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Training in the Historic Building Trades of New Orleans: An Inventory and Analysis

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Urban and Regional Planning

By

Nyssa Hackett

B.A. Boston University, 2007

May 2011

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## Abstract

The unique cultural techniques of the historic building trades of New Orleans are currently at risk of being lost due to a lack of new master craftsmen and the demise of the current generation of master craftsmen. The purpose of this study is twofold: to analyze the historic transmission of the trades in New Orleans through the lens of workforce development and to inventory and analyze current programs that teach the trades. Analysis of historic training in the trades and best practices in workforce development inform an assessment of the strengths of current programs and their ability to enhance the supply of master craftsmen. Additional analysis of workforce development practices and programmatic strengths combine to illustrate room introducing career pathways and intermediaries into the current system of training. This system of training in New Orleans is fragmented and insufficient to truly enhance supply; however, programmatic strengths present opportunities for improvement.

Building Trades, Workforce Development, Historic Preservation, New Orleans, Cultural Heritage

# Chapter One:

## Introduction

*By creating sturdy structures, building tradesmen provide us with a reassuring context in which subsequent civilizing acts might flourish; culture commences from the sense of place that flows from their diligent command over mundane materials. What they fashion for us is nothing less than the context of our daily experiences.*

**--John Michael Vlach**

*In Raised to the Trades*

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina with the vast flooding and subsequent increase in blighted homes, neighborhoods throughout New Orleans were at the brink of losing their historic sense of place. The supply of master craftsmen available to properly restore the architecture so vital to the culture of New Orleans had already been diminishing for generations, but faced with further decline due to the dislocation and death of many master craftsmen in the post-Katrina environment, the supply of new master craftsmen virtually disappeared. Although there have been various proposals since Hurricane Katrina to create a new pool of master craftsmen through training programs, training in the building trades in New Orleans is currently a disjointed system that has varying success and limited relation to the historic means of transmitting the trades. Without an adequate system of training in the building trades, New Orleans will be left without future generations of master craftsmen to preserve and restore the cultural fabric of the city.

The traditional method of passing the building trades to new generations of master craftsmen in New Orleans has broken down leaving the technical and cultural knowledge of the trades on the verge of disappearing. While technical schools and unions did play a role in the formation of the trades, the most vital aspect of the creation and transmission of the building



trades was the existence of both strong community and familial networks. The familial networks functioned as a path for education in a specific trade with the master craftsmen acting as the gatekeepers of all cultural and technical knowledge of a trade. Access to this knowledge was generally only provided through direct familial ties amongst male descendants of a trade family. Master craftsmen provided access through apprenticeships that not only taught the techniques of the trade, but also transmitted any soft skills necessary for career success. Master craftsmen were well established in the New Orleans community and had direct ties with employers. These links to employers provided both a chance for apprentices to understand how to act on the job site and a direct link between the supply of and the demand for skilled labor. The links between supply and demand existed both in the formal and informal economies through formal contracts with firms and through informal bartering with friends or neighbors. The existence of clear paths into apprenticeships through familial ties, direct links to employers, and room for career advancement through ongoing training combined to create distinct career ladders and pathways for family members interested in the trades. This apprenticeship system not only functioned as a method to preserve the technical skills of each trade, but also presented an opportunity for innovation and creativity as male family members were brought in at an early age and encouraged to try their own hand at the family trades.

Networks of master craftsmen were connected through strong neighborhood ties created by craftsmen from a variety of trades living within the same community. These networks of master craftsmen from various fields created an opportunity for collaboration and the development of an informal economy in the trades. Master craftsmen of different trades would barter their skills to construct and renovate each others' homes. This bartering system not only created an informal economy where one man's work could be traded for another man's work, but

also fostered a stronger sense of community where members would come together to improve the neighborhood. This informal work allowed master craftsmen both to showcase their skill within their community and to enhance their skills and train apprentices in a less formal setting.

Neighborhood and community networks extended the reach of familial networks by providing more links to employment, access to social support, and informal settings to teach both soft and technical skills.

Unfortunately, these strong familial and community networks began to weaken in New Orleans and thus limited the ability to teach the trades to new generations. The initial demise of the trades was caused by a decreasing interest among younger generations of influential trade families. Familial networks were severely weakened as master craftsmen found it increasingly difficult to secure new apprentices amongst their family ties. These master craftsmen no longer had to act as gatekeepers to disseminate their unique skills or to protect family and trade specific knowledge as there were few interested parties trying to access this information. The weakening of familial networks destroyed the career pathways that existed within the trades. Without the ability to link prospective craftsmen to the gatekeepers of trade knowledge, there was no clear path to train new craftsmen let alone to advance an individual to master craftsmen status. As this system of training broke down and the supply of new master craftsmen dwindled, the supply of and demand for skilled labor became increasingly imbalanced and both the informal and formal trade economies were severely weakened.

Further demise of the trades was caused by the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina with the dislocation and death of many master craftsmen and the destruction of their homes and tools, which limited the ability of many individuals to practice their trades. The dislocation and death of master craftsmen, as well as the decreased pool of potential trainees due to population loss,

further weakened or virtually destroyed familial and neighborhood networks in the building trades. Furthermore, the imbalance between supply of and demand for skilled labor was further distorted due to the drastic increase in the number of blighted homes in need of historic restoration in New Orleans coupled with a decreased pool of master craftsmen and apprentices. In the five years following Hurricane Katrina, blight has decreased significantly and attempts have been made to start programs to train a new generation of master craftsmen; however, the number of historic homes in need of renovation remains high and the number of new master craftsmen remains low. With the traditional familial and neighborhood ties severely weakened, the networks necessary to train a new generation of master craftsmen have virtually disappeared leaving New Orleans with a fragmented system of training in the trades that is insufficient to teach the technical and soft skills of the historic building trades and to link supply of and demand for skilled labor in the trades.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is twofold: to analyze the historic transmission of the trades in New Orleans through the lens of workforce development and to inventory and analyze the current training programs in the trades in New Orleans. Analysis of the historic training techniques will be implemented to determine what aspects of these techniques can be replicated or emulated through workforce development programs. Analysis of current training programs in the trades will result in determining what gaps exist amongst these programs and what the strengths are of each program.

The two-fold purpose of this study is necessary to address how the current system of training can be improved to preserve an important cultural aspect of the city of New Orleans and to provide access to good jobs. Historically building trades in New Orleans were not only vital to

creating the architectural heritage of the city, but also in providing the opportunity for sustained musical and artistic expression. Many master craftsmen were also influential musicians who relied on their careers in the trades to pay the majority of their bills and sustain their ability to practice and perform as musicians. Similarly, many master craftsmen also masked as Mardi Gras Indians, an expensive endeavor that requires purchasing large quantities of materials to construct their suits. A career in the trades could not only fund the purchase of these materials, but also fostered a creativity that could be used in designing Mardi Gras Indian suits. Thus the building trades were a vital part of the creation of the unique culture of New Orleans and continue to contribute largely to the sense of place and branding of New Orleans.

Preserving the building trades of New Orleans is also important to help preserve access to good jobs in the city. Careers in the building trades pay relatively high wages and provide room for advancement with further training. Additionally, there is currently an unmet need for construction trade workers. Analysis of historic training and evaluation of the current training programs in the trades combine to demonstrate that the current system in New Orleans does not appear to be adequate to fully preserve the historic techniques of the trades nor to connect the supply of and demand for skilled labor in the trades.

In order to address how the building trades in New Orleans can be preserved and overcome the inadequacies of the current training system, three main questions will be investigated:

- What strengths exist in the current system of training in the trades in New Orleans?
- How can career pathways be incorporated into the system of training in the trades in New Orleans to advance training in the trades?

- What and where is the potential for creating an intermediary in New Orleans to emulate the familial and neighborhood networks that allowed for the traditional transmission of the historic trades to new generations of master craftsmen?

This research relies on published materials including books, archived materials, program websites and publications, journal articles, and university and research center publications to answer these questions. Additionally, interviews with program staff act as a supplement to programmatic information that is not easily accessible via websites or publications. I analyze the strengths of current training programs using established frameworks to compare current programs to both the historic method of training and ideal workforce development practices. In order to assess how career pathways can be incorporated into the current training system, I used research on career pathways within community colleges and high schools as well as analysis of local programs. Finally, I evaluate the potential for creating an overarching intermediary within the existing training system in New Orleans through research on intermediaries and how networks work within such intermediaries.

In Chapter Two, I will assess the history of the trades in New Orleans, explore research on current programs, and present prominent research on workforce development. Chapter Three will follow with a more detailed exploration of the research methodology used to answer the three research questions. Chapter Four will focus on drawing together findings from published research and interviews to answer the research questions and will offer recommendations. Finally, Chapter Five will conclude by offering suggestions for future research and address any implications of this study.

## **Chapter Two:**

### **Placing the Current System of Training in the Trades in Context**

Currently in New Orleans there is a lack of interest in pursuing a career in the historic architectural trades that are responsible for the renowned vernacular architecture of the city (Hankins, Hankins and Malansky). The lack of new blood in the architectural trades in New Orleans means a continued disappearance of the master craftsman and a limited ability to properly restore and replicate the city's historic architecture. The situation has worsened in the post-Katrina environment due to both the inability of many master craftsmen to return to the city and to the vast surge in the inventory of historic homes in need of repair. This imbalance between the small number of skilled craftsmen and the large number of historic homes in disrepair creates a need for increased efforts to recruit and train New Orleans residents in the historic trades. This review examines the historic methods for transmitting the trades in New Orleans and identifies national trends in workforce development in order to provide a framework for analyzing the current system of training programs in New Orleans that incorporate the historic trades.

National research focuses on the need of community colleges, vocational schools, union programs, and other training programs to maintain social connections and to provide direct connections to potential employers. Currently in New Orleans, there are three main types of programs that employ training in the trades as a form of workforce development: technical high school and college programs that provide intensive training in the construction trades; shorter training programs that focus on preparing individuals to enter the building trades or to move into apprenticeships upon completion; and separate apprenticeship programs that focus on detailed

training in a specific trade. Current programs in New Orleans appear to be lacking in both their ability to replicate the traditional social ties that supported the development of the trades and links to master craftsmen, union organizations, and other sources of employment opportunities.

### **Justifications for Revived Training in the Trades**

#### *Concerns Over the Demise of the Trades*

Various sources, both locally and nationally, outline the need for a revival of craftsmanship and a focus on specific architectural details and materials rather than simply an architectural plan. Many of these sources defend the skill of the craftsman by lambasting architects or construction workers. Sasser asserts that “anyone who has worked in historic preservation for any length of time can tell horror stories about exceptional historic buildings butchered through the application of heavy-handed treatments prescribed by the most highly trained and credentialed professionals, or point out jewels of restoration completed by amateurs with a sensitive eye” (p. 40). She believes that such heavy-handed treatments are the result of a disconnect between architects and the “actual physical process of building construction, repair, and maintenance” as well as of relying too heavily on plans and specifications (Ibid). The craftsman, however, is not only trained in a hands on manner, but also is, by definition, almost constantly involved in the physical act of construction or restoration. Historic buildings that were created by craftsmen trained in the minute details of their trades are more suited to restoration and repair by a younger generation of craftsmen who share the same attention to detail rather than to restoration by architects who rely on plans that will inevitably miss certain details.

Master craftsmen in New Orleans have not only been trained for generations in the techniques to create and restore the architectural details of the historic architecture, but also in the specific materials that are appropriate and sustainable in the climate. Hankins emphasizes the

unique characteristics of New Orleans architecture and the ability of the master craftsmen to salvage such characteristics in the face of “unnecessary destruction by speculators and well-intentioned volunteer groups who are quick to gut” (p. 96). Hankins discusses the need for craftsmen to “train the horde of variously competent contractors and construction workers” that surfaced in New Orleans after the hurricane and thus to “preserve the contexts of the vernacular that supports the city’s Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, brass-band musicians and Mardi Gras Indians that are the soul of the city” (Ibid). In the aftermath of the storm it was often easier, if not incentivized, to demolish homes rather than preserve them and to employ the contractor or construction worker most easily obtained, not necessarily the person most skilled for the job. Hankins viewed these forces as a defense for creating a Construction Training Program that would support master craftsmen and encourage them to become “master trainers” to educate a new generation of craftsmen (p. 96). Although Hankins’ proposed program was never implemented, his article represents a strong, succinct justification of why funds should be invested to encourage and train craftsmen.

Concerns over the demise of the historic trades and the need to establish training programs to revive craftsmanship precede Hankins’ article by decades and span across the nation. The Whitehill Report of 1968 created by the Committee on Professional and Public Education for Historic Preservation dedicated an entire section, and subcommittee, to the conservation of the building crafts. The subcommittee believed that “prefabricated and disposable construction destroyed the general need for such craftsmen” and that drastic steps needed to be taken to ensure “their continuation as a living tradition [which] is essential to insure [sic] the authentic conservation of our early buildings” (Whitehill Report). One of the most important findings of the subcommittee’s work was that the group could not identify any training



centers for the traditional building trades that focused on preserving traditional skills, supporting existing craftsmen, and training new craftsmen. The findings emphasize determining how the skills of traditional craftsmen can be employed before focusing on training new craftsmen so as to ensure supply of craftsmen do not surpass their demand. The subcommittee believed that in order to improve the state of the trades nationally, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, with support from various other organizations, should create a “Conservation Council for Traditional Building Crafts” (Whitehill Report). The subcommittee suggested that this council create Conservation Centers for Traditional Building Crafts throughout the United States in urban areas where an “intellectual and professional climate provides opportunities for cross fertilization” and that have a stock of early buildings where the crafts could be practiced. These centers eventually would also contain training programs that would provide education in various levels of detail and would employ a group of craftsmen as trainers and educators. The centers would also focus on establishing pathways for students to move from training to employment and would hold a “Historic Structures Training Conference” (Whitehill Report). While these centers never came to fruition in the manner that the Whitehill Report envisioned, the report was an important document due to the fact that it represented the “first formal recognition by the principal preservation agencies and institutions of the vital role of the trades in the conservation of cultural heritage” (Sasser, “Why the Trades matter” p. 13).

