

# CityBuild

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**Location:** San Francisco, California

**Host Organization:** Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)

**Partner Organizations:** City College of San Francisco (CCSF), San Francisco Building and Construction Trades Council, local community-based organizations

**Target Population:** Economically Disadvantaged San Francisco Residents

## Program Innovations

- Four employment liaisons, who work in different geographical regions of San Francisco to assess on-the-ground job demand and build relationships with construction contractors to help place Academy graduates into construction related jobs and apprenticeships
- Meetings with industry prior to each cycle to determine job demand and size of training class to meet that demand
- Innovative curriculum, designed and developed by CCSF and the Carpenters Training Committee of Northern California, is continually tailored and adjusted to meet the changing needs of industry and provide trainees with the new green knowledge required to work in construction

## Program History

In 2004, the collective leadership of San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and Supervisor Sophie Maxwell led to the formation of CityBuild, a centralized, citywide construction workforce program to train and refer San Francisco residents for public and private construction projects. CityBuild's components include a construction-skills training Academy, employment placement assistance, and a participant tracking and reporting system. A network of nonprofit community-based organizations (CBOs) serves as CityBuild's outreach, recruitment, assessment and supportive service arm. CCSF and the Carpenters Training Committee of Northern California provide the Academy with a training facility, in-kind use of construction tools, and equipment and faculty to be instructors. Trade unions provide access to their apprenticeship programs and members to provide introductory "hard skills" training for specific trades. CityBuild staff works with contractors and consultants to provide employment opportunities through San Francisco's First Source Hiring Program.

As of January 2010, CityBuild had referred 1,449 disadvantaged San Francisco residents for construction employment opportunities. CityBuild placements have spanned 20 different skilled trade areas, ranging from laborers to field ironworkers and sprinkler fitters. Moreover, CityBuild has expanded its training and placement services to include solar installation workers, environmental field technicians, and asbestos removal and lead abatement workers.

CityBuild Academy has completed nine training cycles, and in early 2010, is in the middle of its tenth. The Academy has graduated 358 individuals and ushered over 75 percent of them into unionized apprenticeship programs. In 2010, the Academy will launch an expanded Green Building curriculum to provide participants with training in green building practices, weatherization and energy efficiency measures.

### Program Summary

Participants in the CityBuild Academy are recruited through outreach conducted by CBO partners. Each enrollee in CityBuild must have a high school diploma or GED, right-to-work in the U.S. documents, a valid California Drivers License, must pass a drug screen and be a San Francisco resident. In addition, participants must take a basic math skills test demonstrating 8<sup>th</sup>-grade math proficiency and be able to effectively communicate in the English language.

The CityBuild Academy is a full-time, 14-week program that integrates classroom instruction with hands-on training. CityBuild enrolls only the number of students it feels confident it can place in apprenticeships. The program is offered two to three times a year, and enrollments vary from 30 to 50 students per class. To assess demand, CityBuild staff looks closely at what time of year the class will graduate, given the seasonal variations in hiring, and talks with industry partners. With this information in hand, CityBuild works with its network of CBOs to recruit the appropriate number of students.

Before the Academy begins, potential trainees participate in a week of job-readiness training. During this initial week, Academy applicants are drug tested and sort out their requirements, such as obtaining a driver's license, for entering the Academy with assistance from a CBO and a case manager. Due to the popularity of the program and the limited number of training spots available, participants are also interviewed by a panel of CityBuild staff during this first week, to help ensure construction is a good fit for their needs and expectations.

For the next 14 weeks, students participate in intensive training provided by CCSF and the Carpenters Training Committee that simulates the construction work environment and culture, with classes running Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**“We’re trying to model an actual construction site. We want students to be able to walk out of here and not be so much in culture shock when they walk onto a construction job. We take into consideration the things students are actually going to be doing or they’re going to need on the construction site.”**

*-- Arcadia Maximo, CityBuild Instructor at the City College of San Francisco*

To help emulate a construction site and environment, and in an effort to assist students in developing real-world construction skills, CityBuild recruits and hires instructors with experience working in the construction industry.

The **curriculum** for the training is continually evolving due to the expertise of the instructors and CCSF in construction and curriculum development, and is also adjusted regularly based on input from union partners. Participants benefit from math courses focused on measurement and fractions, and then contextualize that knowledge through hands-on training, which includes tool use and identification. CCSF’s training facilities allow trainees, as part of their hands-on training, the opportunity to build small wooden houses. Students take a physical education course to build strength and endurance to prepare them for the physical rigors of construction work, and participate in safety training. Students may work to earn any number of certificates, including:

- OSHA 10
- CPR and First Aid
- Scissor Lift
- Forklift
- HAZWOPER
- Scaffolding
- Fall Protection
- Flagging

Students also have the option of taking additional coursework at the College. For example, interested students may pursue training in solar panel installation.

CityBuild’s core curriculum also includes an introduction to **green construction**, which provides an overview of what green is, why construction is heading in that direction, and what green employment opportunities exist. Students learn about green and sustainable building standards, materials handling, green vocabulary, and construction demolition and recovery.

**“New construction in San Francisco, whether it be commercial or residential, is going to have to be LEED Certified or Green Point Rated.”**

*-- Arcadia Maximo, CityBuild Instructor at the City College of San Francisco*

While in training, students may access a variety of **support services**. CityBuild partners with CBOs to provide case management and support to CityBuild students. While CCSF provides tuition-free education and allows trainees to earn college credit for the math class they take with the Academy, the CBOs assist students with child care, transportation, driver’s license attainment or reinstatement, and work expenses associated with paying union dues or buying tools. Eligible trainees receive a small cost-of-living stipend to support themselves during their training.

Upon graduation, students are matched with one of four CityBuild employment liaisons employed by the City, who provide **job placement** assistance to the graduates. The liaisons, who each cover a separate geographical region of the City, are responsible for the program’s job development. Their deep understanding of the construction labor market and their extensive networks within the industry lead to a high proportion of students being placed in union apprenticeships and other construction related jobs. To help them transition into the world of work and into the construction industry after placement, CityBuild participants are tracked and supported for one year.

### **Program Funding**

Funding for CityBuild has evolved and diversified since the program’s creation. Since the program’s inception, other San Francisco City departments have become financial supporters of CityBuild. The City’s General Fund and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding are also used to support the program. CCSF provides the training space for the program, but salaries for instructors and staff, such as the employment liaisons, are paid for by the City. Philanthropic support from foundations also aids CityBuild continuing ability to offer the program to the community.

### **Industry Engagement**

Frontline staff and CityBuild’s management have industry contacts to assist them in building a strong program, and in placing graduates into quality construction jobs and apprenticeships. For frontline staff, such as the employment liaisons, walking on to job sites and engaging directly with contractors allows them to

make face-to-face contact with those responsible for hiring. The liaisons work to build relationships with union and non-union contractors to inform them about local hiring requirements, the CityBuild program and the quality workers the program can provide. At the same time, the liaisons are analyzing what the job demand is in the area and are actively judging the contractors and the opportunities they provide to ensure that CityBuild graduates are placed in quality jobs. Through this process and relationship building, the liaisons can help contractors meet their local hiring requirements and help place Academy graduates in quality jobs, which are often union apprenticeships.

At another level, representatives from the San Francisco Building and Construction Trades Council are also heavily involved in the program. The Council and its affiliate unions work on a large percentage of publicly-funded projects in the City. Together, they offer strategic advice and consultation to the program to ensure enrollment and training are aligned with the industry's needs in San Francisco. For instance, to determine job demand and how many students to enroll in the Academy, CityBuild meets with union representatives from the Council and contractors prior to each class.