

KENTUCKIANAWORKS CONSTRUCTION PIPELINE PROJECT

THE LOUISVILLE ARENA AND BEYOND

JOB TRAINING THAT BUILDS CAREERS



PHOTOS © LINDA DOANE



A REPORT BY THE LOUISVILLE URBAN LEAGUE



Louisville
Urban League

*Empowering People.
Changing Lives.*



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BUILDING AN ARENA

WHILE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE FUTURE

Innovative program puts local people, including women and minorities, to work

The dazzling new KFC Yum! Center is one of the most impressive buildings erected in Louisville in decades. The 22,000-seat arena will showcase sporting events, concerts, conventions and more in world-class style and comfort. The \$238 million facility will turbocharge a downtown that was already undergoing a strong rebirth.

Equally impressive is what's being built behind this magnificent edifice: a landmark program to recruit, train and employ local minorities and women in construction jobs – not just on the arena, but on major projects all over the metro area well into the future. The program is also building better relations among groups and individuals with vastly different viewpoints. And for those individuals who seize this unique opportunity, the program is building careers as well.

The program, called the KentuckianaWorks Construction Pipeline Project, is the result of an unprecedented public-private

partnership led by the Louisville Urban League. The Pipeline so far has trained 293 candidates on construction skills and placed 111 of them in jobs, including 35 on the arena. The average wage for these placements is \$15.25 per hour, more than double the minimum wage. Men and women who might otherwise be bouncing from one dead-end job to another, or drawing unemployment, are now finding hope, providing for their families, and discovering new meaning in their lives.

“If I can make it, I swear to you, anybody can,” said Jemiah Clay, who was trained by the program and found his first contributions to the world of work as an ironworker helping construct the arena. “I’ve never had a job in my life. My résumé started after the Pipeline program.”

PIPELINE PROJECT BY THE NUMBERS

293

CANDIDATES COMPLETED TRAINING

111

CANDIDATES PLACED INTO EMPLOYMENT INCLUDING:

12

WOMEN

95

MINORITIES



PARTNERS GO TO WORK

The Construction Pipeline Project represents an extraordinary convergence of forces, uniting governors from both major political parties, Louisville Metro government, representatives of both labor and management, local nonprofits, a civil-rights group, and others in creating a new template for minority inclusion on major construction projects.

In late 2005, then-Gov. Ernie Fletcher created the Louisville Arena Authority and named Jim Host, former state Commerce Secretary and the man behind sports marketing for the NCAA, its chairman. Host and the Authority board quickly expressed their intention to promote the use of minorities and women in all phases of the arena project by establishing an Affirmative Action and Labor Committee headed by banker William Summers V.

The Louisville Metro Council reinforced those intentions with an arena-funding ordinance, later signed by Mayor Jerry Abramson, that set out ambitious workforce goals on the use of local labor, minorities and women, both in the trenches and in ownership positions. For example, 20 percent of the work had to go to minorities, and 5 percent to women.

The ordinance asked that the Louisville Urban League and the Justice Resource Center work toward those goals. But it was soon apparent that the arena project could serve as the launch of something broader – a training program that would help prepare underemployed people for work in the construction field.

To pay for the program, Host first persuaded Gov. Fletcher, a Republican, and later Gov. Steve Beshear, a Democrat, to provide discretionary funding out of federal Workforce Investment Act dollars. Initial funding in 2007 was \$1 million; the annual budget

since has been half that. KentuckianaWorks, a federally funded, regional workforce development agency, was tasked with administering funding for the program.

The Urban League – richly experienced in workforce development and other services for local minorities – then worked with organized labor to design and implement this new training program.

The Justice Resource Center and its founder, the Rev. Louis Coleman, visited churches, community centers and street corners in search of budding construction workers. Coleman died in the summer of 2008, but the Justice Resource Center remains involved in the Pipeline program. “This was one of his pets, getting people jobs,” says the Rev. James Tennyson, who succeeded Coleman as head of the center.



Meanwhile, Anthony Mathis, running the minority-owned Louisville construction company started by his father, Robert E. Mathis, teamed up with the lead contractor, Mortenson Construction, a Minneapolis firm with an excellent reputation for major sports projects, to build the arena. Throughout the project, these contractors proved their commitment to meeting minority participation goals.

