

# Florida Construction Workforce Taskforce:

*Legislative recommendations*



**UF** | UNIVERSITY of  
**FLORIDA**

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M.E. Rinker, Sr. School of Construction  
Management at the University of Florida*



## **M.E. Rinker, Sr. School of Construction Management**

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*The M.E. Rinker, Sr. School of Construction Management at the University of Florida combines the skills, diverse experiences, and talents of its faculty with an innovative educational curriculum to educate future construction professionals. Housed in the College of Design, Construction and Planning, the Rinker School is dedicated to construction science and management and is committed to excellence in education and research. Established in 1935, it is the oldest school of construction in the U.S. and the first program to receive accreditation from the American Council for Construction Education (1975). Twenty faculty members teach and guide the School’s 500 undergraduate and 120 graduate students. The School’s new building, Rinker Hall, is the 26th building to have been awarded LEED Gold certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. The Rinker School has substantial experience with crafts training and has had extensive collaboration with the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), the premier crafts training education organization, for the past 18 years. Most recently the Rinker School developed a crafts training program, Training for Manufactured Construction (TRAMCON), that provides students with hybrid manufacturing/construction credentials. These credentials also provide training across multiple crafts including carpentry, plumbing, electrical, and HVAC using NCCER training modules.*

### **Mission Statement**

*The mission of the M. E. Rinker, Sr. School of Construction Management is to be the center of excellence for construction. The Rinker School will pursue this by:*

- ✓ Promoting professional and ethical behavior in education and practice.*
- ✓ Advancing the industry by creating new knowledge through research and scholarly activities.*
- ✓ Educating individuals in principles, knowledge and skills required to be successful in their professional careers.*
- ✓ Providing service and transferring knowledge to the citizens of Florida, the construction industry, professional societies, the nation, and the world.*

*The Rinker School will achieve this mission by fostering a core culture of value and quality.*

## Executive Summary

The Rinker School of Construction Management at the University of Florida has been tasked with evaluating workforce training availability in Florida. This study will support the evaluation of workforce development programs in the state and allow for better understanding of the types and training offered as well as where they are offered and how they are sponsored.

Workforce shortages in the state are historically cyclical and follow significant lulls in construction volume over time. Most recently, there was a significant downfall in construction volume in Florida starting in 2007 (see Figure 1 below), with the recovery beginning in 2012. The significance of this most recent economic cycle to the state is that

the downturn started earlier in Florida and lasted longer than the national average.

Construction employment follows general housing and building trends as well. The difficulty for the recovering market is replacing the trained workforce that left the state or the industry during the economic downturn. High demand for trained workers increases pressure on construction firms to employ unqualified workers who are trained through an informal on-the-job training (OJT) process, resulting in initial quality, productivity, and safety issues compared to a trained worker. National construction employment demands are reflected in Figure 2 below.

