The Business Roundtable Skilled Trades for America Initiative (STAI) was launched in 2025 in response to growing labor shortages affecting the strength and competitiveness of the American industrial base. STAI expands and strengthens talent pipelines for skilled workers by convening member companies to share best practices in workforce development; developing pilot projects and partnerships to address local workforce needs; and raising awareness of skilled trades careers and their importance to the U.S. economy.

Initiative Highlights

- Business Roundtable CEOs Marvin Ellison of Lowe's and David Gitlin of Carrier co-champion the initiative. Lowe's, Carrier and many other Business Roundtable member companies are addressing talent shortages in the skilled trades by creating new pathways to good-paying careers in critical fields.
- STAI focuses on skilled trades critical to the growth of America's production economy, including jobs in the following sectors: industrial and manufacturing, construction and building, maintenance and repair, and energy.
- To expand the talent pipeline for skilled workers, the initiative:
  - Offers members opportunities to share best practices and insights through company spotlights, case studies, a skills inventory and action-oriented playbooks.
  - Aligns education with labor market needs through pilot projects that include work-based learning opportunities for workers and partnerships with community colleges, K-12 career and technical education (CTE) systems, other education and training providers, and labor unions.
  - Promotes the benefits of skilled trades careers by raising awareness of the economic opportunity associated with jobs in these critical fields.

The Imperative to Expand the Skilled Trades Talent Pipeline

Labor shortages in the skilled trades are expected to rise due to workforce retirements and increased demand from emerging industries. The estimated imbalance across the skilled trades is 20 job openings for every one net new employee.[1] In manufacturing alone, employers may require roughly 3.8 million new workers between 2024 and 2033, with around half of those jobs (1.9 million) at risk of remaining unfilled if talent gaps are not addressed.[2] Similarly, the construction industry is projected to require more than 500,000 additional workers annually to keep pace with demand.[3]

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1 McKinsey & Company, Tradespeople wanted: The need for critical trade skills in the US
2 The Manufacturing Institute, Taking Charge: Manufacturers Support Growth with Active Workforce Strategies
3 News Releases, ABC: 2024 Construction Workforce Shortage Tops Half a Million