

# PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Career & Workplace • Special Report

## **Leaders in Construction: Roseann Freitas of BIA Hawaii on workforce trends and challenges**



Image: Stephanie Salmons | PBN

Roseann Freitas, CEO, Building Industry Association of Hawaii

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Roseann Freitas is CEO of the Building Industry Association of Hawaii, which is “the voice of the construction industry,” according to its mission statement. “BIA Hawaii promotes our members through advocacy and education, and provides community outreach programs to enhance the quality of life for the people of Hawaii.”

**Can you talk about the latest workforce development or training opportunities your organization offers?** The Building Industry Association of Hawaii provides workforce development curriculum for the construction trade industry. This year, we have two cohorts available. BIA Hawaii received the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg grant for a YouthBuild Green Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training Program, or Green PACT, and funding for Green PACT from the City and County of Honolulu WorkHawaii Youth Program. The Green PACT training program is designed to equip unemployed and underemployed young adults with the knowledge and skills necessary for environmentally friendly construction employment in a training environment with financial support that allows underprivileged students to concentrate on their learning. The program intends to facilitate an equitable and inclusionary transition into the workforce for underprivileged students, thus creating more access to the trades and a diverse and inclusive skilled workforce.

BIA Hawaii offers various trade programs for continuing education including certified aging in place, construction quality management, OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] training and more.

**What trades are the hardest to find nowadays?** All – as with most industries today, the labor market is low. For construction, this trend has been happening for a long time, as many young people choose college over trade schools.

**What are the biggest challenges the construction and building industry are facing today in terms of workforce?** The biggest challenge to construction workforce development is not just the lack of potential workers; many younger people don't want to work in the field or understand that it is an excellent choice to make a living wage.

**How are your members recruiting and retaining employees? Can you provide some examples of members and programs who are doing this well?**

Construction companies pay well and are willing to train their workers.

[According to a] [workforce development numbers article](#) by [the] National Association of Home Builders:

“Half of payroll workers in construction earn more than \$58,500 and the top 25% make at least \$79,450, according to the latest May 2023 Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics and analysis by NAHB.

“In comparison, the U.S. median wage is \$48,060, while the top 25% makes at least \$76,980.

“The OEWS publishes wages for almost 400 occupations in construction. Out of these, only 46 are construction trades. The other industry workers are in finance, sales, administration and other offsite activities.

“The highest-paid occupation in construction is chief executive officer, with half of CEOs making over \$172,000 per year. Lawyers working in construction are next on the list, with a median annual salary of \$166,450, and the top 25% highest paid lawyers making over \$221,220. Out of the next 10 highest paid trades in construction, eight are various managers.

“... Among construction trades, elevator installers and repairers top the median wages list, with half of them earning over \$103,340 a year, and the top 25% making at least \$129,090. First-line supervisors of construction trades are next on the list; their median wages are \$76,960, with the top 25% highest paid supervisors earning more than \$97,500.”