

Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction Skills

Location: New York, New York

Host Organization: Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction Skills

Partner Organizations: Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York (BCTC), Building Trades Employers Association (BTEA), Career and Technical Education High Schools in New York City, Consortium for Worker Education, Local Government Agencies including the New York City School Construction Authority, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, New York City Housing Authority, Office of the Mayor of the City of New York, New York City Department of Education

Target Population: Graduating Seniors in New York City Public High Schools, and Public Housing and Section 8 Residents

Program Innovations

- Direct entry agreement with New York State Department of Labor -- registered apprenticeship programs jointly sponsored by union affiliates of the BCTC and contractor affiliates of the BTEA.

Program History

During the 1990s, Project Pathways, a program run through the New York City School Construction Authority, recruited New York City public high school students for entry into careers in the unionized building and construction trades. Towards the end of the decade, unionized construction industry leaders decided these recruitment efforts would be best managed and implemented through a nonprofit organization. As a result, in 2000, union leaders from the Building and Construction Trades Council and the Building Trades Employer Association created Construction Skills 2000. In 2007, the organization was renamed the Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction Skills to honor Mr. Malloy, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council from 1992 to 2008, and a founder of Construction Skills in 2000.

The Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction Skills (CSKILLS) is dedicated to building careers for New York City's next generation of skilled construction professionals. Through collaborative efforts with union apprenticeship programs, local government agencies, public high schools, and nonprofit organizations,

CSKILLS offers pre-apprenticeship training to graduating public high school seniors and public housing and Section 8 residents from diverse communities throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

Program Summary

Participants in the CSKILLS program are recruited through partnerships with career and technical education high schools in New York City. CSKILLS conducts recruitment and outreach efforts throughout the school year; however, students do not enter the Construction Skills program until the spring of their senior year. To enroll in the program, students must have a minimum cumulative grade average of 70 percent or better, a 90 percent attendance record, and a strong commitment to pursuing a career in the unionized building and construction trades industry. The majority of participants are African-American, Hispanic, Asian and other minorities.

Construction Skills Adult Program

In collaboration with the New York City Housing Authority, the Malloy Initiative began offering pre-apprenticeship training to Section 8 residents in New York in 2006. The program, targeted towards adults living in public housing, provided a five-week course, which included a mix of hands-on and classroom instruction. Upon completing the five-week training, graduates were referred to a union apprenticeship through the CSKILLS direct entry track. The contract with NYCHA ended in 2009. CSKILLS is currently in talks with NYCHA in 2010 to continue providing services to NYCHA and Section 8 residents.

The Construction Skills program is offered once each year. The pre-apprenticeship **curriculum** is separated into two modules, or components, that mix classroom instruction with hands-on training. During the first module, which occurs during the spring of the students' senior year, they attend one three hour class each week for 10 weeks. In these first 10 classes, participants receive intensive math skills training, safety training, and an introduction to the building trades in New York City, which includes an overview of working conditions and a detailed description of each of the trades. One other key focus during these 10 weeks is the development of trainees' soft skills. A significant amount of the classes is devoted to

learning how to be professional in the trades. Participants learn about the importance of motivation, participation, attendance and punctuality.

To prepare students for the greening up of the trades, Construction Skills is in the process of developing a greener curriculum. The new curriculum will introduce trainees to the lexicon of the green sector, and broadly discuss what green construction means and why it is happening. Emerging green skills will be

incorporated as needed and trainees will learn about the different licensing requirements green construction is creating.

During their spring break, students are assigned to tour at least three apprenticeship training facilities. During these tours, students meet with apprenticeship training coordinators and instructors to learn about the trades. The tours help trainees decide what trade they will pursue for a career. In addition, throughout the spring training, students receive **intensive career counseling** and guidance from their instructors. At the end of the initial 10 weeks, students meet with a Construction Skills' career counselor to further discuss and analyze their choice of a trade to pursue.

The second training stage lasts four weeks and occurs in the summer after the students graduate from high school. During the summer, the Construction Skills program focuses on building students' skills through basic hands-on training. The training emulates a worksite, and students rotate to four different job sites during the four week session to help them learn to navigate the city's transportation system. At each site, trainees work in groups on basic construction projects, which are organized by local nonprofit organizations. Students are led by an instructor, who is a union journeyman. To make the experience as real as possible, each student is assigned to be a steward, foreman, or other construction-related employee.

Once trainees complete the summer session, they are eligible for **job placement**, which includes a direct entry referral into a union apprenticeship. The trainees meet again with the career counselor, who provides job interview coaching and resume development services. Each trainee's services are tailored to the trade they are pursuing. Because of the recession, apprenticeship opportunities are fewer than they were during the previous ten-year boom. However, because of Construction Skills' direct entry arrangement with the unions, 20 percent of new apprenticeship seats are reserved for qualified graduates of the pre-apprenticeship program. In other words, when an apprenticeship program recruits a new class, CSKILLS graduates are given the opportunity to compete for 20 percent of the new seats. It is important to note that graduates of CSKILLS must meet all the entrance requirements of the apprenticeship programs, including aptitude and physical examinations. They are, however, exempt from "recruitments" and may, therefore, bypass waiting lists.

“Pre-apprenticeship training is such a tremendous way to move people out of poverty.”

--Nicole Bertran, Vice President of Programs at the Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction Skills

Program Funding

The funding for the Construction Skills' youth program comes primarily from the New York City School Construction Authority and The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Funding for services to public housing and Section 8 residents came from the New York City Housing Authority.

Industry Engagement

The involvement of the Building and Construction Trades Council and the Building Trades Employer Association with the Construction Skills program translates into a program with strong industry engagement. Currently, in 2010, CSKILLS Board of Directors includes several union leaders and contractors. The direct entry agreement with apprenticeship programs jointly sponsored by the affiliated unions of the Building and Construction Trades Council and affiliated contractors of the Building Trades Employers Association means that up to 20 percent of their apprenticeship openings must be reserved for qualified Construction Skills graduates.

Even with these strong industry ties and the involvement of industry since the program's inception, these relationships took time to develop and still take a lot of effort to maintain. CSKILLS is constantly working to strengthen its relationships with industry partners. For example, staff from Construction Skills attends meetings of the BCTC's Apprenticeship and Training Committee, and meets with industry at every opportunity they can. And, according to Nicole Bertan, Vice President of Programs, the first step to building and strengthening those relationships is to be accountable, and to provide a screened, qualified, and reliable set of employees for the industry.

“Once people see you have a qualified pool that is being trained by a union journeyman it adds a great deal of legitimacy to what you’re doing.”

--Nicole Bertran, Vice-President of Programs at the Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction Skills