

SEE YOURSELF IN GLASS

The Work is
everywhere
so is the
opportunity

Glass installers — called glaziers in the trade and most job listings — put the glass in every skyline, hospital, school, and home. It's skilled, tech-equipped work — and there's a clear path for advancement, no four-year degree required.



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What Do Glass Installers Do?

Where they work

High-rise
commercial
construction
jobsites

What they do

Install exterior glass wall systems called curtainwalls, glass building entrances, windows, and glass interior products like railings or decorative glass



Low-rise
commercial
construction
jobsites

Install and/or repair storefront systems—the glass entrance to a retail store for example—glass doors and hardware, and windows



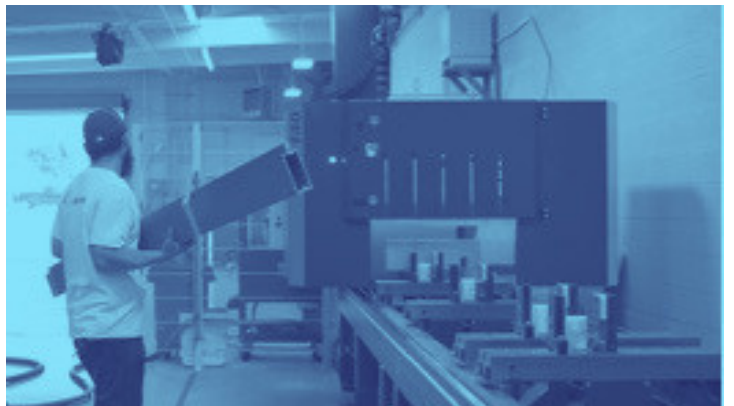
Residential
homes

Install glass showers, mirror, and custom glass products like railing, tabletops and decorative glass



In the shop

Use specialized equipment to cut metal framing; use tools to custom cut glass



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Is This Career Right for You?

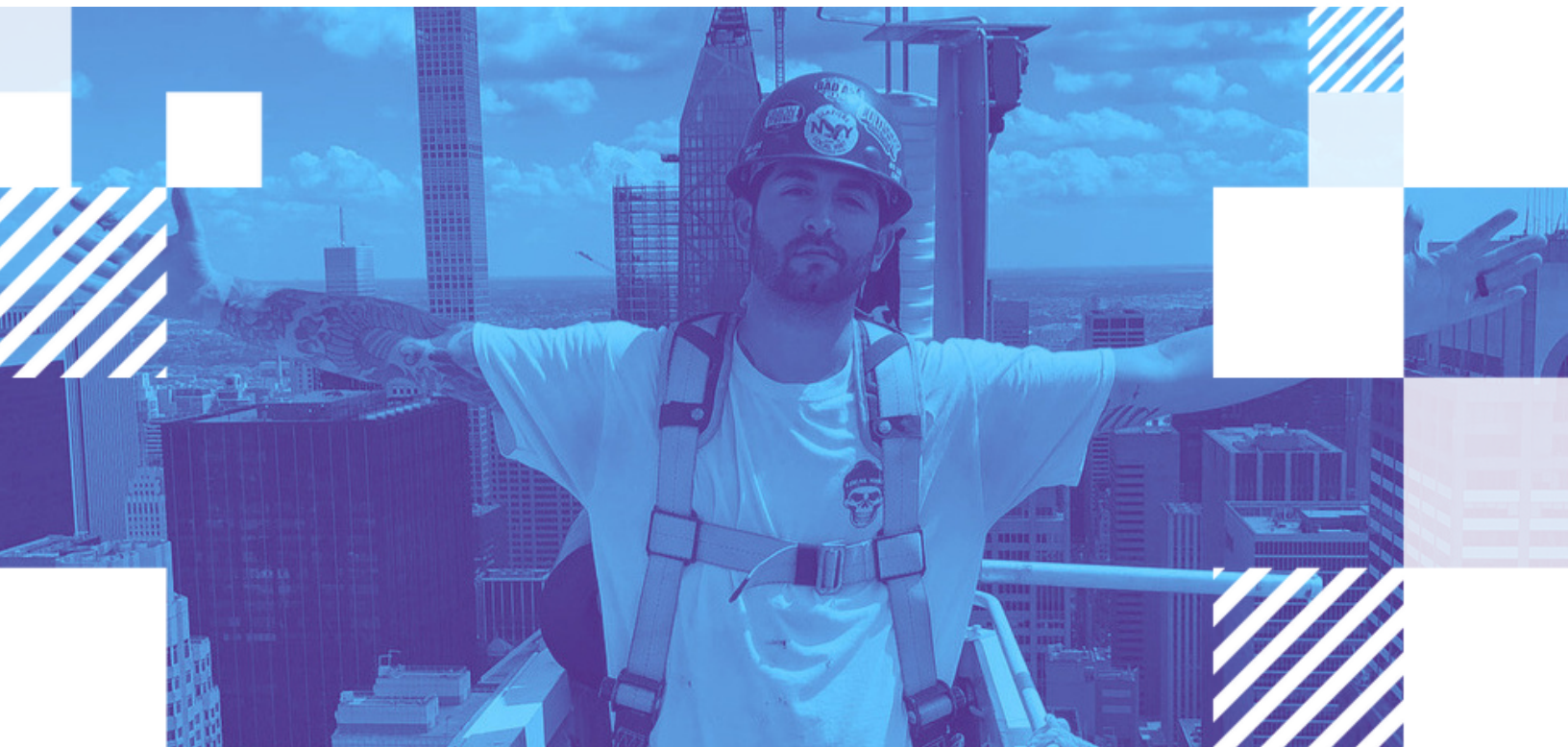
This work may suit you if...

