

SHARPENING THE PATH

Barbering Apprenticeships in the United States



By Tom Solomon
November 2026

IJ Institute for Justice

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Please note, the information provided in this report is intended solely for the purpose of advancing policy conversations related to the barbering industry and it is current as of November 2026. None of this information should be relied upon for making individual decisions about one's occupation or training, nor does this report offer any legal advice. Consult a legal professional and/or your local regulating authorities for guidance and up-to-date information.

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Introduction:

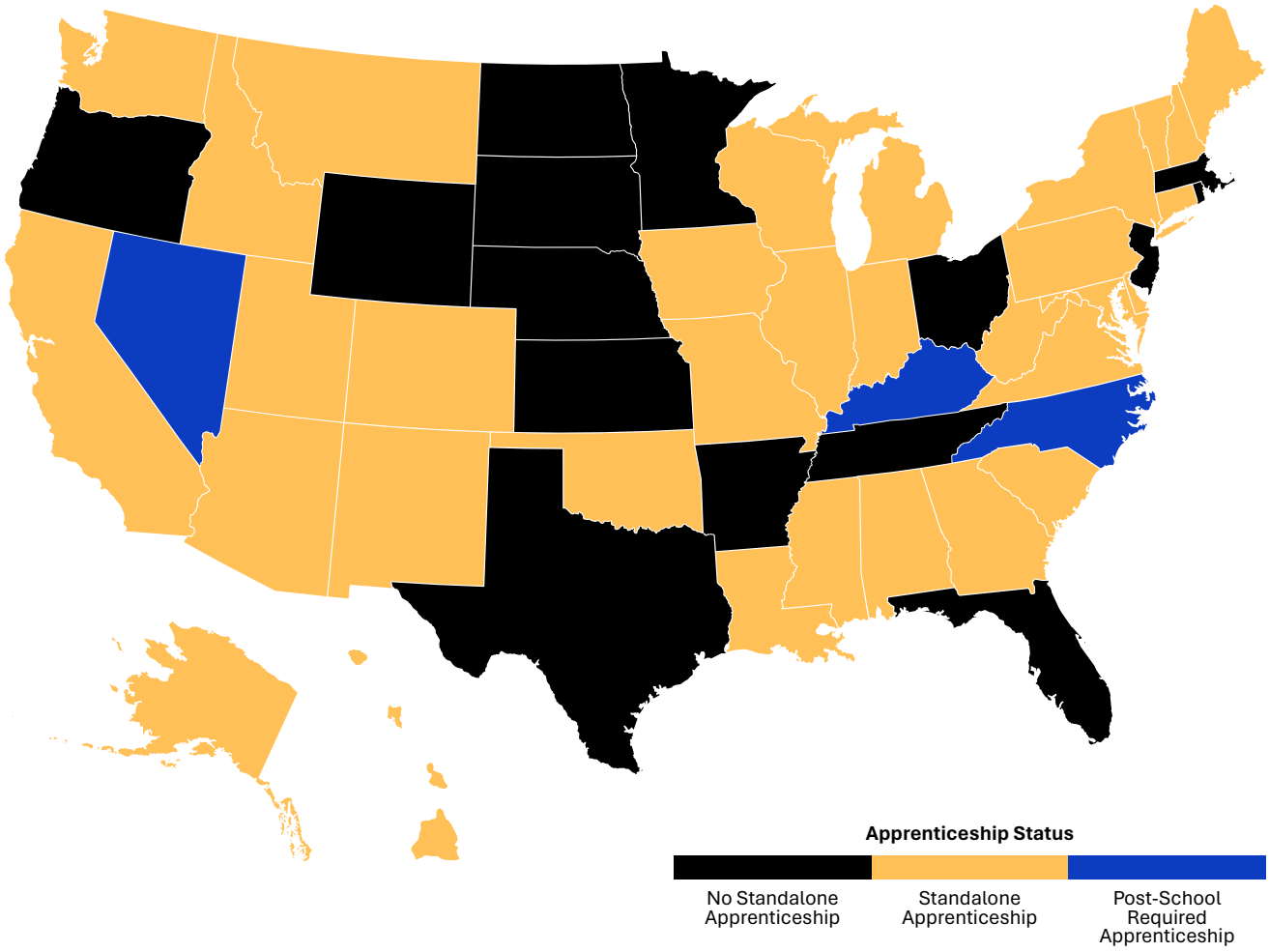
Apprenticeships are a valuable way for workers to gain the real-world skills and experience they need to succeed. In 2026, there were over 755,000 Americans engaged in registered apprenticeships, up nearly 50% from a decade ago.[1] While apprenticeships are embraced by numerous skilled occupations and have deep historical precedents in the barbering profession, state licensing laws have, over the past century, privileged education in barbering school over on-the-job training.[2]

Barbering apprenticeships typically take one of two forms. Most commonly, states manage programs themselves, usually as determined by statute and the board that oversees barbering. There is significant variability in the length, structure, and requirements of these programs. A minority of states recognize the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) registered apprenticeship model as a pathway to a license for barbers.

