



In September 2016, the Department of Labor (DOL) awarded \$2.8 million dollars to three Texas cities - Austin, San Antonio, and El Paso. El Paso's Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WFSB) was the only Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Board to receive this grant. While the award was being granted to WFSB, El Paso's construction industry was booming. It is anticipated that in the next five years, residential, commercial, and industrial construction will have a big demand for skilled labor, a resource that has been strained in El Paso due to competing growth in other Texas cities. As the leader of YouthBuild in El Paso, WFSB convened and created partnerships with a local training provider, service delivery operators, and employers to deliver a robust program that provides skilled labor to the El Paso's Construction Industry employers.

WFSB's YouthBuild El Paso! offers disconnected youth an opportunity to achieve their GED and gain construction training that produces the skills that are currently in-demand and pathways to high skilled trades in the future. YouthBuild students work side-by-side with artisans building brick and rock walls and with professionals in all trades. This experience serves as a hands-on career exploration opportunity.

- Mental Toughness
- GED Instruction
- NCCER Certifications
- 12 Graduates
- 9 obtained full-time employment (as of 1/18)
- \$26,000 average salary (as of 1/18)

The outcomes of the YouthBuild El Paso! program include GED credentials and a National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) certification (a national, industry recognized certification) for all. Young men and women are encouraged to pursue post-secondary and vocational training in the trades they were exposed to during the program. The ultimate goal of YouthBuild is entry into the workforce earning competitive wages. In May of 2017, WFSB graduated its first cohort with a successful combination of GED and NCCER credentials and permanent, full-time job placement for nine students.

During the application process, interested young men and women attend a two-week Mental Toughness program designed to challenge youth to explore interests, abilities, skills, and aptitudes. Additionally, using tools such as Texas Reality check during WFSB's Dynamic Futures, youth are guided through the process of learning what being out in the world on their own is really like. Together the valuable insight they gain from that exploration and the overview of the construction industry and the potential for them there, help youth to make an informed decision to commit themselves to working on forging their own futures with the help of WFSB partners teaching, coaching, and supporting them along the way.

