

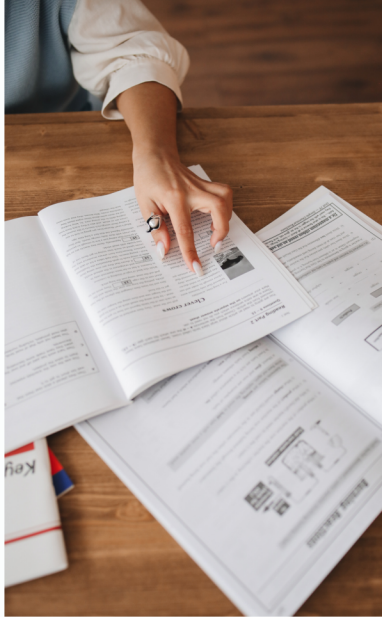
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GUIDE



# Establish an Effective Workforce Development Committee and Strategic Plan



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We would like to acknowledge the following organizations for participating in the development of this guide by sharing their experiences and resources.

- **Sheila** Leach, Homebuilders and Remodelers Association of **Central Connecticut**
- **Chad** Lawler, **Madison** Area Builders Association (WI)
- **Karen** Isaminger, Construction Resources of Alabama (**Birmingham**)
- **Al** Audette, Building Industry Association of **Washington**
- **Brian** Miller, Building Industry Association of **Northern Kentucky**
- **Marlo** Asher, Housing and Building Association of **Colorado Springs**/Careers in Construction Colorado (El Paso County)
- **Stu** Bradley, Homebuilders Association of the Upper Peninsula, Career and Technical Education Committee (**Marquette and Alger Counties, Michigan**)

Special thanks to **Ford NGL** for their assistance in crowdsourcing, analyzing, and organizing this guide.

According to the spring 2023 HBI Construction Labor Market Report, “A lack of skilled construction labor is a key limiting factor to expanding home construction and improving housing inventory and affordability.”

The report highlights a few key findings that put the spotlight on the housing industry's skilled labor shortage. These include:

- The construction industry currently needs approximately 723,000 new construction workers each year to meet demand.
- The number of open construction sector jobs currently averages between 300,000 to 400,000 every month.
- The median age of construction workers is 42 years old.
- Although the number of women in construction is at a record high (11%), gains each year continue to be very low—rising by less than 2% in four years.
- Blacks (6%) and Asians (1.6%) are underrepresented in the construction industry. Hispanics account for nearly 1/3 of those employed in the industry.

# INTRODUCTION

It is clear from the Home Builders Institute (HBI) Construction Labor Market Report, that the future success of the construction industry is highly dependent upon its ability to build a robust and competent talent pipeline. Growing that next generation of home builders and skilled employees requires local associations to proactively promote, educate, and innovate. To do so, members need access to a variety of support programs, services, and resources that focus on career awareness and education; talent development and acquisition; and labor and employee relations. So, exactly how does a Home Builders Association (HBA) initiate this effort? How should an HBA work with its members to put sufficient resources (time, talent and treasure) around the effort in order to have the desired impact on workforce development?

Addressing the industry's persistent labor shortage requires a strategic approach to workforce development. First, the HBA needs to establish a workforce development committee. Then the committee needs to develop a strategic plan that considers the overall labor market data and takes into account the local environment, needs, and circumstances. Finally, once the plan is developed, the committee members must actively support and engage in the plan's implementation, monitoring, and refinement. This guide provides the essential components of both a workforce committee and a workforce strategic plan. To assist you with this effort, you will also have access to materials such as example plans, a suggested committee structure, committee agendas, and other HBA crowdsource resources.

The workforce development committee should be established as a permanent HBA structure. It is not a temporary task force. The committee's ongoing role is to assess, define, deliberate, decide, advise, oversee, and provide strategic direction for all HBA workforce development initiatives. It serves as the organization's "go to" group for all things related to the development of the construction industry's future talent.

