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**Growth in Trade Skills Education is Expanding Nationwide**  
*Home Builders Institute Credits Change in Perception Driven by Pandemic*

**Washington, DC** – The number of U.S. secondary schools embracing trade skills curriculums is growing rapidly, according to the Home Builders Institute (HBI). The chief executive of the nation’s largest nonprofit organization in construction skills training says middle and high schools are reexamining the need to expose more of their students to the trades.

“For decades, technical education took a backseat to the college-bound track in our schools. That kept millions of young people from considering the lucrative post-secondary opportunities in the trades,” said Ed Brady, HBI President and CEO, “The trend is definitely turning.”

HBI reports that it has experienced more than a 300 percent increase in the number of schools licensing its trade skills curriculum since the start of the pandemic. HBI programs are now in 240 schools in 37 states, compared with 79 schools in 14 states in 2019. The numbers include schools funded by HBI’s “School to Skills” grant initiative. The program provides HBI’s industry-recognized curriculum free to schools and students. Since launching in fall 2019, Schools-to-Skills grants have funded more than \$1.7 million in trade programs across 33 states in 159 schools, including 40 schools new to the program for 2022.

The Home Depot Foundation and the National Housing Endowment are continuing sponsors of Schools-to-Skills. The National Kitchen and Bath Association and the Truist Foundation provided funding for the program in 2021.

“The economics of the pandemic have changed the perception of careers in construction,” said Brady. “Educators, parents and students themselves once again are seeing how valuable trade skills can be for young people entering the workforce today.”

Unlike costly college tuition that can leave students buried in debt, HBI's programs are tuition-free for students and can lead to high-paying jobs and careers, according to the chief executive.

A [report](#) released by HBI this week shows that half of payroll workers in construction earn more than \$49,070 annually and the top 25 percent make at least \$75,820. In comparison, the U.S. median wage is \$45,760, while the top quartile makes at least \$68,590.



HBI's curriculum is one of only three national curriculums recognized and approved by the U.S. Department of Labor and several state departments of education. It provides free, hands-on construction trades training and certification to middle and high school students, setting them up for a successful career path in the building industry.

The expansion of training programs comes at a critical time for the residential building industry, which is starved for skilled workers. According to [HBI's Spring 2022 Construction Labor Market Report](#), the construction industry needs 740,000 new skilled tradespeople each year for the next three years, totaling 2.2 million workers, to keep up with housing demands. The Schools-to-Skills initiative and all of HBI's licensing programs will help address the skilled labor shortage crisis while giving young adults the opportunity for good-paying jobs immediately after graduating high school, HBI's chief executive said.

“The skilled construction labor shortage has reached crisis levels, in no small part because as a nation for too long we have given trade skills training the short shrift. We urgently need to introduce younger students to the trades and get them excited about construction,” said Brady. “HBI's curriculum is aligned with STEM and offers a great alternative for students who can't or don't want to pursue four-year college after graduation.”

The Home Depot Foundation has committed \$50 million to train the next generation of skilled tradespeople through its [Path to Pro program](#).

“The construction industry has hundreds of thousands of open roles right now. The Home Depot Foundation's support of HBI's Schools-to-Skills and our other Path to Pro programs reflects our \$50 million commitment to educating and training more young people in the skilled trades,” said Heather Prill, The Foundation's Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships. “We're hopeful these efforts will help close the skilled labor gap and provide the younger generation with an abundance of career opportunities.”

The National Housing Endowment provides financial support for Schools-to-Skills through its Skilled Labor Fund.

“Reaching middle and high school students about the opportunities that await them after graduation is one of the most important things the housing industry can do to create future generations of leaders in home building,” said the Endowment's CEO Mark Pursell. “We believe HBI's Schools-to-Skills is the single best licensed curriculum for getting young people excited about careers in construction.”

For more information on Schools-to-Skills, visit: [www.hbi.org/s2s](http://www.hbi.org/s2s)

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**Building Careers.  
Changing Lives.**

**About Home Builders Institute (HBI)**

*The [Home Builders Institute \(HBI\)](http://www.hbi.org) trains and places thousands of skilled workers every year for the building industry. With a 200+ training team working in 46 states, HBI is the nation's leading nonprofit provider of trade skills training in residential construction. Through the organization's industry-recognized curriculum utilized in nearly 400 programs, HBI trains in a variety of skills including carpentry, electrical, plumbing, building construction technology, HVAC, and masonry. HBI provides pre-apprenticeship training and certification programs in secondary schools, community colleges, technical institutes and training academies for middle and high school students, veterans and transitioning military, underemployed, unemployed and displaced workers, low-income and opportunity youth, and justice-involved youth and adults. For more information, visit: [www.hbi.org](http://www.hbi.org)*

**About The Home Depot Foundation (THDF)**

*The [Home Depot Foundation](http://www.thdf.org) works to improve the homes and lives of U.S. veterans, support communities impacted by natural disasters, and train skilled tradespeople to fill the labor gap. Since 2011, the Foundation has invested more than \$400 million in veteran causes and improved more than 50,000 veteran homes and facilities. The Home Depot Foundation has pledged to invest half of a billion dollars in veteran causes by 2025 and \$50 million in training the next generation of skilled tradespeople through the Path to Pro program.*

**About The National Housing Endowment (NHE)**

*Founded in 1987 by NAHB and a visionary group of leaders and icons in the housing industry, the [National Housing Endowment](http://www.nhe.org) works to "build a foundation" to help make the American dream of home ownership a reality for present and future generations.*