

Building Union Diversity program enrolling new classes, boasts 87 percent placement rate in its first four years

Apr 1, 2019

www.stlameric.com

The Building Union Diversity (BUD) recently graduated 16 participants in its 15th cohort, which is dedicated to increasing diversity in the building trades in the St. Louis region. Of those 16 graduates, 13 were African-American and six were women.

New BUD classes start April 8, June 10 and August 12. Apply at SLATE, 1520 Market St., on the 3rd floor.

During their five week training, the students took and passed their OSHA 10 certification for occupational safety and, after a one-week orientation, spent four weeks learning from floor layers, cement masons, sheet metal workers, carpenters, plumbers, pipe-fitters and the electricians.

They started interviewing for jobs at their graduation, Russ Signorino, and many were offered jobs. The rest lined up interviews with employers, he said. According to Signorino, BUD boasts an 87 percent placement rate during the first four years of the program.

"In all my years of advocating for more diversity in the building trades, with all the current and future construction on the books, there has been no better time for African Americans to get into the building trades," said Lew Moyer of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

The BUD Program, now in its fourth year, was designed by the St. Louis Building and Construction Trades Council (BCTC). It assembled a team of more than eight cooperating joint labor-management construction training programs to implement and manage this construction skills pre-apprenticeship training program. Its aim is to launch careers in construction trades for previously un- and under-employed individuals from across the St. Louis region, with a particular focus on women and minorities.

BUD offers enrollees a comprehensive introduction to construction employment and careers and provides relevant national skills certification training, with a particular focus on job safety. Once participants have successfully completed training they are enrolled in the BCTC employer/contractor database. The database serves as a pool of pre-qualified workers at various skill levels and proficiencies and is used by the construction owners and others in supporting the workforce inclusion goals that they are expected to meet and/or exceed, particularly in public supported construction projects.

The BCTC program team is committed to work with partnering owners and only offers training when entry-level jobs are available.

For the new BUD classes starting April 8, June 10 and August 12, Signorino will interview candidates the Wednesday before the session starts. However, candidates need to take and pass some tests administered by SLATE, so Signorino urges minorities and women interested in a career in the building trades to go to SLATE, 1520 Market St. on the 3rd floor, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, to start the process immediately.

For more information, visit <http://budprogram.com> or call (314) 303-6082.