



**PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF  
SKILLED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS:  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

*2015*

## **Introduction: Why America Needs a Construction Workforce Development Plan**

As the construction industry emerges from a severe downturn that began more than eight years ago, many firms report having a hard time finding enough skilled workers to fill key positions. These workforce shortages may at first seem counter intuitive for an industry that was forced to lay off more than 2 million workers since 2006. However, these shortages are the consequence





**Reform and Reinvigorate the Perkins Act.** Congress and the administration must work together to make a number of reforms to the Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Act the primary federal funding vehicle for career and technical education programs. For example, the act should be amended to give states increased flexibility to select and fund high-quality training programs in response to labor market needs. In addition, the legislation should give states increased autonomy to establish sector partnerships focused on promoting collaboration among secondary and post-secondary training programs. And the reformed program must include clear benchmarks for success.

In addition, given the higher graduation rates of career and technical programs and expanding demand for construction jobs, Congress needs to boost funding for the Perkins Act. Specifically, funding should go from the current level of \$1.12 billion in 2015 to its 2007 level of \$1.30 billion. This additional flexibility and funding will make it easier for school districts to expand their career and technical program offerings. These programs should undergo an annual review to make sure they effectively matriculate participants into the next stage of their training, and ultimately into jobs.

**Offer Community College Career and Technical Programs to High School Students for Free.** Other states should follow the lead of states like Kansas and TennesseeCcal s lie



immigration reform that provides such a path to legal status and allows for significantly more construction workers to enter the U.S.

**Make It Easier to Establish Public Schools Focused on Career and Technical Education.** A number of state and local governments have enacted legislation permitting charter schools and construction career academies to be put in place. In some of those areas AGC chapters have successfully partnered with education providers to establish construction-focused charter schools. These programs have proven to be successful. In Portland, Oregon, for example, a chapter-supported charter school program is proving extremely successful and popular. Unfortunately, many other jurisdictions either lack such enabling legislation or their measures are too restrictive to be effective. State and local officials must enact measures to allow the establishment of new charter schools.

In addition, state a flexibility to establish career academies that focus on construction, like the San Antonio Construction Career Academy in Texas.

**Implement Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.** WIOA streamlines much of the workforce development system, gives states greater flexibility to address the most crucial local worker shortages, and strengthens employer engagement. The final implementation regulations will largely dictate how the act functions and ultimately its effectiveness on training skilled construction workers. While AGC supported passing the bill, it recommends that clear incentives allow employers to partner with the workforce system to design and implement occupational training programs. The employer measures should be objective, not subjective, and should be organized to keep employer burdens to a minimum by identifying a short list of performance indicators the administration should consider. AGC gave recommendations on membership of workforce boards, One-Stop delivery and apprenticeship, industry recognized credentials, work-based training and pay for performance contracts to the administration prior to the rule making. We wait to see if our recommendations will be included in the final rules.

## **Conclusion**

As demand continues to pick up around the country, the construction industry will face worker

