

Industry Workforce Summit: Success Stories and New Strategies Report

- The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) emphasizes advocating for the creation of new approaches and programs geared toward young adults and students throughout grade school.
 - There is a misunderstanding that people under 18 years of age are not allowed at construction sites or around the equipment, or that they are restricted from participating. There are labor laws restricting persons under 18 from engaging in work; however, minors are allowed on the job site and can participate in restricted activities for educational purposes.
 - Organizing events like the National Building Museum’s [Big Build](#) engage elementary school-age students on the topic of highway construction.
 - [Wisconsin’s Youth Apprenticeship program](#) works with high-school aged students to offer on-the-job work experiences. More than 20 participants pursuing careers in the skilled trades and general construction industry were in the most recent cohort.
- Career and technical education programs experience challenges with limited funding of programs, lack of support, and a disconnect between education and the industry that can prevent candidates from entering into the construction industry. Using a common vocabulary, focusing underutilized resources on monetary incentives for teachers, and providing hands-on learning experiences can make the difference in students considering a career in the construction industry.
 - Teacher externship programs give teachers the opportunity to participate in programs, typically during the summer, to expose them to the many career opportunities within the construction industry. Working on a construction site and seeing what the industry has to offer will help build a stronger, working bond between schools and industry.
 - The [Building Advancement Externship](#) provides educators with a 5-day hybrid learning experience. Throughout the externship, educators are offered background on the business of commercial construction, an overview of field training and safety programs, and information on project management and industry innovations. After completing the externship, the program provides a grant-funded stipend of \$3,000–\$4,000 per educator.
- Apprenticeship training is a necessary component of helping people grow their careers. Industry-wide changes that include hiring construction instructors, creating institutional knowledge positions for retirees, increasing partnerships with and involvement in community and technical colleges, and establishing pre-apprenticeship programs will only strengthen the apprenticeship stage.
 - Schools and firms can employ apprenticeship instructors who are retirees to serve in a dual capacity on project work and educate students on the projects in which the instructor is participating. Instructors also benefit from better pay and ensure that apprenticeship programs can meet the demand for staff needed to produce qualified workers.



Speaking Points Based on the Associated General Contractors of America 2022 National Construction Industry Workforce Summit: Success Stories and New Strategies Report

- In Alaska, the Fairbanks North Star School District has an agreement with union partners to lead an [Introduction to the Trades program](#), which allows for recruiting students in the school district who are interested in the construction industry and then allowing union representatives to teach the class. Once the students complete the program, they are eligible to directly enter a union apprenticeship training program which boasts a retention rate that averages above 90 percent.
- Attracting and retaining a new workforce that is diverse in background and ability is necessary to grow the industry and adapt to societal expectations for the work environment, industry culture, and competitiveness in benefits.
 - Facilitating recruitment of veterans and criminal justice-involved individuals requires adapting to different terminology and relating it back to the construction environment.
 - The U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s [Hiring Our Heroes](#) and North America’s Building Trades Unions’ [Helmets to Hardhats](#) help identify and recruit military members about to be discharged. Helmets to Hardhats helps service members explore the construction trades, get started with earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship training programs, and connect with employers. The program has seen over 41,000 military personnel successfully transfer into civilian careers in the construction trades since 2003.
- Creating a separate ladder for craft worker’s development and advancement is pivotal to attracting a skilled labor workforce. Opportunities include reverse mentoring, training on days with prohibitive weather, personally curated training programs, and leadership programs.
 - Reverse mentoring programs encourage a two-way exchange of training based on the idea that new methods from a new generation are applicable to an older generation. Experience from older generations will help newer generations get up to speed faster.
 - Programs can impart essential skills and leadership capabilities from previous generations of construction workers to a new youth cohort. Instruction coaches can bolster the capabilities of future leaders by imparting specific skills from peer-to-peer exchanges rather than senior to junior mentorships.
 - The Inland Northwest AGC chapter is working with justice-involved individuals—people recently released from prison—to offer construction training and placement into the industry. The [Head Start to the Construction Trades](#) program, which requires coordination with the parole and prison system and law enforcement officers, has successfully reduced the recidivism rate from 65 percent to 25 percent among program individuals.

To view the full report, visit <https://workforce.agc.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/37/2023/02/FINAL-AGC-2022-National-Construction-Industry-Workforce-Summit-Report-2.21.23.pdf>.

Resources and strategies for starting or improving your workforce development program are available on the Federal Highway Administration’s Strategic Workforce Development Toolkit at https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovativeprograms/centers/workforce_dev/hcwp/toolkit/.

