

Your Path to Plumbing in Texas

From Apprentice to Master Plumber: A Complete Career Guide

Why Choose Plumbing?

The plumbing industry in Texas is experiencing unprecedented growth. With licensing exams increasing by 111% since 2022 and the state fast-tracking master plumber requirements from 4 years to just 2 years (effective September 2025), there has never been a better time to start your plumbing career.

Key Benefits of a Plumbing Career:

- Job security - everyone needs a plumber
- Earn while you learn through apprenticeships
- No college debt - start earning immediately
- High earning potential - master plumbers average \$72,000+ annually
- Independence - opportunity to own your own business
- Essential service - recession-proof industry

The Plumbing Career Path in Texas

Texas offers a structured career progression through five license levels, each with increasing responsibility, earning potential, and independence. Here's your complete roadmap:

Level 1: Plumber's Apprentice

Requirements:

- Minimum age: 16 years old
- No high school diploma required (though recommended)
- U.S. citizenship or eligible alien status
- Registration fee: \$15

What You'll Do:

- Assist licensed plumbers with installations and repairs
- Learn pipe cutting, threading, and fitting
- Basic maintenance tasks like cleaning and organizing tools
- Observe and practice under supervision
- Help with basic plumbing system installations

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Typical Earnings: \$13-20/hour starting wage, with regular increases as skills develop. Union apprentices start at \$13.50/hour with raises every 6 months.

Level 2: Tradesman Plumber-Limited

Requirements:

- 4,000 hours (2 years) of documented experience
- 24-hour training course approved by TSBPE
- Pass licensing exam
- Exam fee: \$40

What You'll Do:

- Install, repair, and service plumbing in 1-2 family homes
- Work under supervision of a Master Plumber
- Supervise apprentices on residential projects
- Handle routine residential plumbing repairs

Typical Earnings: \$22-28/hour (\$45,000-58,000 annually)

Level 3: Journeyman Plumber

Requirements:

- 8,000 hours (4 years) of documented experience
- 48-hour training course approved by TSBPE
- Pass comprehensive licensing exam
- Exam fee: \$40

What You'll Do:

- Install and repair complex plumbing systems independently
- Work on both residential and commercial projects
- Supervise apprentices and tradesman plumbers
- Diagnose complex plumbing problems
- Install gas lines and specialized systems
- Read blueprints and ensure code compliance

Typical Earnings: \$28-35/hour (\$58,000-75,000 annually)

Level 4: Master Plumber

Requirements (Updated September 2025):

- High school diploma or GED
- Licensed Journeyman for 2 years (reduced from 4 years!)
- OR 1 year as Journeyman + approved apprenticeship program
- Pass master plumber examination

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What You'll Do:

- • Design plumbing systems for new construction
- • Supervise journeymen and apprentices
- • Work with code officials and inspectors
- • Create plumbing schematics and plans
- • Manage complex commercial projects
- • Prepare bids and cost estimates

Typical Earnings: \$35-50/hour (\$72,000-100,000+ annually)

Level 5: Responsible Master Plumber (RMP)

Requirements:

- • Current Master Plumber license in good standing
- • 24-hour training course approved by TSBPE
- • \$300,000 commercial liability insurance

What You'll Do:

- • Own and operate your own plumbing business
- • Supervise all plumbing work and personnel
- • Pull permits and ensure code compliance
- • Take full responsibility for all projects

Typical Earnings: Business owner - unlimited potential (many earn \$100,000+)

How Our Training Program Gives You a Head Start

Our comprehensive plumbing training program is designed to accelerate your career advancement and maximize your earning potential from day one.

Program Advantages:

- Structured Learning: Complete foundational training before starting your apprenticeship
- Higher Starting Wages: Trained apprentices typically start \$2-4/hour higher than untrained beginners
- Faster Advancement: Complete your apprenticeship requirements more quickly with solid foundational knowledge
- Industry Connections: Direct placement assistance with established plumbing contractors
- Hands-On Experience: Practice with real tools and equipment in controlled environment
- • OSHA Safety Training: Graduate with essential safety certifications

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- Career Support: Ongoing mentorship and job placement assistance

Your Career Timeline

With our training program, here's how quickly you can advance through each level:

Career Level	Time Required	Total Experience	Annual Earning Potential
Apprentice	Start immediately	0 hours	\$15,000-40,000
Tradesman	2 years	4,000 hours	\$45,000-58,000
Journeyman	4 years total	8,000 hours	\$58,000-75,000
Master Plumber	6 years total*	2 years as Journeyman	\$72,000-100,000 +
RMP Business Owner	6+ years	Master + insurance	\$100,000+ (unlimited)

**Accelerated timeline due to new Texas regulations effective September 2025*

Texas Plumbing Industry Outlook

The plumbing industry in Texas is experiencing explosive growth:

- Licensing exams increased 111% since 2022
- Texas employs 41,890+ plumbers (2nd highest in nation)
- 22.3% job growth projected through 2028
- Average plumber age is 58 - massive retirement wave coming
- New testing centers opening to meet demand
- 60 high schools now offer plumbing programs

Plumbing Career vs. College: The Numbers

	Plumbing Career	Traditional College
Time to Start Earning	Immediate (apprenticeship)	4+ years
Average Student Debt	\$0 (earn while learning)	\$37,000+ nationally
4-Year Earning Potential	\$120,000-200,000	\$0-80,000 (with debt)
Job Security	High (essential service)	Varies by field
Starting Salary After Training	\$45,000-58,000	\$30,000-50,000 (varies)

Ready to Start Your Plumbing Career?

Take the first step toward a rewarding career in plumbing:

Apply for our program at texasplumbingcareers.com

TPC is a Non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the plumbing industry.