This report compares apprenticeship programs across the country and highlights opportunities for states to improve on-the-job training options for aspiring barbers.



Map of Programs:



Key Findings:

- Thirty-two states and Washington, D.C. allow aspiring barbers to get their license through a standalone apprenticeship pathway as an alternative to attending traditional barber school.
- The average length of a standalone apprenticeship is 2,315 hours.
- Eighteen states offer no standalone apprenticeship pathway for aspiring barbers to get a license.
    - Three of them—Kentucky, Nevada, and North Carolina—require both school and an apprenticeship to get a license.
    - The remaining 15 may allow hands-on training to be a part of a student's barber school experience, but still require significant classroom hours.

32
States and D.C. with a standalone apprenticeship

18
States with no standalone apprenticeship

2,315
Average hours for a standalone apprenticeship

States should continue to expand opportunities for on-the-job training by reducing red tape (for both aspiring barbers and the licensees who want to train them) and introducing alternative options for aspiring barbers to get experience in shops.



Jerrae Lindsey

Iowa-based shop owner and celebrity barber

Jerrae Lindsey is the owner of Uncle Jay's Barbering Co. in Iowa Falls, Iowa. An accomplished barber who has run a successful business and earned several awards for his skill as a barber, Jerrae has a wealth of experience to pass on to future generations of barbers. After being asked by multiple aspiring barbers if they could train under him, he looked into offering an apprenticeship at his shop.



At the time, Iowa had recently introduced an apprenticeship pathway to barber licensure. While apprenticing has long been a tradition in the barbering industry, Jerrae was shocked to find how convoluted, burdensome, and expensive it would be to comply with the program's requirements. After giving it a go once, he decided it was unworkable and reluctantly turned other prospective apprentices away.

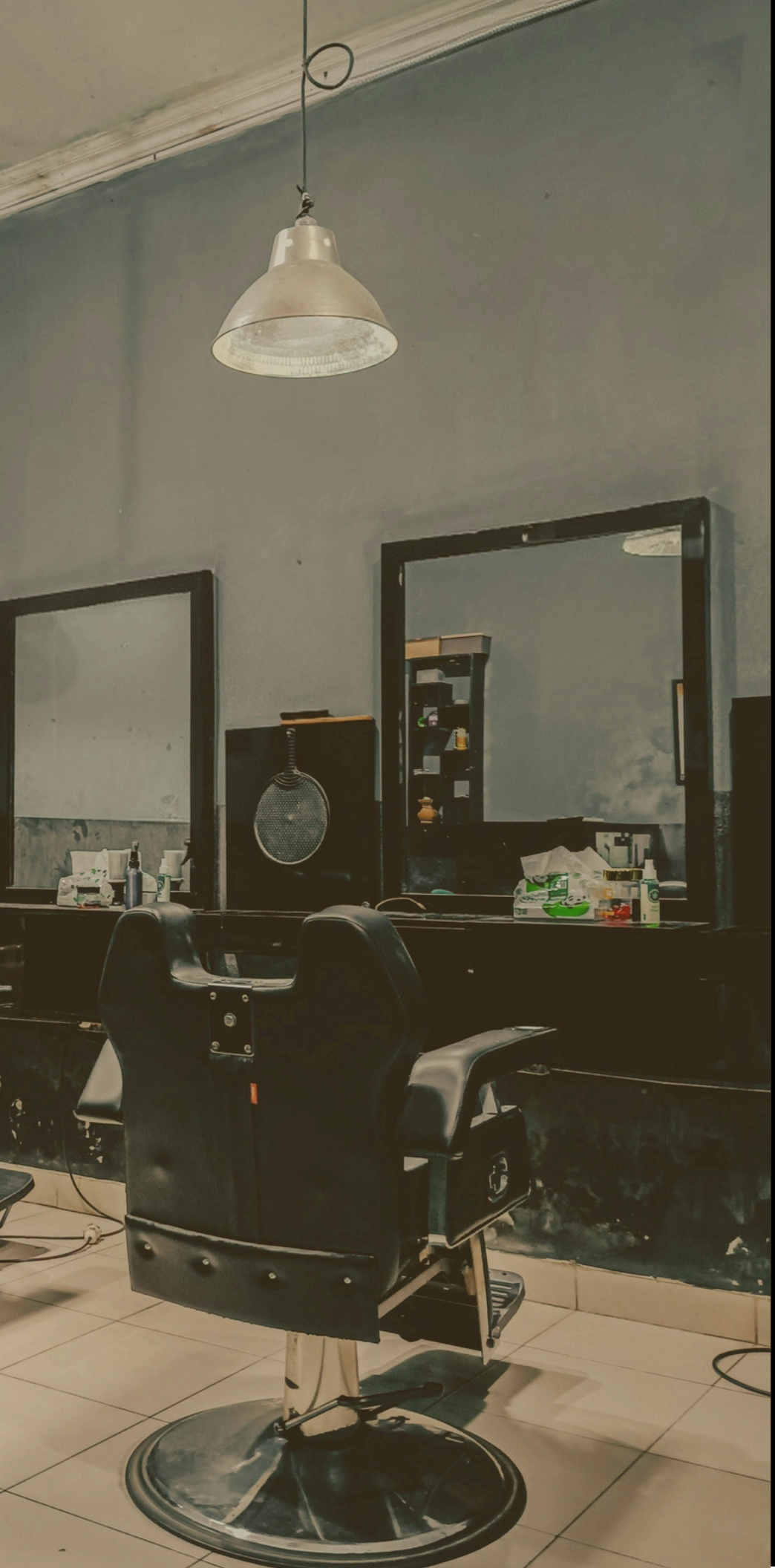
While Jerrae ultimately decided to take this issue to the legislature and help create a new, less complicated in-shop training option for Iowa barbers (see a description of the program on page six and the policy recommendations on page 12 for more information), his story underscores both the high demand for on-the-job training among aspiring barbers and the need for programs that are economically and logistically viable for training providers and trainees alike.



