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News Release

MANHATTAN HOUSING AUTHORITY AND UFM COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER AWARDED \$1.5M GRANT FOR NEW US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ‘YOUTHBUILD’ PROGRAM

UFM in partnership with MHA will deliver a novel community engaged construction (CEC) pre-apprenticeship training program that aims to address labor market shortages in affordable home construction and renewable energy sectors.

MANHATTAN, KS – To continue to expand registered apprenticeships, prepare young workers for good quality jobs, and strengthen the nation’s workforce to meet industry demands, the U.S. Department of Labor announced this month the award of \$90 million in grants to 68 organizations in 32 states to provide training and employment services. Manhattan Housing Authority was awarded a \$1.5 million grant for their *YouthBuild* application. It was the only award made in Kansas.

The grant will support pre-apprenticeships that will educate and train young people from ages 16 to 24 for jobs in high-demand industries including construction, for which *YouthBuild* will focus student learning on building or rehabilitating affordable housing in their communities for low-income or unhoused families.

Over the next 20 years, the Manhattan area will need in excess of 3,000 new homes built according to the City of Manhattan’s 2023 Market Analysis. The Manhattan-based *YouthBuild: Bountiful Bridges* program addresses regional labor market shortages for in-demand solar and renewable energy combined with new home construction and rehabilitation. The program will graduate 65 students during a 40-month period.

“The YouthBuild grant we’re announcing today will strengthen the local workforce and give Manhattan, Kansas a modern path forward for disadvantaged youth to develop or repair affordable housing in our community,” said Aaron Estabrook, Executive Director Manhattan Housing Authority.

Administered by the department’s [Employment and Training Administration](#), and supported by the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#), *YouthBuild* grants support a pre-apprenticeship model that provides disadvantaged young people with occupational skills training, employment services and educational guidance, with emphasis on green building techniques, including understanding sustainable building materials, solar panel installation, permaculture, weatherization processes and the use of [Energy Star](#) appliances.

“The local non-profit collaborations are what make this so special. Connecting **affordable housing** and **workforce development** is a game-changer for the community. This is a major win for the Flint Hills region. UFM is excited to be on the cutting-edge of community-engaged problem solving to help bridge the equity gap at a local level,” said Aliah Mestrovich Seay, Executive Director UFM Community Learning Center.

YouthBuild participants will divide their time between classroom instruction – where they earn their high school diploma or equivalency degree – and workplace training to prepare for postsecondary opportunities.

The next several months will involve Manhattan Housing Authority working with the Department of Labor and our local partners to revise and adapt any plans before officially launching the new YouthBuild program with UFM later this year.

[Learn more about the YouthBuild program.](#)

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