

# SFY 21 Construction Careers Foundation Direct Appropriation

Final Report

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Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development  
Employment and Training Programs Division

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## Introduction

The Minnesota State Legislature has appropriated funds since the 2016 Legislative Session to Construction Careers Foundation (CCF) to “provide year-round educational and experiential learning opportunities for teens and young adults under the age of 21 that lead to careers in the construction industry.”

### Legislative Appropriation Reference

Funds for this project for State Fiscal Years (SFY) 2020 and 2021 were appropriated in [2019 Minnesota 1st Special Session Laws, Ch. 7, H.F. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 3(r)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2019/1/Session+Law/Chapter/7/).

### Appropriation

The appropriation provided $375,000 each year for SFY 2020 and 2021. The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is permitted to use five percent of the appropriation to administer the grant, making the amount available to CCF $356,250 for SFY 2020 and 2021.

## Summary of Objectives Presented in the Work Plan

Construction Careers Foundation is using the DEED funding to accomplish the following objectives through the Construction Careers Pathway (CCP) Initiative:

1. Enhance and grow an industry wide marketing campaign targeted to youth and young adults focusing on the depth and breadth of careers within the construction industry.

2. Increase construction industry exposure activities for middle school and high school youth, parents, and counselors to reach a more diverse demographic and broader statewide audience.

3. Increase the number of high schools in Minnesota offering construction classes during the academic year that utilize a Multi-Craft curriculum, thereby exposing participants to a variety of construction trades.

4. Increase the number of summer internship opportunities; and

5. Enhance activities to support graduating seniors/young adults in their efforts to obtain employment in the construction industry and increase the number of young adults employed in the construction industry that reflect Minnesota’s diverse workforce.

The CCP Initiative’s career pathway supports a diverse future workforce and, in doing so, it also supports the Legislature’s commitment to narrowing economic disparities. Students participating in the CCP Initiative earn high school diplomas while concurrently earning construction industry credentials as they participate in real-world learning experiences.

The CCP initiative builds on the experiences and successes of a variety of existing programs while implementing new programming layers. While Construction Careers Foundation (CCF) representatives are involved with many of the CCP Initiative’s activities, to fulfill this effort the CCP Initiative strategic partners include school districts, Minneapolis and St. Paul Building Trades Councils, Apprenticeship Coordinators Association of Minnesota, and Construct Tomorrow. In addition, the CCP Initiative has multiple strategic relationships within the construction industry, labor, community, education and government sectors. A longer report describing the activities and strategic partnerships of the CCP initiative can be found on DEED’s [Youth Direct Appropriations](https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/direct-appropriations/) webpage.

## Program Activities

Described below is a summary of activities delivered during the period July 1, 2020 through October 31, 2021.

**Objective 1: Outreach and Marketing Efforts**

In partnership with Pocket Hercules and industry stakeholders, emphasis during the past year has been on expanding content on the [Construction Careers website](http://www.constructioncareers.org/) and making it easier for prospective candidates and their supporters to learn more about the construction industry through social media channels. Activities included:

* Website Redesign: Renewed the visual look of the website and enhanced the functionality (i.e., made the website easier to use).
* Content Updates: Upgraded Career pages with more details about construction apprenticeships, including links to trade unions, apprenticeship applications and practice aptitude tests. Added a page for Teachers to download educational materials.
* Student profiles – Added more than 20 stories and posts of real high school and middle school students and their experiences with construction through the Minnesota Trades Academy and the Learn2Build programs.
* Interviewed 10 construction apprentices and Minnesota educators. Created longer (about 1 to 2 minutes) interview videos and 30-second promotional videos for social media to add to the website, to use on social media and on the CCP’s YouTube page.

Social media efforts included increased frequency and quantity of content pushed through social media platforms with nearly daily content posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

CCP increased the organization’s email list to approximately 4000 educators throughout Minnesota to deliver monthly e-newsletters about CCP activities. The newsletters will complement and promote the new educator materials available through the website.

Print communications also continued with news releases and continued outreach to Minnesota media outlets such as the Star Tribune, Finance & Commerce, Construction Dive, and Teaching Today Minnesota.

**Objective 2: Middle School and High School Events**

***Middle School Events – Learn2Build***

Learn2Build provides construction career exposure for middle school youth by offering construction camps and afterschool programming. The intent of Learn2Build is to introduce middle school youth to construction in a fun and innovative fashion. By offering hands-on opportunities in partnership with schools and youth focused organizations/groups, Learn2Build brings construction trades experiences to young people as they potentially begin to think about their high school and post-secondary options.

