



1/19/2022

To: House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development

RE: Workforce Development

Associated General Contractors of Vermont (AGC/VT) is the trade organization for contractors and construction workers in Vermont. We provide industry specific training, Occupational and Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) certifications and are home to nationally recognized safety instruction. Our members employ 15,000-20,000 in Vermont annually with careers offering wages and benefits well above Vermont's livable wage. Our members work directly with state agencies including the VTRANS, Building and General Services and Department of Labor to enhance delivery of service to the state.

Workforce development has been a priority for the building trades long before COVID-19 changed the employment landscape. Although the Stay Home, Stay Safe order shut down construction for a few weeks it was the first industry that went back to work as early as April of 2020 and very few resisted returning to work. This is not relegated to the confines of Vermont but a trend nationally that is driven by workers retiring faster than people joining the industry. In Vermont, the median age of a construction worker is 55 years old.

The Vermont Department of Labor has predicted that we will lose approximately 1,700 individuals from construction over the next 3 years. Increases in home building, infrastructure and transportation will require about 2500 new people within 5 years which does not account for the 1,700 lost. We will need to recruit an average of 1,000 individuals per year to maintain this need. This does not account for the thousands which will be needed for Vermont's weatherization goals.

What are our roles in workforce development?

Employers- Offer well paid positions with a clear path to advancement by creating programs to educate and elevate workers into advance positions. Create healthy working spaces that offer inclusion and support. Promote themselves through advertising and funding associations.

Trade Associations- AGC/VT has a broad mission in that we have significant contact with the workforce before and during employment with our member firms. AGC/VT has developed a workforce program over the past 20 years to provide industry specific training including safety, hard and soft skills. In 2021, Shawn Rouleau was hired as our workforce development director joining us from a 30-year background in education and construction. Shawn and the AGC/VT team have developed Vermont's first construction specific career platform that offers potential recruits job/wage information and videos about trades positions which then connects them directly with member employers. In addition, the association has put together a program to provide a credential known as "Introduction to Construction" which includes safety basics and construction principles for people who wish to seek employment in construction. The

credential will be recognized by contractor members and help get the recruits hired. AGC/VT has also crafted a “career ladder” program members have adopted that show recruits the training and skills required to move up the “ladder”. The association has also reorganized training to help advance and back fill workers in advanced positions approaching retirement.

Government-

1. Pass legislation that funds Vermonts Department of Labor programs employers and trade associations can access including funding to adapt the existing construction workforce to climate initiatives.
2. Ensure that the funds appropriated for workforce development make it to employers and groups who can show specific results in recruiting Vermont.
3. Pass legislation that improves workforce homeownership opportunities.

Matt Musgrave
AGC/VT
802-223-2374

www.vermontconstructionjobs.com