



THE \$100K TRADE CAREER BLUEPRINT

5 Proven Paths to Six Figures Without Student
Debt



TRADE BOSS COLLECTIVE

Empowering Women in Trades

2026 Edition • TradeBossCollective.com

WHY WOMEN ARE WINNING IN THE TRADES

The skilled trades aren't just a career path—they're a shortcut to financial freedom. While your friends are drowning in student loan debt, you could be earning a six-figure income, building wealth, and creating a life on your own terms.

Here's why smart women are choosing trades over traditional college:



PAY EQUITY

Women in HVAC earn 99.1% of what men earn (compared to just 81% in traditional industries).

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2026



LOW COST

\$5,000–\$15,000 total investment vs. \$100,000+ for a 4-year college degree. Plus, get paid to learn!



FAST START

6–24 months to launch vs. 4+ years. Start earning real money faster—no waiting until 30 to pay off debt.



HIGH DEMAND

2+ million worker shortage by 2030. Translation: Job security, higher wages, and your pick of employers.

Source: AGC, NAHB



DID YOU KNOW?

THE 5 HIGHEST-PAYING TRADE CAREERS FOR WOMEN

Choose your path based on income potential, training time, and your interests.

Trade	Entry Salary (Apprentice)	Journeyman Salary	Master/Owner Salary	Training Time
Electrician	\$35K-\$45K	\$62K-\$75K	\$88K-\$120K+	4-5 years
Plumber / Pipefitter	\$32K-\$42K	\$60K-\$74K	\$80K-\$110K+	4-5 years
HVAC Technician	\$30K-\$40K	\$60K-\$75K	\$85K-\$120K+	2-5 years
Welder	\$35K-\$45K	\$50K-\$65K	\$75K-\$100K+	6 mo-2 years
Elevator Installer	\$50K-\$65K	\$90K-\$110K	\$120K-\$150K+	4-5 years

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, May 2024

BONUS:

These salaries don't include overtime, which can add **\$10,000-\$30,000+ per year**. Many tradeswomen report total compensation of \$80,000-\$150,000 annually within 5-7 years.

Ready to dive deeper?

See the detailed breakdown for each trade on the following pages.

ELECTRICIAN

Your Path to Six Figures

What You'll Do

Electricians install, maintain, and repair electrical systems in homes, businesses, and industrial facilities. You'll read blueprints, troubleshoot wiring issues, install lighting and power systems, and ensure everything meets safety codes. It's problem-solving, hands-on work with great job variety.

Income Breakdown

- **Apprentice (Years 1–2): \$35,000–\$45,000/year**
Earn while you learn under a licensed electrician.
- **Journeyman (Years 3–5): \$62,000–\$75,000/year**
Work independently on most projects.
- **Master Electrician (5+ years): \$88,000–\$110,000/year**
Supervise teams, sign permits, bid on jobs.
- **Business Owner: \$120,000–\$250,000+/year**
Run your own contracting company. Unlimited potential.

Training Path

- High school diploma/GED
- Apply to apprenticeship (IBEW, ABC)
- 4–5 years (8,000+ hrs OJT + classroom)
- Pass state licensing exam

Advancement

- Specialize (solar, automation)
- Foreman / Project Manager
- Electrical Inspector
- Contractor / Business Owner

Electricians rank #2 in Best Trade Jobs (U.S. News & World Report,

PLUMBER / PIPEFITTER

Your Path to Six Figures

What You'll Do

Plumbers install, repair, and maintain water, gas, and drainage systems in homes and businesses. Pipefitters work on high-pressure piping systems in factories and power plants. Both roles offer excellent job security, high pay, and the satisfaction of solving real problems.

Income Breakdown


- **Apprentice (Years 1–2): \$32,000–\$42,000/year**
Paid training with benefits.
- **Journeyman (Years 3–5): \$60,000–\$74,000/year**
Handle most jobs independently.
- **Master Plumber (5+ years): \$80,000–\$110,000/year**
Pull permits and supervise commercial projects.
- **Business Owner: \$120,000–\$200,000+/year**
Emergency calls and contracts are highly profitable.

