Construction Sector

Summary of key themes, needs, and opportunities: June 2025

Prepared by AGC Education Foundation

(1) What are the top 3-5 themes you hear from employers in your sector related to workforce development? (2-3 sentences max for each statement)

- "Graying workforce" – the need to attract new talent as many approach retirement.
- Need for soft skills
- Efforts to build diversity and a more inclusive workforce
- Demand for construction professionals with degrees
- Consistent demand for skilled construction laborers, craft workers
- Demand for increasing quality of training in construction education programs
- Demand for skills and credentials that are applicable across industry sectors
- Desire for employees to be interested in learning how to apply emerging technologies

(2a) What are the 3-6 occupations that employers in your sector indicate should be high priority for workforce development to help meet their hiring needs?

- Project Engineer
- Project Manager
- Construction Manager
- Construction Laborer
- Construction Career and Technical Education (CTE) Educator

(2b) Which career-connected learning programs are effectively meeting the hiring needs of employers in your sector?

- Community and Technical college programs
- Construction Management degree programs – UW, CWU, WSU
- Core Plus Construction (Statewide)
- Skills Centers (Statewide), New Tech Skills Center (Career Launch Endorsed program, East Region)
- Pre Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship level programming such as ANEW, Inland AGC Apprenticeship (Northwest and Northeast Regions region), Palmer Scholars (King Pierce)
- OIC of Washington (Yakima)
- Pierce Spokane Construction WORKS
- SkillUSA (Statewide)

(2c) Which career-connected learning programs could be adjusted, expanded, or scaled to other regions to meet the hiring needs of employers in your sector?

- Skills Centers
- Core Plus Construction
- Sawhorse Revolution
- WABS Job Shadow
- Palmer Scholars
- Career Academy (ESD 105)
- College in the High School
- Underground Ministries, Underground Employment
- CTE Educator Trainings

- Short term certificate programs
- CWU's 'Related Major' program within Construction Management

(2d) Which career connected learning programs should be developed to meet the hiring needs of employers in your sector?

- Successful CCL programs will build out their offerings of soft skill training and wrap-around support (in addition to construction programming) to make more effective and inclusive programs. Additionally supporting explore/awareness programs, especially those led by people of color and that can authentically increase career-connected learning efforts to communities of color, can help develop interest in a construction career pathway and should be prioritized. Successful programs seek employer partnerships that reflect the program's values and efforts. Expanding programs should ensure content, and its delivery is culturally responsive. Programs doing this successfully will make learning more engaging and impactful for BIPOC students.
- Programs specializing in craft career-connected learning should highlight opportunities for multiskilling and educate participants about where skill sets are applicable across niches and or industry sectors. Providing participants with information about multiskilling, pathways to do so, and jobs across industry sectors or niches where their skills apply will strengthen program outcomes. The resulting outcomes will increase participants' options for employment and promotion.
- Programs that support pathway development should make investments in providing industry-recognized certifications, credentials, or college credits. Programs should introduce students to credentials that will illuminate high-wage construction opportunities. Construction Management professionals with degrees are in demand and efforts should be made for pathway development.
- Programs should invest in creating relevant construction educator training and continuing professional development options to strengthen all programs. Initiatives should be created to actively seek professionals who have (or can build) experience in industry and educational settings.

(3) What are the top three efforts, initiatives, or investments that could meaningfully support the workforce development needs of employers in your sector?

- Support cross-sector CCL. Example: Shared programming and utilizing elements of a skills-first approach when discussing career options.
- Support accessible programs that pair skills education with pathway development. Example: Supporting in-school programming, College in the High School for CTE classes.
- Invest in educators. Example: Quality resources and professional development training that reflects industry needs and the exciting career opportunities within construction.

(4) What are the top 3-5 approaches you recommend to increase participation of underrepresented students in your sector's high-priority occupations? (2-3 sentences max for each statement)

The Construction Sector's Strategy recommendations are made with increasing participation of underrepresented students in mind.

The core recommendations address the problems of 1. An employer's ability to attract and retain talent - in part people, the talent pool is more diverse than the hiring people and processes. 2. Awareness of construction career paths in general, and especially career paths that begin with a degree. 3. A lack of qualified construction teaching professionals. For BIPOC students, this may be an even larger barrier if a teacher is out of touch with the students and community in which they are teaching. We believe tackling these recommendations is work that needs to be done to advance BIPOC participation. 4. Awareness about how valuable skill sets and multiskilling are transferable across types of construction and industry sectors.