Various influential reports on training in the trades followed the Whitehill Report and had varied results in terms of the creation of training programs. In 1971 the National Trust for Historic Preservation held the “Conference on Training for the Building Crafts,” which not only reiterated the commitment to the building crafts found in the Whitehill Report, but also called for organizations such as the National Park Service (NPS) and the National Trust to establish

preservation trades training programs (Sasser, “Why the Trades Matter”). A series of evaluations of the building trades by both of these organizations continued until 1977 when the NPS established the Williamsport Preservation Training Center in Williamsport, Maryland, which still exists today in the form of the NPS Historic Preservation Training Center in Frederick, Maryland (Ibid). While this training center has remained a vital institute for training in the trades, the program is small in size and scope and does not begin to approach the ambitious recommendations of the Whitehill Report. The U.S. Congressional Office of Technology Assessment produced the *Technologies for Prehistoric and Historic Preservation* report in 1986 that resulted in the creation of the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training housed in Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana in the form of both a Bachelor’s and Master’s program in Heritage Resources (Sasser, “Why the Trades Matter”; Guin). While this report did result in a functional program that served “to advance the art, craft, and science of historic preservation in the fields of archeology, historic architecture, historic landscapes, objects and materials conservation, and interpretation,” the program was eliminated by the Louisiana’s Board of Supervisors in higher education in the summer of 2010 (Sasser, “Why the Trades Matter”; Guin).

The *Employment Strategies for the Restoration Arts: Craft Training in the Service of Historic Preservation* symposium report was another influential report on the loss of trained craftsmen that called for the revival of crafts training. This report was the product of a symposium of the same name held in 1993 in New York by the Worlds Monument Fund (WMF). While the motivation behind the symposium was based on the state of the crafts in New York City, the issues discussed, programs highlighted, and recommendations made can both apply to and advance the state of the trades in any city in the nation. The report discusses using

historic preservation and the crafts as a way to address unemployed youth, to create more career opportunities amongst minorities, and to repair historic homes to relieve housing shortages. The symposium and report present summaries of many successful programs that implement training in the crafts and construction trades, some of which still exist today. The participants of the symposium identified several barriers to gaining wide spread acceptance for training in the crafts and historic preservation including that the crafts are often not considered a valid career path by many educators or guidance counselors, that questions abound regarding the extent of demand for skilled craftsmen, and that historic preservation is often seen as an elitist activity (WMF). Public officials and several private individuals involved in historic preservation recommended that those looking to fund training programs in historic preservation and architectural trades should advertise such programs for their ability to create jobs and economic benefits.

#### *Employing the Arts as an Economic Development Tool*

While the 1968 Whitehill Report and subsequent investigations recognized the ability to employ the artistic talent of craftsmen to revive the field, Currid is one of many contemporary writers who recognize the potential of using art and culture in general to revive an economy. Currid focuses on the arts in economic development and includes a brief discussion of Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* to illustrate why the arts have become central in many economic development schemes. Florida's creative class, composed primarily of highly educated members, is the driving force of economic growth and relocates based off of an area's "quality of place" that includes art and culture. Florida's economy is driven by knowledge and human capital rather than by the production of tangible goods. Currid expands the role of art and culture to say that cultural industries are "the silver bullet to attract the skilled human capital that drives the post industrial economy" (p. 369). Cultural industries, thus, are not only important for their

ability to grow and strengthen a local economy in their own right, but also to act as an amenity that attracts new investment and economic development (Currid p. 369).

The ability of art and culture to attract new residents and new investment provides a defense for continued investment in the traditional architectural crafts throughout the United States, but especially in New Orleans. The unique and eye-catching vernacular architecture of New Orleans helps brand the city and draw in new residents and tourists alike. Master craftsmen are vital in preserving this rich architecture and preserving the New Orleans brand to help ensure that the New Orleans economy develops not only by strengthening the industries from within, but also by drawing in new residents and investment. Master craftsmen are also a vital part of the sense of place in New Orleans due to the craftsmen community's deep involvement in the brass band, Mardi Gras Indian, Social Aid and Pleasure Club, and Jazz communities in New Orleans. The recognized lack of adequate training programs, both nationally and locally, calls for a revived interest in New Orleans in dedicating time and funding to developing mechanisms for training new master craftsmen and preserving the unique knowledge and techniques of the trades.

#### *Justification for Training in the Trades in New Orleans*

In 2008 Greater New Orleans, Inc. identified gaps between supply and demands of construction workers in New Orleans that ranged from modest gaps between how many trained workers local employers required and the supply of those available. The largest of these gaps were seen amongst millwrights, electricians, structural iron and sheet metal workers, and other groups with general carpenters also facing moderate gaps, as seen in Table 1 (Wadley-Donovan

Table 1: Demand and Availability for Construction, Maintenance, Production, Extraction Jobs						
Occupation	Demand			Availability		Training Required
	Responses	Total Need	Average Score*	Median Score*	Imbalance**	
Boilermakers	2	19	1.6	1	XXX	Long on the job training
Carpenters	3	22	2.5	2	XX	Long on the job training
Carpenters, building trades	1	2	3	3		Long on the job training
Drywall and ceiling tile installers			1.8	1.5		Moderate on the job training
Electricians	9	30	2.5	2.5	XXX	Long on the job training
Helpers/unskilled laborers	7	36	2.7	3	XX	Moderate on the job training
Millwrights	4	21	1.8	1.5	XXX	Long on the job training
Painters, construction and maintenance	2	4	2	2	X	Moderate on the job training
Plumbers/pipelayers/pipefitters/steamfitters	6	35	1.9	2	XXX	Long on the job training
Structural iron/sheet metal workers	2	60	1.3	1	XXX	Long on the job training
Welders/cutters	9	101	1.9	2	XXX	Postsecondary vocational award

Source: Adapted from Wadley-Donovan Growth Tech, LLC and Younger Associates' *Labor Market Assessment of Greater New Orleans, Louisiana prepared for Greater New Orleans, Inc* (2008). \* 5=plentiful, 1=unavailable; \*\* X=modest gap, XX=gap, XXX=large gap

and Younger Associates).<sup>1</sup> These data present the opportunity to gain an understanding of which occupations are lacking the skilled labor necessary to fill the demand. Of particular interest is the large gap identified for millwrights, one of the traditional building trade occupations in New Orleans. As identified by Wadley-Donovan and Younger Associates, to become a millwright

<sup>1</sup> The demand may be slightly skewed due to the fact that data collection depended upon employer responses, did not comprehensively account for all employer demand, and included production and extraction jobs within some of the occupational categories.

involves long on the job training. The combination of a large extent of training necessary and a large gap between supply of and demand for skilled labor provides a justification for a focus on workforce development programs in the building trades in New Orleans.

<b>Table 2: Wages in the Construction Trades in the New Orleans Area, 2009</b>				
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Total # of Jobs</b>	<b>Median Hourly</b>	<b>Mean Hourly</b>	<b>Mean Annual</b>
Brickmasons and Blockmasons	200	\$20.78	\$20.43	\$42,490
Carpenters	2,650	\$18.55	\$19.28	\$40,100
Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	360	\$17.81	\$21.71	\$45,160
Construction and Related Workers, all others	120	\$14.17	\$17.44	\$36,280
Construction Laborers	4,670	\$12.14	\$13.08	\$27,210
First-line Supervisors/Managers of Construction Trades and Exaction Workers	2,270	\$25.66	\$27.27	\$56,730
Helpers-All Other Trades	180	\$12.60	\$12.39	\$25,770
Helpers-Brickmasons, etc.	130	\$12.31	\$12.46	\$25,920
Helpers-Carpenters	590	\$12.74	\$13.06	\$27,170
Sheet Metal Workers	770	\$15.10	\$15.79	\$32,850
Structural Iron and Steel Workers	440	\$16.80	\$17.85	\$37,130
Tile and Marble Setters	not available	\$14.86	\$17.00	\$35,350
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>509,460</b>	<b>\$15.15</b>	<b>\$18.85</b>	<b>\$39,210</b>
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2009 Metropolitan Area Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, New Orleans, Metairie-Kenner, LA				

In addition to gaps identified by employers, the Department of Housing of Urban Development Section 3 hiring requirements increase the demand for low-income construction workers and presumably increase the gap between supply and demand in New Orleans. Section 3

requires that “at least 30 percent of any new hires supported by certain public housing or community development funds should come from low-income households, with a preference for public housing residents if the funds are public housing funds” and that a percentage of contracting opportunities created by the development, usually ten percent, are given to contractors that live in public housing or are low-income individuals (Johnson and Savner). In New Orleans a number of HUD operated housing developments are currently being redeveloped or are slated for redevelopment in the near future, including the Lafitte, B.W. Cooper, and Iberville housing projects. The Lafitte Redevelopment Project is already drawing Section 3 workers, specifically from the Tremé area through the Sojourner Truth Neighborhood Center (Sojourner Truth Neighborhood Center). The demand created for low-income construction workers by Section 3 hiring requirements increases the need to create workforce development programs to train individuals in construction specific skills.

Not only are the building trades an important target for workforce development programs due to the fact that there is currently a mismatch between the supply of and demand for skilled labor, but the trades also warrant attention by workforce development practitioners because construction jobs are fairly good jobs. As shown in Table 2, the median hourly rate and mean annual income for the more skilled construction trade jobs approach the median household income for the New Orleans-Kenner-Metairie MSA of \$46,219 and fall above the median household income for Orleans Parish of \$36,468 in 2009. Table 2 not only demonstrates that construction jobs are fairly good in terms of paying near or above the median income for the area, but also that they are good jobs in terms of providing room for career advancement with increased pay with more specific skills and training. Skilled craftsmen such as cement masons make as much as \$18,000 more than general construction workers and almost \$20,000 more than

their presumably less trained helpers. These pay structures demonstrate not only that jobs in specific building trades are fairly well-paying, but also that the building trades contain career ladders that can be climbed by mastering a trade through further training. The existence of these career ladders can also be seen through the gaps between demand for labor and supply of laborers as explored earlier in this chapter. As identified in Table 1, there is a moderate gap for helpers and unskilled laborers. This moderate gap means that there is room for entry at low levels in the building trades, while gaps identified in the more skilled subsets of the building trades demonstrate that there is also room for advancement with further training.

### **Historic Method of Training in the Trades**

While the demise of the historic method for training in the trades in New Orleans is widely recognized and demands the creation of a new manner to transmit the trades to the next generation of master craftsmen, it is important to study the history of training in the trades to determine the strengths and weaknesses that should either be emulated or avoided in this new system. Exploring the history of training in the trades is also vital to understand what organizations may have the capacity to house an expanded program to teach the trades.

The trades were traditionally taught through three main paths: trade family and neighborhood networks, unions, and technical schools. Apprenticeships obtained through familial, or occasionally neighborhood, ties historically provided both strong and exclusive training opportunities. Union apprenticeships were important for their ability to link the supply of new craftsmen to the demand for skilled labor, but were often racially charged and were generally focused only on large construction projects. While the quality of trade school training was occasionally questioned, these schools provided an opportunity for those without a background in the trades to obtain exposure and training. The strengths of these historic training



methods, primarily through familial ties, allow for the creation of a framework by which to analyze the current system of training in the trades in New Orleans.

### *Role of the Family*

Understanding how trades were historically transmitted in New Orleans is important to develop a context for current training programs and a framework for addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the current system. While education in the trades took place in organized unions and trade schools, the development of the historic architectural trades in New Orleans primarily centered on Creole and African American neighborhood and family ties. *Raised to the Trade: Creole Building Arts of New Orleans* is one of the most recent accounts of the evolution of the trades in the city. Detailed techniques and a strong focus on quality workmanship were transferred from father to son, uncle to nephew, father-in-law to son-in-law, or between brother-in-laws. Families generally focused on one specific trade with the elder family member being recognized as a master craftsman. In his contribution to *Raised to the Trade*, Edwards describes the trades as “redolent with the pride of secret traditional craft specialization passed orally through many generations from father to son” (Hankins and Malansky p. 62). Close family ties allowed early exposure and hands on experience to younger generations as well as a certain sense of ownership of the craft. Personal interviews of master craftsmen provide insight not only into the specifics of how each craftsman was trained, but also into how a personal connection to the trades was formed. Earl Barthé, a master plasterer, explained that his father and grandfather “trained [him] to appreciate the work” and to recognize his trade as “precious work” from the time he was a child (Hankins and Malansky p. 24). Barthé viewed the ability to plaster “like a jewel, and it’s for you to preserve,” clearly illustrating both a sense of pride and of obligation to the craft (Hankins and Malansky p. 25). A sense of the crafts being viewed as an inherent skill

passed down through the generations is also present in the words of many of the craftsmen profiled in this work, such as Russell Plessy who views himself as “gifted to woodwork” (Hankins and Malansky p. 35). Family connections to the trades also meant a sense of “responsibility because of your last name, not because of your personality or your skills” and a motivation to succeed in order to live up to this family name, as explained by Allen Sumas (Hankins and Malansky p. 49). The traditional training in the trades through familial ties ensured that the specific, well-honed techniques of a family were preserved by direct transfer through various generations of a family. An individual could not easily obtain master craftsman status without the familial ties and social support necessary to enter into and navigate through the existing networks of master craftsmen. These networks were one of the greatest strengths of the historic transmission of the trades and factor in largely when analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of current training programs.

### *Role of the Neighborhood*

*Raised to the Trade* emphasizes the importance not only of the trades being passed down from generation to generation, but also on the function of the neighborhood in strengthening and ensuring the survival of the trades. The majority of craftsmen in New Orleans was either Creole or African American and often lived in close knit neighborhoods that housed a variety of artisans from different trades. Various authors in this compilation discussed the trades as an occupation that was not defined by the work week. Craftsmen would work at paying jobs during the week and would work in neighbors’ homes and community buildings on the weekend (Hankins and Malansky p. 134). Craftsmen from different trades would come together on the weekends and contribute their skill to build homes, churches, and other structures (Ibid). This collaboration not only served as a social event with work compensated with food and drinks, but also as a way to

further hone the craftsmen's skills (Hankins and Malansky). These social ties become vital to sustaining an art form and way of life (Currid). The family and community involvement central to the trades shaped a mere occupation into a distinct way of life and unique part of the culture of New Orleans.

