Nebraska and the Nuclear Workforce

Advance findings from a joint analysis by Opportunity Data and Good Energy Collective, testing a 78-role nuclear power plant staffing taxonomy, 61 occupations from the construction trades to licensed operations, against federal training data and each state's Workforce Pell eligibility screen.

24th
national rank, nuclear staffing training capacity

32 of 61
staffing occupations with in-state sub-baccalaureate completions

9 of 61
staffing occupations the state's eligibility list reaches

Key takeaways

→ **Training capacity.** Nebraska institutions report sub-baccalaureate completions in 32 of the 61 staffing occupations, ranking 24th among the 50 states and DC. Eight of the 61 occupations map to no instructional program anywhere, so the most any state can reach is 53.

→ **The Workforce Pell screen.** Of the 49 occupations on the state's published eligibility list, 9 appear in the staffing taxonomy: Carpenters, Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers, Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators, Electricians, Plumbers and Pipefitters, HVAC Mechanics and others. Occupations that distinguish nuclear-grade work sit largely outside the list; the table on the following pages shows the alignment occupation by occupation.

→ **The national pattern.** Trades with deep national pipelines, welders, electricians, and pipefitters, clear nearly every live state screen. The occupations that distinguish a nuclear build, from fuel handling to specialized fabrication, are the least visible to federal training data and state screens alike; a state that wants nuclear-ready pipelines has to design its eligibility list for them deliberately.

→ **An invitation.** Opportunity Data works with institutions, state agencies, and employers on program and occupation alignment: joint statements, briefings, and state-specific analysis. The national analysis is at opportunitydata.org/workforce-pell-nuclear.html.

Who this report is for

This is the complete Nebraska report, free so that any reader can judge it. The same four pages exist for each of the 51 jurisdictions at $19. Four readers use it differently.

College official

Workforce dean, trades and technical programs, continuing education

What you learn	Where Nebraska colleges already train for nuclear plant staffing, and where no institution in the state does. Central Community College in Grand Island leads with 759 trades and technical completions reaching 10 of the occupations. 21 of the 53 trainable occupations had no completions anywhere in the state in 2023-24, among them boilermakers, sheet metal workers, and nuclear power reactor operators.
Where to turn	“Where the completions are” and the gap lists on the last page.
What to do next	Any state’s report is $19, with the same four pages, for a peer or a neighboring state.

State official

Energy office, workforce board, higher education agency, legislative staff

What you learn	Nebraska ranks 24th in nuclear staffing training capacity, with in-state completions in 32 of the 61 occupations. The state’s Workforce Pell list names 9 of them. 2 trades and technical occupations are trained in state but not on the list: electrical and electronics repairers (13 completions, 2 institutions) and CNC tool operators (6 completions, 1 institution).
Where to turn	The 61 occupations, one by one, with completions, institutions and list status side by side.
What to do next	Reports for all 51 jurisdictions are $19 each; the national analysis is free on the nuclear page.

Taxpayer

Anyone asking what the public pays for and what it gets

What you learn	Where public training for a nuclear build already exists, and where it does not. 7 institutions, mostly community colleges, reported the completions in this report. For 21 of the 53 trainable occupations the state trained no one in 2023-24; a project that needs them hires from out of state or funds new programs.
Where to turn	The gap lists: occupations not trained in state, and occupations neither trained nor on the list.
What to do next	Read it free. The national analysis on the nuclear page compares every state.

Student

Anyone choosing a trade

What you learn	Which nuclear plant trades you can train for in Nebraska below a bachelor’s degree, and which are on the state’s Workforce Pell list: welders (586 completions, 6 institutions), electricians (271 completions, 5 institutions), industrial machinery mechanics (220 completions, 3 institutions), and HVAC mechanics (202 completions, 5 institutions).
Where to turn	The occupation table: find the trade, then the institutions on the last page.
What to do next	An occupation on the list is a first step; each short program still needs state and federal approval before Workforce Pell can pay for it. Ask the college which programs it has submitted.

Nebraska: the 61 occupations, one by one

Every occupation in the 61-occupation nuclear power plant staffing taxonomy, with the sub-baccalaureate completions Nebraska institutions reported in 2023-24 in the instructional programs the federal crosswalk maps to that occupation, the number of institutions reporting them, and whether the state's Workforce Pell eligibility list names the occupation. A program mapped to several occupations counts toward each; eight occupations have no instructional-program mapping at all. Construction trades first, then maintenance and production, engineering and science technicians, and the remaining roles.

