

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Addressing the Workforce Skills Gap, “Construction Ready” Training Program Expands into Augusta in May**

**ATLANTA, March 8, 2021** -- The Construction Education Foundation of Georgia ([CEFGA](https://cefga.org)) is expanding its “Construction Ready” program into the Augusta region beginning May 2021. [Construction Ready](https://cefga.org) takes Georgians through a free 20-day construction education program that ends with training, credentialing and job placement. The Augusta training facility will be located at Augusta Technical College. For more information and to register, applicants should visit - <https://constructionready.org/career-seekers/overview/>.

The expansion into the Augusta region is part of a major growth of the program across Georgia, financed in part by the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund (a part of the CARES Act). In August 2020, Governor Kemp announced CEFGA was selected to receive \$3.3 million to expand the Construction Ready program. The GEER funding supports broadband and connectivity extensions, mental health services, workforce training, childcare, and tech innovation.

“The City of Augusta is proud to be the next area of expansion and investment for the Construction Ready program. Being able to bring training and jobs to Augustans is extremely important when the overall employment of construction laborers and helpers is projected to grow 5 percent from 2019 to 2029, faster than the average for all occupations. A career as a construction worker offers good pay and a high likelihood of finding and maintaining employment,” says Mayor Hardie Davis. “The Construction Ready Program allows us to address the workforce skills gap and put people to work.”

Since 2014, CEFGA through the Construction Ready program has trained more than 1,000 workers of all ages for a successful career in construction. Successes of the program include:

- 97% job placement by end of training
- Average starting salary of \$12-15/hour
- 70% of participants employed with same company one year later

“We are excited to expand the Construction Ready program into Augusta,” says CEFGA President and CEO Scott Shelar. “There are construction jobs in the midst of this pandemic, and we need Georgians trained and certified to fill those positions across the state.”

The goal of the Construction Ready program is to help close the workforce skills gap. The Nationwide Workforce Initiative finds that for every five people that retire from the skilled professions, there is only one apprentice to fill the job. The lack of skilled workers is also a problem in Georgia as a shortage of more than 61,000 workers was reported in 2019. The shortage has continued through the pandemic. Closing this skills gap by educating more Georgians about careers in the skilled professions is CEFGA’s primary goal.

“Augusta Technical College is honored to partner with the City of Augusta and CEFGA to host the construction ready training on our campus,” said Dr. Jermaine Whirl, President, Augusta Technical College. “The college is also committed to offering participants access to complimentary programs of study that will enhance their career trajectory in the construction industry.”

“It’s great to see CEFGA allocating Georgia’s GEER funding so quickly in Augusta as part of the Construction Ready program,” said Georgia Governor Brian Kemp. “These are challenging times for our state, but we will continue to work around the clock to support our students and teachers, improve outcomes, and get hardworking Georgians back to work.”

#### **About CEFGA**

More information on the Construction Ready program and CEFGA can be found by visiting <https://cefga.org>. CEFGA is also holding weekly Facebook Live sessions to reach Georgians interested in the skilled trades. Every Tuesday at Noon, CEFGA’s President and CEO Scott Shelar and his guests have discussed a different aspect of the construction industry with the goal of educating students about career opportunities in the construction industry. All of these events are also found here - <https://cefga.org/k12-pipeline/instagram-live-summer-series/>.

The organization has also set up a career hotline for those interested in entering the construction industry. Georgians can text “careerpath” to 31996 and someone from the CEFGA career placement team will follow up with information on advanced training, apprenticeships and even job placement.

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