Supervised Services:

States have begun considering "Supervised Services Programs," which allow barbers to get on-the-job training under licensed practitioners outside of a traditional apprenticeship. This option allows any licensed practitioner to hire, train, and supervise an individual regardless of their licensure status. It does not have the curriculum or time limit requirements that apprenticeships typically have. Unlike an apprenticeship, participating in such a program does not necessarily lead to licensure, though states may allow (but not require) participants to take the test for licensure after a certain period of time in the program. This model creates a legal structure that is easier to comply with for the sort of on-the-job apprenticeship training that is already common in the barbering industry. In 2025, Iowa enacted a Supervised Services Program (known there as the "Establishment Training Program") with the support of a coalition of barbers and stylists, including Jerrae (featured on page five).[3] Other states, such as Kentucky, Missouri, and Nevada, have considered introducing this model as well.[4]





Methods:

To better understand how states regulate apprenticeships as a pathway to barber licensure, I compared the requirements for apprenticeships in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. I define two categories of apprenticeships:

1. **Standalone apprenticeships**, which include all programs that allow an apprentice to obtain a license or permit upon completion enabling them to practice independently and where the vast majority of training is completed on the job rather than in school. These programs may include a small portion of bookwork or classroom attendance, but that does not constitute a majority of the training. These can be broken down into two sub-categories:
    - **State-based apprenticeships**, which are programs created at the state level and typically managed or approved by the board that oversees barbering.
    - **DOL apprenticeships**, which are programs that are recognized by the state as a pathway to a license and are also registered with the DOL. Around one year in length, DOL apprenticeships follow federal standards, including requirements for apprentices to be paid from day one of training and access to need-based financial aid, and result in a nationally recognized certification upon completion.[5]
2. **Post-school required apprenticeships**, which include on-the-job training that must be completed after a full course of study in a barber school and before a barber can receive a full license.

This report considers only apprenticeships required at the state level, not any that might be required at the local level.[6] It also does not consider any continuing education required to maintain licensure. And in the case of states with post-school required apprenticeships, I do not count required school hours in the apprenticeship hours. See Table 1 for a breakdown of both required components.

