



## AHRI Policy Position Workforce Development

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The Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI) is the trade association representing manufacturers of heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, refrigeration (HVACR) and water heating equipment within the global industry. AHRI's more than 320 member companies account for over 90 percent of HVACR and water heating residential and commercial equipment manufactured and sold in North America.

### Background

The ability of manufacturers to succeed in the highly competitive global marketplace depends on access to an educated, diverse, inclusive, flexible, and knowledge-based workforce. Employees, in turn, need the education and skills to participate in a high-performance workforce for the robust and dynamic manufacturing economy in every state.

Developing qualified workers for the engineering and manufacturing of HVACR equipment can help drive investment and manufacturing jobs in states that make it a priority. In addition, every state in the country will need a strong contracting, installation, and maintenance workforce to safely and efficiently heat and cool both residential and commercial buildings. The combination of state licensure requirements and state level workforce development programs helps ensure that qualified workers are available for manufacturers considering investment in the state, and can improve energy efficiency, cost, safety, and comfort for consumers.

HVACR contractor licensing requirements vary state by state. In some cases, states licensure programs include academic- and experience-based requirements to apply for and secure an initial license. There are also states that require continuing education credits be completed in order to renew a license. In both cases, ensuring the appropriate educational and training opportunities are available is critical to establishing and maintaining a qualified workforce.

To meet the demand for a qualified workforce, states have taken a variety of different approaches to encourage workforce development for both manufacturing and maintenance. Some states have implemented Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that support access to trade schools and certification programs for those interested in installation and maintenance. Other states have taken the approach of prioritizing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) through retention programs for students. Both CTE and STEM programs play a vital role in ensuring opportunities are available for individuals interested in a career in the HVACR and water heating industry.

When manufacturers are deciding where to build or maintain facilities, the availability of a qualified workforce for engineering and manufacturing of HVACR and water heating products is critical. Implementation of CTE and STEM programs that establish a foundation for HVACR manufacturing careers can help state policymakers drive and secure manufacturing jobs for essential consumer needs. Further, ensuring a qualified contractor workforce through access to trade, licensures and certification programs can help maximize the energy efficiency, consumer comfort, and safety of installed equipment.

## Industry Position and Considerations

AHRI supports state policies that encourage schools to offer a diverse array of CTE programs, including industry-recognized certification programs. In addition, AHRI is supportive of state and local policies aimed at developing and expanding a skilled workforce through STEM retention programs for interested students.

AHRI is committed to working with industry partners at the state level to promote quality installation and maintenance of HVACR and water heating equipment, to ensure access to training needed for the entire supply chain. AHRI also supports efforts to ensure that repairs and maintenance are being completed by qualified, licensed contractors.

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