

Plumber

Install and repair the pipes that carry water, gas and waste. Paid from your first day of training.

TYPICAL PAY

\$63,800

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$44k to \$108k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Houses under construction, service calls, factories, commercial buildi...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma or equivalent** Grade 12
 Math, and any shop or construction course you can take. A driver's license matters as much as your transcript here.
- 2 Get taken on** Weeks to months
 Apply to a United Association local, a plumbing contractor, or a state-registered program. Apprenticeship.gov lists open positions by trade and zip code. This is the hardest step, not the exam.
- 3 Register as an apprentice** Days
 In most states you register with the plumbing board before you touch a pipe. Texas, for example, requires an apprentice registration and fingerprints from every license holder.
- 4 Work and study** 4 to 5 years
 The United Association says its apprenticeship typically lasts five years. You work full time on pay and attend classes in the evenings or in blocks.
- 5 Journeyman license** After your hours
 Log the required hours, then pass your state's journeyman examination on the plumbing code and practice. Several years later you can sit the master examination.

Pros and cons

- + Paid from day one, no student debt
- + Licensed in 4 to 5 years with a skill that cannot be offshored
- + Clear route to owning a business
- Hard on knees, back and shoulders over decades
- Crawlspace, trenches, sewage, and weather on construction sites
- On-call nights and weekends in service work

Optional boosts

Master plumber license. Welding certification. Medical gas installation. Backflow prevention tester.

Good to know

The union is bigger than most people think

The United Association represents about 409,000 skilled workers across North America in eight trades, including plumbers, pipefitters, steamfitters, sprinkler fitters and welders. It has been running for mor...

Texas licenses six different kinds of plumber

The Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners issues apprentice registrations, tradesman plumber-limited, journeyman, master, responsible master plumber and plumbing inspector credentials, and...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Plumbers, Pipefitters and Steamfitters, wages and tasks
 United Association: apprenticeship
 Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners
 Apprenticeship.gov, United States Department of Labor

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/plumber>



Scan for the full clicker