Information on apprenticeships is not always fully located in state statute. To varying degrees, the power to structure and recognize apprenticeships

is delegated to agencies such as a state's barber board (or its equivalent), department of education, or office of apprenticeship. If the information is sufficiently available in a state's statutes, I included that citation. Failing this, I cited the administrative code, then agency websites. I also cited legislation that had recently been signed into law. Where information was unavailable, ambiguous, or unclear, I contacted agencies directly.[7] As a last resort, I reviewed the lengths of existing programs available online to arrive at an approximation.[8]

States do not uniformly report the required duration of apprenticeships. For ease of comparison, I standardized all durations into hours.[9] For states that report in terms of whole hours, I simply present that number. For states that report in terms of months, I multiplied the number of months by 21.67, which is the approximate number of non-weekend days in a month in a non-leap year.[10] I then subtracted the number of vacation days permitted by law, if specified. Finally, I multiplied the difference by 8, the number of hours a person might spend at their apprenticeship in a day, and rounded the result to the nearest hour. In all cases, I assumed a 40-hour work week.[11]

DOL apprenticeships may follow one of three tracks: time-based, competency-based, or a hybrid of those two. The time-based track requires a certain number of hours of instruction and on-the-job training, while the competency-based track allows progress to be defined by showing proficiency rather than logging hours.[12] While the competency-based and hybrid tracks could allow a barber to complete the program in less time, this report uses the time-based track for consistency and ease of comparison with other programs.[13]

Following the time-based track, a DOL apprenticeship is required to last at least one year (a minimum of 2,000 hours) plus 144 hours of related instruction, or a minimum of 2,144 hours total.[14] This is the number I report for all states that recognize DOL apprenticeships, even if the statutory or administrative code requirement was different.[15]

Table 1: Total Hours Required for Licensure in States with Post-School Required Apprenticeships

State	School Hours	Apprenticeship Hours	Total Hours
Kentucky	1,500	1,040	2,540
Nevada	1,500	3,024	4,524
North Carolina	1,528	2,080	3,608





Results:

- Thirty-two states and Washington, D.C. allow aspiring barbers to get their license through a standalone pathway.
    - Of these, 23 states and D.C. manage their programs at the state/District level.
    - The remaining nine states recognize the DOL registered apprenticeship model.
- The average length of an apprenticeship across all states that offer a program (either via a state program or DOL) as a standalone pathway to licensure is 2,315 hours, with requirements ranging from 130 hours in Utah to 4,288 hours in Louisiana, and with a median length of 2,144 hours.
- Eighteen states do not offer a standalone apprenticeship pathway for aspiring barbers that would allow them to complete a majority of the training required for licensure on the job.[16]
    - Three of the 18 states—Kentucky, Nevada, and North Carolina—have post-school required apprenticeships. These are the most difficult states in which to obtain a barber license due to the extensive time required to be spent on education and training.[17,18,19] For these states, the hours reported here represent only the length of the apprenticeship, not the total length of time required to obtain a full license. As such, this does not accurately represent the full burden of obtaining a license in these states. See Table 1 for a tabulation of both the school and apprenticeship requirements in these states.



Policy Recommendations:

The role of licensing in the barbering profession is a debated topic and must be included as part of any discussion around the length, content, format, and utility of apprenticeships. Because research has shown that there is no systematic evidence indicating that current licensing requirements for barbers and related professions are necessary to protect public health, the foremost recommendation is to simply not require licensure for the practice of barbering and instead rely on legal consumer protections that exist in every state.[20] Decisions about the training and employment of barbers should be left to private individuals—who, after all, are best suited to make those determinations—rather than the state.

That said, nearly all jurisdictions across the United States require barbers to obtain a license to be allowed to practice their craft.[21] To the extent jurisdictions retain their barber licenses, they should recognize on-the-job training as a standalone pathway to licensure.

Further, to minimize burdens on apprentices and training providers, all apprenticeship programs should:

1. Be no longer than demonstrably necessary to learn skills and knowledge required for safe practice.
2. Allow apprentices to be paid for their work.
3. Require hours to be portable between training providers.
4. Recognize previous relevant work experience and training, including out-of-state experience and training.
5. Not impose significant requirements on barbers wishing to take on an apprentice, such as an instructor's license.
6. Not restrict the number of apprentices a shop or training provider can train.
7. Not require apprentices to work full time or require apprenticeships to be completed within a certain amount of time.
8. Give training providers and apprentices maximum control over the length, content, and format of individual apprenticeships.

Finally, states should adopt more flexible on-the-job training options outside of traditional apprenticeships, such as a "Supervised Services Program" (see page six). While a traditional, structured apprenticeship is a great option for some, expanding flexible options for on-the-job training and supervised work without a license would give more people an opportunity to pursue a legal pathway into barbering.



