



**The Skill Up Movement
Mentor Welcome Packet
Build Skills. Build Self. Build Success.**

Welcome Letter

Dear Trade Coach,

Welcome to The Skill Up Movement—and thank you, truly, for stepping into a role that holds the power to shape futures.

By choosing to mentor with us, you are not just volunteering your time—you are planting seeds of transformation in the life of a young person who may have never had a clear path forward. You are offering more than trade skills. You're offering belief, guidance, and a vision of what's possible.

We are deeply honored and immensely grateful to have you join this mission. It takes a rare kind of commitment to lead by example, to give back when the world often tells us to keep moving forward. It takes heart to mentor. And that decision—your decision—can change the course of someone's entire life.

Your experience, presence, and encouragement will speak louder than any textbook or lecture. Whether you're introducing a teen to a power tool for the first time, or simply listening and offering advice, the impact is real. It's long-lasting. It's legacy.

At Skill Up, we believe in the power of work, the dignity of craftsmanship, and the unmatched value of mentorship. We believe in you.

Thank you again for joining this movement. Let's build something greater—together.

**In strength and gratitude,
Des Middleton
Founder & Director**

Mission, Vision & Core Values

Mission Statement

The Skill Up Movement is dedicated to introducing skilled trades to the next generation and building a clear pathway for young people to pursue meaningful careers. We provide guidance, resources, and mentorship to future tradesmen and tradeswomen, empowering them to develop real skills, real confidence, and real control over their future.

Vision

Our vision is to build a lasting legacy where skilled trades are celebrated, accessible, and embraced by new generations. We envision youth who not only learn a craft but also discover pride, self-worth, and long-term opportunity through their work.

Trade Coach Core Values (S.K.I.L.L.U.P.)

S – Service

Lead with purpose. Give your time, knowledge, and care to shape young lives and serve the community through action.

K – Knowledge Sharing

Pass down more than just skills—share your journey, your challenges, and your wisdom so mentees can see what's possible.

I – Integrity

Model honesty, discipline, and accountability. Let your actions teach as much as your words.

L – Lead by Example

Be the standard. Show what it looks like to work hard, show up consistently, and carry yourself with pride.

L – Lifelong Impact

Understand that even the smallest act of mentorship can leave a lasting impression. You're not just teaching a trade—you're shaping a life.

U – Upliftment

Encourage, empower, and build confidence. Your belief in them might be the spark they've never had.

P – Professionalism

Demonstrate excellence. Teach youth how to succeed on the job and in life with respect, reliability, and pride in their craft.

Trade Coach Role & Responsibilities

As a Trade Coach with Skill Up, you're not just filling a volunteer role—you're stepping into a position of power, purpose, and legacy. You will help shape not only technical skills, but character, discipline, and confidence in the youth we serve.

Your Role as a Trade Coach:

- Be a steady presence. Show up, stay committed, and build trust through consistency.
- Lead by example. Demonstrate integrity, work ethic, and professionalism on and off the jobsite.
- Share your story. Your journey is living proof of what's possible through trades—don't underestimate its power.
- Guide, not just instruct. Help youth develop hands-on skills *and* life habits that stick.
- Encourage growth. Celebrate progress, coach through setbacks, and always point toward the next step.
- Support real-world readiness. Help students understand what it takes to succeed in your trade—from tools and technique to attitude and reliability.

Core Responsibilities:

- Attend a brief mentor orientation and onboarding session.
 - Commit to at least 4–6 hours per month (more if desired), including workshops, events, or 1-on-1 time.
 - Maintain open, respectful communication with program staff and mentees.
 - Follow all policies outlined in the Mentor Code of Conduct and Youth Safety Guidelines.
 - Serve as a positive influence and community role model.
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Trade Coach Expectations & Best Practices

What We Expect from Our Trade Coaches:

- **Show Up Consistently:** Be reliable and communicate when unavailable.
- **Be a Role Model:** Demonstrate how tradespeople carry themselves.
- **Stay Patient:** Growth takes time. Lead with empathy.
- **Communicate Clearly:** Use respectful, appropriate language.
- **Practice Safety First:** Report any unsafe conditions immediately.
- **Respect Differences:** Embrace each student's unique story and background.

Best Practices:

- **Listen First:** Give youth space to speak.
- **Make It Hands-On:** Let them learn by doing.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** Every step forward matters.
- **Keep It Real:** Authenticity builds trust.
- **Use Encouragement as Fuel:** Positive words spark progress.

