

## **WELDER**

**Job Description:** A skilled welder is consistently in high demand and is needed for almost all energy industries. This is a person who uses flame-cutting, hand-welding, soldering or brazing equipment to join metal components or to fill holes, indentations, or seams of fabricated metal products. It is demanding work that requires great attention to detail. It is also a job for someone who enjoys working with his or her hands and takes pride in doing quality work. Work conditions can be challenging in that it is often done in very hot or very cold temperatures. Attention to safety and the use of safety equipment and clothing is very important because the work can take place in hazardous situations involving high voltage electricity, combustibles, and chemicals. Welders work in a variety of conditions and body positions, because they're called on to repair or maintain heavy machinery and equipment, pipes, transport vehicles, and more.

**Needed Skills and Education:** Welders are required to have a high level of skill in order to assemble equipment and products and to use welding and soldering machines and equipment. They also need to be able to follow manufacturing blueprints and diagrams, follow written assembly work orders, and inspect products and materials for defects. In most cases a high school degree is required, along with moderate-length on-the-job training. Formal training is offered in high school technical education courses and in post-secondary institutions such as vocational-technical institutes, community colleges, and private welding schools. Some welding positions require general certification in welding or in other related skills areas. Generally, welders participate in continuing education and training programs to learn new techniques and updates with equipment.

**Wages:** In North Dakota, the average annual wage for a welder is \$45,500. In western North Dakota's oil and gas regions, the average wage is considerably higher, at \$59,840. These wages are well above the national average annual wage of \$38,410. For North Dakota, the beginning hourly wage is \$14.65 with experienced welders receiving up to \$34.39 per hour.

**Other Information:** As with other trade skills, military services offer training and certification opportunities. The services have over 6,000 welders and metal workers and are in constant need of new workers due to changes in personnel.

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