Conclusion:

Across the country, states are actively working to increase access to on-the-job training. For example, at the time of this writing, Michigan is considering a bill that would reduce the number of hours required for its apprenticeship, New Jersey is considering a bill to create standalone apprenticeship pathways, and earlier in the year, South Carolina considered legislation to remove its required apprenticeship and create a standalone program.[22] In June 2026, Illinois joined the ranks of states offering a standalone apprenticeship option for barbers with the signing of House Bill 3460 into law.[23]

With the burdens of occupational licensing coming under increasing scrutiny combined with the high costs of attending barbering school, on-the-job training offers a tried-and-true approach for getting aspiring barbers the skills they need to succeed, increasing the pool of talent available to existing shop owners, and ensuring that deeply rooted traditions and skills are passed down from generation to generation.[24]

The Institute for Justice is dedicated to ensuring that hard-working Americans are not excluded from earning an honest living because of arbitrary, unreasonable, or burdensome regulations. Apprenticeships are an important way for governments to lower the barriers to employment that licensure creates, through the recognition of on-the-job training as a legitimate pathway into the industry. While school can be valuable for many, one size does not fit all. Whether it is people living in rural areas, established professionals looking for a career change, immigrants who bring barbering skills from their home country but face language barriers, individuals who just don't thrive in a classroom, or those on the first rungs of the economic ladder for whom school is not an option, apprenticeships can be the key that opens the door to a fulfilling and economically productive career. IJ encourages policymakers to expand and simplify on-the-job training options across the country as well as to embrace other alternatives to the rigid approach to training that has dominated the industry for decades.



Data:

State	Apprenticeship?	Mandatory?	DOL?	Length (Hours)
Alabama	Yes	No	No	2,000
Alaska	Yes	No	No	2,000
Arizona	Yes	No	Yes	2,144
Arkansas	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
California	Yes	No	No	3,420
Colorado	Yes	No	Yes	2,144
Connecticut	Yes	No	No	2,150
Delaware	Yes	No	No	3,000
Florida	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Georgia	Yes	No	No	2,280
Hawaii	Yes	No	No	3,000
Idaho	Yes	No	No	1,800
Illinois*	Yes	No	No	3,000
Indiana	Yes	No	Yes	2,144
Iowa	Yes	No	Yes	2,144
Kansas	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kentucky	Yes (Post-school)	Yes	No	1,040
Louisiana	Yes	No	No	4,288

State	Apprenticeship?	Mandatory?	DOL?	Length (Hours)
Maine	Yes	No	No	1,600
Maryland	Yes	No	No	2,250
Massachusetts	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Michigan	Yes	No	No	1,800
Minnesota	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mississippi	Yes	No	No	3,000
Missouri	Yes	No	No	2,000
Montana	Yes	No	Yes	2,144
Nebraska	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nevada	Yes (Post-school)	Yes	No	3,024
New Hampshire	Yes	No	No	1,600
New Jersey	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Mexico	Yes	No	Yes	2,144
New York	Yes	No	No	4,164
North Carolina	Yes (Post-school)	Yes	No	2,080
North Dakota	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oklahoma	Yes	No	No	3,000

State	Apprenticeship?	Mandatory?	DOL?	Length (Hours)
Oregon	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pennsylvania	Yes	No	No	1,250
Rhode Island	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
South Carolina**	Yes	Yes	No	3,840
South Dakota	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tennessee	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Texas	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Utah***	Yes	No	No	130
Vermont	Yes	No	No	1,125
Virginia	Yes	No	Yes	2,144
Washington	Yes	No	Yes	2,144
Washington, D.C.	Yes	No	No	2,000
West Virginia	Yes	No	No	2,400
Wisconsin	Yes	No	Yes	2,144
Wyoming	No	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Illinois' apprenticeship program goes into effect January 1, 2027.
**South Carolina requires all barbers to complete an apprenticeship after their initial training. However, both components can be completed on-the-job.
***Utah's 130-hour apprenticeship program enables one to obtain a "barbering permit" which allows for the practice of many common barbering services. An apprenticeship for a "master barbering license" requires 1,000 hours.

