

Remodeling: A Sound Investment, A Rewarding Career

Many factors contribute to the astounding growth of professional remodeling. Home improvement and remodeling is now a \$300 billion per year industry, with no limits in sight.

Environmental awareness puts greater emphasis on maintaining and restoring older housing stock in urban areas. High transportation costs make a long commute impractical, and today's families often prefer to remodel, staying in familiar neighborhoods rather than moving to larger homes elsewhere.

These and other considerations point to a sound future for the remodeling field. Demand is definitely there.

However, there is an increasing need for young, well-trained craftsmen to carry on the work as an older generation nears retirement. Remodeling careers are immensely rewarding in terms of personal satisfaction, skill development, and generous income.

NARI: Meeting Multiple Goals

The Milwaukee Chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) was chartered in 1961. Currently, its more than 840 members make it the largest chapter in the country.

True to its original mission, Milwaukee/NARI works hard to promote ethical and conscientious remodeling professionals. The Milwaukee chapter has improved remodeling's reputation and efforts by accepting only those members who meet high standards of craftsmanship, business ethics, fair employment, and personal integrity.

A further goal of Milwaukee/NARI is to promote members' job training and business skills through ongoing courses, workshops, and educational programs. Other important aspects of NARI include promoting qualified remodeling experts to the public through home shows and tours, and mediating in those infrequent cases of a dispute between client and contractor.

Fostering the future of the industry by attracting qualified new employees and members is one of the most vital aims of Milwaukee/NARI. To accomplish this, NARI is going directly to schools.

Foundation Purpose

The purpose of the Milwaukee/NARI Foundation, the educational and charitable arm of the Milwaukee/NARI Home Improvement Council, is to engage in educational programs and activities for the benefit and enlightenment of the public with respect to home remodeling and improvement.

To carry out its purpose, the Foundation...

- Expends funds for the refinement and/or expansion of existing NARI education programs.
- Supports scholarships to assist professional training of individuals entering the home improvement and remodeling field.
- Embarks on activities judged necessary to insure an ample supply of professionally trained individuals.



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Today's Student... Tomorrow's Professional

Not everyone is meant to go to college. Intelligence has little to do with the decision. Many people take considerable pride and find greater fulfillment in lifetime work that combines physical dexterity with advanced training. Professional remodeling is such a career choice, as are the arts, athletics, and farming, to name a few.

Information about a wide variety of employment options lets young men and women explore those alternatives best suited to their interests and talents.

The Milwaukee/NARI Foundation can present students with some of the career choices available in this field of renovation.

Foundation Focus is Awareness

Chartered in 1993, the Milwaukee/NARI Foundation has increased public awareness of the importance of professional standards in the remodeling industry, and contributed to the community through various charitable projects.

But perhaps its most vital goal is attracting newcomers — the professionals of tomorrow. The Foundation has so far financed over \$50,000 in scholarships to more than 100 people studying in some phase of the field. In addition to high school graduates, scholarship recipients have included displaced workers and those returning to employment after an absence of years. Women and minorities have been given special attention.

To date, scholarships have been awarded to technical college students pursuing associate degrees within the building trades and related areas such as landscaping and interior design. As additional funds become available, the scholarship program will be expanded to four-year-college students enrolled in allied fields such as architecture and design as well as high school students.

Mentoring & Student Membership

Exposing young people to the wide variety of opportunities in the building trades through an active Mentoring Program is one of NARI's educational cornerstones.

To qualify for NARI Student Membership, prospects must attend an accredited institution offering a certificate or associate degree in some type of commercial or residential remodeling, or an affiliated

field. Student members should plan to work in the remodeling industry and be able to attend periodic NARI educational programs, membership meetings, and special events.

A closer understanding of their chosen field will be gained through mentor contact. Work site visits and an explanation of business basics such as customer service, sales, work scheduling, and project estimating/billing are just a few of the student membership benefits. Having hands-on knowledge will be invaluable when students make career decisions.

To mentor a NARI student, a company or individual tradesperson must be an active NARI member in good standing, be able to meet with the student on a regular basis and accompany the person to NARI events, and have sufficient time and resources to provide the necessary guidance.

To defray program costs, an individual sponsor absorbs the \$40 fee for student membership. These sponsors, who are NARI members actively involved in the industry, will also cover incidental costs for students participating in NARI events.

The Case for Remodeling Careers

Personal satisfaction, pride in work done well, and often a greater degree of employment independence are frequently cited as reasons for choosing the remodeling industry. Traditionally well-paying jobs and a quicker preparation period than a four-year college program are others.

There is excellent earning potential for remodeling industry workers and wages continue to rise with demand for skilled employees. The average starting salary is nearly \$27,000. Sheet metal workers, plumbers, and electricians are among those who earn more than \$50,000 annually.

A Guaranteed Investment

Every year, tuition at both private and public colleges and universities increases, as do costs for books, supplies, and housing. Most U.S. families can't afford to pay full educational expenses. Unless a student earns a scholarship — and many only cover partial

costs — the college graduate faces uncertain job prospects and years of repaying often staggering student loans. Starting a lifetime career with thousands of dollars of debt is daunting.

Consider, instead, the modest tuition of a technical college, the one or two-year certificate or associate degree requirements compared to a four or five-year college degree, and the ability to enter a high-demand, high-salary field with lifelong opportunities for advancement —unburdened by years of tuition debt repayment.

Comparison of Average Education Costs

2-Year Technical Institution:	\$12,000
4-Year Public College/University:	\$20,000
4-Year Private College/University:	\$67,000

Pride: An Intangible Reward

There are benefits in all careers, plus wide variations in salary that aren't always reflected in the time and effort involved in preparation. Sadly, people with advanced degrees and years of experience sometimes accept low-paying jobs due to lack of demand in their field or other situations, including down-sizing.

The remodeling industry is thriving, offering full employment and generous compensation. Besides a healthy paycheck, however, there is the tremendous reward in contributing toward a job well done. The work performed by remodeling contractors doesn't go into files or get discarded by next year's model.

NARI professionals create lasting testimonials to skilled craftsmanship and better living. Their efforts produce safer and more cost-effective building systems, a nursery for the new baby, a sunny, efficient kitchen, welcoming front porch, or gracious trees, gardens, and walkways in what was a barren field. At the end of the day, there are visible, enduring results.

Experiencing justifiable pride at the completion of a project, and knowing that one's work will stand for years to come is a major component of job satisfaction. The Milwaukee/NARI Foundation can assist those individuals who wish to share in the fulfillment of a job well done.



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