### *Role of Trade Unions*

The trade unions also played a large role in shaping the development of the architectural trades in New Orleans. By 1900 there were thirty-eight American Federation of Labor organizations with a total of 5,908 members in Louisiana (Cook and Watson p. 82). These unions organized local craft workers and ensured a certain quality of work and craftsmanship. The Local 130, also known as the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, recognized that their union had the ability to “preserve the quality and dignity of their craft” by offering a competitive price for highly skilled workmanship (Cook and Watson p. 85). While there seems to be some debate regarding the effectiveness of the local unions to block non-union employment, the unions were able to accomplish a number of goals for local craft workers. The unions provided the ability to secure large projects for their members that added significantly to both to the strength of the unions and the employment of local craftsmen, such as securing the bid for the construction of many of the housing projects in New Orleans during the 1930s. Larger groups such as the New Orleans Central Trades and Labor Council provided an extra level of organization, provided “mutual support” to the larger trade groups, and attempted to enforce the rule that any worker on a construction site must belong to a union (Cook and Watson p. 85). The unions organized the local craftsmen into cohesive groups and were able to connect the supply of skilled labor with the demand of local construction projects, while the larger labor councils added another layer of protection to guard the rights and well-being of local trade workers.

Various aspects of the trades unions in New Orleans limited their ability to support local craftsmen. While the Central Trades and Labor Council worked to ensure that the large unions were adequately supported and fought against non-union workers working on the same sites as union workers, the organization refused to allow black unions to join the council. In 1901 a charter was granted for the Central Labor Union, which permitted membership for black unions, but also created a system of segregated trade unionism (Cook and Watson). The segregated system meant that there were multiple forces at work attempting to promote the interest of their member unions and most likely that these groups ended up competing with each other. The other main disadvantage of union organization in the history of trade labor in New Orleans was that residential jobs were generally too small to attract or encourage unionization. Shapiro explains that residential builders are generally part of small firms with high turnovers and thus have little motivation to unionize (p. 8). Many of the master craftsmen that were employed in small residential jobs were presumably better off utilizing neighborhood ties, family reputation, and word of mouth to pursue work rather than joining a union whose main focus was on placing union workers in large scale projects.

### *Role of Technical Schools*

*Raised to the Trade* also discussed the existence of technical high schools, such as Booker T. Washington Senior High. A number of craftsmen who were interviewed spoke highly of these programs, which were part of a segregated vocational education system that existed throughout the middle of the twentieth century (Hankins and Malansky). Trade high schools in New Orleans taught youth the skills of carpentry, bricklaying, and other types of masonry as preparation to continue into trade labor unions for further training through employment (Hankins and Malansky). Although a more detailed exploration of how the trade high schools functioned

historically needs to be completed, it is apparent that the curriculum expanded past pure technical instruction to include topics such as money management and voting, in the case of Booker T. Washington Senior High School (Hankins and Malansky p. 137).

### *Delgado Central Trades School*

The Delgado Central Trades School was created in 1921 using funds bequeathed by Isaac Delgado to the city of New Orleans to purchase land adjacent to City Park for the creation of a trade school “in which the boys of the grammar grades of the Public Schools can be taught a trade” (Stone and Gordon p. 22). Delgado served as “a substitute rather than a supplement to high school education” and performed “a function carried out by no other educational institution in the community (Stone and Gordon p. 23). The school opened with a class of 1,300 men and boys and thrived throughout the 1920s, but began to decline during the 1930s with the start of the Great Depression. World War II created an increased demand for the services provided by Delgado Central Trades School due to the need to train military personnel, which the school was contracted to do throughout the war (Haas and Massey and Associates p. 3). Delgado’s official history describes the school as meeting the needs for skilled training in aircraft construction and maintenance and, more important for the history of the architectural trades, in both the metal and woodworking trades (Delgado Community College). The trade school began to decline again during the 1950s both due to a lack of funding and decreased enrollment (Stone and Gordon; Delgado Community College).

In 1957 Tulane University’s report *Problems and Progress of the Delgado Trades School* was published, which Delgado’s official history outlines as “a survey of Delgado’s role and scope in a changing economy” (Delgado Community College). The publication of Tulane University’s report was the turning point for Delgado Central Trades School with both a

programmatic move away from the strict commitment to the trades and a name change in 1958 to Delgado Trades and Technical Institute (Delgado Community College). The report recommends that Delgado “be expanded to a technical institute at the junior college level and that its main function be to provide post-high-school educational programs for technicians,” but the report also emphasizes the need for increasing training surrounding the skilled architectural trades due to a projected increase in demand for craftsmen in the following period (Delgado Community College; Stone and Gordon). The authors clearly envisioned that the new Delgado Trades and Technical Institute play a role in the continued development of the trades; however, they also recognized the fact that “the development of the skilled trades in New Orleans [would] continue to rest primarily upon apprenticeship programs and informal ‘on the job training’” and that “no community in the United States has attempted to train all of its skilled workers in public trade schools or vocational high schools” (Stone and Gordon pp. 3-4). While the report recognizes the benefit to employers, unions, and future students of expanding the trades’ school, it also acknowledges the strong role that informal training plays in the education of the traditional trades in New Orleans and the weaknesses of the trade school programs in terms providing adequate links to employment and the greater craftsman community. Delgado played a large role in training students from youth to become skilled craftsmen from 1921 to 1957; however, from 1957 the school began to transition away from a sole focus on the trades to an ever increasing focus on technical education and its formation as a junior college. Today the college maintains both a building and construction management program and a building and construction technology program; however, these programs lack “an emphasis on artistry” that is essential to the true transmission of the trades in New Orleans (Bryan, “An Emphasis on Artistry” p. 37). The Delgado Central Trades School’s transition into a community college effectively eliminated

one of the historical methods to carry the historical architectural trades of New Orleans through the generations and left training in the trades primarily in the hands of trade families.

### **Hurricane Katrina's Effect on the Trades**

While the trades were already weakening by the beginning of 2005, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina struck a terrible blow to the state of the trades in New Orleans. Master craftsmen were displaced and those who were able to return faced damaged homes and destroyed tools. The city's historic architecture was in dire trouble as well. With over eighty percent of the city flooded, the already high percentage of blight of pre-Katrina New Orleans soared with an estimated 80,000 homes damaged or destroyed (BGR). With a total of 20 National Register Historic Districts in the city at the time Katrina hit, the large number of damaged historic homes becomes obvious (Bruno). Various sources outline the unique quality and craftsmanship of historic structures in New Orleans as well as the unique knowledge held by master craftsmen of what can be repaired, the techniques to repair specific features, and the skill to replicate historic architectural craft (Hankins and Malansky, Hankins). Examples of failed preservation attempts also abound illustrating the need to employ knowledgeable and talented craftsmen to ensure restorations are correctly handled. Hurricane Katrina's effects widened the gap between supply of and demand for skilled labor in the trades. This skills mismatch requires strong efforts to train a new generation of master craftsmen and link these new skilled workers with the demand for skilled labor.

### **Workforce Development and the Role of Ties and Networks**

This thesis relies on research on workforce development to determine best practices within the field. These best practices can be used to develop a framework to analyze current training programs, to explain the importance of career pathways and the potential for creating

them in New Orleans, and to explain the role of intermediaries and their potential use within the network of training in New Orleans. While not all of the training programs in the trades that exist in New Orleans are workforce development programs, each program can be analyzed through the framework of best practices to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the current array of training programs in the trades. Given that many of the training programs in the trades are simply that, and not workforce development programs, it is important to distinguish between workforce development and pure training programs.

### *Workforce Development versus Training Programs*

Wang and King define workforce development as “the constellation of activities from recruiting, placement, and mentoring to follow-up, of which the actual training is but one element” and as a system that “not only involves ‘production’ of skills but also enhances the trainee’s ability to learn and socializes them to working with others” (p. 24). Giloth elaborates on workforce development as the interplay of “substantial employer engagement, deep community connections, career advancement, integrative human service supports, contextual and industry driven education and training, and the connective tissue of networks” (“Learning from the Field”, p. 342). Pure training programs that lack this robust system of encouragement and support are not sufficient to guide unemployed or underemployed individuals into gainful employment, especially when these individuals have been marginalized for years. The prevailing concept of how labor markets work isolates low-income individuals who may not be able to navigate complex systems of hiring. Qualified job seekers are thought to arrange themselves in employment “queues” from which employers draw new employees; however, job seekers rely more heavily on “intersecting social and business networks,” which low-income individuals may not be able to find since “the social networks to which these workers and their prospective



employers belong fail to intersect” (Harrison and Weiss p. 35-36). Pure training programs simply provide the skills necessary to be qualified for employment without helping marginalized job seekers access the labor market or secure jobs. The goal of workforce development is to link the supply of workers with the demand of employers, not simply to increase the supply of skilled workers. To do this workforce development programs must be housed within “organizations that can break paths, open doors, insist on quality service, and negotiate collectively with employers and governments” (Harrison and Weiss p. 39).

### *Networks*

As seen in the various definitions of workforce development, networks are vital to the success of the workforce development program, specifically in terms of the participant’s ability to secure employment upon completion. The importance of social ties and intangible connections exists both within workforce development research as well as in a variety of works outside the realm of workforce development. For instance, although Currid’s exploration of networks is far removed from the workforce development literature it clearly relates to the wide network of social connections that helped form and strengthen the architectural trades in New Orleans. Currid begins this discussion by introducing Lloyd’s argument that the main problem of using art towards economic development is that those designing the development programs or methods do not understand how people interact with the arts on a daily basis (p. 375). Planners and developers often miss this level of personal interaction and thus cannot truly replicate the system through which cultural industries function. Currid explains that cultural industries and their labor pools center around three main requirements: a flexible labor pool, “the ability to establish reoccurring ties with various firms’ labor pools and resources, gatekeepers, and ‘certifiers,’” and the “instantaneous ad hoc nature of these transactions” (p. 377). These characteristics highlight

the difficulty of institutionalizing or truly replicating a creative industry to fit into an economic development scheme. While a developer or planner can draw connections to flexible labor pools or create arrangements with a variety of firms, gaining participation of cultural gatekeepers and certifiers can be a much more complicated social negotiation. Those individuals in a specific art or cultural industry who carry the ability to authenticate both production and techniques, such as master craftsmen who are able to transmit traditional techniques to a new generation, operate in a less formal manner than typical institutional leaders. Currid believes that since cultural and artistic systems employ more informal social ties to accomplish their ends, that “planning and development must aim to preserve and strengthen these relationships in the places in which they occur” (p. 378). Following this logic, any economic development program that would focus on the traditional architectural trades should place a large focus on maintaining and strengthening both the familial and neighborhood connections that helped transmit the trades through generations of New Orleanians. Given the decreasing interest in learning the traditional crafts within trade families in New Orleans, however, creating a new system of networks is a necessary component of training in the trades.

Extensive research has been done on how networks are employed within workforce development programs, with arguably the most influential research on the topic coming in the form of Harrison and Weiss’ *Workforce Development Networks: Community Based Organizations and Regional Alliances*. Workforce development programs must cultivate strong networks not only to assist low-income workers whose networks “fail to intersect” with those of employers, but also to compensate for low-income individuals’ lack of appropriate ties. Workforce development programs help disadvantaged individuals lacking appropriate networks and sufficient ties by fostering networks and ties within the community, industry, and

educational institutions. The best networks are those that are “not too relationally distant from actual employers” and those that place the workforce development organization in a central position that requires information to pass through it, which results in a stronger reputation than other network partners (Harrison and Weiss p. 38). Networks are a vital component of any workforce development program that wishes to guide unemployed or under employed individuals into a career, especially into a good career.

### *Career Pathways*

Another component that contributes to the success of workforce development programs is the existence of career pathways. Career pathways are defined as “a framework for connecting a series of educational programs with integrated work experience and support services, thereby enabling students and workers to combine school and work and advance over time to better jobs and higher levels of education and training” (League for Innovation in the Community College p. 3). Alssid defines career pathways as “one seamless system” with “all the steps--skills training, work experience and upgrade training--needed to prepare and economically and educationally disadvantaged worker for employment in the field and advancement in a career” (p. 4). Career pathways typically focus on targeting good jobs with high wages and high demand by “begin[ning] where the good jobs are and then work[ing] backward to creating connections to low-income communities and skill-building pathways” (Giloith, “Learning from the Field” p. 342). Career pathways are important due to a large degree of employer involvement in developing training curriculum and providing connections both to internships and job placement (Kazis and Seltzer). Career pathways are distinct from other sectoral approaches due primarily to their focus on establishing a bridge between basic education, more advanced academic education, and training in career specific skills (Alssid). This bridge creates a “vertically linked

set of learning opportunities” that gives low-income individuals a clear and direct route from unemployment or underemployment into a good job (Kazis and Seltzer p. 331). The League for Innovation in the Community College proscribes the “ultimate goal” of career pathways as providing “a seamless system of career exploration, preparation, and skill upgrades linked to academic credits and credentials, available with multiple entry and exit points spanning middle school, secondary school, postsecondary institutions, adult education, and workplace education” (p. 3). The combination of strong employer involvement and a clear pathway through varying educational opportunities helps to ensure that trainees emerge from the process with both the basic knowledge and the specific sector knowledge necessary to secure job placement and success.

Despite the strengths of career pathways to provide clear transitions through varying educational opportunities, links to employment, and opportunities to structure existing relationships, the career pathway approach demonstrates a number of limitations. The main limitations are that career pathways, like any sectoral approach, isolate individuals that do not have the basic capacity to learn the skills necessary to succeed in a specific sector and that career pathways are a theoretical model that may be impossible to fully implement within a flawed institutions (Alssid; Giloth, “Learning from the Field”). For example, sectoral approaches in areas such as the health care industry and technology intensive sectors may require a basic level of mathematic ability and understanding that may not be possible to teach in remedial courses. If individuals do not have the basic skills necessary to succeed in remedial courses, these individuals may not be able to advance past the remedial basic education level to more advanced academic or vocational training and finally into employment. Giloth asserts that the need for job seekers to possess basic abilities as well as ambition to succeed in employment may cause

sectoral approaches to “reinforce the very forms of exclusion that low-income people face in other parts of their lives” (“Learning from the Field,” p. 343). Career pathways provide the ability for capable individuals to move through educational opportunities into employment, but many disadvantaged individuals may not have the basic abilities necessary to take advantage of this system of training and support. The benefits of career pathways cannot, however, be overlooked and are important to analyzing how training in the trades can be expanded in New Orleans.