## Core Responsibilities

The Workforce Development Committee:

- Co-develops the workforce plan with measurable goals and objectives.
- Champions the workforce plan among other members and in regional industry collaboratives.
- Determines staffing, resources, and budget needed to implement the plan.
- Provides strategic oversight and guidance.
- Develops opportunities for members to build their capacity through programs and services.
- Cultivates and maintains member involvement to support the implementation of the identified action items.
- Reviews and analyzes plans and metrics, regularly assess progress, and recommends adjustments.
- Identifies key decisions that impact the trajectory of the plan (i.e., decisions regarding changes to the scope, budget, and/or timeline).

## Leadership and Membership

The workforce development committee is made up of a chair, vice-chair, the selected HBA staff, and HBA members. A fully-functioning committee typically has up to 20 actively engaged members. The size will vary depending on the size of your HBA and the strategic direction your HBA is taking in regards to workforce development. Identifying and selecting an effective chair and vice-chair is essential for the success of the committee.

### Committee Leadership

The chair and vice-chair:

- Ensure responsibilities are clearly defined and designated for both strategic logistics and for the effective "nuts and bolts" operation of the committee.
- Embody a broad knowledge of the industry, the labor market, and the talent pipeline.
- Demonstrate leadership skills to keep meetings, planning, and implementation on point.
- Co-develop and co-facilitate all agendas and meetings.
- Work closely with the staff who oversee other tasks in support of the committee and HBA membership such as managing timelines and action plans, disseminating notes and schedules, communicating updates, and facilitating meeting space and arrangements.

## Typical Committee Membership

- Represents diversity in age, race, gender, trades, and skills.
- Includes community representation (i.e., someone from an aligned CTE program such as a skilled-trades educator).
- Demonstrates a sincere interest in workforce development.
- Has prior experience in youth-focused partnerships (i.g., with CTE and with out-of-school programs like the Boys and Girls Club).
- Includes expertise in human resource recruitment and management.

## Effective Committee Members:

- Have “walk-in” authority within their respective organizations. For example, an effective committee member has reasonable access to their president’s office and is able to engage key decision makers and procure resources when needed.
- Represent a balance between HBA members and community representatives. It can be helpful to have a representative from a local CTE organization or educational program serving as the vice-chair and a representative from the local HBA serving as the chair.
- Ensure responsibilities are clearly designed both for important logistics and for basic tasks and activities.
- Review, discuss, and strengthen ongoing progress according to the workforce strategic plan.
- Develop and implement a process for onboarding new members.

## Time Commitment

- It is suggested that membership on the committee is for a minimum two-year term.
- Meetings including the committee chair and vice-chair, HBA staff, and other committee members should be scheduled and take place quarterly at a minimum. The frequency of meetings will greatly depend upon the strategic plan, specific action items, and benchmarked timelines.



Insert QR Code here.

**To access resources related to the committee scan the QR code.**

You will find resources such as:

- Sample meeting agenda
- Sample Workforce-Committee Descriptions
- Chair Job Description



The workforce development strategic plan serves as a roadmap for your HBA for the next three to five years. Within the plan there are measurable short-term and long-term goals as well as action items to achieve those goals. Oftentimes the strategy to support workforce development can be embedded into your HBAs overall strategic plan.

## Start Here!

- **Conduct a labor-market data analysis** to gain a better understanding of your community's demographic makeup, education attainment rates, and occupational projections.
- **Conduct a needs assessment** including a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis of your HBA to identify issues your members face. What is working well, and what support is needed to help them grow their talent base?
- **Identify the "North Star"** for your workforce development strategy by pulling together committee members to define what success looks like in five years. This becomes your long-term goal for your plan and creates a vision of where the committee is headed.
- **Identify short- and long-term goals** that the committee will focus on over the next few years (backward planning from your long-term goal). For example:
  - Recruit more non-traditional individuals into the construction trades.
  - Increase engagement with career and technical education (CTE) at the secondary level.
  - Develop a partnership with two out-of-school organizations (e.g., the Boys and Girls Club).
  - Improve retention of existing workers.
- Create action plans for each short-term goal/priority that outlines the steps, resources, people, and due dates.
- Establish key performance indicators (metrics) to track overall impact that the plan is having, so progress can be monitored.



