

BuilditAZ Apprentices Initiative

Plan to double the number of construction trades apprentices by 2026

About BuilditAZ Initiative

Arizona is a **national model** for innovative and successful workforce development programs. Our collaborative approach brings together government, education, labor, and industry to develop comprehensive, award-winning, and scalable solutions. On August 4th, 2023 Governor Hobbs announced BuilditAZ apprenticeship initiative that aims to double the number of registered apprentices by 2026. As of the latest available data, there are 4,071 apprentices actively participating in construction and trades registered apprenticeship programs in Arizona. In addition, a directive was given to OEO to form a cross-sector task force and produce a plan by November 4, 2023.

BuilditAZ Apprenticeship Initiative represents Arizona's latest workforce advancement, connecting workers with the skills and know-how needed for jobs in the state's construction and trades industry with the goal of doubling the number of registered apprentices in construction and the trades. All of this work is aimed towards meeting the building needs of our growing 21st-century economy – from housing to semiconductor fabs to broadband to electric vehicle charging infrastructure. To achieve this goal, the initiative organized a workgroup of over 40 volunteers from various sectors, including industry, education, government, trades, and non-profit community organizations, all operating under the leadership of the Workforce Arizona Council. The workgroup developed specific goals and strategies in key areas related to apprenticeship expansion. These key areas typically included:

1. Marketing and Outreach
2. Policy and Governance
3. Employer Engagement
4. Career Pathways
5. Grants and Funding Opportunities

What is being delivered as part of the BuilditAZ plan?

- **Invest \$500,000 in capacity-building for construction trades apprenticeships:** To build on current, successful programs and focus on emerging needs in our workforce, the Governor has allocated \$500,000 in federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds for the expansion of existing employer-funded registered apprenticeships. These funds will be used to support the hiring of instructors and purchase of equipment to expand the capacity of current successful and high-quality apprenticeships growing our skilled workforce in Arizona. This funding was part of the Governor's initial announcement on August 4 and serves as a down-payment for future expansions and investments in apprenticeship programs. The Office of Economic Opportunity and Department of Economic Security will administer the funds.
- **Launch BuilditAZ Industry and Trades Marketing and Outreach Campaign with initial \$500,000:** A common industry theme that emerged through the workgroups is the need to raise awareness and effectively recruit new talent into apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, presenting a leadership void and opportunity for the Governor and her Administration. The state-led marketing and outreach campaign aims to promote pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs in Arizona, showing that construction represents not just a good job but a good career. Its objectives are to create awareness, drive interest towards a dedicated informational/registration portal with consistent key messages, and establish a strong branding presence on social media based on research. The campaign will primarily target priority populations within Arizona and utilize social media platforms, while collaborating with partners on content and additional funding to enhance its reach. With a budget of \$500,000 from the Arizona's federal WIOA funds and partner support, the campaign's success will be measured through various metrics, including impression volume, creative impact, audience engagement, website traffic, and form fill rates, with the ultimate goal of guiding individuals towards these valuable career opportunities. The Office of Economic Opportunity and the Registrar of Contractors Office will coordinate the campaign. The Registrar of Contractors hosts an annual Construction Science Technology Apprenticeship Fair, connecting students with companies recruiting apprentices and job candidates. In 2023, over 900 students from 55+ Arizona schools attended. AZ ROC also actively engages in promoting careers within the construction science technology field throughout Arizona by participating in CTED advisory boards, high school job fairs, Construction Career Days events, and the SkillsUSA State Competition.

- **\$750,000 for a new Workforce Development Grant office at OEO:** The establishment of a Grants Office represents a significant step towards strengthening our region's workforce and economic development efforts underscoring our unwavering commitment to fostering growth and prosperity. This office will be ready to meet the urgent requirements of local and regional sectors, with a particular focus on high-demand industries like construction. The OEO grants office will work closely with local and regional partners to secure federal workforce grants, which represents a significant commitment to enhancing our state's economic prospects. The office will strengthen the grant application by empowering applicants with technical support and essential data, and enhancing competitiveness through state funding and subsidies for grant writers.
- **Appoint trades representatives to the Workforce Arizona Council:** Governor Hobbs has used her appointment power to the Council, responsible for creating the vision for Arizona's use of federal WIOA funds, to increase labor and trades representation on the Council, in addition to new representatives from industry and higher education. Since the launch of BuilditAZ, two additional trade representatives have been recommended for appointment to the Council. The Council is in the process of drafting Arizona's next four-year plan for its WIOA funds, due to the Department of Labor in 2024, an opportunity to expand and update strategies for meeting future workforce needs. The representation of labor unions on the Council has significantly increased in support of the new initiative.
- **Creation of BuilditAZ Policy Task Force:** The Arizona Workforce Council will charter a policy workgroup tasked with evaluating existing apprenticeship policies to guarantee inclusivity, access, safety, market relevance, and the optimization of training capacity. Their objectives include gathering input from stakeholders, benchmarking other states, pinpointing industry gaps, particularly in the field of green construction jobs, boosting participation through increased access and inclusivity, and aligning policies with licensing, safety standards, and market trends. The workgroup is expected to make recommendations within 90 days and submit an assessment and plan to the Council. Key metrics for success involve proposing policy changes that will increase apprentice enrollments and implement flexible policies that support the expansion of apprenticeship programs.
- **\$500,000 for ADOT's On the Job Training (OJT) Apprentice Training Program:** ADOT's OJT Program is central to Arizona's federal-aid highway initiatives, focusing on building a diverse workforce for the construction industry. In collaboration with prime contractors, it provides opportunities for individuals to pursue highway construction careers. Over the last four years, ADOT's federally funded projects amassed 223,000

OJT hours. For the OJT program, the next 3 years will generate 148,955 apprentice training hours, 327 apprentices, and 15 journey person graduates. Additionally, ADOT's OJT Supportive Services (OJTSS) Program is set to allocate approximately \$500,000 over the next three years. This funding targets services and educational opportunities for underrepresented groups, such as women, minorities, veterans, and economically disadvantaged individuals, bolstering their prospects in the construction industry. Since 2018, the OJTSS Program has provided \$1,439,000 in FHWA support for approved apprenticeships, CDL skills training, highway construction pre-apprenticeship programs, and online courses like OSHA 10 and highway flagger certification through the ADOT Virtual Construction Academy.