The Greater Louisville Building and Construction Trades Council, representing 15 construction trade unions, worked with the Urban League to develop a comprehensive pre-apprenticeship training curriculum. Originally a 46-hour program, the curriculum now spans 120 hours, covering such topics as communication and team building, résumé writing and interview techniques; basic safety, CPR and first aid; math; industry awareness, blueprint reading and instruction on the use of construction tools.



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Joe Wise, secretary-treasurer of the council, says the program not only turns out quality workers, it has united people with diverse interests. “If you want to get something done in this community, or any community, it’s better for various constituent groups to figure out what we all have in common and pull in the same direction than figure out what we don’t have in common and work against each other.”

The recession has kept the Pipeline program from placing even more graduates into careers, but this too shall pass. “We’ve laid the foundation,” Summers says. “And when the economy gets back, we’re going to have a workforce that will be able and ready to take advantage of the opportunities that exist.”

Michael Gritton, executive director of KentuckianaWorks, says Pipeline graduates have an opportunity to get not just any job, but one with good wages, good benefits, and long-term stability. “What I like is helping people get middle-class jobs they can build careers around,” he says.

Each of the workforce goals on the arena project was met or exceeded, raising the bar for construction projects yet to come. “There’s never been a public project, or a semi-public project, built in the history of this state, that has had these requirements – and has lived up to the goals that were set,” Host says. “And that shows there’s no reason why this type of goal can’t be set for future projects like this that are done in the commonwealth.”

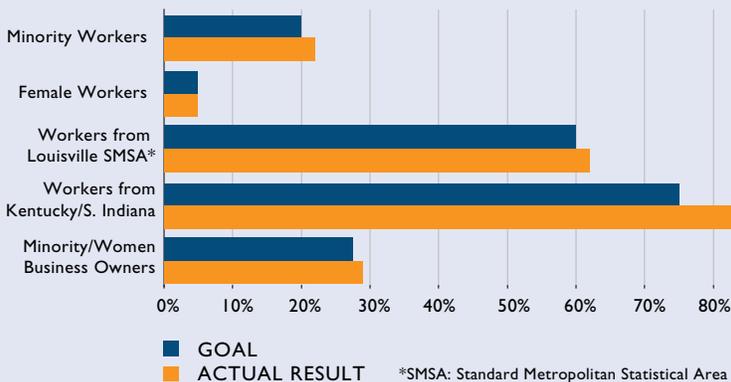
Ben Richmond, president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League, says the arena project should serve as the new normal for major construction projects. “The Construction Pipeline program started with the arena, but we believe it will live

on with many other projects, including the Museum Plaza, the reworking of the Haymarket area, the Ohio River bridges construction, and so forth,” he says. “It really is a ‘best-practices’ type of program that sets the standard for ensuring inclusion on a construction project.” ■

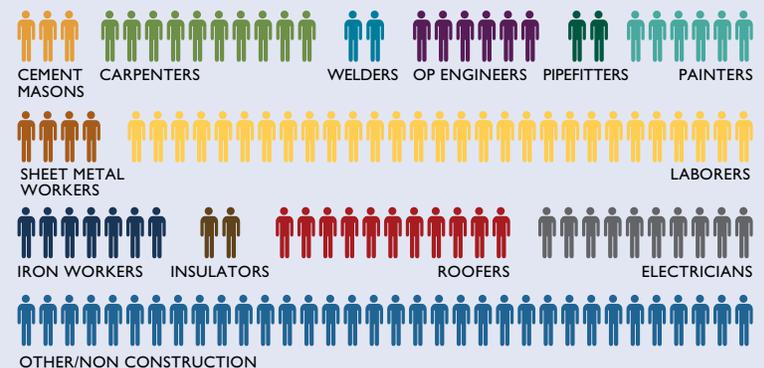
“The thing I’m proudest of about the arena project is not the bricks and mortar, but the cementing together of this community, and of this state, between minorities and the workforce.”

- Jim Host

ARENA CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE: GOALS & RESULTS



CONSTRUCTION PIPELINE: JOB PLACEMENTS



CONSTRUCTION PIPELINE: THREE SUCCESS STORIES



DAWGHAUS PHOTOGRAPHY

JEMIAH CLAY

Union Ironworker's Apprentice

"Just so happened I went to church, and I'm really not a church-going person. I went to church one day with my wife. God was like, 'Go talk to Me.' There was a gentleman there by the name of (Pipeline instructor) Frank McAfee, who said, 'Are you scared of heights?' And, I'm like 'No sir, I'm not scared of nothing.' 'You'd make a good ironworker.' I was like, 'What's an ironworker?'"