Insert QR Code here.

To access resources related to the strategic plan scan the QR code.

You will find resources such as:

- Blank workforce development strategic plan
- Sample workforce development plan

**What advice do you have for an HBA who is considering forming a workforce committee or for writing a workforce development strategic plan? What lessons have you learned that you think might be helpful?**

## **Be Member Focused but Staff Driven**

“There is a fine line between a member-driven workforce committee and an effort that is staff-driven. We are focused on more of a staff-driven system. We include lots of members but direct them on what lanes we need them in. Otherwise, we could find ourselves awash in endless efforts that result in little income for the association and a drain upon the association’s resources. The long-term value proposition and win/win for associations is to solve the members’ problems and make revenue from those efforts. Members may focus on putting themselves in front of younger students and telling them what a great industry they are part of. We focus on revenue while making skilled tradespeople. Whether an association runs its own school or works with others to achieve the same results, there is revenue to be had. Grants can pay for overhead, administrative costs currently incurred totally upon the association, and other possibilities yet unknown as an association sits today wondering what to do. We have a multitude of examples of how we have increased top-line revenue or decreased the burden of major expenses through grants, forming 501(c)3’s, and creating new opportunities with expenses largely paid where it is incumbent upon us to draw in revenue, or the opposite where grants pay the revenue, and we are responsible for the expenses.” – Brian

## **Find Members Passionate About the Cause**

“Find the members that are passionate about the cause and understand the importance to our industry and the impact if we do nothing. They are your champions, and they can share their rewarding story the best.” – Sheila

## **Go Slow to Go Fast**

“Keep it simple, start out slow. I was so excited and wanted to jump in and run with it. But, I quickly realized I needed to slow down, get prepared, and have good quality events for the students. Hands-on projects are great. They love getting to actually participate in the industry we are introducing. For instance, when I had a brick mason come and talk to the kids, he actually let them brick-up a 3-foot wall. They love being divided up into teams and having a competition. Also, I learned a lot from listening to others who have started a work-enforcement program. Listening to them tell of their successes and mistakes was very valuable to me. Being prepared is a must. You lose the students with idle time. Keep them totally involved in what you are presenting.” – Karen

## **Define Your Goals and Objectives**

“Clearly define your goals and objectives. We started out with an idea, to get members trained and comfortable to be guest speakers and demonstrate activities during classes. We have now changed to focus on specific activities in each local area. For instance, we identified a college that was just starting to set up a construction project. The task force can now decide how we want to support this effort, if at all, and assign members for different roles after a decision has been made. This provides action items for members to jump in on instead of each member trying to create opportunities on their own. We have tried to make this as member-driven as possible but have found that method can bog things down in certain instances.” – Al

## **Select a Champion as Your Chair and Members Who Are Workers**

“Form the committee with a champion as your Chair. Be selective for the members of the meeting who are workers, not members just joining to say they are on a committee. Have the BOD engage in a strategic planning session with Workforce Development as a pillar, and then have the committee work on the tasks to reach the objectives and goals set by the BOD in the strategic planning session. Review progress at each meeting in terms of where we sit on the strategic plan.” – Chad

Now more than ever, the industry needs more workforce development champions. NAHB members and home builders associations are the best advocates for the skilled trades and there are many ways to get involved. Champions provide job shadowing opportunities at their jobsite, participate in career day events, guest lecture at local schools or donate equipment to shop classes.

If you're interested in becoming a workforce development champion, NAHB has a list of ideas to help you get started. If you're already a skilled trades advocate, complete the online champions checklist for an opportunity to be officially recognized by NAHB as an advocate.





# MY NOTES

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To learn more about **Workforce Development Champions** email Greg Zick CAE, AVP, Workforce Development (gzick@nahb.org) , or **visit** <https://www.nahb.org/>

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