

SURGICAL TECHNOLOGIST APPRENTICESHIP



Employers invest in your workforce with an Oregon Health Authority and Bureau of Labor & Industries Registered Apprenticeship in Surgical Technology!

The Surgical Technologist Apprenticeship program, offered by the Health Star Joint Apprenticeship Training Council (JATC), provides aspiring job seekers with a genuine "earn and learn" route to employment. This apprenticeship is currently offered in Lincoln, Benton, Douglas, and Linn counties, and we are looking to expand to more counties in the state.

Empower your staff and invest in their professional growth through our Surgical Technologist Apprenticeship program. By partnering with us, we can provide your employees with opportunities to enhance their skills, receive mentorship, and gain valuable on-the-job experience while preparing to take their NCCT Tech In Surgery TS-C exam.

Become a Training Agent Today! We invite employers from all counties in Oregon to apply.



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What is the surgical technologist apprenticeship program?

Apprenticeship is a time-tested, "earn while you learn" strategy that combines paid on-the-job training, related instruction online or in a classroom, mentorship, and incremental wage increases. It has been used successfully for decades in industries like construction and manufacturing. Recently, there has been a significant push to expand the model to other sectors, such as healthcare. The surgical technologist apprenticeship has been created to help meet the vacancies in Oregon state-wide for surgical technologists. This apprenticeship has recently been allowed because of the Oregon state-approved law (HB 3596) that allows a person employed by a healthcare facility to practice surgical technology upon completion of the apprenticeship. In a Registered Apprenticeship, employers work with the program's sponsor/employer to identify the competencies, timelines, and related coursework for the occupation in which training is offered.

What is a JATC, and who is Health Star?

Health Star is the name of the Join Apprenticeship Training Council (JATC), which oversees apprenticeships. The JATC is comprised of an equal number of employee and employer representatives. The JATC is the heart of the apprenticeship program. The JATC will operate the program and decide on the many facets that make up the program. The JATC is responsible for assuring that applicants have an equal opportunity to be selected for a program and that apprentices have every reasonable opportunity to succeed in the program. The JATC has an apprentice coordinator who is responsible for day-to-day operations and record-keeping.

How long is the apprenticeship, and what other training is required?

This apprenticeship is designed as competency-based training, which mirrors the structure of the NCCT exam. Apprentices will be required to complete competencies for specific work processes that then get approved by their mentor. These competencies will include the 125 surgical cases, including the following*: Minimum of 30 scrubs in general surgery (Maximum of 50), Minimum of 75 scrubs in at least 3 (three) of the following specialties: Gynecology, obstetrics, Otorhinolaryngology, genitourinary, thoracic, plastic/reconstructive, cardiovascular, ophthalmology, neuro and peripheral vascular, Or any specialty not listed, *At least 90 of the 125 cases must be 1st scrub cases. Diagnostic endoscopes are capped at 20.

Apprentices must also complete 288 hours of related classroom instruction delivered online through MedCerts. The NCCT, the credentialing organization, set the case requirements and exam questions. Umpqua Community College approved and certified the curriculum. Apprentices are responsible for completing the online coursework on their own time and are not typically paid for those hours. Usually, the apprentice will spend 3-5 hours a week on their online coursework. If apprentices do not have a laptop, one will be loaned through MedCerts. Test preparation, including practice tests, is also included in the course package through MedCerts. **This MedCerts course is not available to individuals in Oregon who are not part of the apprenticeship program because as a direct educational route, only the CST is accepted. However, for this apprenticeship, the TSC has been written into legislation.

Prior experience cannot be substituted for case log work. However, apprentices may be eligible to accelerate the on-the-job work processes by submitting prior employment information to the committee. No prior credit will be awarded for the related training, and apprentices must complete the entire coursework requirement.

This is a competency-based apprenticeship, and we anticipate completing the program in one year since it will require 2000 on-the-job hours.

What does completion of this apprenticeship look like?

Apprentices will be eligible to sit for the exam once they have done the following: completed 2000 on-the-job hours, 288 hours of online classroom instruction while passing courses with a B or better, completion of the 8 core competencies in the on-the-job work processes with sign-off by a mentor which includes the 125 surgical cases in the correct categories. Then, apprentices will be eligible to sit for the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT) Tech In Surgery exam (TS-C). If they pass the exam, they will complete the apprenticeship with certification/licensure. If they do not pass the exam, they will be allowed to retake it per NCCT's policies and the JATC's policies on retakes. Recertification is outside of this apprenticeship program's responsibility.

What is expected of a Training Agent?

