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## **Carpenters Union's Career Connections Program Ramps Up to Meet Local Demand**

ST. LOUIS — The St. Louis-Kansas City Carpenters Regional Council (CRC) is working to fill a skills gap in St. Louis, and a unique program is helping.

The Regional Council's *Career Connections* program brings cutting-edge technical education to schools across St. Louis, helping local employers fill a skills gap in the vocational trades and offering a pathway to a middle-class career for young people in the region.

"Students and their families sometimes become so focused on earning a four-year degree that they overlook or are unaware of vocational options," said Dr. Art McCoy, Jennings School District Superintendent of Schools. "Career Connections provides students an opportunity to learn about skilled trades in a way that prepares them for a successful career. It has been a wonderful addition to our schools."

The Career Connections Program works in partnership with educators to provide students with a practical CTE education taught by skilled instructors. With more than 1,700 students in 35 programs across our region, our graduates have gone on to earn six-figure salaries as union carpenters.

"Career Connections helps ensure St. Louis has the next generation of skilled workers it needs to continue growing," said Al Bond, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the CRC. "The program provides a leg up to students, who start their career with knowledge and skills that other apprentices don't have, and it helps ensure a pipeline of talented workers to the local employers who hire them."





Along with vocational training, the program also includes preparation in the skills that research shows employers value most, including: goal setting, positive attitude, punctuality, teamwork, and taking initiative.

The various skills Career Connections graduates learn help make them employable, while local companies remain competitive and ensure St. Louis can build high-quality, safer, lower-cost construction projects.

"It is very difficult to find enough skilled workers to perform all the work we have available," said Bill Lowery, Project Executive with PARIC. "There are projects I would love for us to bid on, but we don't have the workers available to do new projects in addition to projects we are already committed to. We are glad to see a program like Career Connection stepping in to fill that need for skilled workers."

To learn more about the Career Connections Program, visit [carpdc.org](http://carpdc.org) or call (314) 269-5663.

#### The St. Louis-Kansas City Carpenters Regional Council

The St. Louis-Kansas City Carpenters Regional Council (CRC) represents more than 22,000 members in 33 local unions across Missouri, Kansas and Southern Illinois. Founded in 1915, we have evolved to meet the needs of our members and the contractors who hire them. We work for our members by negotiating fair wages and comprehensive benefit packages. We have invested millions of dollars in development and redevelopment projects to create jobs. We believe in providing contractors with the safest, most productive, and skilled workforce available while offering the kind of advanced training and technology that gives our members the competitive edge.. For more information about the St. Louis-Kansas City Carpenters Regional Council, please visit [www.carpdc.org](http://www.carpdc.org).