### *Intermediaries*

“Intermediary” is a widely used term that can be applied to any number of arrangements that work towards connecting supply and demand. Labor Market Intermediaries (LMIs) play three important roles in the labor market: “reducing transactions costs, building networks and managing risk” (Benner, “Labour Flexibility” p. 621). LMIs “engage in job brokering or matching activities, helping individual employers and job seekers find a match of appropriate skills, attitudes, interests, and needs” and can be grouped based on “the extent to which they try to influence factors of supply and demand” (Benner, “Building Community-Based Careers” p. 1; Meléndez p. 361). These groupings include the most basic intermediaries such as temp agencies, which simply create connections; placement intermediaries, which combine training, education, and social services to enhance supply; and progressive intermediaries, which work to influence both supply and demand (Meléndez). The most progressive intermediaries have the ability to “change the demand side of the labour market” by “organizing groups of employers to improve employment relationships and work practices” (Benner, “Labour Flexibility” p. 631). In practice, many workforce development programs function as placement intermediaries that help prepare job seekers for employment by providing training and creating networks to employers,

social service providers, and educational institutions. While any workforce development program can be seen as a labor market intermediary due to programmatic focus on connecting supply and demand of skilled workers, workforce development programs should strive towards meeting the more progressive roles of LMIs.

Giloth presents another definition of intermediaries as existing at “three levels of investment: between employers and jobseekers (including unions), between local investors and workforce projects, or between national investors and model workforce efforts” (“Learning from the Field,” p. 352). The first level of investment represents intermediaries that focus on “bridging supply and demand” and “engage community colleges, faith-based institutions, and public sector organizations in matching jobs, supplying labor, or creating employer demand” (Giloth, “Learning from the Field” p. 352). The most progressive examples of these intermediaries are able to utilize their networks to create “new occupations, curricula, and partnerships with other labor market stakeholders” to improve not only access to jobs, but also quality of jobs (Giloth, “Learning from the Field” p. 352). The second level of investment includes the Jobs Initiative created by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which focuses on improving regional capacity for workforce development by attempting to strengthen existing intermediaries (Giloth, “Learning from the Field”). The foundation chose six cities to participate in their Jobs Initiative, which “invested in specific jobs projects that connect job seekers to jobs” and “aspired to build local coalitions of businesses and other stakeholders to change the scale and sustainability of public and private investments in effective and coordinated workforce development” (Giloth, *Workforce Development Politics* p. 4). These six cities included New Orleans, which performed as the worst case scenario, and Seattle, which performed as the best case scenario. The third level of intermediaries is national workforce intermediaries that work to “make the presence of

community-based providers more visible in the national workforce policy arena” (Giloith, “Learning from the Field” p. 352).

The first two levels of intermediaries, as defined by Giloith, are the most important in terms of considering the potential for creating an overarching intermediary in New Orleans that works to connect the fractured system of workforce development and training in the trades. Both types of intermediaries, those that link supply and demand and those represented by the Jobs Initiative, place a large focus on networks and partnerships to maximize workforce development investments and capacity. The Jobs Initiative effort was unsuccessful in New Orleans due to “too many competing agendas for change [that] crowd[ed] out workforce development from public and civic attention” including agendas focusing on crime and public education and to a “legacy of exclusion and weak public institutions,” a lack of social capital, and an overall lack of civic capacity (Giloith, *Workforce Development Politics* p. 228). The initiative, however, provided a strong framework for workforce change. The initiative focused on three main principles: advancing low-income individuals to jobs with higher wages, higher retention, and room for career advancement, customizing investments to account for differences amongst job seekers, and working with a diverse group of partners (Giloith, *Workforce Development Politics*). The Seattle Jobs Initiative program, for example, utilized a strong “network of community organizations, community colleges, employers, unions, and government agencies to make all the links necessary to get people into jobs in targeted sectors of the regional economy” (Meléndez p. 400). Developing this diverse group of partners contributes to the ability of intermediaries to harness civic capacity and act as “agents of reform” (Giloith, *Workforce Development Politics* p. 19). Intermediaries have the ability to take advantage of existing momentum created by organizations working towards workforce change and to leverage this momentum to create

robust networks to train, advance, and place low-income job seekers in high quality jobs and careers.

## **Workforce Development Programs**

### *Workforce Development in Technical Schools*

#### **Community Colleges**

Community colleges possess a number of key characteristics that enable implementation and operation of strong workforce development systems. McCabe outlines some of these characteristics which traditional higher educational institutions have generally lacked, such as accessibility for individuals who have not achieved well enough academically to attend four year universities and for those “who cannot afford the psychological, financial, or other constraints of ‘going away’” (p. 19). Additional factors include that community colleges are generally located in easily accessible locations; have a mix of occupational, basic education, and academic programs; and have developed strong relationships with social service agencies and non-profits, industry and business sectors, and other educational institutions (McCabe). Alssid et al. explain that community colleges are logical locations for workforce development due to their ability to provide “accessibility to the community, low tuition, an open-door admissions policy, a wide range of educational and training offerings, and a continuing funding base” (p. 1).

While the continuing funding base is questionable with the current economic state, the other factors that enhance the ability of community colleges to form workforce development programs clearly connect to both Wang and King and Giloth’s definitions of workforce development. Most importantly, community colleges have strong ties both to the community, specifically the low-income and underemployed community, and to employers. These relationships mean that community colleges have the ability to create direct links between



trainees and employers and theoretically to link the supply demand of skilled labor. The existence of a mix of educational and occupational training in both noncredit and for credit formats gives community colleges the ability to provide basic adult education to those lacking sufficient high school education, provide academic skills necessary to function well in the workplace, and provide sector specific training. This combination of training helps to ensure the creation of a skilled worker who meets the requirements of an employer. Community colleges' existing relationships with social service providers as well as the existence of both career and emotional counseling services combine to provide an opportunity on campus to teach the social skills necessary to obtain and keep a job. Community colleges, thus, provide a unique opportunity to provide the varying aspects of workforce development in a single, easily accessible location.

Community colleges have long offered an alternative to the college preparatory and post-secondary education system, but recently research has outlined the potential to construct workforce development systems that link students more directly to employers through the support system of community colleges. Alssid et al. discuss workforce development in community colleges as a way to “prepare the unemployed to meet industry’s demand” and explores the use of career pathways as a way to create viable networks within community colleges (Alssid et al. p. 4). Career pathways work within community colleges to organize employment and training opportunities into a more fluid system by funneling employer resources, training providers, social service providers, and government groups through the college (Ibid). This arrangement is necessary, as Alssid explains, because “individually no one of these entities can offer the comprehensive services and support needed to assist low-income individuals in gaining long-term economic self-sufficiency” (Alssid et al. p. 5).

While the career pathways system does provide a good model for increasing the ability community colleges to serve a broader range of students, the system also faces some challenges in terms of implementation. These difficulties include a lack of communication amongst departments at the community college, difficulty in drawing students to pursue courses beyond the basic level or making them aware of what else is available, organizational inertia, and lack of funding (Alssid et al). In order to overcome such barriers, community colleges must first focus on creating a “bridge program” to link credit and non-credit courses and provide greater integration amongst departments, administration, and vocational and strictly academic pathways (Alssid et al. p. 15). Similar to Currid’s emphasis on the need to encourage maintaining strong social ties in economic development schemes employing the arts, career pathways and bridge programs must provide strong social support and create ties within the educational and vocational program to ensure students ability to successfully navigate and complete a workforce development program (Currid; Alssid et al).

In addition to housing career pathways, community colleges have also been identified for their unique opportunity to act as progressive intermediaries due to their “potential to influence the structure of employment” (Meléndez p. 359). This opportunity to influence demand comes from the fact that many community colleges are involved in economic development services such as providing technical assistance to improve business performance, coordinating with employers to ensure the college’s training meets industry skill needs, and providing contract training for specific businesses (Meléndez). Despite the strong relationships between community colleges and industry, community colleges are unable to truly influence demand without a network of partners and supporting policies at the state or local level (Meléndez). Community colleges require a large number of partners including employers to shape curriculum and offer

internships, support services to assist in child care and transportation, and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to assist in connecting job seekers both to the college itself and to support services as well as to supplement training (Meléndez). Incorporating local Labor Market Intermediaries into a community college's network of partners would also help to foster stronger relationships with specific sectors in the regional economy (Meléndez). By incorporating this diverse group of partners, a community college would expand its ability to influence demand and ensure graduates are placed into good jobs; however, to achieve this lofty goal, community colleges would need a greater dedication of funding and support from state governments.

### **Workforce Development in Louisiana: Governor Jindal's Plan**

In June 2009 Governor Bobby Jindal along with the Louisiana Workforce Commission created Louisiana's Demand Driven Workforce Investment Plan that outlines seven "reform initiatives," two of which are pertinent to the development of strong workforce development programs within Louisiana community colleges. The first initiative outlined in the plan includes "targeting and expanding community and technical college programs to prepare workers for demand occupations," which will improve "opportunities for workers...as training is further aligned with demand occupations and as training capacity is expanded" (Jindal p. 2). The main goals of this initiative are to restructure the Louisiana Community and Technical College System workforce development programs to more directly meet the needs of high demand sectors, to provide "Day One Guarantees" that emerging trainees will meet job requirements, to increase enrollment, and to create "centers of excellence" regionally (Jindal p. 9). Jindal also proposes important improvements to funding for workforce development in community colleges through expanding funds available from Workforce Investment Boards, a component of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, to include entire program funding rather than simply funding individual

students. Funding will be provided specifically for programs focused on training for high demand sectors. This initiative will also place a large focus on occupational forecasting to help ensure that students will emerge from training into a career path with job openings. The second initiative that affects the efforts within community colleges focuses on “cultivating alternative career pathways” (Jindal p. 2). The main goal of this initiative aims to employ marketing techniques to “educate students and their families on viable career tracks that involve vocational and technical education” and to increase participation in these career tracks (Jindal p. 9). Career pathways will contain “‘bridge programs’ for educationally disadvantaged youths and adults that emphasize basic skills like communication, math and problem solving” in order to advance these individuals to more intensive education and career placement (Jindal p. 44). Both of these initiatives can be implemented within the Louisiana Community and Technical College System to improve workforce development in the state and in New Orleans, although to date few improvements have been documented as an effect of the plan. While data on the impact of Jindal’s workforce development plan are not readily available, the plan is still important to illustrate the receptiveness of local government to career pathways. As identified by the League for Innovation in Community Colleges, state policy that is “fully aligned in order to reconceptualize education as a pathway spanning high schools, community colleges, universities, and workplaces” is vital to the success of career pathways (p. 9).

### **High Schools**

One of the major arguments for workforce development programs and vocational education comes from the recognition that the current high school educational system fails to meet the needs of a large portion of the population. Maxwell and Rubin explore the failures of the current educational system, movements towards reform, and alternative systems that may be

able to support a larger spectrum of students. They assert that leaders from both the private and public sectors “cite economic and labor market trends showing an increasing demand for workers with high levels of skills, and statistical evidence suggesting that our schools produce students who are unable to meet these requirements” (p. 12).

In the early 1990s school-to-work reforms were implemented to focus on increasing occupational and industrial knowledge and creating partnerships between schools and employers to “integrate high academic achievement with active learning in real world jobs” (Maxwell and Rubin p. 24). Three acts in the early 1990s--Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technical Education Act of 1990, and the School-to-Work Opportunity Act of 1994--also strengthened the focus on school-to-work programs. As conceived by these acts, true school-to-work programs were meant to guarantee success both in high school and further academia through providing students with “*general* human capital,” but were also meant to “impart the industrial and occupationally *specific* human capital necessary to succeed in the labor market” (Maxwell and Rubin p. 25). The school-to-work system is meant to improve upon the traditional secondary school education system by “eras[ing] the distinction between academic and vocational curricula through an integrative framework, new methods of instruction, and a heterogeneous student composition,” which would promote students to “gain workplace knowledge without reducing academic learning” (Ibid). This system encourages partnerships with businesses, community organizations, community colleges and universities and attempts to keep post-secondary education as a realistic option for all students while also providing technical education to prepare students to move straight into work. The school-to-work model can also be taken a step further to employ the “career academy model,” which

“coordinates curriculum and activities around a single occupation, profession, or industry that is of importance in the labor market” (Maxwell and Rubin p. 28).

Goldberger and Kazis identify a number of concerns from individuals both within and outside of the secondary education world regarding school-to-career programs and offer a proposal on how to minimize these concerns. Vocational educators fear curriculum change adding more academic intensity, administrators fear failing to meet larger academic goals due to devoting limited resources to “boutique” school-to-career programs, and the larger community also fears occupational learning being detrimental to academic achievement and standards (Goldberger and Kazis). Proponents view school-to-career tracks as helping to eliminate general track education that “prepares young people neither for college or for productive work,” as a way to promote general educational reform, and as a way to reengage students that have been “turned off” by typical high school education options (Goldberger and Kazis p. 548). The authors describe the implementation of school-to-career programs as a “balancing act” between the two goals of high educational performance and greater career opportunities and thus a similar balancing act between satisfying academic practitioners and employers (p. 548). The authors state that programs should promote high school students to “undertake serious career exploration” rather than requiring students to choose a career path, focus on “mastery of specific occupational skills within a curriculum emphasizing more general academic and technical learning,” and start training early on in the academic career in order to maximize both academic and vocational achievement and to prevent the risk of never using acquired skills that is associated with highly specific occupational training (Goldberger and Kazis p. 549). Goldberger and Kazis conclude with a proposal for a system that uses thematic learning, encouraging exploration of general interests to prevent “high-stakes career decision[s],” integrating work-

based learning, and encouraging integration between high schools and post-secondary education, since the authors believe that more specific occupational training should take place at the post secondary level.