SOC	Occupation	In-state sub-baccalaureate completions, 2023-24	Institutions	On the state list
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	354	5	No
47-2011	Boilermakers	none		No
47-2031	Carpenters	21	2	Yes
47-2051	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	7	1	Yes
47-2061	Concrete Worker/Laborer	*no instructional program maps to it*		No
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	5	1	Yes
47-2111	Electricians	271	5	Yes
47-2131	Insulation Workers	none		No
47-2141	Painters	none		No
47-2152	Plumbers and Pipefitters	14	2	Yes
47-2171	Ironworker (Structural)	*no instructional program maps to it*		No
47-2211	Sheet Metal Workers	none		No
47-4011	Construction and Building Inspectors	none		No
47-4041	Hazardous Materials Removal Workers	none		No
49-2095	Electrical and Electronics Repairers	13	2	No
49-9021	HVAC Mechanics	202	5	Yes
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	220	3	Yes
51-2099	Factory Assembly Technician	*no instructional program maps to it*		No
51-4041	Machinists	88	3	Yes
51-4121	Welders	586	6	Yes
51-8011	Nuclear Power Reactor Operators	none		No
51-8013	Power Plant Operators	none		No
51-8091	Chemical Plant and System Operators	none		No
51-8099	Fuel Handling Technician	*no instructional program maps to it*		No
51-9161	CNC Tool Operators	6	1	No
51-9199	Fuel Fabrication Worker	*no instructional program maps to it*		No
17-2041	Chemical Engineers	none		No
17-2051	Civil Engineers	none		No
17-2071	Electrical Engineers	none		No

SOC	Occupation	In-state sub-baccalaureate completions, 2023-24	Institutions	On the state list
17-2072	Electronics Engineers	none		No
17-2111	Health and Safety Engineers	none		No
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	none		No
17-2131	Materials Engineers	none		No
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	none		No
17-2161	Nuclear Engineers	none		No
17-2199	Engineers, All Other	8	3	No
17-3023	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians	11	1	No
17-3029	Engineering Technologists and Technicians	53	4	No
19-2012	Physicists	none		No
19-2041	Environmental Scientists and Specialists	2	1	No
19-4031	Chemical Technicians	1	1	No
19-4099	Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other	261	4	No
19-5011	Occupational Health and Safety Technologists	4	1	No
11-3051	Industrial Production Managers	1,012	10	No
11-3061	Purchasing Managers	none		No
11-9021	Construction Managers	1,054	10	No
11-9199	Managers, All Other	1,054	13	No
13-1041	Compliance Officers	2	1	No
13-1051	Cost Estimators	997	10	No
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	998	11	No
13-1151	Training and Development Specialists	1	1	No
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists	903	9	No
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	51	4	No
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	547	7	No
23-1011	Lawyers	2	1	No
25-1194	Career/Technical Education Teachers	117	2	No
27-3031	Public Relations Specialists	11	4	No
33-9032	Security Guards	none		No
43-0000	Administrative/Clerical Staff	*no instructional program maps to it*		No
43-4199	Document Control Specialist	*no instructional program maps to it*		No
43-5071	Supply Chain/Warehouse	*no instructional program maps to it*		No

Where the completions are in Nebraska

The ten institutions reporting the most 2023-24 sub-baccalaureate completions in programs mapped to the taxonomy's trades and technical occupations (SOC groups 47, 49, 51, 17 and 19), each program counted once, with the number of those occupations their programs reach. Management, business and support roles are left out so that business programs do not swamp the trades. 7 institutions in the state report at least one such completion.

Institution	City	Trades and technical completions, 2023-24	Trades and technical occupations covered
Central Community College	Grand Island	759	10
Metropolitan Community College Area	Omaha	438	10
Southeast Community College Area	Lincoln	393	12
Northeast Community College	Norfolk	137	9
Mid-Plains Community College	North Platte	48	6
Western Nebraska Community College	Scottsbluff	26	3
Little Priest Tribal College	Winnebago	2	1

Gaps

Not trained in state in 2023-24 (21 of the 53 trainable occupations): Boilermakers, Insulation Workers, Painters, Sheet Metal Workers, Construction and Building Inspectors, Hazardous Materials Removal Workers, Nuclear Power Reactor Operators, Power Plant Operators, Chemical Plant and System Operators, Chemical Engineers, Civil Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Electronics Engineers, Health and Safety Engineers, Industrial Engineers, Materials Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, Nuclear Engineers, Physicists, Purchasing Managers, Security Guards.

Neither trained nor on the state list (21): Boilermakers, Insulation Workers, Painters, Sheet Metal Workers, Construction and Building Inspectors, Hazardous Materials Removal Workers, Nuclear Power Reactor Operators, Power Plant Operators, Chemical Plant and System Operators, Chemical Engineers, Civil Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Electronics Engineers, Health and Safety Engineers, Industrial Engineers, Materials Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, Nuclear Engineers, Physicists, Purchasing Managers, Security Guards. These are the occupations a state that wants nuclear-ready pipelines would have to add to its list and stand up programs for.

Invisible to federal training data everywhere (8): Administrative/Clerical Staff, Document Control Specialist, Supply Chain/Warehouse, Concrete Worker/Laborer, Ironworker (Structural), Factory Assembly Technician, Fuel Handling Technician, Fuel Fabrication Worker. No instructional program maps to them, so no Title IV program can be classified as training them; employers, apprenticeships, and licensing fill these roles.

Sources: NCES IPEDS completions 2023-24 (final release); state eligibility documents as of November 2026 (Opportunity Data State Implementation Record); U.S. Department of Energy. Licensed for internal use by the purchasing organization. © 2026 Opportunity Data.