

COMMUNITY

COMMISSIONERS ANNOUNCE PRE-APPRENTICESHIP JOBS PROGRAMS

The Franklin County commissioners today announced contracts with the Columbus/Central Ohio Building and Construction Trades Council and local service provider, IMPACT Community Action to administer a pre-apprenticeship pilot program designed to help low-income county residents to transition into apprentice programs that lead to well-paid commercial skilled construction trades careers. The program is called Building Futures, and will provide both “soft skills” and trade-specific training before culminating in apprenticeship entrance assessment so that participants may progress directly from this program to a traditional apprenticeship in one of the skilled construction trades. Up to 30 students are expected to take part in the pilot class, which kicks off at the end of this month.

“Franklin County is booming,” said Board of Commissioners president John O’Grady. “And building in this region is only going to continue to increase. Construction jobs are good jobs, and there’s a shortage of skilled tradespeople right now, but many people need help bridging into an apprenticeship.”

Apprenticeship is the traditional process for training and educating a worker as a skilled construction craftsperson, and involves both classroom and on-the-job instruction. It’s a necessary first step to a good job in the construction field, and Building Futures will help participants to progress into apprenticeship.

“So many in our community are willing and able to work hard to make a living,” said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. “But opportunities aren’t equally available, and not everyone is ready to jump right into a formal

apprenticeship program. We’re trying to help young women and men to make that jump.”

Building Futures participants will begin with three weeks of “soft skills” training, such as skills assessments, teamwork and interpersonal skills training, and financial literacy curriculum to be provided by IMPACT Community Action. Participants will be paid \$250 per week for their time.

“Construction trades can be an excellent job,” said Commissioner Kevin L. Boyce. “But it’s not an easy field to enter, and lots of people don’t know where to start, especially if they’ve never been around the construction industry.”

The next six weeks of Building Futures will focus on so-called hard skills, including safety certification, construction-specific literacy and math, and trade-specific instruction and assessment, which will be provided by the Columbus/Central Ohio Building and Construction Trades Council. The entire program will be recognized by the Ohio State Apprentice Council, and will encompass more than 100 hours of training during nine weeks of evenings.

“Apprenticeship is the portal into our local unions and the beginning on a direct path to the middle class. Apprentices earn while they learn, honing their skills with on-the-job training and education in the classroom,” said Dorsey Hager, Executive Secretary of the Columbus/Central Ohio Building and Construction Trades Council. “Apprentices enjoy a good wage and benefit package which includes health insurance, dental, vision, and a pension. All so that they can take care of their families and retire comfortably at the

end of their career.”

In addition to the skills assessment and training, participants will receive mentoring and Comprehensive Case Management services provided by the commissioners’ Job and Family Services department, which will also administer the program for the county. Four classes totaling up to 100 students are expected to participate over the next year.

“The Building Futures program demonstrates the power of partnership and real opportunities for individuals seeking work in the construction trades,” said Robert “Bo” Chilton, CEO of IMPACT Community Action. “Our staff and partners are committed to barrier reduction, quality education, and supportive services that increase the likelihood of individual and collective successes for our program participants.”

The county broke ground two weeks ago on a new Corrections Center, a project that is expected to employ more than 800 construction workers at its peak, and will be starting construction of a new Forensic Science Center next year. The commissioners are working hard, including via a Construction Inclusion Team made up of members from the community, construction experts, union representatives, and community activists, to help ensure high levels of participation among groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the construction trades, including minorities, women, immigrants, veterans, and members of the LGBT community.

For more information on the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, call the Office of Public Affairs at (614) 525-3322 or visit commissioners.franklincountyohio.gov.

THE KERNER COMMISSION AT 50 CONFERENCE

A conference exploring race, segregation, and inequality 50 years after the release of the historic Kerner Commission Report.

From #BlackLivesMatter to the Supreme Court, issues of race, segregation, inequality, the legacy of slavery, and who belongs in America and who America belongs to, is as salient today as it was 50 years ago. Join the conversation at the #Kerner50 conference.

The 50th anniversary of the Kerner Commission report on Civil Disorders falls on March 1, 2018. The 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act occurs two months after that, along with the sesquicentennial of the 14th Amendment.

The Haas Institute is organizing a national conference to be held February 27-March 1, 2018 to commemorate and investigate the Commission and its contemporary significance.

We are in the midst of a re-awakened awareness of the extent of racial segregation, inequality, and police brutality and violence, the precise themes and areas of inquiry of the Commission. Appropriately, the Kerner Commission has received renewed attention of late, including citation by the Supreme Court in its decision upholding the use of disparate impact claims in fair housing cases.

Keeping discussion of these issues alive is the Movement for Black Lives, as well as ongoing protests on college campuses, state capitols, and elsewhere over monuments and legacies of slavery and segregation.

Our 50th anniversary conference will not only examine the history, legacy, successes and failures of the commission, as well as its findings and analysis, but envision what a contemporary Kerner Commission report might look like.

Among those scheduled to participate in the conference are Shaun Donovan, who served as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Obama, as well as former US Senator Fred Harris, who is the only surviving member of the Kerner Commission.

The conference will be co-hosted at UC Berkeley and at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Most of the speakers will be participating at the Berkeley location, but all events will be live streamed via video-link at both locations, and recordings of the events will be posted online at a later date for those who are not able to attend the conference.

For historical background on the Kerner Commission, download and read the executive summary of their 1968 report [here](#).

Date: February 27 - March 1, 2018
Location: Pauley Ballroom, UC Berkeley