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## New program brings women to the trades

### Women Building MN already seeing success with placements

Women Building MN – an apprenticeship readiness program helping women break into construction careers – is already making an impact.

With the help of grant funding from DLI as part of the Women's Economic Security Act (WESA), Women Building MN hosted two informational sessions to introduce women to the construction industry and career training gained through the registered apprenticeship system. Women Building MN is a program of Build Minnesota, a registered apprenticeship program providing entry-level training in the specialty construction trades. Women Building MN training is designed to introduce women to the construction industry while providing broad experiential learning opportunities.

At the informational sessions participants heard presentations from DLI staff, contractors, business owners, apprentices and journey-level workers currently working in the field about the variety of apprenticeship tracks and the rigors and rewards of the job.

After learning about the program and undergoing an assessment and interviews, 20 women were selected to be part of a two-week industry orientation session. Classwork throughout the two weeks included math, the changing culture of construction, financial literacy and measurement. The women also toured several training centers and took part in hands-on learning in pipefitting, low-voltage wiring, sheet metal work and more activities.

The training concluded with a tour of a McGough project at the University of Minnesota's new Ambulatory Care Center where current apprentices shared their experiences with the tour group. Upon completion of the two-week course, graduates were given boots and tools so they are prepared to go work.

As of June 1, 2015, four women have progressed into the Building MN registered apprenticeship program where they are



Women Building MN participants tour the construction site of the University of Minnesota's new Ambulatory Care Center.

working as pipefitters and sheet metal helpers. Vicki Sandberg, Building MN apprenticeship coordinator, said she expects more placements to follow.

"It's so great when I hire someone knowing that with some hard work and mentoring, this career will change their life forever and I have been a part of that. It's very satisfying," said Ken Mostoller, labor manager at Egan Company. "That's why Building MN is so worthwhile, it helps people help themselves. I am just proud to be part of it."

Women Building MN is also partnering with the Minnesota AFL-CIO's Big Step program to provide additional assistance with placement, retention and mentoring programs. Through the collaboration each new apprentice will be paired with a journey-level worker to encourage and support their successes as they move through apprenticeship.

#### In the news

Women Building MN featured in the Union Advocate.  
[advocate.stpaulunions.org](http://advocate.stpaulunions.org)

## Apprenticeship spotlight:

### Greenwood: Giving back to registered apprenticeship

Many factors contribute to an apprentice's success throughout the term of their apprenticeship. The quality of the program curriculum, the journey workers on-site, instructors and apprenticeship coordinators are all vital components.

Sam Greenwood – newly appointed as apprenticeship coordinator for Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC) Local 1 Minnesota and North Dakota – worked through apprenticeship and now teaches future generations of workers.



Sam Greenwood

Greenwood began his career as a tile finisher and member of BAC Local 1 in the late 1990s. He progressed by achieving journey-level status as a tile finisher and later, a tile layer. In 2003, while working as a journey-level tile layer, he achieved foreman status. In 2008, he became a field superintendent.

During his journey, he was interested in becoming an instructor for the apprenticeship program. He was hired in 2005 as a tile layer instructor where he would teach the trade for 10 years. Today, he has a new role as tile apprenticeship program coordinator.

"I love the craft that I am in and I enjoyed apprenticeship," Greenwood said of his career in the trade and his transition to apprenticeship coordinator. "I want to give back to the system that contributed to the success of my career. I enjoy teaching and helping the apprentices."



Above, left to right, John Aiken, Labor Standards and Apprenticeship director, Rick Martagon, Labor Standards and Apprenticeship supervisor, and Jon Helberg, project manager, introduce the online apprenticeship application program.

### DLI launches new apprenticeship database

DLI welcomed dozens of apprentice sponsors and staff members on April 23, 2015, to demonstrate the agency's new apprenticeship database system.

The new technology makes it easier for apprentice sponsors and their staff from throughout Minnesota to add, edit and remove information about registered apprentices and for DLI to obtain, organize and track information about the sponsors and apprentices. Also launched was an online sponsor directory that includes details about registered apprenticeship sponsors and training programs.

View the new online apprenticeship agreements and sponsor directory tools at [www.dli.mn.gov/Appr.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/Appr.asp).

## Benefits available to veterans and their employers

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is available to assist apprenticeship training facilities and veteran apprentices.

If a job program receives approval from the State Approving Agency (SAA), veterans are able to use their federal and state GI Bill resources. Typically the requirements to become a VA-approved training site are answered with these six questions:

- Does the wage meet VA requirements?
- Is the training offered the usual and

customary length required for the position?

- Is credit for prior training provided, if appropriate?
- Is training provided by a qualified person?
- Is there a reasonable expectation that the veteran will have a job when the training is completed?
- Is the training program at least six months?

If you hire veterans and your training program can answer yes to those questions, contact the SAA at [SAA@state.mn.us](mailto:SAA@state.mn.us) for assistance

becoming a VA-approved training site.

Once approved, veterans can also use their Minnesota GI Bill resources while in training. Employers can receive up to \$2,000 for every veteran they hire, train and retain. Veterans can obtain up to \$7,000, depending on the length of the training program.

For more information, contact Dave Bellefeuille, MDVA director of education and training, at [david.bellefeuille@state.mn.us](mailto:david.bellefeuille@state.mn.us).

