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## Skills to Build America's Future Initiative

U.S. Department of Labor  
Employment and Training Administration

### Industry Summary

Construction is one of our nation's vital industries. It had a gross domestic product of over \$480 billion last year and now employs over 6.9 million workers. The future growth and prosperity of our country is dependent on the ability to build the buildings and homes where we work and live and the roads that get us there and back.

### The Challenge

To build America's future, we will need the skills and talents of a new generation of tradesmen and women. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 2002 and 2012, there will be nearly 1 million new jobs for workers in the skilled trades – an increase of 15% -- and more jobs will continue to open up as the men and women of the Baby Boom generation retire. To fill this demand, we must inform young people and their educators, guidance counselors and parents of the higher education opportunities, career options and earnings potential available in the skilled trades. Only through the hard work and dedication of tomorrow's skilled tradesmen can the United States maintain and improve the critical infrastructure upon which our economy depends.

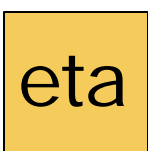
### Meeting the Challenge

The Employment and Training Administration has spent several months meeting with construction industry executives and human resource managers as well as labor union representatives to learn more about the industry's workforce, the job opportunities that exist and education and training required to fill those opportunities. During those meetings, it was apparent that the industry also faced serious challenges in recruiting and retaining new workers. To help meet this particular challenge, the Labor Department established a partnership among industry/labor, educators and the workforce investment system. The result is the Skills to Build America's Future Initiative.

### Founding Partners

The three major sectors of the construction industry – commercial, residential and transportation – as well as unions representing the construction workers partnered with the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration to create the Skills to Build America's Future Initiative. The products and messages are designed for use by all construction industry stakeholders in their efforts to promote the value of and career opportunities in the skilled trades. The founding partners of the Initiative include:

- *Executive Branch:* U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education
- *Industry:* Construction Industry Round Table, National Association of Home Builders
- *Labor:* Affiliated international unions of the National Heavy and Highway Alliance including: Laborers' International Union of America; International Union of Operating Engineers; United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental & Reinforcing Iron Workers; Operative Plasterers' & Cement Masons' International Association; International Brotherhood of Teamsters; International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers.



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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### The Initiative

Launched in April 2004 by Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao and the heads of the founding partner organizations, the Skills to Build America's Future Initiative is concentrating on addressing the industry's need to attract a pipeline of new workers in order to address the current and future shortages.

The Skills to Build America's Future Initiative is designed to build national awareness of the importance of skilled workers to our economy and nation; inform people about the training, education, and apprenticeship opportunities available to those who want to join the skilled workforce; send the message that careers in the skilled trades are plentiful, lucrative and fulfilling; and invite young people and more experienced workers who are transitioning to new careers to pursue opportunities in the trades.

### Action Plan

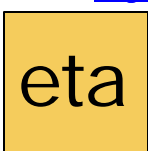
The actions taken under this Initiative by the Labor Department and partners are focused in the following seven primary areas.

- (1) Executive Agency Action – coordinate outreach efforts to educators with the U.S. Department of Education, and use the Web site CareerVoyages.gov as the home for information concerning the Initiative.
- (2) State/Gubernatorial Outreach – ask Governors and/or State Legislatures to issue proclamations promoting the skilled trades, include a link to CareerVoyages.gov on their page, and record Public Service Announcements.
- (3) Workforce Investment System Outreach – engage the national network of over 1,800 comprehensive One-Stop Career Centers, federal and state apprenticeship directors, and agency national programs (Job Corps, Native Americans) in efforts to partner with local construction training programs.
- (4) Educational Outreach – issue joint letters to guidance counselors, co-host job fairs and other events, and provide information to schools detailing the education and career opportunities available in the skilled trades.
- (5) Events – deliver speeches at middle- and high-schools, trade schools, skills competitions, and graduations; participate in ribbon cutting ceremonies; visit new construction sites, etc., to promote opportunities in the skilled trades.
- (6) Media Plan – obtain earned media through speeches, press releases, op-eds, and celebrity endorsements. The Labor Department will also purchase media time for TV ads, radio ads, and print advertising.
- (7) Sponsorships – Through Labor Department sponsorships with professional sports organizations, we will secure radio and print ads on game/race day, athlete spokesmen, opportunities for “Skilled Trades Day” activities at stadiums and race tracks with industry and educators, links from team sites to CareerVoyages.gov, and other opportunities to project the message of opportunities in the skilled trades.

### Public Access Point for Information

<http://www.careervoyages.gov>

<http://www.careervoyages.gov/skillstobuild-main.cfm>



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**What should I do in preparation for the initiative?**

- Establish relationships with representatives from construction industry sponsored apprenticeship and training programs, associations, labor unions and companies.
- Identify where the job opportunities in the skilled trades are in your state and/or local community.
- Participate in any state-wide or industry-led "Skilled Trades Appreciation Day/Week," activities.

**What information and services can I provide to interested parties?**

- DOL and the Skilled Trades Coalition will provide brochures, posters and other resources for display within the one-stop offices.
- Provide a link to [www.careervoyages.gov](http://www.careervoyages.gov) on your computer terminals available to job seekers in the one-stop career centers. The user will have access to a variety of information to create an electronic tool box for skilled trades information.
  - *Some resources currently available on the website include:*
    - Profiles of different skilled trades occupations as well as information on growth of that occupation by state.
    - Links for education, skills, earning potential and training requirements for each occupation
    - Specialized resources for youth, career changers, adults and career advisors
  - *Short term, future enhancements of the website will include:*
    - Service Locator tool designed for user's to easily locate information about construction industry training and apprenticeship programs accessible to them by entering a zip code.
    - Ongoing updates on national activities in support of the Skills to Build America's Future initiative.
    - Ongoing updates to downloadable tools and informational resources on the skilled trades.

