

ARIZONA BUILDS FUTURES

Focused on empowering people to build their futures by choosing high demand, high paying careers in construction, BuildYour Future Arizona (BYF Arizona) was established through a private-sector, industry-driven campaign of the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation (the Foundation). BYF Arizona is working to increase awareness of craft professional occupations, improve education and training outcomes through business partnerships, and increase the number and tenure of craft professionals throughout the state.

DISCOVERING A NEED

The Foundation focuses on connecting industry and education in addition to creating solutions for acquiring entry level and experienced talent in the construction industry. The Foundation is taking strides to fill a skills gap in the state's construction industry that is projected to hit 150,000 by September 2022, as well as gathering data to better understand the shortage. Addressing the shortage of skilled craft professionals, the Foundation advocates for a trained, educated workforce while establishing strong relationships with local residential and commercial construction, contractors and subcontractors, wholesalers and manufacturers, and heavy civil construction.

This effort is led by an industry steering committee that consists of leaders who are passionate about creating the next generation of craft professionals.

Focusing on the talent gap, BYF Arizona was derived from the Foundation's Construction Workforce Collaborative, a workforce development effort that brings together employers, key business leaders, and education providers to enhance the talent pipeline in Arizona. Launching BYF Arizona has helped the Collaborative spread the important message about high-demand, high-wage career opportunities in construction and provides direction to education and training programs across the state.

Recognizing the important link between training, education and job retention, the Foundation networked to find organizations in alignment with developing the next generation of craft professionals. Connecting with NCCER and the national Build Your Future (BYF) initiative, BYF Arizona was formed.

"We were hesitant to launch a career awareness campaign, but the employers felt it was the best first step to addressing the talent gap in the craft professions. Several key investors stepped up with significant contributions to the campaign and then championed their partners to jump on board," said Jennifer Mellor, chief innovation officer at the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation. "BuildYour Future was a perfect fit for the effort as we were given the flexibility to customize our message to Arizona while building on a nationally respected brand."

BEST PRACTICE PROFILES

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS IN ARIZONA

A key component to the success of BYF Arizona was establishing a solid foundation for the initiative, while meeting financial commitments and expectations set in place. The Foundation established a timeline, budget and key performance indicators that would determine the overall success of the campaign. The initial financial goals were achieved in March 2019, solidifying the campaign's launch.

"Being in the construction industry for over 30 years, I know the impact recruiting solid talent and proficient sub-contractors has on the success of a general contractor. That's why I was so excited to be a part of the BYF Arizona initiative," said Mike Bontrager, vice president and general manager at Alston Construction. "The response and financial commitments we have received from our local construction firms has been amazing. I am confident that BYF Arizona is going to help change the way the industry identifies, trains and hires the next generation of crafts professionals throughout our state."

Having secured funding and industry partners, the BYF Arizona campaign identified how to create a positive impact on construction career and technical education/training programs. After spearheading the recruitment initiative, the Foundation focused on developing and integrating its message, promoting training and educational opportunities, and mapping career paths for candidates interested in pursuing a career in construction.

A primary objective was to establish trust between educational institutions and this new career awareness and recruitment initiative. The Foundation recognized the key to long-term success was getting students into classrooms, aligning the training programs to employer needs, and providing institutions the opportunity to interface with the construction industry to meet the increasing talent needs. Using this method, the Foundation has developed a partnership with the Maricopa County Community College District, and a variety of associations such as the Masonry Council and the ABA apprenticeship program.

BYF Arizona is also in partnership with local industry associations, including the American Subcontractors Association of Arizona, Arizona Builders Alliance, Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Arizona Masonry Council, Arizona Roofing Council, Arizona Roofing Contractors Association, Arizona Utility Contractors Association, Associated Minority Contractors of Arizona, Gilbert Chamber Foundation, and the Valley of the Sun Chapter of Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA).

"When launching any initiative focused on a particular industry it is critical to bring the trade associations that service that industry to the table," said Paul Sanders, workforce development manager for BYF Arizona. "Associations know firsthand what their member companies are experiencing. That is the purpose of trade associations, to alleviate industry pain points and provide solutions for their members."

BEST PRACTICE PROFILES

LOOKING AHEAD

“Maricopa County Community College District has had a long-standing focus in providing craft and trades training for the state’s workforce,” said Sanders. “The District’s recent addition to the South Mountain Community College campus, the SMCC Construction Institute, demonstrates their commitment to providing the craft professionals needed to help fill that 155,000-position gap over the next two years, and beyond.”

The BYF Arizona campaign has produced early results and attention from industry partners, helping create a collaborative curriculum with education providers, while promoting programs to enhance student engagement. This includes integrating new trade programs using NCCER Core Curriculum at specific centers, placing skilled craft professionals in jobs, and monitoring completion rate results from developed programs. The Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation and BYF Arizona will continue to foster partnerships that invest in educating the next generation of craft professionals to positively impact workforce demands.



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