

**STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES**  
**Rebranding Construction as a Career**

**Background:** North Carolina's construction industry is experiencing a shortage of skilled workers to fill crucial positions. Misperceptions about the industry, coupled with a decades-long societal emphasis on earning four-year degrees, have had an adverse impact on construction companies' ability to recruit workers.

Recognizing that this worker shortage could have a negative impact on public projects such as roads and infrastructure, the General Assembly in 2017 appropriated \$200,000 to the NC Community College System to work with the Carolinas Association of General Contractors to raise awareness of construction as a rewarding and well-paying career.

Systemwide in 2017-18, enrollment in construction-related curriculum programs totaled 11,265. In 2018, there were 14,621 registrations in short-term training programs in construction trades. The NCCCS and CAGC would like to see increased participation in these programs, as well as in construction-industry apprenticeships and internships.

**The project:** Through a competitive process, the NCCCS selected Sally Johns Design of Raleigh to execute the rebranding project. The goal is to rebrand construction as a career, not just a job. Materials developed by Sally Johns Design will be used to attract middle and high school students and adult learners.

The agency's work has four components:

- Research and focus groups with high school students, community college and university students, young adults and construction workers to learn about attitudes and opinions concerning construction careers. Focus groups also included minorities, women and military veterans transitioning to civilian life. In addition, the agency tested concepts with these groups to gauge the potential effectiveness of messages and images. This work occurred from spring to fall 2018.
- Development of a toolkit of promotional materials that colleges and CAGC can use for recruitment. The toolkit is being reviewed by community colleges that have construction programs. When completed, the toolkit will be distributed to community colleges for their customization and use.
- Creation of a video aimed at "busting myths" about construction careers. The video is in production.
- Redesign of the Build Your Career logo and website, which provides information about construction-related careers and links to community college programs. The logo redesign is complete. The redesigned Build Your Career website (<https://buildyourcareer.us>) is scheduled to launch in March.

**Additional partnerships:** Because Sally Johns Design's bid for the project was only \$187,750, the NCCCS, with the State Board's approval, used the remaining \$12,000 of the appropriation to support Durham Technical Community College's construction summer camp for high school students in June 2018. The camp introduced high school students to a variety of construction trades through hands-on learning activities and demonstrations.

The NCCCS also has partnered with the Generation T campaign to drive 3 million students to community colleges nationwide. Funded by the Lowe's Foundation, the campaign is aligned with our construction rebranding efforts and seeks to change the traditional identity associated with construction careers. Generation T's website will be directing individuals to the appropriate North Carolina community colleges based upon the individual's location and career interests.