For the Learn2Build program, in-person activities and construction summer camps were canceled for the year. However, the CCF organization was able to pivot and create new programming for the year.

A new summer experience was created through the development of at-home activity kits. These kits were designed to help middle school youth learn about various careers in construction, while practicing to correctly use tools and gain knowledge of the energy and environmental aspects of each trade. Students had access to an online Google classroom and tutorials and were able to display photos of their kit creations in an online format.

Each kit contained the following:

* Necessary building materials to complete each project
* A selection of hand tools to keep
* Any necessary safety equipment (glasses, masks, gloves)
* Printed directions
* Google classroom downloads

Printed materials are also included with each kit to direct students to trades websites for more career investigation. These materials include:

* Posters featuring Minnesota apprentices of both genders and multiple trades.
* Flyers that direct students to the Construction Careers Foundation’s website.
* Trading cards that feature a related trade, including photos of an apprentice, length of apprenticeship, income projections, benefits and scope of duties for that trade.
* Further information about tools in the kit.

Kits were delivered to the following schools and organizations:

* Roosevelt HS 9th grade - 200 kits
* Science Museum - 15 kits
* White Bear Lake Middle School - 25 kits
* St. Paul Public Middle Schools - 50 kits
* St. Paul Public Housing - 50 kits
* John Glenn Middle School - 128 kits
* Justice Page Middle School - 100 kits
* Cedar Middle School - 20 kits
* Girl Scout Troop, Minneapolis - 32 kits
* Family Means, Stillwater - 80 kits
* First Lutheran Church, Aiken - 60 kits
* Torre de San Miguel affordable housing apartments - 48 kits
* Keystone Community Services- 80 kits
* New Salem Missionary Baptist Church, Minneapolis - 48 kits
* Model Cities Program- 80 kits
* Common Bond Communities, Minneapolis - 60 kits
* Arlington Hills Community Center , St. Paul - 100 kits
* YMCA at Maxfield Elementary School, St. Paul - 48 kits
* Girl Scout Troop 55385, St. Paul - 28 kits
* Freedom School, St. Paul - 75 kits
* YMCA Girls Inc., Minneapolis - 50 kits
* Brooklyn Center Middle School - 342 kits
* Osseo Middle School - 32 kits

Starting in July 2020, L2B partnered with the Zoom Stem Science program through Sandford Middle School that provided STEM experiences for 68 middle school students that resided in 13 Minneapolis ZIP codes. L2B provided 137 kits from July – September. All kits were hand-delivered (contactless delivery) to each student’s home.

In June 2021, L2B partnered with Dunwoody College to host a day of building for 68 Girl Scouts campers. L2B staff and volunteers helped girls construct Little Free Pantry/Little Free Libraries using various building materials and power tools. L2B also provided 68 bird feeder kits for take-home use and provided 6 full tool cases for prizes.

***High School Events – Construct Tomorrow***

Due to COVID-19, Construct Tomorrow was not able to hold in person programming during the period of June 1st, 2020 to October 1st, 2021. Instead, Construct Tomorrow pivoted to an online environment. The move to virtual learning was challenging since the Construct Tomorrow mission is focused on hands-on exposure to the construction trades and their corresponding apprenticeship programs.

During this period, Construct Tomorrow produced short, point-of-view (POV) videos showing apprentices in training centers and at the jobsite performing work specific to the trade they are employed. Construct Tomorrow made:

* Twelve “Ask an Apprentice” videos which ran up to three minutes in length.
* Twelve Apprenticeship POV of one minute or less.

These videos are available on YouTube and the Construct Tomorrow webpage. Each of the videos was viewed an average of 25 times on You Tube and another 428 visits to the videos (as well as other resource videos) were viewed on the CCF website between 6/1/2020-10/1/2021. These included:

* 133 visits to the POV page
* 119 visits to “Ask an Apprentice” video page
* 94 visits to the Resources page
* 82 Twin Cities Training Centers page

Construct Tomorrow did reach out to high school staff contacts to let them know all these materials were available to utilize in their classrooms at no cost.

Geographic location of viewers on the Construct Tomorrow website were more challenging to pinpoint as compared to previous on-site events at high schools across the state. While the majority of website traffic is focused on the metro area, Duluth has a high concentration of engagement. Additionally, outstate Minnesota is still significantly represented in the traffic, showing a continued need for engagement and events focused in those areas of the state.

