



Whirlpool showcases apprenticeship programs during visit from Acting U.S. Labor Secretary Keith Sonderling

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At the world's largest washing machine factory, Whirlpool Corp. showcases the start of its \$300 million Ohio investment and the licensed skilled trades professionals building the next generation of American-made appliances

CLYDE, Ohio, Aug. 5, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Whirlpool Corp. highlighted its nearly 70-year-old apprenticeship program Monday during a visit from Acting U.S. Secretary of Labor Keith Sonderling to its Clyde facility, the largest washing machine factory in the world. Joined by state and local leaders, Sonderling took a firsthand look at how the only remaining major American-owned appliance manufacturer builds and maintains its skilled workforce.

The Clyde plant, in operation since 1952, employs approximately 2,600 people and has run a formal apprenticeship program since 1958. Sonderling met with current apprentices and journeymen in the plant's tool room, walked a section of the facility being modernized through the company's recent [\\$300 million investment in its U.S. laundry operations](#) and reviewed the training academy for new production employees.

The visit came the same day Sonderling convened a workforce roundtable with U.S. Senator Jon Husted and northwest Ohio business leaders at Owens Community College in Perrysburg, where Whirlpool was among the participating employers.

"Whirlpool believes in the future of U.S. manufacturing because we see what our people can do when we invest in them," said Kristin Day, Whirlpool Corporation vice president of U.S. manufacturing. "Our apprenticeship and training programs run in partnership with career technology centers, high schools and community colleges drawing on homegrown talent, including second and third-generation employees, to build what comes next. We thank Acting Secretary Sonderling for visiting and the Administration's focus on the skilled trades and creating a level playing field for domestic producers that helps American manufacturers keep investing and building here."

"Whirlpool is a leader not just in American manufacturing but also in workforce development," said Acting Labor Secretary

Keith Sonderling. "Touring their facility, speaking with apprentices, and learning about the decades of experience the company has in training new hires and preparing them for long-term careers gave me invaluable insights. Under President Trump's leadership, the Department of Labor is committed to fostering industry-driven innovation to bridge America's skills gap."

"For more than 70 years, generations of Clyde families have built careers inside the Whirlpool plant," said Doug McCauley, Clyde Mayor. "Whirlpool's apprenticeship and workforce programs are how the next generation gets the same shot of learning a trade, earning a paycheck and a future in Clyde. We're grateful Secretary Sonderling came to see where American manufacturing is headed and the people taking it there."

Whirlpool is investing \$300 million in its Clyde and Marion laundry operations — work that includes new and modernized lines and a new generation of front-load washers and dryers launching later this year. In Perrysburg, construction is underway for the company's [newest manufacturing facility](#) that will house a new parts and sub-assembly plant and employ up to 150 people.

Whirlpool is the only remaining major kitchen and laundry appliance company still based in America, building 80% of what it sells in the U.S., three times the industry average. Whirlpool has approximately 20,000 U.S. employees, including 14,000 manufacturing workers. Ninety-six percent of its steel is sourced from the U.S., and the vast majority of materials and components for its U.S. factories are produced in-house or sourced from domestic suppliers.

A skilled trades pipeline that begins in high school

Whirlpool is focused on attracting strong talent, creating defined career pathways and constantly focusing on how to make Whirlpool the best place to work. Whirlpool has expanded its apprenticeship and certification programs with some of the largest classes in its history, recognizing the growing need for skilled trades.

The Clyde apprenticeship at Whirlpool is a four-year, state-certified program that pairs classroom instruction with on-the-job training alongside working journeymen. Apprentices maintain and rebuild the dies, tools, molds and automated equipment that keep the plant running, and graduate into a variety of roles. The result is a debt-free alternative to a four-year degree for students who want to earn and build a career in Sandusky County.

The apprenticeship sits alongside other Whirlpool workforce pathways:

- An on-site training academy where new production employees learn and certify on plant processes
- Expanded certification programs, with some of the largest classes in the company's history
- Tuition reimbursement that allows hourly employees to earn degrees and move into engineering and plant leadership roles

The next class of apprentices starts this fall. Four years from now, they will be the journeymen showing the next class around.

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