## **Conclusion**

The decline of the trades in the United States has been well recognized since as early as the 1960s and the situation has become increasingly worse in New Orleans since the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Various sources have recognized the need to create programs to address and attempt to reverse the weakening of the trades. Research surrounding general workforce development approaches provides some guidance in terms of how to utilize technical high schools, community colleges, and community organizations in training unskilled workers in the trades. The importance of social ties arises in works by Currid, Wang and King, and other authors in terms of both building sustainability in a sector and helping disadvantaged navigate complex social networks. Overall, it becomes obvious that a successful training or workforce development program in the trades needs to recruit and assist students into the program, provide support and well-rounded education through the duration of the program, and to attempt to link graduates either with potential employment or further training and education.

## **Chapter Three:**

### **Investigating Training in the Trades in New Orleans**

This research relies primarily on secondary sources, but also employs primary research to attempt to fill in any gaps in the secondary research. In order to gain an understanding of the topography of available training programs in the building trades in New Orleans, I performed systematic searches of internet websites, newspaper archives, magazines, trade publications, and other print sources. I employed primary research in the form of interviews to gain programmatic information from staff members, when possible, to supplement these secondary sources. This inventory of training programs was limited to Orleans Parish, except in the case of Delgado Community College's Technical Division located in Harvey, Louisiana in Jefferson Parish as this is part of the greater Delgado system based in Orleans Parish. I chose to limit the geography primarily to New Orleans due to the fact that the historic building trades developed within New Orleans, specifically the seventh ward. The historic networks that allowed for the creation and transmission of the trades existed mostly within a geographically limited area, often as small as a neighborhood. While craftsmen worked outside of New Orleans, the unique cultural techniques of the trades were primarily taught in New Orleans and thus this research focuses primarily on how these techniques are being taught in the same geographic area today.

Systematic searches of these primary sources resulted in an inventory of current training programs in the building trades in New Orleans. The sample of programs discovered through this research ranges from proposed programs that were never seen to fruition to intensive training programs that require prior experience and extensive time commitments (see Table 3). While it is



important to consider prior proposals for training programs in order to gauge interest in reviving the building trades, this research will primarily focus on training programs that are operational.

<b>Table 3: Training Programs in the Trades in New Orleans</b>	
	<b>Current Programs</b>
<b>Short Term Training Programs</b>	Gulf Coast Career Construction Center Old City Building Center’s Workforce Development Program Isaiah Institute’s Workforce Development Program
<b>Technical School Programs</b>	Priestley Charter School of Architecture and Construction Delgado Community College/GREAT Program Delgado Community College’s Architecture/Design Construction Technology Program
<b>Longer, Intensive Training Programs</b>	Preservation Resource Center’s Prince of Wales Rebuilding Communities Programme/Building Crafts Apprentices

In order to determine what strengths exist in the current system of training in the trades, I analyze these training programs through established frameworks to compare current programs to both the historic method of training and ideal workforce development practices. I obtained research on these historic training methods through museum publications, archived materials, theses, and other publications. The framework that I developed from this research focuses on the strengths of the historic manner of transmitting the trades. These strengths include a strong relationship with master craftsmen, the ability to complete hands on training, a high level of skill attained at the end of an apprenticeship, a strong link to the community, strong links to prospective employers, and the existence of training in soft skills incorporated into training in the more technical aspects of the trades. I analyze each program according to this framework to assess their strengths and weaknesses. After this analysis, I employ research on workforce development programs and best practices within workforce development to further analyze these programs through the lens of workforce development. Best practices include strong networks

throughout the community as well as linkages to prospective trainees, the ability to teach soft skills, the ability to provide support systems for trainees, the existence of clear links to further education, and the relationship with employers or similarly the ability of trainees to secure jobs upon completion. While there is some overlap between these two frameworks, this overlap should not be viewed as redundant, but rather as emphasizing the most vital aspects of training in the trades that allow contemporary programs both to build off of the strong tradition in New Orleans and advance to embrace the best practices in workforce development to enhance both the supply of and linkages to the demand for labor. An example of this framework can be seen below in Table 2 and summary tables of program assessment can be found within Chapter Four.

In order to determine how career pathways can be incorporated into the system of training in the trades in New Orleans, specifically to take advantage of the demand for construction trade workers and room for advancement within the trades, I use research on career pathways within community colleges, high schools, and Community Based Organizations and combine this research with analysis of local programs. I draw best practices in terms of implementation of career pathways from a variety of sources including journal articles, university and research institution publications, and books. I then synthesize the best practices outlined in Chapter Two with the results from the analysis of question one. This synthesis will provide an understanding of which programs contain versions of career pathways and what potential exists for expansion of career pathways within training in the trades in New Orleans.

Finally, I determine what and where the potential is for creating an intermediary in New Orleans to emulate the familial and neighborhood networks that allowed for the traditional transmission of the historic trades to new generations of master craftsmen through research on intermediaries and how networks work within these intermediaries. Similar to the research

performed to answer question two, I then extract best practices for the implementation and performance of intermediaries in workforce development from journal articles, books, and university and research center publications. I then analyze these best practices, also outlined in Chapter Two, alongside the strengths and weaknesses of current training programs in New Orleans. Through analyzing national best practices as well as local strengths and weaknesses, I can determine the current potential for the creation of an overarching intermediary in the training in the trades of New Orleans.

**Table 4: Framework for Analyzing Current Training Programs in the Trades**

	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Undetermined</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Historic Transmission of the Trades</b>	Relationship with master craftsmen			
	Ability to complete hands on training			
	Level of skill attained at end of training			
	Link to the community			
	Link to prospective employers			
	Existence of training in soft skills			
	Opportunities for innovation and creativity			
<b>Workforce Development</b>	Link to the community			
	Link to prospective trainees			
	Ability to teach soft skills			
	Ability to provide support system (social support)			
	Existence of clear links to further education			
	Relationship with employers			
	Ability to secure jobs upon completion			

## **Chapter Four:**

### **Results and Discussions**

In order to meet the two fold purpose of this study, to analyze the historic transmission of the trades in New Orleans through the lens of workforce development and to inventory and analyze the current training programs in the trades in New Orleans, this research addresses three questions:

- What strengths exist in the current system of training in the trades in New Orleans?
- How can career pathways be incorporated into the system of training in the trades in New Orleans to advance training in the trades?
- What and where is the potential for creating an intermediary in New Orleans to emulate the familial and neighborhood networks that allowed for the traditional transmission of the historic trades to new generations of master craftsmen?

This chapter serves as an exploration of these three questions and a presentation of the results discovered through the research methodology. The discussion that follows attempts to place the current system of training programs in the building trades into the context of the history of the trades and workforce development best practices as well as to assess any room for improvement within this system.

#### **Strengths and Weakness of Current Training Programs**

The mismatch between supply of and demand for skilled labor calls for a thorough assessment of the current training programs in the trades in New Orleans to determine the strengths, weaknesses, and room for improvement. The current training programs in New Orleans can be divided into three main types of programs: short training programs, technical

schools, and longer, more intensive programs. While all of the programs profiled in this research feature some sort of training in the trades, many of them have other goals included in their design such as adult education and more general skills building. The analysis of these programs considers not only the precise instruction in the trades provided by each organization, but also how these other goals fit into the realm of workforce development and help prepare trainees for the transition from training to employment. While this study attempts to be as thorough as possible in terms of program analysis, programmatic information is limited in some cases due to an inability to gain further information from program staff.

### *Short Term Programs*

#### **Gulf Coast Construction Career Center**

The Gulf Coast Construction Career Center (GCCCC) is a short term program that was created in 2007 with the intention of increasing the supply of workers in the construction trades in New Orleans and of serving as a long-term investment in workforce development on a regional level in the post-Katrina setting. The program is structured as a pre-apprenticeship program with the main indicator of success being placement in a union apprenticeship. Trainees are paid ten dollars an hour to attend classes on topics such as labor history, tool identification, and safety as well as to gain an introduction to the trades taught at local unions provided by presentations by local union members (New Orleans Labor Media). The Gulf Coast Construction Career Center places a large focus on ensuring that students emerge with an understanding of the intensive qualities of union apprenticeships including the length of these apprenticeships, the emphasis on being drug and alcohol-free, and the emphasis on punctuality and attendance (New Orleans Labor Media). While Art Lujan, the former executive director of the program, identifies workforce development as a component of the training program, the program is not so much

workforce development as a transitional program that prepares unemployed or underemployed individuals for further training in a chosen career path (Arnold; Fitzgerald).

**Table 5: Gulf Coast Construction Career Center**

	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Undetermined</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Historic Transmission of the Trades</b>	Relationship with master craftsmen	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to complete hands on training			<b>x</b>
	Ability to advance to master craftsman status at end of training			<b>x</b>
	Link to the community		<b>x</b>	
	Link to prospective employers	<b>x</b>		
	Existence of training in soft skills	<b>x</b>		
	Opportunities for innovation and creativity			<b>x</b>
<b>Workforce Development</b>	Link to the community		<b>x</b>	
	Link to prospective trainees		<b>x</b>	
	Ability to teach soft skills	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to provide support system (social support)			<b>x</b>
	Existence of clear links to further education	<b>x</b>		
	Relationship with employers	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to secure jobs upon completion			<b>x</b>

While the Gulf Coast Construction Career Center does not directly educate students in the technical skills of the building trades of New Orleans, it does serve a useful goal of introducing individuals to the trades and preparing students to enter union apprenticeships. Even though the program does not provide access to master craftsmen as the gatekeepers of the unique cultural and technical knowledge of the trades, it can still be analyzed using the framework of strengths found in the historic training methods of the trades (Table 5). GCCCC does provide a relationship with master craftsmen by linking into the network of craftsmen contained within local unions. These networks are employed to obtain entrance into the trades in a similar manner as such networks were employed traditionally. Rather than using strong familial ties or neighborhood ties to gain access to education within trade family or union apprenticeships, the

GCCCC is using professional ties to gain access to union apprenticeships for their students. The relationship with highly skilled craftsmen is essential to the program functioning. Craftsmen make appearances in classes at GCCCC as representatives of a trade and its respective union to give students an introduction to the trade and what an apprenticeship for this trade would entail.

The GCCCC clearly has a link to master craftsmen within New Orleans; however, the program is lacking many of the strengths of the historic method of training in the trades. Primarily, the relationship with skilled laborers and master craftsmen merely acts as an introduction to the trades in a more theoretical manner and does not provide hands on training in the trades. Similarly, rather than providing the ability to access a high level of skill attainment within the training program, the program solely provides an introduction to the trades and basic training necessary to prepare for entrance into a union apprenticeship. The program also lacks the ability to foster innovation and creativity since the main focus is basic preparation including labor history and tool identification. The GCCCC appears to have a fairly strong link to other community based organizations as demonstrated through their partnership in the Green Collaborative of New Orleans (City Business staff); however, information on the program's link within the larger community that each of these organizations represent is more difficult to ascertain. Despite these weaknesses, the program is valuable overall in its ability to link prospective apprentices with master craftsmen and to potential employers through the relationships with unions as well as the existence of training in soft skills including appropriate behavior to succeed within union apprenticeships and future careers.

Although the Gulf Coast Construction Career Center is not a complete workforce development program, it can still be analyzed based off of the best practices for workforce development. As illustrated in the analysis using the framework of strengths of the historic

training in the trades, the GCCCC has the ability to teach soft skills necessary for advancement, clear links to further education through the union apprenticeships, and relationships with employers within affiliated unions. While it is clear that the program has some relationship with the community and to prospective trainees, given its presence in community collaboratives and the fact that trainees have progressed through the program, it is difficult to determine the strength of these links. The difficulty in obtaining current programmatic information creates doubt regarding the ability of interested individuals to access such information or gain entry into the program. The program shows great potential for preparing students for union apprenticeships and increasing interest in pursuing careers in the trades; however, if prospective students cannot easily gain information regarding the program, the ability to gain new students seems severely limited.

### **Old City Building Center**

The Old City Building Center's (OCBC) Deconstruction, Construction, and Historic Preservation Workforce Development program is a short term program that focuses mainly on adult education and teaching basic construction skills, but also presents opportunities to learn more trade specific skills. The OCBC's workforce development program was created through a partnership with the Louisiana GreenCorps, the Arc of Greater New Orleans, and the Alliance for Affordable Energy and primarily focuses on training disadvantaged youth between the ages of 17 and 24, including both formerly incarcerated and mentally disabled youth. The program places a large emphasis on adult education and assisting students in obtaining GEDs; however, it also ensures that participants receive training to meet national standards such as becoming Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) certified to meet the Environmental Protection Agency's lead law guidelines (Loebig). Instructors at OCBC primarily teach construction and



historic preservation through the deconstruction process in which students go out as a crew and remove any salvageable material from a home that is about to be demolished (White). The warehouse in which the students train and prepare salvageable material for resale also contains a small woodworking mill, which gives the students an opportunity to learn about one of the historic trades (White). The Old City Building Center’s program is a workforce development program and includes training in aspects of the historic building trades; thus, the two frameworks for analysis are especially useful in this case.