"Even when I work today, I mean till this day, I laugh to myself 'cause I can't believe it. There's people in my old neighborhood that don't believe that I work.

"I went to a car lot and bought a car off the car lot. I have a bank account. So financially, I am great. Family-wise, it's given me so much more confidence. I have five daughters, and I set the standard of what a man is. It feels so good to be able to do for my family. My wife, she's more confident in me. My kids are more confident in me. When they tell their friends, when they go to school and say 'My daddy's an ironworker' or 'My daddy helped build the arena,' I can see the glow in their face. So I mean all the way around the board, it's helped tremendously."

JESSICA ANN DRAKE

Union Carpenter's Apprentice

"I originally found out about the Pipeline program through the unemployment office. I went through the Urban League.

"I was very intimidated in the beginning because I know there are not a lot of young women in the field. But the program helped me to prepare for exactly what's going to be going on in the field and to know that it's hard work but it's rewarding and it pays off in the end. I'm currently employed with a reputable bridge crew in Simpsonville.

"The biggest thing my children like is, previously at Ford, I worked nights. I work in the daytime while they're in school so I'm there in the evening for them. We have a lot of family time together.

"I've realized I'm very, very strong. I have no family here at all. KentuckianaWorks, all the people that were in the Construction Pipeline program, I talk to them regularly. They keep in contact with me. They care."



DAWGHAUS PHOTOGRAPHY



HERMANSKI (HANK) EUGENE CARR

Construction Worker

"Without the Pipeline program, I wouldn't have got the job I have now. It got me this job. I'm making over \$25 an hour. And, I'm doing what I like to do. I love coming to work every morning because of that. I can do things with my children that I couldn't do before.

"I like working with my hands. I like building and creating things. I love construction. I like hard work – getting dirty and everything. The Pipeline training was really good. I just wish I had it a few years earlier when I was

in construction before. I ran into a lot of problems that was covered in the Pipeline program, you know, just workplace issues, what's expected, just kind of to give you a feel for what the construction industry is like.

"I've been able to change my life. A couple of years ago, I lost my apartment. I wasn't able to drive my car. I couldn't afford insurance on the job. I've fixed all that. I'm able to save money, pay my bills, take care of my kids again. I'm able to travel."

CONSTRUCTION PIPELINE: KEY PLAYERS



JIM HOST
CHAIRMAN
LOUISVILLE ARENA AUTHORITY



JERRY ABRAMSON
MAYOR
LOUISVILLE



WILLIAM SUMMERS V
CHAIRMAN
ARENA AUTHORITY AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION COMMITTEE



BEN RICHMOND
PRESIDENT & CEO
LOUISVILLE URBAN LEAGUE



REV. JAMES TENNYSON
DIRECTOR
JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER



ANTHONY MATHIS
PRINCIPAL
MATHIS & SONS INC.



MICHAEL GRITTON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KENTUCKIANAWORKS



JOE WISE
SECRETARY-TREASURER
GREATER LOUISVILLE
BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION
TRADES COUNCIL



JUANITA SANDS
DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
LOUISVILLE URBAN LEAGUE



ALICE HOUSTON
SECRETARY
LOUISVILLE ARENA AUTHORITY



JUNIOR BRIDGEMAN
MEMBER
LOUISVILLE ARENA AUTHORITY



IN MEMORIAM:

Very special recognition goes to the late Rev. Louis Coleman, who dedicated his life to opportunity and equality for all.

The Louisville Urban League thanks the following for their commitment to making this project a success:
Mayor Jerry Abramson • Louisville Metro Council • Louisville Arena Authority • Justice Resource Center • KentuckianaWorks
Greater Louisville Building & Construction Trades Council • Mortenson Construction • Mathis & Sons Inc.

Pipeline staff: Juanita Sands, Frank McAfee, Tim Murphy, Darrel Echols, Yvonne Morris & Ernestine Woods



Justice Resource Center



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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WWW.KENTUCKIANAWORKS.ORG

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