**Objective 3: Academic Year Curriculum**

The CCP Initiative works with various schools and school districts that offer students a Construction Career Pathway during the academic year, referred to as Construction Apprenticeship Preparation programs (CAP). Such coursework incorporates the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3), a nationally recognized, comprehensive apprenticeship readiness training curriculum.

For 2020 and 2021, schools, and teachers in particular, were faced with unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19. Due to the increased demands on teacher’s time and resources, CAP schools and CCF staff did not meet as group in the 2020-2021 school year. Plans have already been put in place for the new school year and for redeveloped resources for CAP school teachers.

**Objective 4: Summer Internship**

The Minnesota Trades Academy (MTA) is a paid summer construction internship experience provided in partnership with the Apprenticeship Coordinators Association of MN (ACAM), MN Building Trades Councils and city youth internship programs. The goal is to help selected high school youth prepare for adulthood through lifelong learning, skill development, and access to well-paid jobs with benefits in the construction industry. MTA offers an Introductory Track (Track I) and an Advanced Track (Track II). In Track I, interns receive an overarching 8-week introduction to construction career opportunities within the building trades industry (carpentry, pipefitting and electrical). Interns are also exposed to industry-related careers such as architecture, surveying, estimating, project management, and design build. Track II provides a 9-week opportunity preparing interns to select a construction career path through union apprenticeship training, construction-related post-secondary tracts, or direct entry into the construction workplace. Throughout the internship program, students visit 16 different apprenticeship training centers where they receive training and supervision from industry experts as they complete projects using both hand and power tools.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, CCF adjusted the internship program and incorporated online modules to maintain social distancing practices. The revised program was a six-week program offered in July and August. Because of the new telecommuting internship model, the number of participants was reduced from previous years. Thirty youth were invited to participate, with a crew of students at White Bear Lake High School and another in Brooklyn Center. Each crew was supervised by a MTA Lead Trainer.

Participants had daily check-in meetings with their Lead Trainer and hands-on trades related building experiences (plumbing, electrical, land surveying, sheet metal work, and more). Interns also completed a four-day community build project as a way to give back to their community. The project focused on helping the rebuilding efforts in the Midway neighborhood.

**Adaptations Due to COVID-19**

Programs delivered through the CCP initiative are intentionally designed to be hands-on and provide students with opportunities to experience various careers in the construction trades. As the pandemic disrupted the usual service delivery model, CCP partners formed an advisory group to brainstorm and evaluate different approaches that could continue to have impact on the students in this new environment. Increased emphasis on digital outreach through the website, social media and new mobile phone app continue to inform interested youth and adults about the opportunities available through the construction trades. Virtual “at home” events and hands-on projects provide students the chance to see if a building trades career may be a good fit. The transition to a virtual program environment made the CCP programs accessible to more youth, removing transportation barriers and allowing for greater parent/family participation. Interaction with participants increased and improved program quality and reach to targeted populations.

Data Elements Being Collected and Reported

CCF is required to submit data to DEED to document the demographics of participants served, services provided and outcomes achieved. The information collected is shown as follows.

## Grant Outcomes

Described below are highlights for the period of July 1, 2020 through October 31, 2021.

*Outreach and Marketing Efforts*

* The website attracted nearly 42,000 unique visitors who conducted more than 55,000 website visits (sessions), 90.8% of visitors were new users.
* Nearly 60% of visitors came from Minneapolis and St. Paul, while the surrounding suburbs made up about 30% of visitors and more rural and northern communities such as Duluth and the Iron Range saw a rise in visitors of nearly 20%.
* Through social media outreach more than 15,000 individuals served.

*Middle School Activities*

* Over 2,000 middle school students received a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) project kit to complete at home with online guidance due to COVID-19 restrictions.

*High School Activities*

* More than 428 visits to Construct Tomorrow’s videos and online resources.

*Summer Internships*

* 50% of 2021 summer interns were female.
* 40% of 2021 enrollees reported a racial/ethnic identity other than white.
* Of those who completed the 2021 MTA Summer Internship Program, 6 participants were eligible for placement in employment and 4 interns were successfully placed in construction-related jobs.

## Expenditures

The activities described in this report for the period of July 1, 2020 through October 31, 2021 were funded by appropriations for SFY 2021. Final expenditures for the SFY 2021 were as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Budget Category | SFY 2021 Budget | SFY 2021 Expenditures | Percent of SFY 2021  Budget Expended |
| Administration | $24,570 | $24,570 | 100% |
| Contracted Services | $301,990.07 | $301,990.07 | 100% |
| Direct Services | $29,689.93 | $29,689.93 | 100% |
| Total | $356,250 | $356,250 | 100% |