	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Undetermined</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Historic Transmission of the Trades</b>	Relationship with master craftsmen	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to complete hands on training	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to advance to master craftsman status at end of training			<b>x</b>
	Link to the community	<b>x</b>		
	Link to prospective employers	<b>x</b>		
	Existence of training in soft skills	<b>x</b>		
	Opportunities for innovation and creativity	<b>x</b>		
<b>Workforce Development</b>	Link to the community	<b>x</b>		
	Link to prospective trainees	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to teach soft skills	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to provide support system (social support)	<b>x</b>		
	Existence of clear links to further education	<b>x</b>		
	Relationship with employers	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to secure jobs upon completion	<b>x</b>		

The Old City Building Center’s workforce development program is shown to be quite strong when analyzed through both the framework of training in the historic trades and through workforce development, as seen in Table 6. In fact, the only weakness identified through this framework is that it is not possible to complete the program with master craftsmen status. The

program does provide links to master craftsmen at the union level through established relationships with AFL-CIO apprenticeship and at the commercial level through the sale of salvaged material to local skilled laborers. Hands on training is a vital part of the program and is required of students in the form of deconstruction to salvage materials from buildings slated for demolition, preparing salvaged material for sale, and working on projects within the Old City Building Center's workshop and mill-shop. Hands on training teaches basic craft skills, but also provides the opportunity to advance into more specific carpentry skills and millwright techniques. OCBC presents another strength through its relationship with the Mid-City Neighborhood Organization, which creates strong links to the community. The organization also has a wide range of partnerships, sponsors, and relationships with other non-profit and for-profit organizations that build diverse connections throughout New Orleans. The existence of the salvage store at OCBC, as well as the incorporation of local contractors into the training program, is another asset of the program in that it fosters strong relationships with local employers and provides opportunities to link trainees to prospective employers. The structure of the program, which pays participants while they are in training, creates an environment in which the soft skills necessary for job success can be picked up, such as punctuality and listening skills. The OCBC workforce development program also allows trainees the chance to be creative, such as encouraging students to enter the Green Project's Salvations furniture building contest where salvaged material is repurposed into artistic creations (Loebig). Overall, the program provides a good basis for introducing students to general construction techniques and fosters interest in the building trades.

In addition to presenting many strengths similar to those of the historic means of training in the trades, the Old City Building Center's program contains the attributes necessary to

produce a good workforce development program. The OCBC's strong partnership with the Louisiana Green Corps, as well as relationships with AmeriCorps, the Mid-City Neighborhood Organization and Job1, means that the program not only has strong ties to the community, but also has a wide range of venues from which to recruit potential trainees. The program presents both the opportunity to learn any soft skills necessary for job success and the ability to provide social support. The most important aspect of the OCBC's program as a workforce development program is that it is able to link students to either further education on the pathway to career placement or to good jobs. While Executive Director Dawn Loebig admits that the placement rate for graduates was very poor in the early days of the program, these rates have improved significantly as the program has matured. Loebig stated that of the 269 trainees that graduated within the first five rounds of training, about forty percent of these individuals were able to attain employment or placement in further training. While OCBC's program places a large focus on helping students obtain GEDs and adult education, Loebig also emphasized that the program is about finding out students' interests, training them within that interest, and helping them to obtain placement in an apprenticeship or employment in the specific field of interest. Graduates of the program have gone onto apprenticeships with the AFL-CIO and employment in pipe fitting, millworks, and other vocations.

### **Isaiah Institute**

The Isaiah Institute's Workforce Development Program targets young black men and other disadvantaged individuals to provide second chances through training in construction. This twelve-week program is funded by a \$400,000 W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant to "provide marketable skills" for youth in New Orleans and attempts to include all the necessary aspects of a workforce development program (W.K. Kellogg Foundation). The Isaiah Institute recognizes

the need to address emotional challenges and does so through a partnership with Successful Social Services, LLC (Louisiana Weekly). The Institute also recognizes the need to link graduates with employment and has developed a partnership with KBK Developers who are working on the B.W. Cooper redevelopment, which is supposed to provide between sixty and one-hundred new jobs to section three workers (Louisiana Weekly; Sanders). The program may alienate some potential trainees due to its strong religious affiliation. Given its fairly small class sizes it is unlikely to drastically impact the supply of trained construction workers. The framework of this program, however, appears to address the varying services that comprise comprehensive workforce development programs.

When analyzed using the framework of the historic methods for transmitting the trades, as seen in Table 7, the program demonstrates many strengths and a few limitations. Due to

	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Undetermined</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Historic Transmission of the Trades</b>	Relationship with master craftsmen		<b>x</b>	
	Ability to complete hands on training	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to advance to master craftsman status at end of training			<b>x</b>
	Link to the community	<b>x</b>		
	Link to prospective employers	<b>x</b>		
	Existence of training in soft skills			<b>x</b>
	Opportunities for innovation and creativity			<b>x</b>
<b>Workforce Development</b>	Link to the community	<b>x</b>		
	Link to prospective trainees		<b>x</b>	
	Ability to teach soft skills		<b>x</b>	
	Ability to provide support system (social support)	<b>x</b>		
	Existence of clear links to further education			<b>x</b>
	Relationship with employers	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to secure jobs upon completion	<b>x</b>		

difficulty in obtaining further information from program staff, it is unclear what, if any relationship exists with master craftsmen within New Orleans, if there is any room for innovation or creativity within the training program, and to what extent soft skills are taught. Published information on the Isaiah Institute's workforce development program was quite useful for analyzing the strengths of the program. The twelve-week program provides hands on vocational training that, although it does not advance students to master craftsmen status, appears to prepare students for immediate employment in construction. It is unclear to what extent traditional trade techniques are introduced into training; however, it is apparent that trainees receive basic building instruction that would be sufficient not only to prepare them for employment, but also for entrance into apprenticeship programs. The relationships with various clergy and thirty faith-based organizations imply strong links to the community and networks that can be navigated between congregations and program administrators. The Isaiah Institute has also developed a relationship with Sheriff Marlin Gusman of Orleans Parish. These networks could be useful both for recruiting trainees into the program, for providing social support throughout training, and for linking graduates to employment. Close knit ties between the Isaiah Institute and local clergy and congregations may function similarly to the networks that operated within the historic transmission of the trades; these networks function to provide selective access to gatekeepers who provide access to information that can be used to gain skills and access career paths.

When analyzed in terms of the best practices for workforce development programs, the Isaiah Institute's workforce development program demonstrates a number of strengths. A strong link to the community and the ability to provide social support through the relationship with Successful Social Services, LLC are great assets of the program and are useful for recruiting and retaining trainees. The direct connection to employers such as KBK Developers presents

graduates with the ability to gain employment upon completing the program. The strong community networks are also important in terms of presenting graduates with connections to a broader range of individuals who may have knowledge of job vacancies and connections to potential employers. While the links to employers and the community create a strong network to guide trainees to employment, it is more difficult to determine the ease in which potential trainees can enter into the program and gain access to these networks. While Sheriff Gusman and the affiliated faith-based organizations provide a route to access the program, those unfamiliar with these entities may find it more difficult to gain sufficient information and guidance to enter the program. The Isaiah Institute's workforce development program demonstrates many of the strengths of both the historic methods of training in the building trades and workforce development; however, it does not currently appear that this program is sufficient in size or scope to truly affect the supply of skilled workers in the building trades.

### *Technical Schools*

#### **Priestley High School of Architecture and Construction**

Priestley School of Architecture and Construction is a charter high school in New Orleans that focuses on project-based learning to teach both basic high school academics as well as craft specific skills to prepare students to pursue careers in construction and the building trades (Sokol). Entrance into Priestley School is “not contingent upon qualifying exams or even a preexisting interest in design,” thus the program is theoretically open to any interested student in Orleans Parish (Sokol). Priestley was founded as a charter school in 2006 with a class of thirty-five ninth graders and grew to a full four-year high school by 2009 (Priestley High School of Architecture and Construction). The curriculum centers on project-based learning that is worked into all subject areas and includes hands-on learning and application of skills (Sokol and Biagas).

Michelle Biagas, principal of Priestley School, asserts in her “Principal’s Message” that “students are empowered to become true leaders, and are taught to embrace relationships with industry professionals who can assist them with practical knowledge concerning their career paths and internship” (Priestley High School of Architecture and Construction). Students are taught to build these relationships through a number of projects with organizations throughout the city. These projects include participating in landscape projects with the LSU School of Landscape Architecture and Tulane School of Architecture, working with Perkins & Will’s architectural team to gather data needed for the redesign of the Priestley building, and studying with blacksmith Darryl Reeves at the Pitot House Museum to create sketches for a hardware restoration design guide (Priestley High School of Architecture and Construction). While Priestley is unique in its incorporation of trade specific projects and linking students to master craftsmen and local nonprofits, it is currently facing a number of challenges including being ranked academically unacceptable and lacking a permanent location (Orleans Parish School Board; Sokol). Priestley’s academically unacceptable ranking creates some concern regarding the ability to adequately teach the building trades given both the inability of school to meet academic standards and larger concerns over the sustainability of the school’s charter. Despite these shortfalls, it is important to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of instruction in the building trades at Priestley. As explored in Chapter Two, high schools are important components in strengthening vocational education as incorporated into school-to-career programs and addressing the skills mismatch at an early age and for this reason the potential of Priestley School cannot be overlooked.

When analyzed in terms of the historic training method in the trades, as seen in Table 8, Priestley demonstrates a number of programmatic strengths. Although the program at Priestley

does not produce trained master craftsmen, it does provide students with a strong introduction to training in the trades and thus prepares students for further education in the trades. Priestley has

<b>Table 8: Priestley School of Architecture and Construction</b>				
	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Undetermined</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Historic Transmission of the Trades</b>	Relationship with master craftsmen	x		
	Ability to complete hands on training	x		
	Ability to advance to master craftsman status at end of training			x
	Link to the community	x		
	Link to prospective employers	x		
	Existence of training in soft skills	x		
	Opportunities for innovation and creativity	x		
<b>Workforce Development</b>	Link to the community	x		
	Link to prospective trainees	x		
	Ability to teach soft skills	x		
	Ability to provide support system (social support)	x		
	Existence of clear links to further education	x		
	Relationship with employers	x		
	Ability to secure jobs upon completion			x

established relationships with master craftsmen to provide hands on training and education in specific trades. Priestley School also provides hands on training through Associated Builders and Contractors classes, including classes in welding during the Spring 2011 semester (Priestley). Priestley exhibits strong connections to various community groups and organizations and thus provides networks for students to utilize to find employment, gain experience through volunteering, and move onto further education. Networks exist between Priestley School and the Preservation Resource Center/Rebuilding Together New Orleans, the American Institute of Architects, Tulane University, the Society of Architectural Historians, James Weldon Johnson Elementary School, and many more organizations (Priestley). Priestley also has a relationship with ACE Mentor Program, which provides professional architects, contractors, and engineers to



mentor students and introduce students to field work, which will presumably present great opportunities to teach students the soft skills of what behavior is expected to gain access to and succeed in careers (Priestley). Priestley's numerous partnerships also provide opportunities for students to be creative and innovative, such as through design competitions that will be encouraged by ACE Mentors and design projects completed with the help of Louisiana State University or Tulane University's Architecture schools (Priestley).

Priestley School also shows a great deal of potential when analyzed through the lens of workforce development. Priestley's strong links to the community and employers as well as the school's ability to teach soft skills have already been demonstrated. These links to the community not only create networks for graduates to utilize in gaining access to further education or employment, but also provide opportunities for Priestley to recruit new students. The fact that Priestley's training in the building trades is housed within a high school structure means that students have access to social support in the form of school social workers as well as counselors who can assist highlighting links to further education; however, it is unclear if social workers perform in this capacity. Priestley has all the structural components of a successful workforce development program; however, it is unclear if Priestley is truly able to connect the supply of labor to the demand for skilled laborers. Although Priestley has strong ties with prospective employers, it is difficult to determine the skill level that students emerge with upon graduation and if the skill learned through Priestley's curriculum are adequate to obtain employment in the trades upon graduation. The concept of Priestley School and its stated goals fit well into both the school-to-work system and the potential for strengthening the current workforce of craftsmen in New Orleans by introducing young adults to the possibility of

pursuing a career in the trades; however, the school itself appears to need significant improvement before it can reach these goals and improve the state of the trades in New Orleans.

### **Delgado Community College**

In New Orleans, Delgado Community College has a workforce development curriculum, programs in construction technology and construction management, and partnerships with employers and other training entities; however, Delgado does not have a cohesive program for workforce development in the architectural trades nor a system in place to organize its multiple efforts in training in the trades. Navigating Delgado Community College's website gives little insight to the construction technology and management programs and shows no apparent overlap between the college's structured workforce development program and training in the trades. Delgado's college profile in the jobs section of nola.com lists "Centers of Excellence for Construction Trades and Shipbuilding" including "apprenticeship programs through union partnerships [with] Asbestos Workers, Carpenters, Ironworkers, Joint Electrical, Operating Engineers, Painters & Glazers, Plumbers, Sheet Metal, [and] Barbering" as part of the College's available programs; however, further research turns up few details on these programs (jobs.nola.com). The 2009 article "Building Crafts Apprentice Program Puts Restoration Skills to the Test" discusses "Delgado's new Traditional Build Crafts Apprentice Training Program," which turns out to be the same as the Preservation Resource Center's Prince of Wales' "Rebuilding Communities Programme [sic]" or Building Crafts Apprenticeship (Delgado Community College and the Preservation Resource Center). While it is obvious that Delgado Community College is involved in some sort of partnership with the Preservation Resource Center on this program, the exact relationship is unclear. The Preservation Resource Center has a clear application process for the program with participation in Delgado's Louisiana Technical

College as one of the qualifications for applying; however, it is unclear if there is a defined pathway within Delgado's technical college to guide students towards this program or through the application process.

The Architecture/Design Construction Technology Program is an Associate's Degree in Applied Science offered at Delgado Community College, but is neither a workforce development program nor teaches the historic trades. The program is worth analyzing, however, because of its location at Delgado Community College and the advantages associated with being part of a community college system. The program does provide an education in both architecture and construction and emphasizes both design and construction of new buildings as well as preservation and restoration of existing buildings. The program appears to be a good option for a formal degree in architecture and construction and may serve as a path to access further education; however, detailed programmatic information is difficult to obtain, which may hamper access to this program. This lack of readily available information can be a huge barrier to introducing individuals, who could benefit the most from workforce development and skilled training, to any available programs. Theories of social networks and the manner in which individuals find employment within the labor market can be extended to include how individuals attain placement in training and workforce development programs (Harrison and Weiss). Harrison and Weiss's statement that "there is practically no way that low-income, already socially ostracized individuals--no matter how highly motivated--can single-handedly reconstruct and negotiate a city's map of social and business connections" illustrates that many prospective trainees will be unable to navigate the system to discover what programs Delgado has available without some sort of social support and community outreach for prospective students.