Trade Coach Code of Conduct

As a Skill Up Trade Coach, you are a role model, teacher, and trusted adult. This Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that every participant—youth, mentor, and staff—experiences a safe, respectful, and growth-centered environment.

A. Professional Behavior

- **Always treat youth, staff, guests, and fellow mentors with dignity, respect, and patience—even in stressful moments.**
- **Speak clearly and positively, using language that uplifts and instructs. Avoid slang or jokes that could be misinterpreted or offensive.**
- **Refrain from swearing, gossiping, or speaking negatively about youth, the program, or anyone involved.**
- **Maintain composure, even when correcting behavior. Never use sarcasm, public humiliation, or raised voices to control situations.**
- **Address conflict constructively and seek support from staff when needed.**

B. Boundaries with Youth

- Maintain professional and respectful boundaries at all times. You are a mentor, not a friend or peer.
- Never engage in one-on-one unsupervised time with youth in isolated spaces.
- Do not initiate personal friendships, gift-giving, social media follows, or direct messaging without staff clearance and parental consent.
- Avoid overly personal discussions unless in a structured, staff-approved setting.

C. Safety & Supervision

- Follow all site-specific safety procedures and enforce PPE requirements.
- Never allow students to operate power tools or perform dangerous tasks unsupervised.
- Keep a clean and hazard-free workspace.
- Report any injury, unsafe act, or hazard immediately to staff.

D. Drug-Free and Weapon-Free Commitment

- The use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, firearms, knives, or weapons of any kind is strictly prohibited at all Skill Up events or work sites.
- Do not report for duty under the influence of alcohol or impairing substances.
- Smoking or vaping is not allowed in view of youth or on Skill Up properties.

E. Mandatory Reporting

- Report any signs or disclosures of abuse, neglect, harassment, or danger to others immediately to program staff.
- Do not promise confidentiality to youth in crisis.
- Do not investigate—report and allow staff to handle the situation.

F. Confidentiality

- Respect the privacy of youth and families. Only share relevant concerns with program staff.
- Never share a student's story or image without written consent.

G. Dress Code

- Wear clean, durable, and appropriate clothing. Avoid offensive imagery.
- Closed-toe shoes, long pants, and required PPE must be worn during hands-on work.

H. Commitment to the Mission

- Represent Skill Up with pride, uphold its values, and lead with integrity.

Acknowledgment: All mentors must sign the Mentor Agreement Form confirming understanding and compliance with this Code of Conduct.

Youth Safety Policy

This policy protects our students and mentors by outlining clear expectations and procedures for maintaining emotional, physical, and environmental safety.

A. General Safety Expectations

- Prioritize student safety at all times.
- Avoid unsafe demonstrations or tool usage beyond a youth's training level.
- Maintain organized, hazard-free workspaces.

B. Supervision Guidelines

- Students must always be supervised.
- Do not leave students unsupervised or in closed, private spaces.
- Work in sight and sound of others when mentoring.

C. Prohibited Behaviors

- No roughhousing, inappropriate contact, or abusive language.
- No graphic discussions or inappropriate jokes.

D. Physical Contact Policy

- Use physical guidance only when necessary, with permission, and for brief instructional purposes.
- Avoid all affectionate or non-task-related contact.

E. Emergency Procedures

- Report all injuries and unsafe conditions immediately.
- Know the location of emergency equipment.
- In case of severe injury, call 911 and notify staff.

F. Transportation

- Do not transport youth unless officially approved with parental consent and insurance verification.

G. Incident Reporting

- Report all safety concerns or disclosures of harm to the Program Coordinator or Director.

H. Digital Safety & Communication

- No private communication with students outside approved channels.
- No social media contact or photo sharing without program approval.

Background Check Requirement

To ensure the safety and integrity of our program, all Skill Up Trade Coaches must complete a background check through our trusted provider, Sterling Volunteers, before participating in any youth-facing activities.

Why This Is Required

As a mentor, you are entrusted with influencing young lives. A background check ensures our students are protected and that Skill Up maintains the highest standard of care and responsibility.

How to Complete Your Background Check

We've partnered with Sterling Volunteers, a secure and nonprofit-friendly platform used by national mentorship and volunteer programs.

Steps to Complete:

1. Go to our secure portal:
2. Complete the online screening application (approx. 10 minutes)
3. Pay the processing fee (around \$20–\$30 depending on location)
4. Your results will be submitted directly to the Skill Up admin team

 Your private information is handled securely by Sterling. Skill Up does not see your SSN or financial data.



