

April 25, 2024

## **HACP set to Expand Workforce Programming through Partnership with Master Builders' Association & New Mobile Workforce Development Initiative**

Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) residents will soon be able to lay the foundation for a stronger future thanks to a new, innovative partnership with the Master Builders' Association of Western Pennsylvania (MBA) and an addition to the HACP's resident programming set to roll into Pittsburgh in 2025 – the Workforce on Wheels CyberBus 2.0 – a mobile one-stop shop for HACP residents seeking to enter the workforce.

The partnership is aimed at bringing current workforce development opportunities among the 16 building trades unions in the Greater Pittsburgh Region, directly to HACP residents ages 18 and older and leading to well-paying union positions in trades such as plumbing, bricklaying, roofing and much more.

"At MBA we have identified workforce development as a key priority for our association. In 2023, we launched BuildWPA.org to help our members attract and retain skilled talent," says Lance Harrell, Director of Workforce Development, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for the Master Builders' Association of Western PA. "Partnering with HACP on this mobile workforce development initiative dovetails perfectly with our goals to support our members, help expand the region's economy and connect HACP residents with a great career in the trades."

The HACP plays a vital role in providing affordable housing for low-income individuals and families in our city. With a mission rooted in the United States Housing Act of 1937, HACP manages more than 2,200 public housing units and provides oversight of additional mixed-finance units, providing housing and supportive services to more than 20,000 Pittsburghers.

"Workforce development is paramount to what we do as a Housing Authority," says HACP Executive Director D. Binion. "We're committed to removing any and every potential hurdle for our residents during their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency. And, as a developer and manager of affordable housing on a large scale, we are reliant upon the services provided by those in the skilled trades. Connecting our residents with these opportunities is a win-win."

The HACP and MBA are committed to highlighting pathways to family-sustaining wages and benefits, along with life-changing careers, for residents of the City of Pittsburgh.

"Our overall goal with this partnership is to make sure we are connecting those who want the opportunity to get into a trade and complete their certification with the right program so that they have the opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency," Lloyd C. Wilson Jr., HACP's Resident Employment Program/Section 3 Coordinator, says. "It's breaking ground to help them create a foundation for the future."

Harrell agrees.

"We are giving residents access to a path that will help them earn life-sustaining wages in the construction industry and change the trajectory of their households," Harrell adds. "This is a first-

time, ground-breaking collaboration that we hope will not only help residents gain skills and employment, but maybe also inspire some to become architects, developers, or engineers.”

Wilson and Harrell feel this initiative will continue to open the door for future partnerships with area organizations and businesses that believe in the program’s mission and goals.

Rich Paganie Jr., Training Director, Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters, says the partnership will help the Carpenters’ Union diversify its ranks.

“It’s better when you have different people from different places working together,” he says. “I think it’s important when people are building their own neighborhoods; there’s a lot of value there. I told Lloyd and Lance I will do whatever I can do to help with the efforts.”

One outcome Wilson and Harrell hope to see from the partnership is the emergence of a large Black-owned general contractor firm in the Pittsburgh area that builds from the ground up, something similar to Waller Corporation in Washington, PA.

In conjunction with the partnership, the HACP is anxiously awaiting the addition of its Workforce on Wheels (W.O.W.) CyberBus 2.0 in mid-2025. Through this initiative, HACP’s Resident Employment Program will provide mobile support services to its 2,200 public housing units located throughout the City of Pittsburgh, offering residents access to a variety of employment-related supports.

Services will include access and assistance with job searches, resume building, interview prep, access to telehealth services, and support through the pre-employment process.

The HACP Resident Employment Program will utilize the mobile workforce development initiative as a platform to introduce residents to careers within the 16 building trades unions, offering exposure to a wide range of opportunities for professional growth and development. The mobile program will provide routine service to communities within HACP’s Low-Income Public Housing portfolio, while also making programming accessible to the roughly 5,500-plus families that utilize HACP Housing Choice Vouchers throughout the City of Pittsburgh.

Paganie adds CyberBus 2.0 will help get the word out to people who may not know about the unions, as well as get them the necessary training needed to become certified in a trade. In the Pittsburgh region, there are about 5,000 Carpenters’ Union members in a seven-county area.

“Ultimately, the more people trained, the more people are making more money, which will contribute to the tax base. That’s a big win in creating generational wealth by flipping the dynamics of your income status. It can lift people up to have a positive, rewarding career,” he says.

“HACP has taken a great step to enhance opportunities for our city’s public housing residents seeking good-paying jobs in our trades,” adds Mayor Ed Gainey. “This new addition will provide access to residents on-site to learn skills that will positively impact both them and their families, as well as the communities they live in.”

HACP and MBA believe the partnership between the two organizations has the potential to make a significant impact on the lives of Pittsburgh residents, providing access to resources, training, and opportunities for upward mobility, while simultaneously helping to bolster hiring workforce development efforts within the regional construction industry and creating new pathways to careers within the building trades unions. Together, we are committed to empowering individuals and families in Western PA to build brighter futures and stronger communities.

The 16 building trades unions include: Boilermakers Local 154; Bricklayers Allied Craftworkers (BAC) Local 9 PA; Operative Plasterers' & Cement Masons International Association (OPCMIA) Local Union 526; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local Union 5; International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC); International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers; Ironworkers Local Union #3; Operating Engineers Local 66; International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) DC 57; Pittsburgh Plumbers Local #27; Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 354; The United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers, and Allied Workers Local #37; Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 12; Sprinkler Fitters Local 542; Steamfitters Local Union 449; and United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America Local #432.

Master Builders' of Western Pennsylvania, Inc., is a trade association whose membership includes more than 265 of the top general contractors, construction managers, specialty contractors, and service and supplier companies supporting our region's commercial construction industry. Collectively, MBA membership accounts for more than 80 percent of the commercial construction in the Pittsburgh area. Since 1886, MBA has been a strong, influential, and single voice for the industry. MBA has awarded more than \$800,000 in scholarship support to students interested in careers in the construction industry. MBA is affiliated with Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), representing more than 32,000 members nationwide. This affiliation affords MBA membership with an even stronger industry voice and broader access to services, resources, and activities available on a national level.

For more information, contact Michelle Sandidge, HACP's Chief Community Affairs Officer, at: 412-812-5545, or Lance Harrell at: 412-922-3912.

Additional information may also be obtained by visiting HACP's website at: [www.hacp.org](http://www.hacp.org) or MBA's website at: [www.mbawpa.org](http://www.mbawpa.org).