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ABC aims to develop the next generation of professionals - by John Anderson

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In a booming construction industry, the biggest challenge member companies face is finding all the qualified workers they need to keep up with demand. Meeting that challenge requires more than just offering competitive pay and benefits; sometimes you have to create the pipeline.

ABC's state-funded Pre-Apprenticeship and Leadership Academy program is doing just that. The initiative, which launched on April 17th at Malden High School, aims to develop the next generation of skilled construction industry professionals. A number of inner-city young adults were recruited for this program, which will provide empowerment and leadership skills, OSHA certification, hoisting license prep, a 75-hour long general construction education training, and job placement with ABC employer members.

Two groups of candidates have been recruited: an initial group of 24 participants, whose classes are being held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and a second group that is scheduled to begin in June. The number of young people whose resumes we have received for the pre-apprenticeship program and for the Building Mass Careers initiative (mostly voc-tech school graduates) has already reached 80 applicants. Building Mass Careers is an initiative recently launched by ABC to attract those seeking a career in construction.

This is an extraordinary time for the industry and for our chapter. ABC is confident that our members will help us fulfill the dreams and promises of the Building Mass Careers and the pre-apprenticeship initiatives by hiring the young people these programs train to address their own worker shortages.

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