

ABC Workforce Development

Workforce Issues

1. Shrinking Labor Pool

* As the Baby Boom generation reaches retirement age the pool of working age individuals will shrink and there will be increased competition from all industry sectors for workers. In the State Workforce Development plan the Governor acknowledges that there will be more new jobs created than people to fill them.

2. Aging skilled workforce.

* The median age for a construction worker is 38. 50% of our labor force is older than 38. Companies that have done a good job in retaining employees now find themselves looking at their employees and seeing that more than 25% of their employees will be eligible for retirement in the next 5 years.

3. Decrease in skilled labor available.

* The aging workforce takes the biggest toll on skilled craftsmen. In some crafts the average age of a skilled craftsman is 58 years old. In a poll conducted by MABC, over 80% of the members that responded acknowledged that finding qualified candidates to hire was difficult.

4. High levels of employee turnover.

* Nationally, our industry added more new workers last year, than any other industry sector, but because of retirement and turnover we did not have a net gain. DOL projects that between 2007 and 2012 there will be 500,000 new construction jobs created and 750,000 jobs opening because of retirement and turnover.

5. “Off-shoring” for labor

* Construction jobs cannot be exported but because of the decreasing numbers of skilled workers and the competition for those workers some companies will import the labor need to complete projects. According to the PEW Institute, in 2006, 2 out of 3 new construction jobs were filled with Hispanic workers.

6. Lack of support to channel students to construction related careers.

*College first. Going to college to begin a career path is promoted above all other available opportunities. While this approach may help schools with test scores by locking kids into only academic classes and limiting elective opportunities, it has also helped to create drop-out rates over 20%. Close to 30% of students that graduate high school will enroll in a 2 or 4 year college and less than 15% of them will finish with a degree.

MABC Strategic Plan Goals

1. Increase the number of adults in training to 2000 by the year 2010.

- * Encourage all members to participate in craft training.
- * Help develop flexible training methods to increase the contractors training.
- * Identify available training programs for contractors to utilize in their training efforts.

(Our greatest resource in this area is the Mississippi Construction Education Foundation.)

2. Increase the number of students in vocational education classes and school to work program to 7500.

- * Connect ABC members with all vocational programs in the state to provide guidance to the programs and to help recruit students to the program.
- * Participate in career fairs, business in the classroom, and other opportunities to speak to students about the opportunities that our industry can offer them and how they can start working toward these careers while they are still in school.
- * Provide resources and learning opportunities to teachers, counselors, and principals about the opportunities that industry has to offer their students.

How can members get involved?

1. Provide training for craft employees. MABC can help you locate or develop a training plan that will meet your company's needs. Please keep us up to date on your efforts by completing training surveys that are sent out.
2. Participate with a vocational education center. MABC can help connect you to school where you can help guide a high school program by serving on an advisory committee. This would require you to attend two committee meetings a year at the school and help the teacher address issues and needs of the program.
3. Sponsor a school – volunteer to participate to attend the schools career fair or to visit the school and speak to students about careers in construction.