**Apprenticeship  
performance measurements  
April, May and June 2015**

	April	May	June
<b>Sponsor information</b>			
Active sponsors	321	326	330
New sponsors	3	5	4
New occupations	0	0	6
<b>Apprentice information</b>			
Total apprentices	9,751	10,129	10,325
Females	685	686	682
Minorities	1,884	1,967	1,985
Veterans	423	421	420
New apprentices	343	688	359
Graduations	96	153	52
<b>Services to sponsors and apprentices</b>			
Service calls	254	98	46
Information calls	197	116	125
Compliance reviews	2	3	5
Supervisory visits	1	0	2
New standards	0	0	3
Revised standards	0	0	10
Community outreach visits	27	17	20
Technical assistance visits to sponsors	37	37	1
Prospective sponsor visits	2	0	8

## Number of registered apprentices on the rise

### Total recently topped 10,000

During the past 15 years the number of registered apprentices in Minnesota has fluctuated. Currently, with the help of a strong economy, an aging workforce nearing retirement and the expansion of registered apprenticeship programs, those numbers are on the rise.

In the past decade-and-a-half, the number of registered apprentices peaked in 2002 with 12,197. 2012 marked the lowest level with 6,640. Today, those numbers have rebounded to more than 10,000 registered apprentices in Minnesota.

#### Strong economy

A strong economy is driving the demand for a well-trained workforce. Existing sponsors (employers), potential sponsors and potential apprentices realize the benefits of registered apprenticeship as a great workforce and career development tool. Some of the benefits to employers include customized training, increased productivity and knowledge transfer, enhanced employee retention, a stable and predictable pipeline of qualified workers, a systematic approach to training, the ability to conduct a readiness assessment and a proven training model. The benefits to the apprentice include improved skills and competencies, incremental wage increases, on-the-job training (OJT), career advancement and much more.

Retirements have also played a role in the growth of registered apprenticeship. The Great Recession from 2007 to 2009 caused many workers to retire because of reduced employment opportunities. Today, replenishing the ranks of the workforce is in full swing.

#### Continued growth

The largest growth is taking place in the construction sector. Large projects like expansion at the Mall of America, Flint Hills Refinery expansion and the new Minnesota Multi-Purpose Stadium (Vikings Stadium) are a few projects fueling the rising number of Minnesota's registered apprentices. The healthcare and advanced manufacturing sectors follow in smaller numbers, but continue to add new programs and new job classifications.

#### More programs

Presently, there are registered apprentices in construction, healthcare, manufacturing, public utilities and automotive sectors. Expansion into agriculture and information technology is on the horizon for 2015. All of those factors are placing Minnesota registered apprenticeship on a trajectory of strong growth throughout the state.

# Four organizations awarded grants through WESA

## Recipients pledge to promote, assist women in apprenticeship

In spring 2015, DLI provided \$250,000 through the Women's Economic Security Act (WESA) to fund four organizations pledging to educate, promote, assist and support women entering registered apprenticeship training.

The four funded programs are:

- The Construction Careers Foundation (CCF)
- The Association of Women Contractors (AWC)
- Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRPT), Big Step in partnership with the Minnesota AFL-CIO
- Summit Academy, OIC

Two of the programs train and place women in apprenticeship programs and the other projects want to create sound mentoring systems and the general support of new apprentices as they earn and



Four organizations pledging to promote women in registered apprenticeship programs were recently awarded grants through the Women's Economic Security Act (WESA).

learn. Intentional services dedicated to retention activities, according to national studies, can help bolster apprenticeship completion rates. The CCF graduated a class of 18 women in late May, 2015, and have placed four women into pipefitting and electrical trades through the Building MN program. There are several additional placements across multiple trades in the works. The foundation has also partnered with WRPT who has provided a mentor for each of

these new apprentices and has also delivered financial support in the form of bus and gas cards and other barrier assistance.

The AWC awarded scholarships to four young women who are currently in registered apprenticeship and several of the female business owners to help with recruitment to the Women Building MN program. The AWC has created a collective of women business owners who have pledged to mentor new apprentices for 18 months and they have also created workshops designed to help women negotiate challenging career issues as they begin work in a male industry.

Summit Academy, OIC, is continuing to grow its Women Wear Hard Hats Too program and are working to train and place women in electrical apprenticeships and as heavy equipment operators.

## Students receive safety training from Minnesota OSHA

DLI is supporting two summer youth programs that prepare individuals to enter registered apprenticeship training: UnderConstruction and the Guadalupe Alternative School (GAP) YouthBuild Program.

In June, both groups visited DLI to receive OSHA 10 Safety certification from Minnesota OSHA Consultation experts Andy Smoka, Mike Seliga and Bill Stuart. The students learned about many safety topics including use of personal protective equipment, fall protection and more.

UnderConstruction is in its 11th year of operation and boasts a zero-injury record. The GAP YouthBuild Program offers high school students a career pathway focused on construction training and the development of work-readiness skills.



UnderConstruction participants are building sheds and garages in St. Paul as part of the apprenticeship-preparedness training program. The students received OSHA 10 safety certification from DLI in June.

## Stay in touch with DLI through social media, e-mail newsletters

- Follow DLI on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/mndli](http://www.twitter.com/mndli)
- Sign up for other DLI newsletters focusing on workers' compensation, OSHA, construction and more at [www.dli.mn.gov/publications.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/publications.asp)