Apprenticeship Citations:

State	Citation
Alabama	https://www.aboc.alabama.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/New%20Law%20and%20Rules%201.1.2022.pdf
Alaska	https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/Portals/5/pub/BAH_Stats_Regs.pdf
Arizona	https://www.azleg.gov/viewdocument/?docName=https://www.azleg.gov/ars/32/00512-02.htm
Arkansas	https://www.labor.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/Barber-Statutes-2023.pdf
California	https://www.barbercosmo.ca.gov/applicants/apprentice_info.pdf
Colorado	https://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/GenerateRulePdf.do?ruleVersionId=11334&fileName=4%20CCR%20731-1
Connecticut	https://portal.ct.gov/dol/knowledge-base/articles/employment-and-training/apprenticeship/barbering-program?language=en_US; https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/departments-and-agencies/dph/dph/practitioner_licensing_and_investigations/plis/barber/barberstatutepdf.pdf?rev=c899516fbe0a4ccea2ca5c522f02afa9&hash=33CA0351C661B7FFEF9CD5A6253994E1#:~:text=Requirement%20for%20operation%20of%20shop,provided%20in%20section%2020-236.
Delaware	https://delcode.delaware.gov/title24/c051/sc01/index.html
Florida	https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2024/476.114
Georgia	https://rules.sos.ga.gov/gac/240-5
Hawaii	https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol10_Ch0436-0474/HRS0439A/HRS_0439A-.htm
Idaho	https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/Title54/T54CH58/SECT54-5810/
Illinois	https://my.ilga.gov/Legislation/BillStatus/FullText?GAID=18&DocNum=3460&DocTypeID=HB&LegId=162101&SessionID=114
Indiana	https://iga.in.gov/laws/2026/ic/titles/25#25-8-12.1

State	Citation
Iowa	https://dial.iowa.gov/licenses/barbering-cosmetology/licensure/how-do-i-barber-cosmetology-license
Kansas	https://kbob.kansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/20170324_Statute_Request.pdf
Kentucky	https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/statutes/statute.aspx?id=56219
Louisiana*	https://law.justia.com/codes/louisiana/revised-statutes/title-37/rs-37-349/
Maine	https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/32/title32sec14227-A.html
Maryland	https://onestop.md.gov/licenses/barber-license-5d1540a654f24d03e9997ee3
Massachusetts	https://www.mass.gov/regulations/240-CMR-800-barber-regulations
Michigan	https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=mcl-339-1108
Minnesota	https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/154.05
Mississippi	https://law.justia.com/codes/mississippi/title-73/chapter-7/general-provisions/section-73-7-13-1/
Missouri	https://www.sos.mo.gov/cmsimages/adrules/csr/current/20csr/20c2085-9.pdf
Montana	https://mca.legmt.gov/bills/mca/title_0370/chapter_0010/part_0010/section_0480/0370-0010-0010-0480.html; https://rules.mt.gov/browse/collections/aec52c46-128e-4279-9068-8af5d5432d74/policies/b5658ecf-a0b3-4dc3-a4b7-c95d9cec4b57
Nebraska	https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/display_html.php?begin_section=71-201&end_section=71-248
Nevada	https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-643.html#NRS643Sec070; https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Nac/NAC-643.html#NAC643Sec030

State	Citation
New Hampshire	https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XXX/313-A/313-A-mrg.htm
New Jersey	https://lis.njleg.state.nj.us/nxt/gateway.dll/statutes%2F1%2F41981%2F42410
New Mexico	https://nmonesource.com/nmos/nmsa/en/item/4397/index.do#!fragment/zoupio-_Toc230164732/BQCwhgziBcwMYgK4DsDWszIQewE4BUBTADwBdoAvbRABwEtsBaAfX2zgCYBmABgEYAbABYA7Fw4BKADTJspQhACKiQrgCe0AOSapEOLmwAbQwGEkaaAEJkuwmFwJlqjdtv2EAZTykAQhoAiAPImAKoAsgCiAHL4zIEASv4R8VKkYABG0KTsEhJAA
New York	https://dos.ny.gov/become-barber; https://newyork.public.law/laws/n.y._general_business_law_section_434
North Carolina	https://ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_86B/GS_86B-23.html
North Dakota	https://ndlegis.gov/cencode/t43c04.pdf
Ohio	https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-4709.07
Oklahoma	https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/cosmo/documents/resources/forms/10.20.2024%20NEWER%202024.rule.book.print.effective.9.11.2023.pdf
Oregon	https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/ors/ors690.html
Pennsylvania	https://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/049/chapter3/s3.71.html&d=reduce
Rhode Island	https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/216-40-05-4
South Carolina**	https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t40c007; https://llr.sc.gov/bar/faq.aspx
South Dakota	https://dlr.sd.gov/barber/documents/license-law-book-barber.pdf
Tennessee	https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/0200/0200-01.20251224.pdf

