

Area high school students learn valuable skills in BIA Foundation internship program

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This month, 40 high school students from around the region completed four-week paid internships to learn about the construction trades. The program, which began in 2017, is sponsored by the North State Building Industry Foundation.

During this year's program, students worked on homes being built by three homebuilding companies — Lennar, Taylor Morrison and USA Properties. They learned skills including framing, HVAC installation, landscaping, flooring, electrical, painting and plumbing from mentors in the construction trades.

This year's graduates brought the total number of interns who have participated in the summer internship program to over 320, and it's just one of several workforce development programs the Foundation is involved with in the greater Sacramento region.

Besides giving participants invaluable hands-on experience, these programs also expose



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Some of the 40 high school students in the North State Building Industry Foundation's internship program pose for a group photo at the end of their session.

them to the fact you can earn a good living in construction. For many years, many school districts downsized or eliminated career technical education programs under the assumption that every high school student

should attend a four-year college.

As a result, many students weren't aware that mean construction wages range from \$30,000 to over \$70,000, with senior-level supervisors and

inspectors easily earning upwards of \$105,000 — and that they can start their careers as soon as they graduate from high school and do so with no student loan debt.

Fortunately, high schools and

community colleges have again embraced career technical education in recent years, realizing that many people enjoy working with their hands and that our increasingly complex society desperately needs skilled workers.

That couldn't have come at a better time for the homebuilding industry, which faces a growing workforce shortage as baby boomers and Gen Xers retire from the trades without enough young people entering the workforce to replace them.

Nationwide, the Home Builders Institute says the construction industry needs about 723,000 new construction workers each year to meet the demand for new homes. However, at least 90% of single-family builders responding to a survey earlier this year reported a shortage of carpenters, while 80-85% reported a shortage of workers in six other construction trades.

The Foundation offers a variety of training programs through local school districts, a program for youth ages 16-24 who are not in school, community college

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programs (Sierra, Consumnes River and Yuba college) and is getting ready to open an academy that provides residents of the Greater Sacramento area opportunities to gain skills and find jobs in the homebuilding industry.

These programs can make a huge difference in a young person's life. Here's how an intern from this year's program described his experience:

"Honestly, I'm really glad to be in this program.

I didn't know what I was going to do (this summer) — I was either going to play video games or do something with my life, and I just decided to do something with my life and get a job to get the experience right now so it can help me in the future." For more information about the North State Building Industry Foundation, visit www.bia-workforce.com. Jennifer Poff is the Executive Director of the North State Building Industry Foundation.