



Construction Industry Roundtable

FINAL REPORT



Introduction

On May 25th Workforce Solutions Borderplex partnered with the City of El Paso and the Borderplex Alliance to host a Construction Industry Roundtable discussion at the Hilton Garden Inn. Businesses in the construction industry attended along with training providers and professionals in economic and workforce development. The roundtable included breakout sessions with a report-out session as well as networking. The partners’ goal was to identify immediate hiring needs, desired skills and in-demand certifications. Additionally, we identified root causes of bottlenecks in the talent pipeline, such as the business’ need for more diverse recruiting strategies. This unique forum created an opportunity for educators to hear firsthand employers’ workforce needs, and employers an opportunity to hear about existing, relevant education programs where they can find potential new employees. It highlighted opportunities for the partners to mobilize their resources to fill the employment gaps as well.

Jobs, Skills and Certifications

The following chart shows employers’ immediate hiring needs as well as preferred and required certifications and experience.

Hard to Fill Positions (current)	Certification Required or Preferred	Experience Required by Most Employers
Diesel and Gas Truck Mechanics	Yes	No
Drivers	Yes	Yes

Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing (MEP)	Yes	Yes
Laborers	No	No
Carpentry workers	No	Yes
Concrete workers	No	
Cement masons	No	Yes
Painters	No	No
Finishers	Yes	Yes
Ceramic Tile Setters	No	No
Carpet Layers	No	No
Floor Tile Setters	No	No
Office Clerks	No	No
Construction Estimator (degree preferred, cert. and exp.)	Yes	Yes
Project Managers (degree, cert. and exp.)	Yes	Yes
Foreman (degree and cert.)	Yes	Yes
Superintendents (typically hired internally) (degree and cert.)	Yes	Yes
Accountants (degree and cert.)	Yes	Yes
Contract Administrator (degree, cert. and exp.)	Yes	Yes
Government Inspectors	Yes	Yes

Certifications

- Hazmat
- CDL
- Welding
- AutoCad
- OSHA20
- OSHA30
- MSHA
- CPR
- Diesel mechanic
- Green building construction (city)
- CPR
- ProCore
- HVAC
- Specific equipment cert. (i.e. forklift)
- Quickbooks
- Heavy Duty Equipment

General Skills Needs

- Foundational skills, e.g. work ethic and punctuality
- Project management/software
- Ability to read and interpret blueprints
- English language skills (bilingual if a supervisor)
- MS Office Suite

Average Recruiting Methods

- WorkinTexas.com
- Word of mouth
- Hire from local unions



Other Factors Affecting Workforce

There are a variety of challenges facing construction industry employers' ability to recruit and retain qualified workers. Many job seekers lack awareness of construction industry jobs. Many who are working in construction have low motivation and work ethic (especially working outside). For some jobs, employers require years of experience before entering, e.g. truck driver, making it difficult for a person to enter the career. In this industry, there is no substitute for hands on training. Even though workers without a postsecondary education are hired, they are still expected to be able to read and interpret blueprints. These intellectual expectations may or may not be communicated to incoming employees and potential employees may not be properly

screened for such skills sets. Employers prefer some certifications but certified workers are hard to find, therefore some employers have created internal training programs.

There is not a clear career path in the construction industry; the road to foreman, superintendent or general manager requires knowledge of every aspect of business. Companies do not have standardized internal training programs to help employees move up in the company. More ambitious workers will find it extremely difficult to identify career opportunities that offer higher pay. One of the biggest issues is the high attrition rate in the construction industry, which can be attributed to factors such as people leaving to work in oil fields and other industries that offer higher pay. Additionally, many times subcontractors work on project-by-project basis so jobs are temporary.

In conclusion, there are many opportunities for businesses, education and workforce and economic development entities to improve the workforce within the construction industry. Strategies include industry promotion, the creation of career pathways, expansion of recruitment strategies, and the incorporation of construction-specific certifications and skills in educational programs. Creating the desired construction industry workforce will likely be achieved through the continued communication and partnership of the varied parts of the industry.