

BUILDSTRONG ACADEMY OF COLORADO



ANNUAL REPORT

2024



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ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2024 has been a productive year as we continue to address critical workforce challenges in the construction industry. Through our construction bootcamp program, we've empowered a diverse group of over 200 students to earn Home Builders Institute Pre-Apprenticeship Certification Training (HBI PACT) certifications and launch rewarding careers with competitive wages that continue to rise year over year. We placed nearly 90 students in jobs in 2024, with over 50% of our students obtaining a job within 3 months of graduation. This year has also been marked by strategic growth through expanded partnerships with community organizations, strengthened employer relationships, and the addition of three new talented instructors to our team. The Opportunity Now Colorado Grant has provided essential funding to support our programming. As we look ahead, we're refining a workforce development model that not only serves Colorado's construction industry but has potential for implementation nationwide. Our focus remains steadfast: creating sustainable pathways to meaningful careers while building stronger, more inclusive communities.



Allison Stepnitz

**Director, BuildStrong
Academy of Colorado**

STUDENT SUCCESSES



UPSKILLING

42

students enrolled in:
HBI PACT Carpentry and/or HBI PACT
Electrical

26

students earned certificates in :
HBI PACT Carpentry and/or HBI PACT
Electrical

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Over the past year, BuildStrong Academy of Colorado maintained steady student enrollment, demonstrating our continued commitment to providing valuable construction skills training and job placement services in a challenging landscape.

231

students enrolled in HBI PACT
CORE

204

students earning HBI PACT
CORE certificates

86%

Completion rate

“Our experience working with BuildStrong Academy has been very positive. When we were experiencing a bit of turnover and needed some new team members, they made the process easy by connecting us with well-prepared candidates and inviting us to their career fair, where we met David Garcia. It was a smooth and efficient way to find talent, and we appreciated the support from their team.”

TUFF SHED, EMPLOYER PARTNER

87

Students employed in the
construction industry

>50%

of graduates are employed
within 3 months of graduation

\$23.26

average hourly wage

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



- * In a male-dominated industry with only 9.1% female representation, our programs are attracting an increasing number of female students - nearly 30% of our students identify as female.
- * With an ongoing commitment to serving all communities in Colorado to create workforce development opportunities to promote economic mobility, 71% are students of color.

**BUILDING
DIVERSITY,
ONE STUDENT
AT A TIME**

ave student
age
29

female
students
28%

students of
color
71%



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Prior to taking classes through BuildStrong Academy, I had very little construction building experience. The extent of my experience was very few home projects, working in a big box store with all building materials, and very closely with contractors. The classes I had taken at the academy had truly prepared me for most of what would come in the construction industry. To this date, I feel incredibly comfortable and confident taking on most elements that are required for building a home and can do so with tons of pride. With that knowledge and experience, it is my hope that I will eventually be able to build a home for myself and my family, and it be a great, longstanding home for generations to come.”

**KAYDEN
HONEYSETTE ,**
*BUILDSTRONG
GRADUATE*

classes:
construction skills
bootcamp

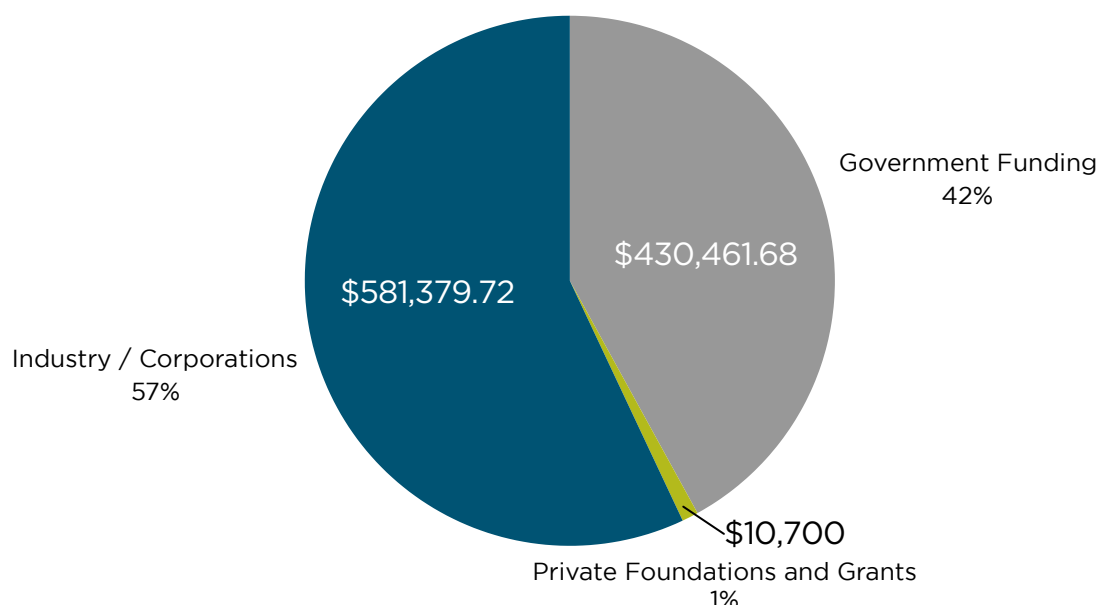
career path:
Quality
Assurance Line
Inspector