State	Citation
Texas	https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?$locale=en_US&interface=VIEW_TAC_SUMMARY&queryAsDate=04%2F03%2F2026&recordId=225877
Utah	https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title58/Chapter11A/58-11a-S302.10.html?v=C58-11a-S302.10_2026010120250507; https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title58/Chapter11A/58-11a-S306.html?v=C58-11a-S306_2026010120250507
Vermont	https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/sos/office_professional_regulation/professions/barber_cosmetologist/barber_cosmetologist_administrative_rules.pdf
Virginia	https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title18/agency41/chapter20/section20/
Washington	https://dol.wa.gov/professional-licenses/cosmetology/cosmetology-apprenticeship-program
Washington, D.C.	https://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Common/DCMR/SectionList.aspx?SectionNumber=17-3704
West Virginia	https://code.wvlegislature.gov/30-27-8A/; https://www.wvbbc.com/Portals/WVBBC/docs/Laws/3-13.pdf
Wisconsin	https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/sps/professional_services/050/50.pdf
Wyoming	https://wyoleg.gov/statutes/compress/title33.pdf#page=55

*Louisiana: There is no document online that could be found with the number of hours. This number was confirmed on April 6, 2026 over the phone with the board.

**South Carolina: While both components are variously listed in terms of months or one year, the board website specifies the initial training to be 1,920 hours and the statute specifies the apprenticeship requirement to be 1,920 hours. Therefore, 3,840 is reported.

References and Notes:

[1] U.S. Department of Labor. (2026). *Apprentices by state.* Retrieved November 17, 2026, from https://www.apprenticeship.gov/data-and-statistics/apprentices-by-state-dashboard; U.S. Department of Labor. (n.d.). *FY 2016 Data and Statistics.* Retrieved November 17, 2026, from https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship/about/statistics/2016. The percentage change was calculated using the number of active apprentices in FY 2016 (505,371) and the number of active apprentices reported for FY 2026 (755,778) yielding an increase of 49.5%. These figures include only registered apprenticeships.

[2] Monthey, W. (2019). The critical role of apprenticeship programs. *State Education Standard, 19*(3), 30–46. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1229470, p. 31; For an example of historic barber apprenticeships, see Dobson, J. (1974). Barber into surgeon. *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, 54*(2), 84–91. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2388370/?page=3, p. 86; Bristol Jr., D. W. (2009). *Knights of the razor: Black barbers in slavery and freedom.* Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 50; Britannica Editors. (2026, January 4). Barber. *Encyclopedia Britannica.* https://www.britannica.com/art/barber

[3] Iowa House File 711. (2025). https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=91&ba=HF%20711

[4] Kentucky House Bill 903. (2026). https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/26rs/hb903.html; Missouri House Bill 3472. (2026). https://house.mo.gov/BillContent.aspx?bill=HB3472&year=2026&code=R%20; Nevada Assembly Bill 225. (2025). https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Bill/12227/Overview

[5] U.S. Department of Labor. (n.d.). Barbers. https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-occupations/listings?occupationCode=39-5011.00; U.S. Department of Labor. (2024, April). *Explore Registered Apprenticeship.* https://web.archive.org/web/20250827094356/https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/DOLIndFSApprent101-043024-508.pdf; Monthey, W. (2019). The critical role of apprenticeship programs. *State Education Standard, 19*(3), 30–46. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1229470, p. 31.

[6] For example, Alabama has a few local barbering commissions that set licensing requirements, including apprenticeship requirements, independent of the state. As an example, see the requirements of Jefferson County's Barber Commission: https://jeffcobc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Barbering-Code-Of-Law.pdf. I do not consider local requirements in this report. Other jurisdictions in Alabama do not require a barber license at all for basic barbering services, which means a barber would not need to complete an apprenticeship at the state or local level to get started as a barber. For the purposes of this report, I included the 2,000-hour apprenticeship required for the state-level Class 2 barber license. See https://www.aboc.alabama.gov/licensing/license-types.

[7] As of April 2026, there is only one approved apprenticeship program in Louisiana, which is 4,288 hours in length. See https://ufcw496.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Apprenticeship-Brochure-Web-2022.pdf. This was confirmed over the phone on April 6, 2026.

[8] New York requires a separate course of study regarding sanitation, sterilization, and infection control. See https://newyork.public.law/laws/n.y._general_business_law_section_434. Based on a review of classes available online in July of 2026, this course appears to be about three hours in length.

[9] This process was borrowed from Knepper, L., Deyo, D., Sweetland, K., Tiezzi, J., & Mena, A. (2022). *License to work: A national study of burdens from occupational licensing* (3rd ed.) Institute for Justice. https://ij.org/report/license-to-work-3/

[10] The 21.67 days figure was arrived at by dividing 260 non-weekend days in a year by 12 months.