- ☐ You want to point to a building and say, "I helped build that."
- ☐ You like detailed finish work
- ☐ You're drawn to how things are designed and put together
- ☐ You want variety — new sites, new systems, no two days alike
- ☐ You work well on a crew, where safety and quality depend on teamwork
- ☐ You're comfortable working at heights (more common in commercial work)
- ☐ You're comfortable working in a customer-facing role (more common in residential work)
- ☐ You want to earn while you learn a trade instead of paying college tuition

Also ask yourself:

- ☐ Am I OK working outdoors in all weather?
- ☐ Am I prepared to take on a physically demanding job?
- ☐ Am I willing to start my workday early?

If you hesitated on any of these, take it seriously — these are real-world conditions.



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Working Safely

Wherever you handle glass, whether on the jobsite or in the shop, you risk injury from cuts, falling loads or other hazards like working at height. The trade takes that seriously.

The risk	How the trade handles it
Sharp edges	Employers are required to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and train you in its use and care. PPE includes cut-resistant gloves, wrist and forearm protectors, among other protective gear. Safety training will instruct you how to lift and handle glass properly.
Heavy glass	You will be trained in how to lift glass safely according to weight and size, with heavy glass lites installed using specialized equipment like vacuum lifters.
Working at height	Harnesses, fall protection systems, and daily equipment checks. You're trained and certified before you work at height.
Weather	Work stops for high wind.

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Potential Salary and Career Path

You start with no experience and no debt. Every step up is earned through hours worked and training completed — not tuition paid.

Position	Typical pay (median)	Relative pay — \$0 to \$90,000/yr	Job description
1a. Glazier Helper entry — no experience	\$21/hr range \$21–\$24/hr about \$43,680/yr		Entry point. No experience needed. Begin to learn the trade on the job, assisting glaziers with handling and installing large pieces of glass, windows, mirrors, storefront materials, showers, and doors.
1b. Apprentice Glazier entry — no experience	\$23.50/hr range \$22–\$26/hr about \$48,880/yr		Alternative entry point. No experience needed. Employee apprentices learn the glazing trade through a combination of paid on-the-job training and classroom instruction, typically in a 3-year program. Apprentices receive structured wage increases as training and coursework are completed.
2a. Glazier trained on the job	\$28/hr range \$26–\$31/hr about \$58,240/yr		Installs glass wall systems, entrances, windows, glass interior products, showers, etc., competently after on-the-job training — but with no credential.
2b. Journeyworker Glazier apprenticeship complete	\$36/hr range \$32–\$39/hr about \$74,880/yr		A journeyworker glazier has completed a glazier Registered Apprenticeship program, earning a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship — official recognition that you've reached journeyworker-level competency in the trade.
3. Crew Lead runs a crew	\$34/hr range \$34–\$39/hr about \$70,720/yr		A crew lead assists the field superintendent as needed and leads the crew to ensure the project is done efficiently and effectively. Glaziers and journey worker glaziers feed into crew lead roles, so pay overlaps journey worker scale — this is a step up in responsibility that opens the path to superintendent.
4. Field Superintendent runs projects	\$80,000/yr range \$77,000–\$90,000		A field superintendent is responsible for the efficient and effective operation of each project at or below budget. They work closely with project management, production, engineering, operations, and other superintendents to ensure projects are operating as required. Salaried rather than hourly.

• Bonuses are common at every level, from about \$1,000 for helpers to \$5,000 for superintendents. Not included in the figures above.

Source: 2025 Compensation & Benefits Study for Contract Glaziers, National Glass Association. Pay varies by region, employer, union status, and overtime.

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What Comes with the Job

Your hourly rate is not the whole picture. Most employers in the glass industry offer insurance on top of wages — coverage you would otherwise pay for yourself. Here is how common each one is.

Benefit	Employers offering	0% to 100%	What it covers
Medical insurance	98%		Doctor visits, hospital care, and prescriptions.
Dental insurance	91%		Checkups, cleanings, fillings, and other dental work.
Vision insurance	76%		Eye exams, and help paying for glasses or contacts.
Life insurance	63%		A payment to your family if you die.
Short-term disability	46%		Replaces part of your pay if an injury or illness keeps you off work for weeks or months.
Long-term disability	43%		Replaces part of your pay if you cannot work for a long stretch.
Other coverage	13%		Varies by employer — may include accident, critical illness, or supplemental plans.

