

AGC MA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

I. www.ConstructingMA.org

In 2017, AGC MA developed Constructing MA to educate high school and college students, veterans, and all job seekers on the many options and benefits of choosing a career in the construction industry. The website explores the various job opportunities within Skilled Trades, Management, Administration and Professional Support, and Design and Engineering and details what each career path entails, the education required and how much the individual could earn.

The construction industry offers ever-evolving, dynamic career opportunities for students who want to enter the workforce immediately after high school and for those who want to pursue college degrees. In the next ten years, the construction industry will need additional workers to cover new work and a retiring workforce and this website showcases the need for talented people both in the office and as skilled craftsman in the field.

II. IV. Madison Park Vocational High School Safety Services Outreach

AGC MA Director of Safety Chris Ziegler has a novel approach to introducing vocational students to the world of commercial construction through safety training. Chris has been engaged with the Madison Park Vocational High School carpentry program for the past five years serving on an advisory board comprised of AGC MA member construction companies, community organizations, the Carpenter's union, and other government agencies.

Chris provides 10- Hour OSHA training to the students giving them an opportunity to receive this critical certification before graduating high school. The OSHA 10 is a requirement of union carpenters and is also required for all trades people on public projects. **Furthermore, Chris brings the students on jobsite visits to AGC MA member company projects in Boston.**

These OSHA classes and jobsite visits might be the first exposure to commercial construction for some students. As projects permitted before the Boston Planning & Development Agency have residency, minority, and women participation goals, joining the commercial trades in Boston can be a very lucrative career for a skilled carpenter. This approach not only serves AGC MA member projects and the industry, but also provides students with an opportunity to build a career and a solid middle-class life working within the trades.

Again, the idea here is to expose students to commercial construction through the prism of safety and provide the students with industry certifications before they graduate. Site visits to AGC MA member company projects will also provide a pivotal step in helping the students understand the career opportunities that are available to them in the commercial construction trades.

III. Blackstone Valley Educational Foundation (BVEF)

The AGC MA was introduced to the BVEF through AGC MA Board member Fran Colantonio of Colantonio Inc. in Holliston.

The BVEF is a non-profit organization that is partially funded through member school districts, the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, and grants from the Commonwealth's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, and MassDevelopment Corporation.

In January 2016, Fran and his staff produced the Massachusetts Construction Advancement Program Guide to Construction Careers, which provides information on job descriptions, skills assessment tools, apprenticeship and training programs, hourly wage rates, and online resources. Fran has since spent countless hours visiting with educators and students at several area high schools to promote the industry and encourage exploration of careers in construction.

AGC MA has partnered with the BVEF because it has a history of innovative programs that connects industry to local high school students to expand career opportunities in the high tech and manufacturing industries. The AGC MA/BVEF Initiative is based on the same premise, using AGC MA member construction firms and trade unions to provide internships and potential employment upon graduation.

There is a four-phase approach to the Initiative, of which AGC MA has completed the first two phases to date.

- Phase I – Teacher Education
- Phase II – Student Industry Introduction
- Phase III – ACE Mentoring Program
- Phase IV – Internships

Phase I – Teacher Education

On January 25, 2018, a half-day seminar was conducted at AGC MA member Consigli's cutting-edge facility in Milford. The program walked 50 Blackstone Valley educators and administrators through a construction project life cycle with demonstrations and presentations made by Consigli project executives and marketing, estimating, project management and field operations personnel. The seminar focused on:

- team work
- communications skills
- technical skills
- training and education
- potential salary ranges

- career growth

To give attendees a sense of the professionalism of the industry today and attempt to shake its male-only, “muddy boots” perception, the program also highlighted the modern-day construction company’s use of cutting edge technology, such as Building Information Modeling.

Phase II –Student Industry Introduction

On April 10, 2018, a Career Fair was held at Uxbridge High School and attended by more than 100 students from BVEF schools. Four AGC MA member companies (Commodore Builders, Colantonio Inc., Consigli, and Gaston Electric), the Carpenters Union training center, and Lamoureux Pagano architects offered information to the students about opportunities that are available in the construction industry for design and engineering, the skilled trades, and construction management tracks. Groups of ten students each rotated among the employer organization. Each organization explained to each group a specific segment or process within the construction industry including design, preconstruction services, project management and on-site supervision.

Phase III – ACE Mentoring Program

After the students have been exposed to the types of organizations within the construction industry, the ACE Mentoring portion of the Initiative will commence in the Fall of 2018. This will consist of roughly eight after-school, two-hour sessions offering interactive learning opportunities within the ACE Mentoring curriculum. Students will gain a baseline understanding of the construction industry and of some of the design, engineering, and construction processes that construction professionals work with every day. Students will also interact with experienced construction professionals on a one-on-one level which will hopefully spur their interest in pursuing a career in the industry.

Phase IV - Internships

The final portion of the two-year program will place students in internships and job-shadow programs with engaged AGC MA members. This phase will be the culmination of the Initiative that began with teachers recognizing certain traits in students that might correlate to construction and referring them to the ACE Mentoring Program. Through ACE, the students will gain a baseline understanding of construction concepts and experience interacting with construction professionals, which can then be applied to internships with an AGC MA member companies.

IV. Fitchburg State University (FSU)

As part of AGC MA’s commitment to accelerate efforts to build the next generation of construction managers, it has engaged with Fitchburg State University’s Construction Technology program. This engagement will help elevate the program and make it an attractive and competitive option for students who want to pursue a construction management education at an affordable public institution. An

AGC/FSU Industry Advisory Board (IAB) was launched less than a year ago and is made up of FSU administrators, FSU faculty, AGC MA member firms, AGC MA staff, the Mass State College Building Authority, and other allied organizations.

The IAB has identified a practical, three-pronged approach to assist the FSU Construction Technology program:

- Provide FSU and students access to AGC MA educational programming.
- Make AGC MA members available as guest speakers and subject matter experts for classes and other presentations.
- Provide internship opportunities for students at AGC MA member firms during the summer.

Over the past nine months, the IAB is proud of several key accomplishments, including:

- Comments and suggestions to the construction technology faculty on a newly revised curriculum.
- Presentations and classes over the past year on the commercial construction industry, interpreting plans and specifications, how to profitably manage projects with detailed project documents, project delivery systems, construction law, risk management, labor relations, and building modeling technology.
- A successful Career Fair.
- Hiring of three graduating seniors for full time positions with AGC member firms.
- Hosting a jobsite visit at the Harvard Business School's new Klarman Hall. This is quite a significant project with unique construction challenges that really taught the students about the importance of field sequencing.
- FSU students have been encouraged to apply for AGC MA-sponsored scholarships.