<b>Table 9: Delgado’s Architecture/Design Construction Technology Program</b>				
	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Undetermined</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Historic Transmission of the Trades</b>	Relationship with master craftsmen		<b>x</b>	
	Ability to complete hands on training	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to advance to master craftsman status at end of training			
	Link to the community	<b>x</b>		
	Link to prospective employers	<b>x</b>		
	Existence of training in soft skills		<b>x</b>	
	Opportunities for innovation and creativity	<b>x</b>		
<b>Workforce Development</b>	Link to the community	<b>x</b>		
	Link to prospective trainees	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to teach soft skills		<b>x</b>	
	Ability to provide support system (social support)	<b>x</b>		
	Existence of clear links to further education	<b>x</b>		
	Relationship with employers	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to secure jobs upon completion	<b>x</b>		

Despite the lack of sufficient information, Delgado’s associate degree program demonstrates several strengths when analyzed through the framework of the transmission of the historic building trades, as seen in Table 9. The location of this program within Delgado Community College gives the program structural advantages due to both links to the community and to prospective employers. Although outdated, a newsletter from 2004 shows that the program itself has links with a variety of employers including local architects, designers, and landscape architects and that graduates have obtained employment at a number of architectural firms and construction companies (Delgado Community College). The difficulty in obtaining current information on the program, however, raises questions regarding the strength and effectiveness of established community and business ties. The program also provides opportunities for hands on training and opportunities for creativity, although much of this appears to be in design and the creation of scale projects. The program does not, however, appear

to have any relationships with master craftsmen nor does it allow students to progress to master craftsman status. The program also appears to be lacking the ability to teach soft skills.

The Architecture/Design Construction Technology Program at Delgado also shows a number of strengths when analyzed in terms of workforce development best practices. These strengths are primarily structural advantages of community colleges including links to the community and to prospective employers, the ability to provide social services, and the existence of clear links to further education. The program also provides students with a chance of securing employment upon completion, due to the facts that the program has ties to prospective employers and ties to graduates working within New Orleans and that students emerge with a recognizable degree from an accredited community college. While it appears that the program should have links to prospective students through Delgado's notoriety within the community, the program does not appear to be well advertised, which leaves some question to how well disadvantaged, underemployed, or unemployed individuals can gain information and access to the program. Delgado appears to have efforts in place to provide skilled training in the trades; however, without incorporating these into an organized career pathways system or workforce development program training efforts will not be fully effective at reaching unskilled workers.

### **Gulf Rebuild: Education, Advancement, & Training**

The Gulf Coast Workforce Development Initiative (GCWDI), a public-private partnership started by the Business Roundtable and later transferred to the Construction Users Roundtable, created Gulf Rebuild: Education, Advancement, & Training (GREAT) after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita with the goal of recruiting 20,000 trainees by the end of 2009 to learn the construction trades and assist in rebuilding the coast (Business Roundtable). The training program was designed by the National Center for Construction Education and Research

(NCCER) and was fine tuned based on recommendations from influential construction firms. In 2008 the 20,000 trained mark was reached and GCWDI decided to transition GREAT into the Choose Construction Initiative to expand this program to serve the entire United States. With this transition to the Choose Construction Initiative, the GREAT program has come to an end with the intent of leaving partner colleges with the tools to continue training programs in the trades. In Louisiana the partner organization that housed the GREAT initiative was the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) and more specifically the Technical Division of Delgado Community College in Harvey, Louisiana. Although the motive for locating this program outside of New Orleans is not clear, this location as well as the reliance on national craft training standards creates much doubt regarding the ability of the Technical Division to enhance the supply of skilled craftsmen to preserve cultural knowledge in the trades of New Orleans. This doubt arises in terms of the program's ability both to connect to the cultural traditions and techniques that were created in a fairly isolated geography across the Mississippi River and to attract potential trainees from New Orleans across this geographic barrier. Despite these limitations, the location of this training within Delgado Community College provides advantages in terms of both workforce development and implementing training methods similar to historic methods.

The most important aspects of the training provided through the Louisiana Technical College are the existence of connections both within the community and with potential employers, as seen in Table 10. These connections between Delgado Community College and the larger community and business world allow students the ability to tap into these networks to access information on employment. These networks also provide means for potential students to access information about the program through their communities. Although the program does

	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Undetermined</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Historic Transmission of the Trades</b>	Relationship with master craftsmen		<b>x</b>	
	Ability to complete hands on training	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to advance to master craftsman status at end of training		<b>x</b>	
	Link to the community	<b>x</b>		
	Link to prospective employers	<b>x</b>		
	Existence of training in soft skills		<b>x</b>	
	Opportunities for innovation and creativity		<b>x</b>	
<b>Workforce Development</b>	Link to the community	<b>x</b>		
	Link to prospective trainees	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to teach soft skills		<b>x</b>	
	Ability to provide support system (social support)	<b>x</b>		
	Existence of clear links to further education	<b>x</b>		
	Relationship with employers	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to secure jobs upon completion	<b>x</b>		

provide hands on training in the trades, as was one of the most vital aspects of the historic transmission of the trades, the scope of training available is limited only to carpentry. Additionally, the ability of this training to teach the unique techniques of the historic building trades is questionable due to the fact that trainers are certified by NCCER rather than being educated based off of local construction techniques. The heavy reliance on standardized national techniques for craft education also leaves some doubt regarding the opportunities for innovation and creativity provided to students. Overall, Delgado Community College presents structural advantages with the existence of robust ties and networks within the community and industry and the GREAT program provided legitimacy to the program by providing national accreditation from NCCER; however, training through Delgado’s Technical Division does not enhance the supply of master craftsmen nor does it appear to provide students with local technical knowledge.

Although the program at Delgado Community College's Technical Division seems to be lacking a strong connection to local craftsmanship and techniques, the location within Delgado provides several advantages that could make for a strong workforce development program. Delgado Community College provides strong links to the community, prospective trainees, and prospective employers and thus makes it simpler to gain access to the program and advance through training to gain employment. Delgado Community College also has the capacity to support trainees through school counselors and social workers. While it is unclear if training in soft skills currently exists, the community college setting should have the capacity to provide such training. Additionally, the fact that students emerge with a degree from a respected institution enhances the ability of individuals to gain employment upon graduation. The GREAT program did not, however, seem to truly enhance any of the inherent advantages of the community college setting. While the NCCER certification may enhance the legitimacy of the training provided in the trades, the GREAT program relied too heavily upon national knowledge and statistics. The Choose Construction Initiative will work to create a forecasting model to gauge where there are gaps in supply of and demand for skilled labor; however, this was not available for the GREAT program, which instead was forced to rely upon national data for determining which areas had the greatest skills mismatch (Greene). While the GREAT program had admirable goals of increasing interest in the building trades and assisting in the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the program's top down structure did not adequately address local educational needs or demand for skilled labor.



## *Longer Training Programs*

### **Prince of Wales's Building Crafts Apprentices**

The Prince of Wales' Building Crafts Apprentices at the Preservation Resource Center (PRC) is a nine month program that teaches students the techniques of the historic building trades of New Orleans. The program requires applicants to have prior experience in the architectural crafts and encourages applications from individuals who are attending or have attended Delgado's Louisiana Technical College, who are current members in a trade union, or who are permanent residents of the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans (Preservation Resource Center). The program is composed of both class work and internships in crafts including "stone masonry, timber, stained glass, ornamental iron and millwork, plasterwork, lime mortar and paint" (Preservation Resource Center). Also incorporated into the nine month training are both a four month work assignment with a master craftsman and a month spent in England for more hands-on work (Preservation Resource Center). According to current students' accounts, upon completion of the program graduates will receive a certificate in technical studies from Delgado Community College's technical school and program officials will attempt to link graduates to employment (Sanady). The program has a higher barrier to entry than any of the other programs explored; however, it also offers the highest level of training.

When analyzed in terms of the strengths of the historic transmission of the trades, as seen in Table 11, the Building Crafts Apprentices is a very strong program that results in adding to the supply of master craftsmen in New Orleans. The program demonstrates all the strengths identified in the framework of the historic methods of training in the trades. PRC's program demonstrates strong relationships with master craftsmen in New Orleans, which are utilized to provide short apprenticeships in each trainees chosen trade. While the Prince of Wales' Building

	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Undetermined</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Historic Transmission of the Trades</b>	Relationship with master craftsmen	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to complete hands on training	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to advance to master craftsman status at end of training	<b>x</b>		
	Link to the community	<b>x</b>		
	Link to prospective employers	<b>x</b>		
	Existence of training in soft skills	<b>x</b>		
	Opportunities for innovation and creativity	<b>x</b>		
<b>Workforce Development</b>	Link to the community	<b>x</b>		
	Link to prospective trainees	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to teach soft skills	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to provide support system (social support)		<b>x</b>	
	Existence of clear links to further education		<b>x</b>	
	Relationship with employers	<b>x</b>		
	Ability to secure jobs upon completion	<b>x</b>		

Crafts Apprentices program cannot recreate the social ties that resulted in the formation and strengthening of the architectural trades in New Orleans, linking students to master craftsmen through four month work placements provides intensive learning of traditional techniques and materials in a shortened version of a traditional apprenticeship. Program participants complete a large extent of hands on training, both through apprenticeships in New Orleans and England and through restoration projects completed within PRC owned homes. The apprenticeships in New Orleans benefit greatly from the program’s relationship with local unions, including the Local Carpenter's Union, which provides an opportunity to draw in journeymen to participate in educating and training program participants and provides access to a mill-shop (Bryan, “PRC’s Operation Comeback”). Apprenticeships also provide the ability to learn soft skills by working in the field with master craftsmen. The Preservation Resource Center has strong links to the community, to employers, to unions, and to Delgado Community College where potential

trainees can be drawn from. The wide range of affiliated organizations and programs that are working to support this apprenticeship program represents a success in organizing efforts and pathways for strengthening the historic trades. The Building Crafts Apprentices also provide great opportunities for innovation and creativity by encouraging students to create their own designs such as molds for decorative plasterwork. While the program is very successful in providing participants with the appropriate training to become master craftsmen and in preserving the unique cultural techniques of the building trades, the program does not appear to operate at a volume large enough to truly affect the supply of master craftsmen in New Orleans.

The Preservation Resource Center's Building Crafts Apprentices represents the most advanced training in the trades available in New Orleans; however, the program does not function at a scale large enough to house a workforce development program to balance the gap between supply and demand of skilled labor in the trades. Additionally, the application requirements of the program create barriers against unskilled workers, which limit the program's ability to serve the needs of disadvantaged youth through workforce development and isolate a large portion of the population. Despite this smaller scale, the program contains many of the strengths of good workforce development programs and works to advance skills of trainees to a level that they should be able to obtain employment in a good job upon completion. As mentioned above, the Building Crafts Apprentices program has strong links to the community, employers, unions, and prospective trainees through the networks contained within the Preservation Resource Center. The program also provides trainees to learn soft skills through apprentices with practicing master craftsmen and working on construction sites. It is unclear, however, if the program has the ability to provide social support or to highlight paths to further education in the trades. A lack of clear pathways to further education, however, is not a huge

weakness of the program since trainees advance to a high skill level and presumably will continue to learn as they gain employment in the trades. The Building Crafts Apprentices program is a great asset in the system of training in the trades in New Orleans; however, the program has high barriers to entry and cannot address the skills mismatch on the large scale.

### **How and Where Can Career Pathways be Created in New Orleans?**

As discussed in Chapter Two, career pathways are a vital aspect of workforce development programs that enhance the ability of these programs to draw in trainees, to connect the supply of and demand for skilled labor, and to promote continued learning and career advancement. Alssid defines career pathways as “one seamless system” with “all the steps--skills training, work experience and upgrade training--needed to prepare an economically and educationally disadvantaged worker for employment in the field and advancement in a career” (p. 4). Career pathways typically focus on targeting good jobs and involve high levels of employer involvement in developing training curriculum and providing connections both to internships and job placement (Kazis and Seltzer). Career pathways establish a bridge that creates a “vertically linked set of learning opportunities,” which give low-income individuals a clear and direct route from unemployment or underemployment into a good job (Kazis and Seltzer p. 331). The combination of strong employer involvement and a clear pathway through varying educational opportunities helps to ensure that trainees emerge from the process with both the basic knowledge and the specific sector knowledge necessary to secure job placement and success. Career pathways are usually housed within high schools or community colleges, but can also be run by employers or community-based organizations (Lekes, et. al).

### *Career Pathways within High Schools*

In order to incorporate career pathways within a high school setting, a school-to-work or school-to-career system would already need to be in place within the school. A well designed school-to-career system could essentially function as a career pathway, but school officials would likely have to overcome a number of barriers to implement such a system. These barriers, as described by Goldberger and Kazis, include educators fearing the difficulty of their jobs increasing with more intensive academic components incorporated into vocational education and fear from both administrators and the larger community that an increased focus on vocational skills will weaken academic standards and performance. Another major barrier is the high degree of risk that intensive training in occupational skills would never be used by students and would result in a waste of resources (Goldberger and Kazis). Additionally, a fully articulated school-to-career program that could function to prepare students equally for employment and further education would require students to dedicate themselves to a specific career at an early age. This dedication to a career at such an early age with little to no time for career exploration could potentially trap a young adult into a career path to which he or she is not fully dedicated. If administrators, the community, and educators could realize that the risk of losing interest in career training is outweighed by the value of the training provided, school-to-work training could be quite successful and provide great locations for career pathways to be implemented.

The fact that career pathways within high schools would require students to dedicate themselves to a specific career track at an early age can be seen as a disadvantage since it limits students' opportunities at an early age; however, it can also be seen as an advantage in terms of educating individuals in the historic building trades. By exposing students to the building trades at an early age and encouraging students to choose a path, career pathways within high schools

would emulate the dedication shown at an early age within the historic transmission of the trades. While it is nearly impossible to replicate the historic familial networks and recreate ties within trade families, it is possible to create networks within schools to master craftsmen, trade unions, and other training programs to illuminate career pathways and encourage a thorough education in the trades. The sense of familial pride and pressure to succeed cannot be recreated without a renewed interest amongst younger generations of trade families; however, career pathways within high schools could encourage students to choose a trade early and stick to that trade. Relationships with current trade practitioners as well as the large amount of time dedicated to vocational training in a career pathway system could help foster both a sense of pride and pressure to succeed in a career in the trades. The Priestley School of Architecture and Construction, despite its academic and locational challenges, has potential for the development of a career pathway system either solely within the school itself, or as discussed later, within a larger career pathway system that links multiple entities.

