



**News Release**

**SECRETARY WALSH JOINS UNION, COMMUNITY LEADERS, APPRENTICES TO DISCUSS REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS, \$20M AGREEMENT TO EXPAND EQUITABLE CONSTRUCTION TRAINING**

***New initiative to support job readiness in underserved communities***

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh joined leaders from North America’s Building Trades Unions, the National Urban League and graduates of pre-apprenticeship programs in construction and construction-related industries to discuss how Registered Apprenticeship programs can train the future workforce to help fill jobs in critical sectors.

During the event, Secretary Walsh announced a \$20 million cooperative agreement between the Department of Labor and the TradesFutures non-profit to advance equitable opportunities in construction through the department’s “Scaling Apprenticeship Readiness Across the Building Trades” initiative. TradesFutures seeks to enroll more than 13,000 participants in apprenticeship readiness programs – giving them hands-on learning experience and skill development – and expects to subsequently place at least 7,000 of them into Registered Apprenticeships in the construction industry.

“The U.S. Department of Labor is committed to making sure the jobs that President Biden’s historic investments in infrastructure will create in construction and its related industries provide equitable and accessible opportunities for all workers,” said Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh. “Our cooperative agreement with TradesFutures and other partners will build on their proven success in using pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeships to develop an open and inclusive talent pipeline for construction and construction-related industries.”

In partnership with the department and the National Urban League, TradesFutures will lead a coalition of community partners to develop a unified strategy that creates a gateway for women, people of color, veterans, Native Americans, justice-involved people and other people from underrepresented communities to access and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship programs. The project will explore programs in Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Tennessee to support identification of best practices, as well as to provide technical assistance to these states and other apprenticeship readiness programs in additional states that may be supported by future expansion efforts.

"TradesFutures is ready and humbled by the historic opportunity to expand Apprenticeship Readiness Programs across the country. This cooperative agreement with the Department of Labor and the National Urban League will uplift people by recruiting and expanding building trades' workforce development pipelines in communities that have been historically underrepresented in the trades while simultaneously meeting demand for the unprecedented federal infrastructure investments," TradesFutures Executive Director Nicole Schwartz remarked. "We welcome this opportunity to help recruit the next infrastructure generation and look forward to maximizing these investments to the greatest extent possible by empowering communities with a stronger, more diverse and skilled local workforce."

“The historic Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will create thousands of new, family-sustaining jobs in the construction industry and this partnership will help to ensure that the communities most in need of these infrastructure investments have equal access to those jobs,” said National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial. “We’re proud of this partnership with TradesFutures and grateful to the Department of Labor for making it possible.”

The cooperative agreement also provides a mechanism for the partners to develop best practices that will be used throughout the Registered Apprenticeship system to scale across other industries.

**Agency:** Employment and Training Administration

**Date:** March 6, 2023

**Release Number:** 23-446-NAT

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