Share of surveyed employers who offer each benefit. Source: 2025 Compensation & Benefits Study for Contract Glaziers, National Glass Association.

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Registered Apprenticeship: Earn While You Learn

Why the apprenticeship matters

\$8.00 more per hour — about \$16,640 a year, for every year you install glass.

A glazier and a journeyworker glazier do the same work at the same level. The difference is the credential and the pay. A journeyworker glazier is someone who has completed a Registered Apprenticeship program, which not only means higher wages (the top of the journeyworker range is \$39/hour, while the top of the glazier range is \$31/hour), but also a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship that travels with you to show your training and skills.

Apprenticeship programs are available through local glass companies and your local International Union of Painters & Allied Trades (IUPAT) union hall. While programs vary in terms of wages, benefits and framework due to location and company structure, here is how they generally work:

Apprenticeship component	What it means
On-the-job training	Three years (typically) of paid on-the-job training, working alongside experienced glaziers.
Related classroom instruction	Classroom instruction alongside your training. This could be online or in person; your employer will determine the schedule.
Wage progression	Scheduled wage increases tied to hours completed and coursework passed.

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Registered Apprenticeship: Earn While You Learn

Apprenticeship component	What it means
Credential at completion	A nationally recognized credential. When you finish, you receive a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship — official recognition that you've reached journeyworker-level competency in the trade. It's recognized by employers across the country, and it belongs to you, not to the company that trained you.
What it might cost you	Most costs are covered by your employer or sponsor, and no registered apprenticeship requires student loans. Where apprentices do pay something, it's usually tools and work clothes, books and materials, class tuition, or state testing and license fees. The exact answer depends on the program. For glass companies using the NGA Glazier Registered Apprenticeship Curriculum, apprentices pay \$0. Other sponsors set their own terms. Ask your employer what you pay, what your employer covers, and whether you'd owe money back if you leave before finishing.

What you walk away with

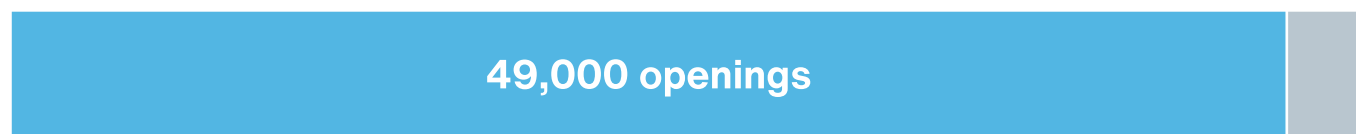
- A recognized credential that travels with you between employers and states.
- No student loan debt. Whatever the cost, you're earning while you pay it.
- Journey-level wages.

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Job Outlook and Demand

5,100 job openings for glaziers each year, 2024-2034	51,000 job openings over the full decade	96% of openings come from workers leaving, not new jobs
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Where the job openings come from



■ Replacing glaziers who retire or leave the trade ■ New positions from industry growth (about 2,000)

Only about 2,000 of the roughly 51,000 openings over the decade come from the trade getting bigger. The rest open up because someone left. That is the difference between a field you have to compete to break into and one that needs you.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Glaziers.

How to get started

Basic requirements

- 18 years of age
- High school diploma or GED, preferred by many employers, not always required
- Physical ability to perform work described
- Ability to meet drug screening or background requirements (varies by employer)
- Basic math and ability to read a tape measure

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Route 1: High school CTE program or pre-apprenticeship

If you are a high school student with an interest in the building trades, join your school's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. Many CTE programs offer construction pathways where students learn trade math, tool safety, and technical skills that prepare them for careers in the glass industry and set their resumes apart from other job applicants.

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Route 2: Train on the job, either as an apprentice or a glazier helper.

Glass companies are hiring! To find open positions:

- Write a resume.
- Search these terms: glazier, glass installer, or glazier apprentice on ZipRecruiter, GlassDoor and Indeed.
- Use your network. The glass industry relies heavily on employee referrals for new hires. Do you have friends or family who are glass installers? Ask them to refer you.
- Introduce yourself. Check the websites of local glass companies for open job positions, and call or visit.

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Route 3: Union apprenticeship program

The International Union of Painters & Allied Trades (IUPAT) also offers a glazier/glass worker apprenticeship program. Visit www.iupat.org/trades/glazier-and-glassworker/ to learn about apprenticeship opportunities available in your area.

Find Your Path

If you're a student, your best bet is to start with a CTE program to confirm your interest in the construction trade and start building the skills you will need as a glass installer.

If you're out of school, contact your local union hall to see if they are accepting apprentice applications and compare their wage and benefit offerings against local glass company job listings to see which fit is right for you.