

New John Deere Apprenticeship Program Approved



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A new John Deere Registered Apprenticeship Program for its Agriculture & Turf and Construction & Forestry dealers has been approved by the U.S. Department of Labor. The program provides dealers with a formalized, on-the-job and technical training plan to develop more highly skilled employees and help address a widespread shortage of service technicians, especially in rural areas across the country.

"The new Registered Apprenticeship Program complements our existing John Deere [TECH](#) program," says Grant Suhre, director, region 4 customer and product support for John Deere Ag & Turf. "In addition to the on-the-job training experience, an apprentice will receive technical instruction and be assigned a personal mentor as a part of the highly organized training structure. Upon completion of the apprenticeship, he or she will receive a nationally recognized journeyworker certificate."



Through participation in the program, dealers formally commit to developing additional talent in an earn-while-you-learn setting. As training progresses, apprentices are rewarded for new skills acquired. "This can improve a dealer's productivity and profit potential as employee turnover costs are reduced and employees are retained longer," says Tim Worthington, manager, customer support for the John Deere Construction and Forestry Division. "In addition, John Deere customers benefit from access to more highly skilled dealer personnel who are servicing or supporting their equipment."

John Deere dealers can also collaborate with any number of local organizations as part of the Registered Apprenticeship Program. These organizations include, but are not limited to: the John Deere TECH Program; K-12 schools; community colleges; labor organizations; economic development groups; foundations; and workforce development boards.

John Deere dealers who wish to participate can receive support and technical assistance from John Deere and Jobs For the Future (a U.S. Department of Labor intermediary), who will expedite the registration process with state or federal apprenticeship agencies. After registering, dealers can immediately enter employees into the Agriculture Equipment Technician or Heavy Construction Equipment Mechanic programs. They can also select other occupations for the apprentice program, including sales professionals, parts professionals, and accountants to develop appropriate work processes for those jobs. Next, dealers will identify master-level employees who are capable of and willing to mentor apprentices. Finally, dealers will identify potential candidates or incumbent workers who would benefit from the apprenticeship program and enroll them.

When apprentices participate, they track and report their on-the-job learning and technical training time in conjunction with their employer. The dealer's program administrator then inputs this data into the appropriate state or federal database. To ensure high standards are maintained, dealers are required to follow specific guidelines, developed over years of apprenticeship experience, after registration.

To simplify participation for its dealers, John Deere created national guideline standards for the Registered Apprenticeship Program and is providing technical assistance to dealers interested in participating. "These guidelines provide a consistent apprenticeship program template that any dealer can implement if they participate," Suhre explains. Dealers can utilize these national guideline standards to have a program approved and operating in a very short timeframe.