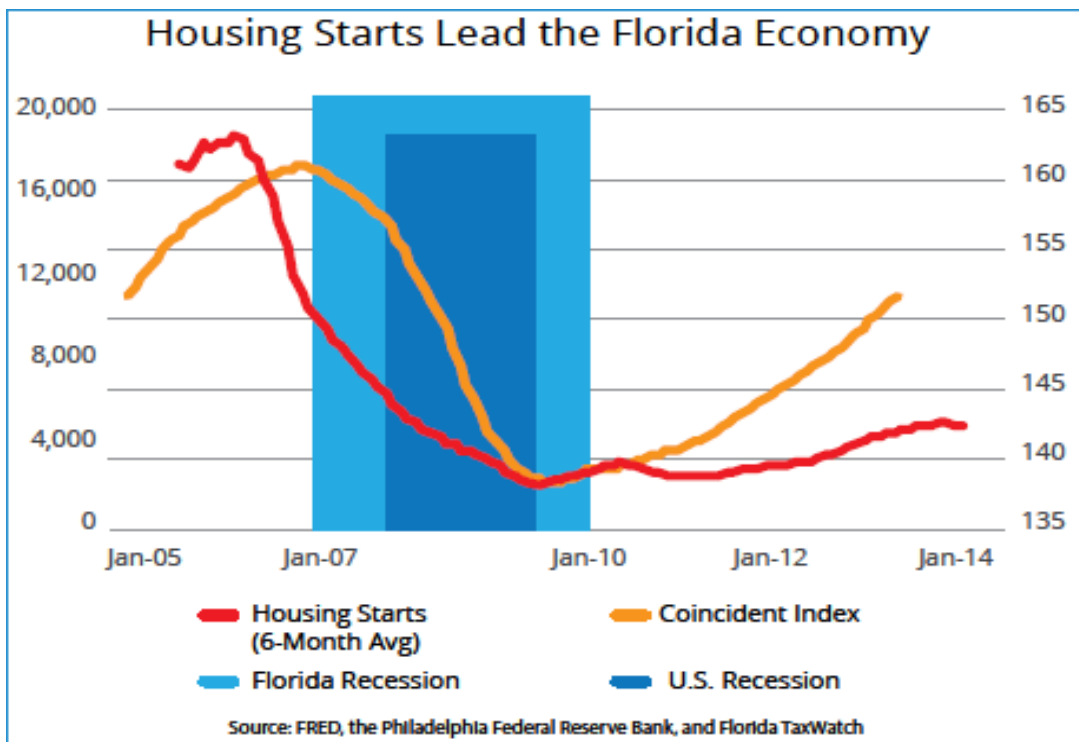
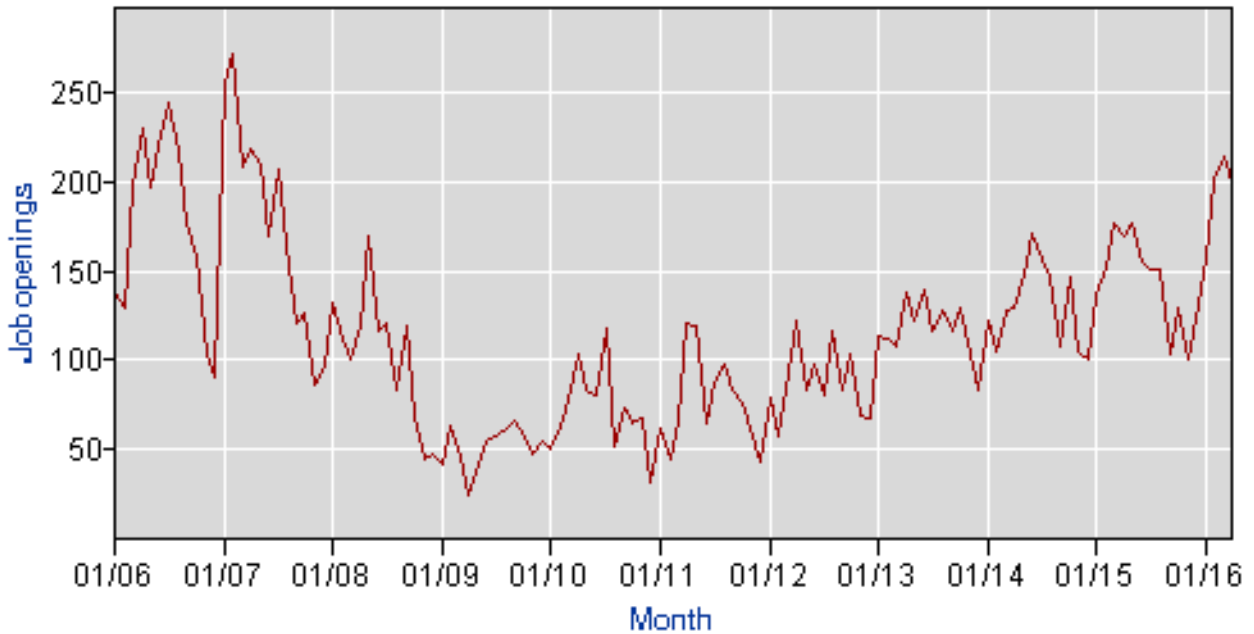


Figure 1 - Housing starts from 2005 through 2014



**Figure 2 -** Department of Labor Statistics (Job openings in 1000's)

Construction workforce training appears in various formats, including high school magnet programs, vocational schools, and apprenticeships. The purpose of this report is to provide a snapshot of the availability of training relative to the increased demand and the lack of interested applicants. Training programs themselves are not adequate for filling the workforce void. Current studies indicate that 50% of the construction workforce is 45 years or

older. An aging workforce, increasing in construction volume and decreasing interest in construction employment is creating the perfect storm for severe labor shortages. These labor shortages have the potential to limit the growth of the construction industry, increase construction costs, and limit the types of construction trades available to service market needs. These factors are the reasons that a Workforce Task Force and research are required.

