

Wood Industry Association Partners with National Woods Board to Expand Workforce Training

Major financial backing from WIA will fuel high school and college technical programs, delivering a new generation of credentialed, job-ready talent to the woodworking industry.



FOREST HILL, Md., and GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Sept. 24, 2026 — The woodworking and cabinetmaking industry's workforce shortage isn't new — but a comprehensive, nationwide solution finally is. The Wood Industry Association (WIA) and the National Woods Board (NWB) today announced a strategic partnership to accelerate nationwide workforce development within the woodworking and cabinetmaking sectors.

Under the agreement, WIA is providing major financial support to fuel the NWB Education Program, a national initiative equipping high school and college students with the practical, hands-on skills required for immediate industry placement. It's a partnership built to move fast — captured in a new tagline: "NWB Education Program — Fueled by WIA."

By integrating Woodwork Career Alliance (WCA) national skill standards and recognized credentials into an industry/education built high school and post-secondary curricula, the NWB Education Program bridges the gap between classroom training and high-demand trade careers. WIA's funding turbocharges that mission, scaling the creation of a pipeline of job-ready talent for manufacturers across the country.

"This partnership with the WIA marks a pivotal moment for the National Woods Board and the industry's long-standing workforce challenge," said John LeTourneau, NWB Chairman. "By combining our proven NWB Education Program with the reach and resources of the Wood Industry Association, we're able to open career pathways for young people in every corner of the country — not just where we've historically had a presence. This is exactly the kind of collaboration our industry needs to build a skilled, sustainable workforce for the next generation of woodworkers and cabinetmakers."

"Educational support and growing our industry through providing tools and resources to improve the woodworking industry workforce is a vital part of the WIA's Mission and Strategic Plan," said Joe Hammock, Chair of the WIA Board of Directors. "With our existing Scholarship Program and the James Scarlett Memorial School Grant Program, National Woods Board is a great partnership to further this mission. We are excited to fuel this initiative and expect great and far-reaching results."

About the National Woods Board

The National Woods Board (NWB) is a non-profit organization focused on solving the woodworking industry's skilled labor shortage by deploying a scalable education pathway that creates a national pipeline of trained workers, bridging the gap between high school education and careers, and replicating successful models like the MiLL Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The NWB Education Program is a standardized, industry-relevant curricula for high schools and colleges, connecting students with career opportunities in advanced wood manufacturing.

The **NWB Education Program** integrates Woodwork Career Alliance (WCA) skill standards and credentials into its curriculum to ensure students graduate with verifiable, job-ready skills. Learn more about the NWB and the NWB Education Program, plus how to get involved with supporting the non-profit's vital mission at NationalWoodsBoard.org.

About the Wood Industry Association (WIA)

The mission of the Wood Industry Association (WIA) is to equip and connect professionals in the wood machinery and supplies industry by delivering valuable resources, trusted insights, strategic connections, educational support, and strong advocacy that collectively shape the future of North America's woodworking sector. www.woodindustry.org

WIA is the proud owner of the International Woodworking Fair®, North America's largest woodworking technology and design trade show and conference and a top destination for the global woodworking sector. IWF is held during even years at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia. www.iwfatlanta.com

WIA is also the proud sponsor of IWF West, an all-new woodworking tradeshow and conference built for connections. IWF West will be held August 25-27, 2027 at the Henry B. González Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas. www.iwfwest.com

MEDIA CONTACT

Amanda Conger, Executive Director
National Woods Board
616-287-0954
director@nationalwoodsboard.org

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