



# Building Strong Communities Newsletter

Aligning stakeholders to provide industry-driven, apprenticeship-readiness pathways into union construction careers.

## Cohort 2025 - Accepting Applications!

Building Strong Communities 2025 cohort begins February 10, 2025! This program offers a unique opportunity to gain valuable insights and hands-on experience in the skilled trades, paving the way for fulfilling and prosperous careers. Classes officially start on February 10 and culminate in a graduation ceremony on May 2.



Veterans, women, and individuals from diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply and seize this life-changing opportunity. Building Strong Communities is more than a program—it's a pathway to success, offering mentorship, training, and valuable connections to help participants excel in the trades. During the Recruitment & Enrollment period, the Building Strong Communities program hosts virtual information sessions to provide potential applicants with an overview of the program's components and expectations. Attendance at these sessions is a required step in the enrollment process. To learn more about our information sessions, visit our website <https://buildingstrong.org/>.

A photograph showing the lower legs and feet of several people in military camouflage uniforms and tan combat boots, standing on a paved surface.

**CALLING ALL VETERANS!**

Looking for a career after service?  
Joining Building Strong Communities empowers veterans by providing career pathways, leveraging their discipline and teamwork, offering competitive wages, and fostering a sense of purpose in impactful construction trades.

**Mock Interview volunteers needed for the upcoming BSC 2025 cohort!**

The Building Strong Communities 2025 cohort will commence on February 10th, 2025! We've curated an exciting lineup of activities, and some may involve your organization. Among these activities are mock interviews, scheduled on the BSC 2025 calendar from March 18th-28th! These interviews will be conducted during both day and evening hours. Each timeslot will accommodate four 30-minute interviews, consisting of 20 minutes of questions followed by 10 minutes of feedback and coaching. This presents a wonderful opportunity for you or a representative from your organization to engage with BSC participants and contribute to their journey towards a career in the Building and Construction Trades. Multiple spots are available for each timeslot. We'll be running up to four rooms simultaneously, aiming to conduct up to 16 interviews during each two-hour session. If you're interested in participating on an interview panel, please visit the SignUpGenius page. As always, BSC deeply appreciates your partnership and support!

Follow the link provided to sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4CA4AF23A6FDCE9-50277537-mock#/>

BSC couldn't do this without support from incredible stakeholders. Thank you for you for supporting BSC!

## BSC Growth & Program Updates

In 2024, Building Strong Communities celebrated a significant milestone by welcoming two outstanding programs into its organization. The addition of Helmets to Hardhats strengthens our commitment to supporting veterans as they transition into meaningful careers in the construction industry. Similarly, the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council's Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Committee enhances our efforts to connect military families with vital resources and support networks. These partnerships reinforce our mission to build resilient communities while providing pathways for individuals to thrive personally and professionally.

### Helmets to Hardhats

“Helmets to Hardhats’ (H2H) mission is to assist military heroes in transitioning into successful civilian careers in the building trades. Working with Building Strong Communities strengthens our ability to connect and engage with military service members seeking new career opportunities while also benefiting from the program’s extensive network, resources, and commitment to creating pathways for success in the skilled trades.”

Justin Rost, Director of Helmets to Hardhats



---

**Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council Beyond the Yellow Ribbon**

**Committee**



“The Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Committee is vital role in supporting veterans, military members, and their families, offering assistance ranging from home remodels to snow removal. By coming under the umbrella of Building Strong Communities, the committee gains access to enhanced resources and expanded opportunities as a nonprofit organization. The collaboration with the BSC team, along with the support of registered apprentices who graduate from the program, strengthens our ability to provide meaningful aid to those who have served, allowing us to make an even greater impact in the lives of service members and their families.”

Joe Fowler, president of the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Committee

## Partner Showcase

Building Strong Communities collaborates with select partners to support program graduates through education, skill development, and career advancement opportunities. North Hennepin Community College, Twin Cities RISE, True North Goodwill, and Five Skies have played an instrumental role in expanding the reach and impact of the Building Strong Communities programs. Together, these partnerships reinforce the commitment to building resilient communities, fostering personal and professional growth, and creating pathways to success in the skilled trades.

### North Hennepin Community College

North Hennepin Community College (NHCC) is a comprehensive college in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, offering diverse academic programs and workforce training. As a partner of Building Strong Communities, NHCC supports participants by providing educational resources, career readiness programs, and skill-building opportunities that empower individuals to pursue rewarding careers in the skilled trades.



### Twin Cities Rise



Twin Cities R!SE has provided comprehensive workforce development to under and unemployed individuals since 1993. Their mission is to transform the lives of those impacted by racial or socio-economic barriers through personal empowerment, career training, and meaningful employment. They envision a community where all individuals, especially people of color, have attained financial independence through employment success.

