



Source: James Kim Photography & PC Construction.

## Teaming Up to Build the Highway Construction Workforce

### Strategic Workforce Development

With a constant demand for maintenance and operations workers in the highway construction industry, collaboration is crucial for identifying, training, placing, and retaining qualified individuals in needed roles. The **U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration** helps to facilitate partnerships among industry, government, education, and non-profit representatives to help fill workforce shortages.

The **National Skills Coalition (NSC)** is committed to providing inclusive, high-quality training so that more people have access to the excellent pay and great benefits a career in highway construction offers, while more businesses fill workforce gaps and increase growth. Through its advocacy work, NSC has helped to change hundreds of policies, transforming lives and enhancing local businesses and economies across the nation.

### Benefits of Working With NSC

- Expert analysis
- Technical assistance
- Organization
- Advocacy
- Marketing and communications

*The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act offers State departments of transportation funding to partner with community-based organizations to promote workforce development for underrepresented groups.*

*“We are really grateful for NSC’s work to advocate for these efforts. NSC raises the profile of the needs of our population and helps to identify missing connections.”*

**CASEY PHEIFFER**  
Policy Director  
Center for Employment Opportunities



Source: Grand Rapids Community College.

## Highway Construction Workforce Partnerships in Action

### Grand Rapids Launches “Growing Your Own” Program

**Grand Rapids Community College Public Works** created an academy for participants in underserved communities, after which NSC was engaged with regard to ideas to enhance the program. From tree trimming and flagger safety to customer service and first aid, the program teaches skills and awards credentials based on NSC models.

Through the program, the public works department partners with local non-profit organizations and educational institutions for outreach. It offers participants access to education and training specialists, as well as providing transportation and other support services, to increase opportunities for employment upon program completion. The highway construction workforce partnership has helped to train more than 60 local residents—averaging a **75 percent career placement and retention rate**.

More information is available on the program at <https://www.grcc.edu/about-grcc/news/grcc-partners-local-municipalities-public-works-academy-providing-skills-rewarding-careers-serving>.

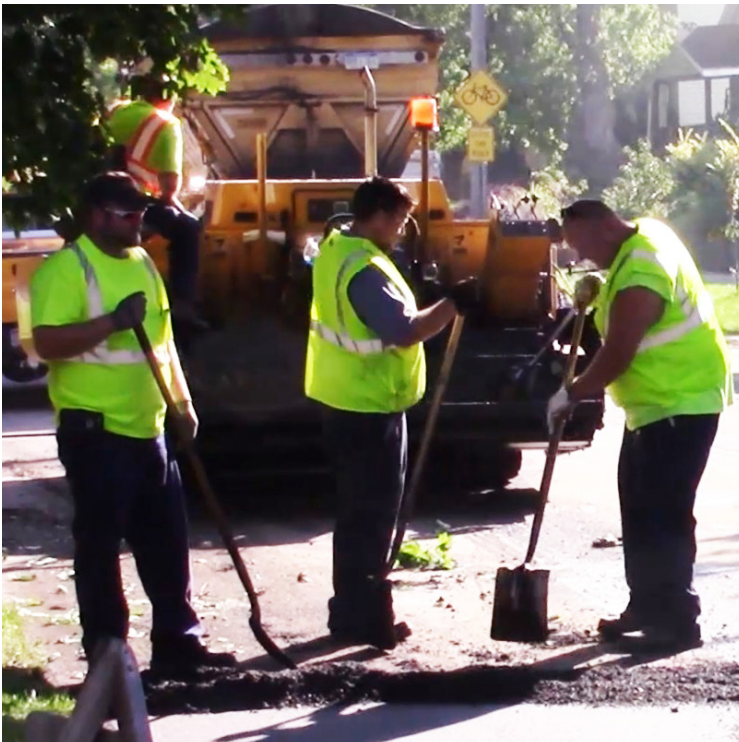
*“We secured grant funds to make this into a paid internship, so participants are earning and learning at the same time.”*

**JOHN VANELST**  
Interim Executive Director  
Workforce Training  
Grand Rapids Community College

## Providing Career Opportunities for All

The **Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)** is the nation’s largest reentry provider. It helps individuals with prior justice involvement transition into the workforce by connecting them to paid work training and experience.

Because the highway construction industry offers this underserved population an opportunity for lasting careers, CEO partners with NSC, State departments of transportation, and other community-based organizations to remove barriers for employment and provide paid skills training via transitional employment and advanced credentialing. For more information, visit <https://www.ceoworks.org/>.



Source: Grand Rapids Community College.

“We foster connections to help people get through the training,” says Sam Hanna, a senior manager with CEO. “You don’t have to be experts. There are organizations that have already created systems and networks for support.”



Source: Grand Rapids Community College.



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

#RoadsToYourFuture

Learn more: Get information on how you can work with NSC to build your highway construction workforce at <https://nationalskillscoalition.org/>.