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**Ahead of Economic Downturn,
New Instructional Center Opens in Houston
Providing No-Cost Training in Construction Skills
*State of Texas Approves Trade Education Curriculum***

Houston, Texas --- As recession and joblessness loom, new skills training for workers is crucial, said the head of the [Home Builders Institute \(HBI\)](#), the nation's leading provider of construction trades training and education, today at the grand opening ceremony of its new facility in Houston.

"Economists now expect we will see an increase in unemployment over the coming months, as the Federal Reserve continues taking steps to rein in inflation," said Ed Brady, HBI CEO. "Now is the time to prepare with programs that will offer the underemployed or unemployed the opportunity to develop new, marketable skills."

The chief executive spoke at the unveiling of the [BuildStrong Academy of Houston](#). The training center is part of a nationwide initiative by HBI to help fill the severe worker shortage affecting housing in Texas and the U.S. The Houston location is the fourth BuildStrong Academy, following the opening of centers in Denver, CO, Orlando, FL and New Orleans, LA. HBI has promised to open 15 more training academies by 2027.

The Houston academy will use [HBI's industry-recognized curriculum](#) designed to transform students into trained, pre-apprentices sought-after by builders. "Over the next few years, the BuildStrong Academy of Houston will help create great career opportunities in the building industry for thousands of those living in the Houston area," said Brady.

Located on Harwin Drive, the BuildStrong Academy of Houston offers programs that are available tuition-free to anyone 18 years or older. No previous construction experience is necessary. Through participation in workshop, classroom and web-based learning, students earn industry credentials, including the OSHA-10 safety certification. They also receive career counseling, job-placement support, and networking opportunities with top industry employers.

At the event, Brady also announced the [Texas Education Agency has approved HBI's pre-apprenticeship certificate training programs for secondary schools](#). Beginning this year, high school students in Texas will have access to the HBI curriculum, exposing them to different forms of trade work and a variety of construction skills including carpentry, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, weatherization and landscaping. The Texas Association of Builders was instrumental in getting HBI's curriculum passed within the state.

The Greater Houston Builders Association (GHBA) plays an important role in connecting local high school graduates to industry opportunities and good-paying jobs.

"The Houston region's homebuilding industry continues to thrive and seek out new talent for our workforce. The GHBA is committed to partnering with programs in our region to help build the next generation of homebuilding professionals and connect them to employers in the industry," said Aimee Bertrand, Executive Vice President and CEO of the GHBA.

HBI's training curriculums are developed in conjunction with members of the National Association of Home Builders and approved by the U.S. Department of Labor.

"The new BuildStrong Academy of Houston, and the availability of our approved curriculum in high schools statewide, reflects HBI's commitment to build the next generation of skilled workers for construction in the state of Texas," Brady said. "In the short term, Houston will need to retrain a sizable portion of the workforce. In the longer term, the home building industry here and throughout Texas will continue to face a skilled trade worker shortage once the economy recovers."

The nation's construction industry has been short [approximately 300,000 skilled workers](#) every month this year, according to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics. According to HBI's [Spring 2022 Construction Labor Market Report](#), the U.S. will need an additional 2.2 million net hires for construction between 2022 and 2024.

The HBI CEO acknowledged that the demand for construction labor will slacken in the short run as a result of an economic slowdown.

"While housing demand will slow during a downturn, there will remain a severe shortage of skilled construction workers now and after the economy recovers," Brady said. "That is because for many decades our country has not encouraged enough young people to consider careers in construction."

"Shorter term unemployment numbers, combined with persistent shortages of construction workers, are the reasons why boosting skills training now will help the local economy to be better prepared for both the coming months and the years to come."

The HBI chief executive said the new programs align with Mayor Sylvester Turner's recently announced \$7.5 million program to boost homeownership for minorities in Houston. "We applaud Mayor Turner's leadership in supporting greater availability and affordability of homes," said Brady. "Training workers in residential construction increases housing supply and puts a downward pressure on housing costs."

The Houston academy has already produced its inaugural class of seven graduates who entered the first program offering in July. Currently 40 students are enrolled in the program.

The BuildStrong Academy of Houston is funded by The Home Depot Foundation (THDF), WoodNext Foundation, West Fraser, and Perry Homes. Trade sponsors for the program include Klein Tools, American Standard and RWC.

“The BuildStrong Academy of Houston is for those seeking accredited training for well-paying opportunities and meaningful careers in the skilled trades,” said Heather Prill, The Home Depot Foundation’s Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships. “The Foundation is proud to serve the Houston market through its Path to Pro trades training program.”

“The BuildStrong Academy provides access to opportunity for those living in Houston,” said Nancy Chan, Executive Director of WoodNext Foundation. “The curriculum and instructors create a gateway to fulfilling lives and careers for program graduates.”

“In response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey, West Fraser, formerly Norbord, funded the launch of HBI’s Houston training program in 2018,” said Ross Commerford, West Fraser’s VP of Marketing and Product Management. “We are thrilled to see this critical, free program evolve and expand its reach so that more Houston residents will have the opportunity to build careers.”

“The Perry Homes Foundation is proud to support the Home Builders Institute,” said Armando Perez, VP at Perry Homes. “Our core values guide us to positively impact the communities we serve, and we are passionate about efforts that educate and prepare individuals for a career in the building industry. Learning the skills to build and improve our communities creates wonderful opportunities for individuals and the greater Houston community.”

For more information, visit: <https://hbi.org/buildstrong-houston/>

About the Home Builders Institute (HBI)

HBI is the nation’s leading nonprofit provider of trade skills training and education for the building industry. With nearly 400 programs across 46 states, HBI provides no-cost pre-apprenticeship training and certification programs to middle and high school students, transitioning military and veterans, unemployed, underemployed and displaced workers, low-income and opportunity youth, and justice-involved youth and adults. Learn more at hbi.org.

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