MMUA
Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association

Apprentice Lineworker
Training Program
Where skill, safety, and hometown values come together



Apprentice Lineworker Training Program

Municipal electric utilities, which are typically smaller than other industry players, face unique challenges in developing and retaining a highly skilled workforce. To address this, the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) created the Apprentice Lineworker Training Program—a flexible, hands-on initiative designed to instruct, mentor, and retain promising individuals with local roots. The program is built on the belief that locally hired and trained employees are more likely to make long-term commitments to their community utility, especially when supported by strong management and competitive wages.

This program has been approved by the US Department of Labor and the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry.

Program structure

On site training: Instruction is delivered primarily at the utility site, allowing apprentices to contribute to real work while focusing on their professional development. This typically occurs two days per quarter, minimizing disruption to operations.

Training happens on your local system, so apprentices learn the exact equipment and conditions they'll face every day. This approach strengthens both performance and safety, while getting real work done with a skilled expert guiding the process.

Flexible timing: Utilities can adjust the schedule to meet their needs, ensuring both productivity and learning.





Program overview

Real training. Real work. Real benefits.

Technical projects
Apprentices participate in hands-on projects that expose them to a variety of approaches for accomplishing their work, fostering broader understanding and problem-solving skills.

Centralized testing and events
Some testing is conducted at the MMUA Training Center based in Marshall, Minnesota, a 19-acre facility equipped with overhead and underground electric systems, as well as indoor and outdoor training stations. Participation in these schools is expected annually for enrolled students, and the hours count toward their apprenticeship requirements.

Credentialing and compliance
The program is validated by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), ensuring alignment with state and industry standards. The MMUA standard simplifies state compliance reviews and supports a streamlined apprenticeship process. Graduates of the program “journey out” with a nationally recognized credential, confirming their mastery of essential competencies.

Retention strategy
Municipal utilities have consistently reported that the lineworkers they are most likely to retain are those with local ties. By hiring and training these individuals locally, utilities increase the prospect of long-term retention and community investment.





Meet our lead instructor



Roger Avelsgard, Certified Utility Safety Professional, is MMUA's Apprenticeship and Job Training and Safety (JTS) Instructor. Roger brings extensive field experience to statewide training programs. He leads hands-on apprentice lineworker sessions and contributes to curriculum development for MMUA's core schools—Overhead, Underground, Meter, and Transformer. Roger also co-developed the on-the-job-training time tracker tool to help utilities monitor each apprentice's progress to successfully meet state audit requirements.

MMUA Training Center: Hub for apprenticeship training

Since its construction in 1999, our training center offers real-world training opportunities for utility professionals. With substations, overhead and underground systems, transmission lines, and specialized training, participants gain practical experience using modern tools and technology.

Our programs adapt each year to new standards, emerging technologies, and member feedback. These sessions include specialized schools—Meter, Overhead, Transformer, and Underground—that count toward the required 8,000 hours of training. The center also hosts workshops and technical projects that expose apprentices to diverse utility practices, enhancing problem-solving and safety skills. Upon graduation from the program, journeyman lineworkers are invited to the Technical & Operations Conference to recognize their achievement.



Enrolling in MMUA's Apprentice Lineworker Program is cost-effective. Your utility receives up to two complimentary registrations at each of these four annual schools—one registration if you have a single apprentice enrolled, two registrations if you have more. The schools are mandatory for apprentices and count towards their required program hours.

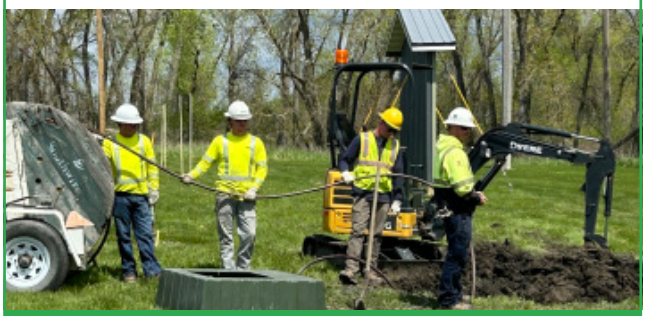
Meter School

At Meter School, participants will learn real-world skills and develop confidence in meter installation, safety, and troubleshooting. Each course offers a combination of classroom and hands-on exercises where participants will work at the metering stations with direct instructor oversight and feedback.



Underground School

Underground School delivers hands-on training to build practical underground-system skills, ensure safety, and improve overall proficiency on your utility's underground distribution network.



Overhead School

The Overhead School equips lineworkers with hands-on proficiency in overhead-line construction, maintenance, and system upgrades—from service installation and wire stringing to double-circuit reconstruction, capacitor-bank maintenance, and fuse coordination—ensuring safe, code-compliant, and reliable overhead distribution operations.



Transformer School

Transformer School explains the basic three-phase systems and the relationship of the phasor to the transformer itself. Participants will have a broad understanding of the following topics: three-phase connections, delta connection, wye connection, open delta connection, and three-phase troubleshooting.



Program details

Enrollment

To enroll a trainee, the student must be employed by a municipal utility. The utility must be a current MMUA member.

Required enrollment forms:

- MMUA Trainee Enrollment Application
- MMUA Commitment Letter
- Northwest Lineman College (NLC) Enrollment Application

Program administration

This program is led by experienced utility professionals. MMUA manages trainee registration, payments, academic records, and official reporting. All course materials—including lessons, tests, and supplemental resources—are provided.

MMUA testing standard and final examinations

MMUA requires a minimum score of 80 percent on all Northwest Lineman College exams within the program. Scores below 80 percent are considered failing and the test must be retaken until a passing score is achieved. The MMUA standards exceed those of Northwest Lineman College.

In addition, MMUA collaborated with NLC to add final examinations for each instructional module and a comprehensive cumulative final exam covering all four years of apprenticeship training. A minimum score of 80 percent is required on each of these examinations for successful completion.

Certification and credit

Upon successful completion, trainees receive the MMUA Certificate of Completion. Program credit is also granted through Northwest Lineman College toward a four-year apprenticeship.





Trainee expectations

The instructor will visit your utility approximately two days per quarter for hands-on instruction.

Trainees are also expected to:

- Participate actively in classroom and task-based training at MMUA's Marshall-based training center
- Attend the following annual schools: Meter, Overhead, Transformer, and Underground
- Collaborate with peers from other utilities and learn from seasoned instructors
- Complete coursework and pass required testing to progress in the program
- Follow all safety regulations per the APPA Safety Manual, NESC, and OSHA 1910.269 (including Subpart V)
- Maintain a valid driver's license

Annual school attendance and registration fee waiver

Trainees enrolled in MMUA's Apprentice Lineworker Training Program are expected to attend the following schools each year at MMUA's Marshall-based training center. Attendance hours count toward apprenticeship training.

MMUA will waive the registration fee for up to two enrolled trainees per utility for each of these schools:

- **Meter School and Pre-conference Workshop**
- **Overhead School**
- **Transformer School**
- **Underground School**

Optional Training Opportunity

All enrolled lineworker apprentices have the option to participate in annual hands-on training at the MMUA Training Center. Topics are tailored to the needs of the apprentices attending, providing an opportunity to build skills and gain practical experience relevant to their progress in the program.





On site instruction with hands-on experience

Robust four-year program supporting the development of our next generation journeyman lineworkers

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Interested in learning more about the MMUA Apprenticeship Program?

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