Deadline to Submit

Please complete the background check within 7 days of signing your Mentor Agreement Form. Participation in any workshops or events will be paused until clearance is received.

Need Help Covering the Fee?

Skill Up is committed to access and equity. If the cost is a barrier, please contact us at support@skillupmovement.org for confidential financial assistance.



Trade Coach Agreement & Commitment Form

This form confirms your understanding of expectations, responsibilities, and program standards.

Trade Coach Commitment Pledge

I commit to:

1. Uphold Skill Up's mission and values.
2. Follow the Trade Coach Code of Conduct.
3. Prioritize youth safety and well-being.
4. Be reliable, present, and accountable.
5. Lead with professionalism and integrity.
6. Stay open to growth and feedback.

Trade Coach Information

Full Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Trade Background: _____

Emergency Contact Name & Number:

Signature

I confirm I have received and agree to the contents of the Trade Coach Welcome Packet. Completed forms must be submitted to mentorship@skillupmovement.org.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

General Liability Waiver

This release waives liability for injuries or damages sustained during Skill Up activities.

1. Acknowledgment of Risks

- Risks may include cuts, trips, equipment accidents, or overexertion.
- I acknowledge the physical risks involved in trade activities.

2. Assumption of Responsibility

- I am responsible for using tools safely and reporting concerns.

3. Medical Authorization

- In an emergency, Skill Up may seek treatment on my behalf. I am responsible for associated costs.

4. Indemnification & Hold Harmless

- I release Skill Up and its affiliates from liability unless due to gross negligence.

5. Insurance Disclaimer

- I understand that Skill Up does not provide personal health insurance.

6. Communicable Disease Waiver

- I acknowledge the risk of illness from group activities and waive related claims.

Signature Section

Full Name: _____

Phone: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Media & Photography Release Form

This release allows Skill Up to use photos and video taken during events.

1. Consent

I grant permission to Skill Up to photograph or record me and use the content for promotional and educational purposes.

2. Ownership

I understand all media is the property of Skill Up and may be used without compensation.

3. Opt-Out Option

If I do not consent, I will notify staff. Reasonable efforts will be made to exclude me from published content.

4. Release of Liability

I release Skill Up and its affiliates from liability related to the use of my image or voice.

Acknowledgment

Full Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

☐ I grant permission ☐ I do not grant permission

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Mentor FAQ Sheet

GENERAL

Q: How much time is required?

A: 4–6 hours/month minimum.

Q: Do I need to be certified to mentor?

A: No teaching license required—just real trade experience.

Q: Will I be paired with a specific student?

A: Sometimes, or you may rotate.

MENTORING

Q: What if I'm unsure how to handle a situation?

A: Contact program staff. You're never alone.

Q: Can I bring my own tools?

A: Yes, but get staff approval first.

SAFETY & LOGISTICS

Q: What should I wear?

A: Closed-toe shoes, pants, PPE, and Skill Up shirt.

Q: What if I can't make a session?

A: Let us know ASAP.

Q: Who do I contact with issues?

A: Email support@skillupmovement.org for mentor matters, info@skillupmovement.org for general questions.

Recommended Resources for Mentors

BOOKS

- *The Carpenter* by Jon Gordon
- *Tools of Titans* by Tim Ferriss
- *The Mentor Leader* by Tony Dungy
- *Shop Class as Soulcraft* by Matthew B. Crawford

VIDEOS & DOCUMENTARIES

- *Dirty Jobs* (Discovery Channel)
- Mike Rowe's *Returning the Favor* (YouTube)
- *Generation Next: Skilled Trades* (PBS)

WEBSITES

- skillsusa.org
 - mikeroweworks.org
 - tradeswomen.org
 - [OSHA QuickCards](#)
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Communication & Support

Skill Up is committed to supporting our trade coaches just as much as we support our youth. You are not expected to do this alone. Whether you need guidance, resources, or just someone to talk through a situation—we've got you.

Ongoing Support for Trade Coaches:

- Monthly Trade Coach Check-Ins
- Mentorship Resource Hub (Coming Soon)
- Trade Coach Group Chat
- On-Site Program Coordinator Support

Key Contacts:

- Program Support & Scheduling:
support@skillupmovement.org
- General Questions & Partnerships:
info@skillupmovement.org