---

## True North Goodwill

True North Goodwill, empowers individuals facing employment barriers through training, job opportunities, and support services. Funded by the sale of donated goods, grants, and gifts, its nearly 300 employees work across Northern MN and WI to foster community growth, offering diverse career pathways and inclusive employment opportunities.



---

## Five Skies



Five Skies Training is a workforce readiness company specializing in Empowerment Training, which transforms participants' mindsets toward their goals and success. By integrating relatable cultural and traditional values, Five Skies creates a personalized learning experience. Graduates receive ongoing mentorship and support, ensuring they can overcome challenges and seize new opportunities.

---

## Department of Energy Visit

BSC and IBEW Local 110 had the honor of welcoming Robert Sandoli, Deputy Director of the U.S. Department of Energy, for an inspiring afternoon with BSC graduates, now Local 110 registered apprentices.

The session included insightful discussions on the Building Strong Communities program and its role in diversifying Minnesota's building and construction trades workforce. Graduates shared their journeys and how Building Strong Communities has prepared them for a career in the construction industry. A huge thank you to everyone involved for making this event a success.



## National Apprenticeship Week Celebrates a Milestone

The 10th anniversary of National Apprenticeship Week took place from November 17-23. A special thank you to Erin Larsen (MNDLI), Ray Douha (MNDEED), Aaron Koski (MET Council), Justin Rost (helmets to Hardhats), and Thomas Scott (BSC Representative) for facilitating four virtual panels throughout the week. These panels featured BSC Graduates, Veterans, and now registered apprentices sharing their experiences and insights. Attendees interested in pursuing a career in the trades had the opportunity to ask questions and learn how registered apprenticeships can transform lives.

Throughout the week, recent graduates of the Building Strong Communities program who transitioned into registered apprenticeships were featured on social media. Followers had the chance to explore their biographies and learn about their journeys into and within the trades. Click the tiles below to read about each registered apprentice's inspiring story:

National Apprenticeship Week

**Kirbi  
Glowaski**



National Apprenticeship Week

**Ben  
Kinsman**



National Apprenticeship Week

**Kris  
Tornow**



National Apprenticeship Week

**Nicole  
Manderscheid**



## Looking ahead

### Women in Construction Week

Women in Construction Week is celebrated nationally from March 2-8 and highlights the vital contributions of women to the construction industry. Currently, 11% of women make up the workforce in construction trades, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. At Building Strong Communities, our goal is to increase the number of women in the construction trades by providing them with opportunities to explore and excel in rewarding careers within the skilled trades. Together, we can build a more inclusive and diverse industry! For Women in Construction Week, we will be hosting panels, where those interested can talk to women already in the trades.

Here is a sneak peek at a few women BSC is honored to promote:



---

## Celebrate National Women in Construction Week with Us!

Building Strong Communities invites you to join us in honoring the incredible achievements of women in the construction industry.

**Event:** Building Strong Communities Women in Construction Panel

**Date:** March 3, 2025

**Time:** 5:30 – 7 pm

**Location:** ZOOM

**What to Expect:** A dynamic panel discussion featuring graduates of our 12-week Apprenticeship Readiness Program who are now thriving as registered apprentices in union construction apprenticeship programs.

**Hear their stories:**

How they entered the construction field

The challenges and triumphs

Their advice for aspiring tradeswomen

This event is a testament to the strength and determination of women in construction. Don't miss this chance to celebrate and support diversity in the trades.

For more details and the link, visit our website: [www.buildingstrong.org](http://www.buildingstrong.org)

Let's build a stronger, more inclusive construction industry together!

---

**Building Strong Communities will have a table at the AGC Construction Summit, February 19, 2025! Stop by, say hello, and learn more about Building Strong Communities!**

## RibFest Recap

The Minnesota Building Trades YellowRibbon RibFest was a success! Over 600 attendees came to the General John W. Vessey Readiness Jr. Readiness Center in Arden Hills on Saturday, September 2. Despite rainstorms the morning of, 25 competitive cooking teams faced off in a heated contest, vying for

top honors in both rib and chicken smoking categories. The Kansas City and Minnesota Barbeque Societies officially sanction this event. BSC brought out a team to this year's Ribfest. Check out the official RibFest [video](#).



BSC Team preparing ribs for judging







“Thank you” to our BSC Supporters!



This content was funded as part of a grant through the State of Minnesota's Department of  
Employment and Economic Development.



*Copyright (C) 2025 Building Strong Communities. All rights reserved.*

You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

Our mailing address is:

Building Strong Communities 353 W 7th Street Ste. 105 St. Paul, MN 55102 USA

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)