Employers who wish to participate in an apprenticeship register with the Joint Apprenticeship Training Council to become Training Agents. These employers include Hospitals, Hospital Outpatient Departments (HOPD), and/or Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASC).

Training agents are responsible for paying apprentices on a progressive wage scale for the hours worked. Typically, because apprenticeships combine training and employment, apprentices start at a rate that is a percentage of what a certified or licensed worker in that field would make.

Additionally, Training Agents must ensure that apprentices are supervised by competent and qualified "journey-level" workers during their training period. A qualified "journey-level" worker is a certified surgical technologist or a registered nurse who is competent in scrubbing the cases assigned for this program. The mentor must comply with the OHA ruling on supervision. .

How do I become a Training Agent?

The first step is to schedule a meeting with the Apprenticeship Coordinator to review the program's requirements and ensure the facility meets the eligibility outlined in the policies and procedures. Then, the training agent will submit a Training Agent Agreement Form to the JATC, which will need approval at the next committee meeting before registering apprentices. Once the agreement has been approved, they may register apprentices at any time. This apprenticeship is not tied to a college calendar, so we accept applications year-round and can work with the employer to find a start date that works for them. If you are facility is in a new county we are not currently approved in, then it will need to be submitted to BOLI and the expansion is approved on a quarterly basis at their council meetings.

What are the costs to employers?

The progressive wage scale used for apprentices is based on a salary survey of participating employers and is updated annually. Our apprentices' minimum starting rate is \$18.13 per hour, with a bump to \$23.70 after successfully completing 1,000 hours of employment and reasonable progress through the related online training. Rates will increase every July 1st as we conduct a new wage survey with all current training agents. Many employers currently working with our program elect to pay higher than the minimum at their discretion, but it is not required.

SOWIB will be submitting a HOWTO grant application that is due on 12/16/24. Our grant application will include the cost of the program to employers. If the grant is not awarded, employers will be responsible for the cost of the apprenticeship, as apprentices are not allowed to pay for the program per our policies. The cost of the apprenticeship is \$7500. 50% will be due at registration, and 50% will be due at the 90-day mark. Upon BOLI approval, the apprenticeship will be on the ETPL; thus, WorkSource WIOA funding may be able to cover all or part of the program for employers.

How are apprentices placed, and what happens after employment has begun?

The Apprenticeship Coordinator screens applicants to determine whether they meet the minimum qualifications. To be eligible, an individual must be at least 18 and have a high school diploma or GED. From there, applicants are ranked via a scoring system determined by employer partners to identify the most desirable candidate traits and placed into a pool. Employers hire apprentices from the pool as needed and on a first-come/first-serve basis, with the top-ranked candidates referred for interviews. Employers are under no obligation to hire any applicant they interview, and the individual must also meet all hiring criteria from each respective employer, including any background checks or drug screens. If an employer elects not to hire the applicant referred from the top of the list, they can request additional candidates or choose to hire outside the apprenticeship program.

Once a hire is made, the employer retains all rights to terminating employment as they would with any other staff member. The apprenticeship program also maintains written standards, policies, and procedures that spell out how to address poor performance, lack of professionalism, or other issues that might arise.

As the apprentice progresses through the program, they maintain contact with the Apprenticeship Coordinator, who collects all required documentation – such as Monthly Progress Reports – that must be submitted to the state.

Can an employer place currently employed staff that they have internally identified into the program?

Yes. Although there may be some restrictions that the Apprenticeship Coordinator can help identify, employers working with our program often utilize their own internal talent development pipelines to identify candidates they would like to promote into expanded roles through apprenticeship. In that way, apprenticeship is an excellent model for employers wishing to establish career pathways and opportunities for advancement for their employees.

What forms are required for an apprentice?

The first step is for the apprentice to fill out the application and supplemental form and email those to the Apprenticeship Coordinator along with copies of their minimum qualifications – a copy of their high school diploma/transcript or GED and a copy of their government-issued ID for age verification. This will allow them to be in the pool of eligible candidates. Once selected, they must submit additional paperwork, such as a JATC registration agreement, Self-Identify Disclosure forms, and additional materials requested by the committee.

Please contact Laura Pumphrey, SOWIB's Apprenticeship Manager and the Apprenticeship Coordinator of this JATC, at 844-532-6893, ext. 9 or lpumphrey@sowib.org for more information.

Health Star JATC 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 18 years old or older. Health Star JATC shall make affirmative action to provide equal opportunity in apprenticeship and shall operate the apprenticeship program as required under the Oregon Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 30. This is an equal opportunity program, and auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.