Training Path

- High school diploma/GED
- Apprenticeship (UA or contractor)
- 4–5 years (8,000–10,000 hrs)
- Pass journeyman & master exams

Advancement

- Specialize (medical gas, green plumbing)
- Foreman / Inspector
- Commercial Project Manager
- Plumbing Company Owner

 **FUN FACT:** Housecall Pro's 2024 study found that 20% of plumbing businesses on their platform are women-owned—double

HVAC TECHNICIAN

Your Path to Six Figures

What You'll Do

HVAC technicians install, maintain, and repair climate control systems. You'll troubleshoot furnaces, air conditioners, refrigeration units, and ventilation. With climate change driving demand for efficient systems, this field is booming—and is one of the fastest paths to six figures.

Income Breakdown


- **Apprentice (Years 1–2): \$30,000–\$40,000/year**
Learn refrigeration and electrical basics.
- **Journeyman (Years 2–5): \$60,000–\$75,000/year**
Work independently on residential/light commercial.
- **Master Technician (5+ years): \$85,000–\$120,000/year**
Commercial HVAC, industrial refrigeration, design.
- **Business Owner: \$150,000–\$300,000+/year**
Service contracts generate recurring revenue.

Training Path

- High school diploma/GED
- HVAC program (6mo–2yrs)
- EPA Section 608 Certification
- 2–5 years on-the-job training

Advancement

- Specialize (geothermal, smart home)
- Lead Technician / Service Manager
- System Designer
- HVAC Company Owner

 **PAY EQUITY WIN:** Women in HVAC earn 99.1% of what men earn—the highest pay equity of ANY industry (BLS 2026).

WELDER

Your Path to Six Figures

What You'll Do

Welders join metal parts using heat and specialized equipment. You'll work in manufacturing, construction, shipbuilding, aerospace, and more. Welding offers incredible variety—one day you're building a skyscraper, the next you're fabricating custom artwork or working on a pipeline.

Income Breakdown


- **Entry-Level (6 mo–2 years): \$35,000–\$45,000/year**
Start with basic MIG or stick welding.
- **Certified Welder (2–5 years): \$50,000–\$65,000/year**
Earn AWS certifications for complex projects.
- **Specialized Welder (5+ years): \$75,000–\$100,000+/year**
TIG, underwater, or aerospace welding.
- **Business Owner: \$100,000–\$200,000+/year**
Custom fabrication or mobile welding business.

Training Path

- High school diploma/GED
- Welding program (6mo–2yrs)
- Learn MIG, TIG, Stick, Flux-Core
- Get AWS Certifications

Advancement

- Specialize (underwater, pipeline)
- Welding Inspector / QC Manager
- Shop Supervisor
- Fabrication Shop Owner

 **FASTEST PATH:** Underwater welders can earn \$50,000–\$100,000+ per year. Commercial divers with welding skills are in extremely high demand.

READY TO BUILD YOUR \$100K TRADE CAREER?

Here's your 3-step action plan to get started:

STEP 1: Choose Your Trade

Go back to the comparison table on Page 3. Consider:

- Income potential vs. Training time
- Work environment (residential vs. industrial)
- Physical demands & personal interests

STEP 2: Research Training Programs

Apprenticeships:

- IBEW.org (Electricians)
- UA.org (Plumbers/Pipefitters)
- ABC.org (All trades)

Schools & Jobs:

- Search "[trade] training near me"
- Look for NCCER/AWS accredited programs
- Search apprentice jobs on Indeed

STEP 3: Connect with Trade Boss Collective



**JOIN TRADE BOSS COLLECTIVE
TODAY**



CAREER LAUNCH PROGRAM

Get hired as a trade apprentice in 90 days or less