apprenticeship to entrepreneurship in the skilled trades is an exciting journey filled with rewarding opportunities. With dedication and the right support, you can build a successful career.

The Jumpstart Savings Program, a state-administered career savings account designed specifically for West Virginia's skilled workforce, is a valuable tool to help you reach your goals. A Jumpstart Savings Account can **benefit a range of individuals** pursuing careers in skilled trades. This includes community and technical college students and graduates, registered apprenticeship participants and journeymen, Advanced Career Education (ACE) students and graduates, and High School Career Technical Education (CTE) students and graduates.

The Importance of Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships offer a strong foundation for a career in the skilled trades. Merging classroom learning with hands-on experience gives apprentices valuable skills and industry knowledge. This experience allows individuals to master the intricacies of their trade, learning from seasoned professionals. It's a period of growth and development, building a strong skill set that will be the cornerstone for future success. During this time, the Jumpstart Savings Program can help cover **qualified expenses** like purchasing required tools, equipment or fees for certifications, and licenses necessary to start a career in the skilled trades.

The Journey to Entrepreneurship

As an apprentice progresses, they develop a deeper understanding of their industry, including market trends, customer needs and business operations. This knowledge, combined with the technical expertise gained through apprenticeship, positions them to consider entrepreneurship. Transitioning from employee to employer is a significant step. It requires careful planning and preparation. Developing a solid business plan, securing financing and building a strong customer base are essential to success.

Owning a skilled trades business offers numerous rewards. It provides the opportunity for independence and financial growth. However, it also comes with challenges. Managing finances, hiring and retaining employees and navigating industry regulations are just a few of the responsibilities that business owners face. To help overcome these hurdles, the Jumpstart Savings Program can provide essential funds for business start-up costs, such as purchasing equipment and marketing materials, as well as covering initial operating expenses.

Jumpstart Your Future
The Jumpstart Savings Program can support your goals at every stage of your skilled trades career journey. The program provides several key benefits, including state tax deductions on contributions and qualified withdrawals, the ability to use your savings for qualified expenses and no monthly maintenance fees. The Jumpstart Savings Program is more than just a financial tool; it's an investment in your future. By saving consistently and taking advantage of the program's benefits, you're setting yourself up for long-term success in West Virginia's thriving skilled trades industry.

Take the Jumpstart Savings Account **eligibility quiz** today.

Get Started

Trade Spotlight: Aircraft and Avionics Equipment Mechanics and Technicians

Aircraft and avionics equipment mechanics and technicians install, test, adjust, and repair aircraft systems and equipment. They typically work in hangars, repair stations, or on airfields, often in loud environments.

Most workers enter the field through postsecondary training, including FAA-approved certificate programs or associate degrees, though some train on the job or in the military.

In May 2025, aircraft mechanics and service technicians earned a median annual wage of $79,870, while avionics technicians earned $82,280. Employment in these roles is projected to grow 6-percent from 2025 to 2035, with about 13,100 openings each year due to retirements and workforce transitions.

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

Connect with a Jumpstart Savings Program representative at one of these upcoming events:

9/30 - F.U.N. Expo (Charleston)
10/2 - Woodrow Wilson HS (Beckley)
10/9 - Independence HS (Coal City)
10/14 - Opportunity Expo (Grand Central Mall-Vienna)
10/16 - Liberty HS (Glen Daniel)
10/23 - Shady Spring HS (Shady Spring)
10/28 - Statewide Union Council Meeting (Parkersburg)
11/5 - Eastern WV Community and Technical College's Community Job Fair (Moorefield)
12/15 - Sissonville HS (Sissonville)

Connect with Us!

Does your organization or group need more information about the Jumpstart Savings Program?

Staff members are available for events, speaking engagements, and conferences. If you or your organization would like to schedule an in-person or webinar speaker, please email wvjumpstart@wvsto.gov or call 304-340-5055.

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