[11] This was done for ease of comparison. Not all states require apprenticeships to be completed at 40 hours per week.

[12] See Code of Federal Regulations. 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(2)(ii–iii). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/part-29/section-29.5#p-29.5(b)(2).

[13] This information was explained and clarified by Jessee Skittrall-Lemons of Atarashii Apprenticeship Program through conversations with the author.

[14] U.S. Department of Labor. (n.d.). Barbers. https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-occupations/listings?occupationCode=39-5011.00; Code of Federal Regulations. 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(2)(i) & § 29.5(b)(4). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/part-29/section-29.5#p-29.5(b)(2). Although federal rules require related instruction which is recommended to be 144 hours, Jessee Skittrall-Lemons of Atarashii Apprenticeship Program advises that 150 hours is common across the industry. Further, new rules adopted by the U.S. Department of Education in 2026 set the minimum hours for a program to be eligible for Workforce Pell Grants at 150. See https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2026-10013/p-55. For consistency with regulatory language, 144 hours is maintained as the minimum length in this report. The 144 hours of related instruction includes theoretical and technical subjects related to barbering and can be accomplished through "media such as classroom, occupational or industry courses, electronic media, or other instruction." See https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/apprenticeship-requirements-reference-guide.pdf

[15] For example, although Wisconsin's administrative code lists the minimum requirement as 1,712 hours, I confirmed over the phone that the state's Department of Workforce Development uses the DOL model. Therefore, I report the DOL number. See Wis. Admin. Code. Department of Safety and Professional Services. § SPS 50.310(3)(b). https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/administrativecode/SPS%2050.310(3)(b)

[16] This count includes Tennessee and Rhode Island. Tennessee allows for up to 50% of the hours required for licensure to be completed on the job. See https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/0200/0200-01.20251224.pdf

Similarly, Rhode Island allows barber school students who have completed 1,000 hours of school to complete 840 hours on-the-job. See https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/216-40-05-4. I do not count these as standalone apprenticeships as one must first attend school before being able to apprentice. Because the apprenticeship training is optional, they are not considered post-school required apprenticeships.

[17] Knepper, L., Deyo, D., Sweetland, K., Tiezzi, J., & Mena, A. (2022). *License to work: A national study of burdens from occupational licensing* (3rd ed.) Institute for Justice. https://ij.org/report/license-to-work-3/

[18] Note: Although South Carolina follows a similar two-step model, the state allows both steps to be completed on the job. See: South Carolina Code of Laws. § 40-7-230. https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t40c007. It is therefore counted among the states that have a standalone apprenticeship pathway, though it is broken into two separate parts.

[19] Note: Some states' apprenticeship hours are higher than Kentucky's, Nevada's, or North Carolina's total hours. However, students in those other states have the option to pursue school rather than an apprenticeship; students living in Kentucky, Nevada, or North Carolina must do both.

[20] West, M. P. (2025). *Clean cut: How clipping unnecessary licensing can grow opportunities for barbers and manicurists and keep consumers safe.* Institute for Justice. https://ij.org/report/clean-cut/results-licensing-has-little-impact-on-health-and-safety/; Utah Department of Commerce Office of Professional Licensure Review. (2025). *2024 periodic review: Cosmetology.* https://commerce.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/OPLR-Cosmetology-Report-1.pdf.

[21] Knepper et al. (2022).

[22] Michigan House Bill 4927. (2025). https://legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HB-4927; New Jersey Assembly Bill 4299. (2026). https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2026/A4299; South Carolina House Bill 4752. (2026). https://legiscan.com/SC/text/H4752/2025

[23] Illinois House Bill 3460. (2026). https://ilga.gov/Legislation/BillStatus?DocNum=3460&GAID=18&DocTypeID=HB&LegId=162101&SessionID=114

[24] For an example of scrutiny of occupational licensing, see U.S. Department of the Treasury Office of Economic Policy, the Council of Economic Advisers, and the U.S. Department of Labor. (2015). *Occupational licensing: A framework for policymakers*. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/licensing_report_final_nonembargo.pdf; For example, the average cost to attend barber school during the 2019-2020 academic year was more than $15,000. See Plemmons, A., & Timmons, E. (2021). *Occupational licensing: A barrier to opportunity and prosperity.* The Center for Growth and Opportunity. https://www.thecgo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Regulation-16-pdf-1.pdf, p. 117.


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Founded in 1991, the Institute for Justice is a nonprofit, public interest law firm. Our goal is to end widespread abuses of government power and secure the constitutional rights that allow all Americans to pursue their dreams.

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