BuildStrong Academy staff, leadership, and graduate Noel Beauchamp with Foundation founder Pat Hamill at the groundbreaking of the Community College of Aurora's Center for STEM, Power Mechanics, and Applied Technologies (CAST) building—our future home opening September 2025.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2024, BuildStrong Academy of Colorado's financial highlights reflect both our current strengths and our vision for the future. Our funding portfolio shows strong industry support (57% or \$581,379.72) complemented by significant government funding (42% or \$430,461.68) through our ongoing Opportunity Now Colorado grant. While private foundation support was modest this year (1% or \$10,700), we're actively working toward our goal of a more balanced "braided" approach with equal distribution between public, private, and industry funding streams. This diversified funding model will enhance our long-term sustainability and resilience as we continue expanding our impact on Colorado's construction workforce development. The strong foundation we've built this year positions us well to achieve this balanced approach in the coming years.



2025 LOOKAHEAD



BuildStrong Academy of Colorado has an exciting year ahead - from a new strategic plan to developing industry partnerships and expanding our student pipeline, we are excited to continue to up-skill Coloradans while also providing the industry with highly-trained individuals. These initiatives align with our mission to build, grow, accelerate and enhance construction careers while maintaining our commitment to high-quality education and hands-on training for Coloradans entering the construction industry. See below for more details!

BUILDSTRONG ACADEMY OF COLORADO'S KEY INITIATIVES FOR 2025

1. Successfully move our training facility to the Community College of Aurora's campus and develop a partnership with the institution that blurs the lines between traditional career pathways and enhances educational and occupational opportunities for our students.
2. Expand our employer relationships to further improve outcomes for our students, with a goal of increasing our job placement rate and maintaining our strong 50%+ employment rate within 3 months of graduation.
3. Seek out new partnerships to enhance and further diversify our student pipeline, building on our success in attracting a student body that better represents Colorado's diverse population (now ~70% people of color).
4. Explore potential programming expansion opportunities into additional trades based on student preferences and industry needs, potentially including plumbing and HVAC tracks.
5. Develop and leverage new, sustainable revenue streams through innovative and strategic approaches including but not limited to community workshops, employer sponsorships, and annual fundraising events.
6. Continue working toward a balanced "braided" funding approach with equal distribution between public, private, and industry support to enhance our long-term financial sustainability.

OUR LEADERSHIP & OPERATIONS TEAM

Jamie van Leeuwen	Managing Director, BuildStrong Foundation
Allison Stepnitz	Director, BuildStrong Academy of Colorado
Julie Keck	Controller, BuildStrong Foundation
Katie Colton	Strategy & Operations Fellow, BuildStrong Foundation
Kristin Davenport	Career Coach, BuildStrong Academy of Colorado
Sam Fowler	Partnerships and Pipelines Manager, BuildStrong Academy of Colorado
Irazú Hernández	Project Manager, BuildStrong Academy of Colorado
Lexington James	Enrollment Ambassador, BuildStrong Academy of Colorado
Reece Marcello	Operations Assistant, BuildStrong Academy of Colorado

OUR INSTRUCTOR TEAM

Ricardo Martinez	Lead Instructor
Danny Buendia	Construction Instructor
Debra McGraw	Construction Instructor
Joe Otumfuor	Electrical Instructor
Jasmine Spinello	Construction Instructor

OUR ADVISORY BOARD

Pat Hamill	BuildStrong Foundation
Dr. Mordecai Brownlee	Community College of Aurora
Andres Carrera	City of Denver
Michael Gifford	Impact Public Affairs & Consulting
Eric Holt	University of Denver
Savinay Nathan	Colorado Gives Foundation
Amy Schwartz	Oakwood Homes
Jay Small	Precision Building Systems

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The future of America depends on our ability as a community of educators, workforce partners, governmental agencies, and legislators to work together to develop seamless academic and career pathways for more students. Together, we can unlock upward social and economic mobility for our youth and for working adults.

DR. MORDECAI BROWNLEE
President, Community College of Aurora



BUILDSTRONG ACADEMY OF COLORADO

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