#### *Career Pathways within Community Colleges*

Community colleges are identified as potential locations for career pathways for a variety of reasons; however, a number of challenges must be overcome in order to incorporate career pathways into an existing institution. Community colleges can successfully house career pathways due to the existence of basic education, more intensive academic education, and vocational training as well as strong links to the community, existing relationships with business and industry sectors, existence of support services, and relationships with higher education institutions (Alssid; Kazis and Seltzer). Despite these strengths, individual community colleges may have internal weaknesses that prevent them from fully implementing career pathways and systems that truly advance low-income individuals through training and into employment. The

main weaknesses of community college systems come in the form or lack of coordination, both within the community college and within the larger community. Lack of coordination results in students in basic education not being aware of opportunities for further advancement as well as an inability to build the necessary partnerships to promote robust training and direct links to employment. Community colleges often suffer a lack of interest in workforce development and focusing on disadvantaged individuals as well as a lack of funding to implement career pathways (Alssid). Often community colleges are also plagued with strong institutional inertia that limits desire to overcome institutional, regulatory, and societal barriers further complicating any efforts to implement career pathways (Alssid). If community colleges can, however, overcome these challenges, these institutions can see benefits in the form of making programs more relevant to labor market needs, potentially increasing their funding, expanding their influence within the community and amongst employers, and providing new opportunities for students (Alssid).

Currently there is potential to house a career pathways system at Delgado Community College to teach the historic trades; however, as illustrated in the general limitations described above, there are many limitations that Delgado would have to overcome in order to implement such a system. The main challenges in terms of implementing a career pathway in the building trades at Delgado Community College are lack of coordination and communication and the lack of focus on the building trades. Delgado Community College already has a workforce development program; however, Delgado's workforce development does not include a construction or building trade component. The architecture and construction Associate's Degree at Delgado suffers from a lack of communication manifested through an inability to gain contact with program staff and appears to have little to no relation with the workforce development program. Delgado's potential for implementing a career pathway comes mainly from the

structural advantages of community colleges. Delgado Community College already has adult basic, academic, and vocational education in place as well as social services. Delgado also already has the networks necessary for successful workforce development and career pathways: links to the community, industry and businesses, and other educational institutions. Earlier in this chapter, it was illustrated that Delgado has a relationship with the Preservation Resource Center's Prince of Wales Building Apprentice Program, which is a great asset for a career pathway since this relationship already provides a path for further education in the trades for Delgado graduates. If Delgado could gather the resources to incorporate training in the building trades into their existing workforce development program and overcome communication and capacity issues, the college could be a great location for a career pathway program to guide students from basic education through to higher education or employment in the trades.

As identified by the League for Innovation in the Community College, "the ultimate goal" of career pathways is "to provide a seamless system of career exploration, preparation, and skill upgrades linked to academic credits and credentials, available with multiple entry and exit points spanning middle school, secondary school, postsecondary institutions, adult education, and workplace education" (p. 3). In order to serve this goal, career pathways must span multiple institutions with clear transitions between each successive level of training. If Delgado Community College could work to create a workforce development program in the trades and Priestley School could overcome its academic and locational issues, Priestley School of Architecture and Construction and Delgado Community College could collaborate to create a seamless career pathway system. Priestley is already performing the function of introducing students to the trades through industry days, classes in specific trades, and projects with master craftsmen. By enhancing communication and coordination between Priestley and Delgado, staff



from both institutions could work to create a clear transition from high school education and introduction to the trades into a more intensive workforce development program at the community college level. Delgado's existing relationship with the Preservation Resource Center's Building Crafts Apprentices program could also be enhanced to create a seamless transition to an even high level of learning. Although this system would not address training at the middle school level and there are a number of capacity issues to overcome, the connection of Priestley, Delgado, and the Preservation Resource Center would work greatly towards achieving the ultimate goal of career pathways: to provide a continuous system of skills advancement and education with multiple points of entry and exit.

### **What is the Potential for Creating an Overarching Intermediary?**

While creating a career pathways system to take advantage of existing relationships amongst institutions would greatly advance the state of training in the trades in New Orleans, there are a variety of training programs that do not fit into this seamless system that would benefit from an overarching intermediary. While all workforce development programs act as intermediaries due to the fact that they work to connect the supply and demand of labor, different programs represent varying degrees of advancement in terms of how they affect supply and demand. All of the programs outlined in this research function roughly at the placement intermediary level. Within this division, however, the programs range from the Gulf Coast Career Construction Center, which is barely above the basic level since the program simply provides an introduction to the trades and makes connections to union apprenticeships, to the Preservation Resource Center's Building Crafts Apprentices program, which has some ability to influence demand due to the potential creation of jobs both through their own renovations of properties and their close ties to employers. None of these entities currently has the capacity to

singlehandedly affect both the supply and demand of labor in the building trades. In order to truly improve the building trades sector and to overcome the current skills mismatch, these organizations must come together to leverage resources, build upon each other's momentum, and to provide a more navigable system of training in the trades.

In order to join together the multiple and occasionally repetitive efforts of the various training programs in the historic trades in New Orleans, robust networks must be formed within these organizations that could be managed by a single, overarching intermediary. Research on workforce development and programmatic information on the current system of training in the trades in New Orleans combine to highlight the potential for implementing a central intermediary to develop and maintain a web of networks with the various training programs. Recently in New Orleans a new initiative, the Greater New Orleans Workforce Funders Collaborative, has been created through the National Fund for Workforce Solutions and Jobs for the Future that may develop into a promising example of how intermediaries can work in New Orleans (Berni). The collaborative will work to achieve the principles of the National Fund, which include "building strong partnerships with employers, focusing on industry sectors important to the local economy, and treating employees and employers as equally important customers," and is meant to transform this network of partnerships into "a workforce development conveyor belt" (Berni). This collaborative, however, is extremely new and it is too early to determine how successful the collaborative will be in building a workforce development intermediary; thus, it is necessary to return to national research on workforce development to help determine existing potential for workforce development intermediaries. Research shows that the best locations for intermediaries with robust networks are generally within community colleges or community based organizations (CBOs) (Meléndez; Harrison and Weiss). Within New Orleans, the greatest

potential appears to be within Delgado Community College, although such an effort would require a large investment to enhance the workforce development program to include training in the building trades.

While Harrison and Weiss emphasize the ability of CBOs to act as intermediaries and the recognition that their individual efforts are not enough to affect change, the CBOs within New Orleans lack either the capacity or scale to act as overarching intermediaries for training in the trades. Harrison and Weiss highlight several scenarios in which CBOs benefit from the creation of strong interorganizational networks, including decreasing risk, increasing access to information, and so forth. The various CBOs that provide training in the trades in New Orleans would benefit from enhancing their networks due to the fact that “no single organization has the internal capacity...to get the job done, whereas the system or network might” and that “a single group is not sufficiently large, wealthy, influential, or powerful to attract a diverse pool of vendors of relevant service” (Harrison and Weiss p. 40). These CBOs in New Orleans are also driven to networking to gain legitimacy and to obtain greater access to information. While networks are useful to increase organizational capacity, small organizations that are lacking sufficient capacity to even perform at their desired programmatic level may have difficulty in determining appropriate networks to partner with and navigating complex relationships with network partners (Harrison and Weiss). The CBOs in New Orleans certainly appear to lack the capacity to develop and maintain more robust networks. Loebig of the Old City Building Center, for example, openly admits that while her organization has the desire, it does not currently have the capacity to expand its program (Loebig 2011). While the Old City Building Center has already established relationships with organizations such as the Preservation Resource Center, Phoenix of New Orleans, and Harmony Homes, when asked about links to Delgado Community

College and other groups, Loebig explains that she is the main source for outreach and has not had time to build more diverse relationships in New Orleans (Loebig). The Old City Building Center's workforce development program is strong and plays an important role in training in the trades at its current scope; however, this program does not currently have the capacity to expand to work towards improving the larger system of training in the trades in New Orleans. This appears to be the case for GCCCC, which focuses solely on connections with unions; Isaiah Institute, which is a small grant funded program with seemingly limited outreach capacity; and the PRC's Building Crafts Apprentices program, which seems to be too focused on a high level of skill attainment to be able to commit resources to networking to encourage a broader level of training in the trades.

Although Delgado Community College does not currently have a building trades component in their workforce development program, Delgado does have various structural advantages that make it a potential location for an overarching intermediary that maintains a network between the various training programs in the trades in New Orleans. As described by Meléndez, community colleges have the “potential to influence the structure of employment” primarily through economic development activities and well-developed relationships with business and industry (p. 359). At Delgado Community College, these economic development activities come primarily in the form of contract training with businesses where Delgado works with a business to create tailored training and thus has some influence in shaping further education of employees, advancement of employees, and the reputation of Delgado graduates within the business community. Delgado Community College's ties to industry present the ability to influence decisions and actions of industry; however, according to Meléndez their influence alone is not enough and community colleges must rely on a strong network of partners

to advance workforce goal. Out of all of the programs/intermediaries explored in this research, Delgado has the most organizational advantages and resources and thus is better suited to focus on networking. Creating robust networks with the other organizations that provide training in the building trades in New Orleans would benefit Delgado greatly. These networks would allow Delgado to attract new students and trainees who have obtained high school degrees from Priestley, GEDs through the assistance of the Old City Building Center, or basic construction skills through the Isaiah Institute and to encourage students to funnel graduates to union apprenticeships through GCCCC or into a higher level of training through the Preservation Resource Center's Building Crafts Apprentices program. Forming and maintaining networks with these organizations would also help Delgado's ability to access social services and promote job placement. Encouraging these various training organizations in the trade to collaborate through a central intermediary would not only mean that all of their resources and capacities would expand, but also that prospective trade workers would be able to access information and resources on training and employment in the trades with greater ease.

## **Chapter Five:**

### **Conclusion**

Training in the building trades in New Orleans is currently contained in a disjointed system of community based organizations and technical schools that do not sufficiently address either the gap between supply and demand of skilled labor or the impending loss of the unique historic techniques of the building trades of New Orleans. Training in the trades is provided in three main formats: short training programs, education and training through technical schools, and longer, more intensive training programs. All of these programs exhibit great strengths when analyzed through the lens of the strengths of historic training methods in the trades and through the lens of workforce development best practices. Despite these strengths, there is much work to be done in New Orleans to improve the state of training in the trades. The current system of training in the trades lacks clear pathways for students to access and advance through training to employment as well as the scale and scope to truly advance both skills attainment and preservation of these unique cultural techniques.

In order to explore how this disjointed system of training can be improved, this study began with research into how the trades were historically taught and how workforce development programs work to enhance skills and link supply and demand of labor. Best practices of both historic techniques and workforce development were used to consider three research questions:

- What strengths exist in the current system of training in the trades in New Orleans?
- How can career pathways be incorporated into the system of training in the trades in New Orleans to advance training in the trades?

- What and where is the potential for creating an intermediary in New Orleans to emulate the familial and neighborhood networks that allowed for the traditional transmission of the historic trades to new generations of master craftsmen?

Analysis of strengths and weaknesses found that the majority of programs in the city utilize a number of networks with employers, the community, and other community based organizations; however, networks between each training or workforce development organization were lacking. A number of organizations have relationships with master craftsmen; however, only in the case of the Preservation Resource Center's Building Crafts Apprentices program did these relationships result in the ability to train a limited number of new master craftsmen and preserve the historic techniques of the trades. The majority of organizations provided some degree of social support and training in soft skills as well as the ability to gain employment at the end of the program; however, only the Isaiah Institute is able to directly link supply and demand and use their partnerships with employers to advance participants through training into employment.

Analysis of career pathways best practices alongside the strengths and weaknesses of local programs resulted in a determination that both Priestley Charter School for Architecture and Construction and Delgado Community College have the potential to house career pathway programs, but that both schools would have to overcome great challenges to be able to implement such programs. Finally, analysis of the potential for creating an overarching intermediary both to link the multitude of organizations and to create a large web of networks resulted in demonstrating the potential at Delgado Community College to house such an intermediary. This analysis also resulted in an understanding that, once again, Delgado would have to overcome several challenges to become a progressive intermediary. These results demonstrate that if sufficient resources and political will were available, it may be possible to

implement change in the system of training in the trades and to combine the disjointed system into a robust network of organizations that provide clear pathways for educational and career advancement.

Despite the valuable results of this research, this study has a number of limitations and further research is necessary to gain a stronger understanding of how training in the trades functions in New Orleans. The main limitation of this study is that programmatic information was not always readily available and difficulties were encountered when attempting to gain further information from program staff. This lack of complete programmatic information has resulted in some of the program analysis being less thorough than originally intended. Similarly, the choice of programs to analyze was limited by the availability of basic programmatic details, such as the existence of the program. There may be other training programs in the trades that exist in New Orleans that the research did not account for. Further research would help develop a stronger landscape of training in the trades in New Orleans and the region. This research could include more in depth programmatic research, investigation through non-traditional sources to gain information on programs that are not public knowledge, research spanning the region to determine what regional efforts and forces are affecting the state of the trades, in depth research into union apprenticeships, and research into what, if any, affects Jindal's Workforce Development plan has had on workforce development in Louisiana, specifically in terms of the trades.

The results of this study show that training in the trades in New Orleans is currently a complex system that is difficult to maneuver and needs a great deal of work on connections between and scale of organizations. As it stands now, the historic techniques of the trades are at risk of being lost as only a handful of new master craftsmen are emerging in New Orleans. A



number of sources have addressed the need for revived training in the crafts both in the country as a whole and within New Orleans; however, proposals for robust training programs in the trades have not come to fruition in New Orleans. The failures of the Jobs Initiative in New Orleans leaves some doubt regarding the city's civic capacity and its ability to move beyond agendas focusing on basic services; however, the innovative environment that has emerged in New Orleans in the post-Katrina environment and the momentum provided by the seven training programs profiled in this study provide hope that systemic change can take place in the city.

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