## Project Deliverables

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*The Construction Workforce Taskforce has been established via state legislation to address the shortage of skilled crafts people and inspectors training in Florida. The taskforce will discuss and recommend methods for craft workers and inspectors in the state of Florida.*

### **The Workforce Taskforce specifically aims to analyze the following:**

- ✓ *Address the critical shortage of individuals trained in building construction and inspection.*
- ✓ *Develop a consensus path for training the next generation of construction workers in the state.*
- ✓ *Determine the causes or the current shortage of a trained construction industry work force and address the impact of the shortages on the recovery of the real estate market.*
- ✓ *Review current methods and resources available for construction training.*
- ✓ *Review the state of construction training available in K-12 schools.*
- ✓ *Address training issues relating to building code inspectors to increase the number qualified inspectors.*

## Contact Information



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## Board Members

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## Legislative Recommendations:

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### Motion for the Construction Workforce Taskforce to make the following Legislative Recommendations – February 2017

1. Recommendation: Expand the definition of a Local Educational Agency (LEA), as used in apprenticeship programs in Florida, to include institutions other than public schools, such as private training organization (for profit and nonprofit), labor unions, industry trade associations or other community based organizations.

2. Recommendation: Create a legislative study to consider the appropriateness of moving apprenticeship programs from the Department of Education to the Department of Economic Opportunity.

In addition, the study should address and provide clarity regarding how current apprenticeships are funded from the state to the LEAs and what options the LEAs have in how they spend apprenticeship funding.

3. Recommendation: The Department of Education recognizes the NCCER curriculum, or other comparable national curriculum, as eligible for high school credits, college credits, and state supported scholarships (e.g., bright futures).

4. Recommendation: Additional state Career and Technical Education (CTE) support to be

directed towards K-12 programs so that “shop” or other construction related programs are added back into CTE programs.

6. Recommendation: Extend the ‘sunset’ timeframe for this Taskforce four additional years and provide funding of \$100,000 per year, and a mechanism to obtain matching funds to continue to coordinate this task force. Funding will be used to continue data collection and analysis, ongoing economic impact studies, and subsequent strategies, implementation planning, and follow up.

7. Recommendation: Direct CareerSource Florida to set aside existing federal training dollars for construction training programs using the previous state-wide ‘Florida Rebuilds’ program as an implementation model.

8. Recommendation: Provide funding from the existing DBPR “Building Permit Surcharge” trust fund dedicated to better code compliance through the recruitment and training of a qualified workforce (e.g. Build Your Future).

9. Recommendation: Allow for an alternative instructor certification process through the Department of Education that does not require certification through an LEA.

10. Recommendation: Create a joint legislative audit committee to review compliance of statute 553.80(7) across the state regarding use of building permit fees beyond the scope of supporting the building department activities.

11. Recommendation: The taskforce recommends and supports the work of Building Officials Association of Florida, Inc., in the development of the following initiatives:

- A. Alternative Internship Certification Program to current standard qualifications
- B. Changes to Florida Statute 468:
  - a. Add Residential Inspector and Plan Examiner categories for all trades.
  - b. Do not restrict provisional and 120-day period to newly hired or promoted staff.
- C. Inter-agency service agreement inspections and plan examination for standard certified building officials across jurisdictions of populations 50,000 or less.
- D. Have Building Code Administrators and Inspectors Board (BCAIB) streamline application for certification process by providing online electronic submissions and combining the examination registration with provisional application.
- E. Provide high school education guidance material for construction related careers.
- F. Support higher education code curriculum in engineering, architecture and construction management degrees.
- G. Need for a comprehensive compensation study for building code compliance personnel.