

**TRADES
FUTURES**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TradesFutures Announces 2026 Rising Leaders Program Recipients

Washington, D.C. – Sept. 14th, 2026 – TradesFutures is proud to announce the 2026 TradesFutures Rising Leaders, sponsored by Carhartt, recognizing 11 emerging tradeswomen whose determination, leadership, and commitment are helping shape the future of the skilled trades. Selected from Apprenticeship Readiness Programs (ARPs) across the country, this year's Rising Leaders represent a range of pathways into union construction careers and a shared commitment to building stronger futures for themselves, their families, and their communities.

From women beginning their apprenticeship journeys to those already building careers as electricians, roofers, cement masons, plumbers, pipefitters, welders, and other skilled trades professionals, the 2026 Rising Leaders demonstrate the power of apprenticeship readiness to open doors to family-sustaining careers. They will be recognized at the 2026 Tradeswomen Build Nations Conference in Houston, Texas, October 9–11.

"The 2026 Rising Leaders represent the talent, ambition, and leadership that women are bringing to the skilled trades across the country. TradesFutures is excited to uplift their achievements and the Apprenticeship Readiness Programs that help to create pathways for women to build strong, family-sustaining careers in union construction." — Marina Zhavoronkova, Executive Director of TradesFutures

"At Carhartt, we believe the future of the skilled trades depends on supporting the next generation and ensuring more people can access opportunities to build meaningful, rewarding careers. We're proud to partner with TradesFutures to help support these outstanding tradeswomen as they strengthen their skills, inspire others and shape the future of the trades." — Sam Denton, VP of Women's Category at Carhartt



Uniyah Chatman – Graduate, [Pathways to Apprenticeship – Syracuse Build](#); Member, IBEW Local 43, Syracuse, NY. Uniyah's longtime interest in mathematics, robotics, carpentry, and understanding how things work led her naturally toward the skilled trades. Her pre-apprenticeship experience prepared her for success in her apprenticeship, and she is motivated in part by the opportunity to increase representation for women in the industry.

Yasmeen Clay – Pre-Apprentice, [Women in Non-Traditional Careers \(WINC\)](#), Philadelphia, PA. Yasmeen brings a visual arts background and a strong commitment to leadership and stewardship to her trades journey. She is pursuing commercial wallcovering, where her eye for fine detail and passion for creating visually impactful environments align naturally with the craft, and she hopes her career will help build stronger communities and legacies.

Kimberly Davila – Graduate, [Building Pathways](#); Cement Mason, Local 534, Boston, MA. Kimberly began her building trades journey with a love of hands-on work and the pride that comes from creating and improving things people depend on every day. Since graduating from Building Pathways and joining Local 534, she has focused on building her skills, working safely and effectively as part of a team, and establishing a reputation for dependability and quality.

Brejai Jefferson – Graduate, [Rising Sun Center for Opportunity](#); Apprentice, Northern California Sound & Communication JATC, Emeryville, CA. Brejai describes herself as a go-getter who is motivated by challenge, growth, and the opportunity to help close the gender gap in the skilled trades. She is especially proud of staying committed to her pre-apprenticeship journey through obstacles and continuing forward with patience, faith, and resilience.

Jasmin Martinez – Graduate, [San Diego Continuing Education](#); Apprentice, LiUNA, San Diego, CA. Jasmin's interest in construction grew through her studies in Building Inspection and Construction Management and her pre-apprenticeship experience. Inspired by her instructor and by her father's pride in his own work, she hopes to contribute to major projects, build a career in sheet metal, and show other women that they belong in construction.

Jennifer Martinez – Graduate, [Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles \(WINTER\)](#); Inside Wireman Apprentice, IBEW Local 11, Los Angeles, CA. Jennifer has long been drawn to hands-on work and learning practical skills she can bring back to her community. She credits pre-apprenticeship with preparing her physically, mentally, and emotionally for a new career and is proud of the commitment that led her to become an IBEW Local 11 Inside Wireman apprentice.

Cynthia Sigala – Graduate, [Chicago Women in Trades](#); Apprentice, IBEW Local 134, Chicago, IL. Cynthia changed careers at 40 after years in food service, seeking greater stability, benefits, and long-term opportunity for herself and her family. Through Women Build Illinois, she discovered the electrical trade, completed extensive construction and safety training, and earned a place in IBEW Local 134's apprenticeship program beginning in October 2026.

Kelcy Tobey – Pre-Apprentice, [Missouri Works Initiative Apprentice Ready Construction](#), St. Louis, MO. Kelcy brings a background in exercise science, operational leadership, and visual art to her transition into the trades. Drawn to hands-on problem-solving and the opportunity to help build the infrastructure communities rely on, she is pursuing a path toward becoming an electrician and approaches every new skill with curiosity, discipline, and a strong commitment to teamwork.

Charlé Tolar – Graduate, [Houston Gulf Coast Apprenticeship Readiness Program](#); Member, OPCMIA Local 783, Houston, TX. Charlé's Army experience as a generator mechanic strengthened her love of hands-on work and taught her discipline, teamwork, attention to detail, and pride in doing a job correctly. She is proud of transitioning from military service into the skilled trades and is continuing to build a career where she can learn, contribute, and grow.

Angel Valentine – Graduate, [Utah Women in Trades Program](#); Apprentice, UA Local 140, West Jordan, UT. Angel has always admired the skilled trades and the role tradespeople play in building the bigger

picture. Her pre-apprenticeship experience helped her identify the path she wanted to pursue, and she is proud of taking the first steps that led to membership in UA Local 140 and a plumbing, pipefitting, and welding apprenticeship.

Angela Velazquez – Apprentice, [Local 195](#), Syracuse, NY. Angela chose roofing to build a stronger future for her family and create a skill-based legacy she can pass on to her sons. She is committed to challenging outdated stereotypes about who belongs in construction and hopes to become a foreman who leads with integrity, patience, and respect while helping other women see a place for themselves in the trades.

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About TradesFutures: TradesFutures is the only national nonprofit dedicated to expanding pathways into union Registered Apprenticeship and family-sustaining construction careers. Through a network of more than 200 Apprenticeship Readiness Programs across 34 states and our award-winning Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3), TradesFutures works to remove barriers to opportunity and build a skilled and well-represented construction workforce. Through proven strategies, programs, partnerships, and initiatives, TradesFutures connects workers to quality careers while helping meet the evolving workforce needs of the union construction industry. Learn more about TradesFutures and its work to develop a more accessible quality construction workforce at [TradesFutures](#).

About Carhartt: Established in 1889, Carhartt is a global premium workwear brand with a rich heritage of developing durable products for workers on and off the job. Headquartered in Dearborn, Michigan, with approximately 3,000 employees worldwide, Carhartt is family-owned and managed by the descendants of the company's founder, Hamilton Carhartt. For more information, visit www.carhartt.com.