

Pathways to Construction Employment Initiative

Linking Workers with Construction Career Opportunities



The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is launching the **Pathways to Construction Employment Initiative** to promote the economic recovery of Louisiana and Mississippi in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This Initiative focuses on helping workers in areas impacted by the hurricanes enter a career pathway in construction, an industry which provides substantial career opportunities for individuals with a range of skill levels and educational backgrounds, while simultaneously assisting critical rebuilding efforts in the Gulf Coast Region. It will target the residential, commercial, industrial, and heavy highway construction sectors, as well as shipbuilding and heavy marine construction.

Grants of \$5 million each will be awarded to the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, working in close partnership with the Louisiana Department of Labor, and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, working in close partnership with the Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges. In each state, the Pathways to Construction Employment Initiative will have four primary components: establishment of Reconstruction Centers of Excellence, career awareness and outreach activities, assessment and access to basic skills training, and pathways to employment.

- 1) Establishment of Reconstruction Centers of Excellence:** Louisiana's community college system and Mississippi's Department of Employment Security will establish Reconstruction Centers of Excellence at selected community and technical colleges in Louisiana and Mississippi, to partner with workforce investment boards (WIBs) and One-Stop Career Centers. Employers and workers will have access to a wide range of workforce services that support career advancement in the construction industry.
- 2) Career Awareness and Outreach Activities:** Community and technical colleges, WIBs, and One-Stop Career Centers, working with industry partners, will conduct basic outreach in their local communities to increase worker and employer awareness of this construction pathways initiative.
- 3) Assessment and Access to Basic Skills Training:** When workers express interest in employment opportunities in construction, community and technical colleges, WIBs, and One-Stop Career Centers will conduct assessments to identify their skill level. When workers lack proficiency in basic skills such as math and English, community and technical colleges and their partners in the public workforce system will refer these workers to adult basic education providers in the community who can help them enhance these skills. Workers whose basic skills are proficient will enter one of two training pathways: apprenticeship prep leading to registered apprenticeship, and basic craft training leading to employment.



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4) Pathways to Employment:

Pathway 1: Apprenticeship Prep to Registered Apprenticeship

Through the Apprenticeship Prep pathway, workers with some background and/or work experience in construction will be able to enroll in classes that enable them to enhance their job readiness skills, acquire general, non-occupation specific skills (such as safety skills and blueprint reading), and receive applied academics training in areas such as numeracy skills. Once this initial training is complete, community and technical colleges and their partners in the public workforce system will help workers secure full time employment in construction apprenticeship programs, as well as in other employment opportunities in the construction industry.

Pathway 2: Basic Craft Training to Employment

Through the Basic Craft Training to Employment pathway workers with no background or experience in construction can enroll in classes that help them enhance their job readiness skills, and acquire both general and occupation-specific construction skills. Occupation-specific skills training could include basic plumbing, basic electrical, and general maintenance courses. After workers have completed this initial training, community and technical colleges, WIBs, and One-Stop Career Centers will help them secure full-time employment with area employers.

Partnership is an essential component of the Pathways to Construction Employment Initiative and its key partners include construction companies, labor-management organizations, industry associations, community and technical colleges, WIBs, and One-Stop Career Centers.

