

Skilled Trades Initiative Expands Pathways as 35 Students Complete Carpenters Apprentice Ready Program

Big Picture Learning, EAS Carpenters and the Carpenter Contractor Trust celebrate CARP graduates and expanded pathways into union apprenticeships

EDISON, NEW JERSEY, NJ, UNITED STATES, August 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Katelyn Leppert didn't hesitate when she was asked about her future.

"In 20 years, I see myself as a strong union carpenter," she said.

Leppert, 18, a recent graduate of Elmwood Park (N.J.) High School, is one of 35 young adults recognized on August 6 by The Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters (EASRCC) for completing the Carpenters Apprentice Ready Program (CARP) during a ceremony at the EAS Carpenters Technical Center.

The graduation marks an important milestone in [Big Picture Learning](#)'s work with the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters (EASRCC) and the Carpenter Contractor Trust (CCT) to prepare students for union construction careers and help build the next generation of the skilled trades workforce. The initiative is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies as part of its \$90 million national skilled trades initiative designed to change how high school students prepare for and enter Registered Apprenticeships and high-wage, in-demand skilled trade careers.

"This graduating class is a window into the future of our field," said Anthony Abrantes, Assistant Executive Secretary-Treasurer for the EASRCC. "CARP gives participants the preparation and support they need to enter an apprenticeship, earn while they learn and build a meaningful career in the union construction trades. These graduates have demonstrated dedication,



New apprentices sign on with the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters, marking the start of their careers in the skilled trades.

discipline and a willingness to learn that will set them up for success."

CARP introduces participants to carpentry, jobsite safety, construction math, proper tool use, workplace expectations and the professional skills needed to succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship. The program creates pathways into the skilled trades while helping employers build a strong pipeline of highly trained workers.

The Carpenter Contractor Trust (CCT) is a labor-management organization that connects the EASRCC's highly trained workforce with qualified signatory contractors. CCT promotes the value of union construction and works with contractors, developers, community organizations and public officials to strengthen the regional construction industry.



Jonathan Young, EASRCC Political Director, congratulating a recent graduate

“

The program is a readiness program. They learn how to build a resume, handle an interview and come up with references. We also prepare them to take the carpenter's exam.”

*Robert Landy, Training
Director at the EAS Carpenter
Technical Centers*

“CARP helps ensure contractors have access to a skilled, safe and dependable workforce,” said Dan Wright, CCT Workforce Development Coordinator. “By introducing participants to the high standards of union construction and preparing them for apprenticeship, we guarantee our general contractors that these local graduates, who are heading directly onto live job sites, are highly disciplined, safety-certified, and ready to produce from their very first hour on the clock.”

During the 2026 program, held in Edison and Hammonton, N.J., participants also received training in job-seeking skills.

“The program is a readiness program,” said Robert Landy, Training Director at the [EAS Carpenter Technical Centers](#). “They learn how to build a resume, handle an interview and come up with references. We also prepare them to take the carpenter's exam.”

"This is exactly what Big Picture Learning was built for," said Elliot Washor, Co-founder of Big Picture Learning. "It felt like an NBA draft day — all the energy, the pride, the sense that something big was starting. These 35 graduates aren't waiting for their careers to begin after

graduation; they're stepping straight into apprenticeships and a craft. That's what the START Center model makes possible: schools, unions and industry coming together early enough that young people like Katelyn can see exactly who they're going to become."

Participants in the August 6 ceremony will now enter registered carpenter apprenticeships. The EASRCC also recognized the instructors, contractors, community organizations, families and program partners whose support helped participants complete the program.

About the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters

The Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters (EASRCC) is one of the largest regional councils of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBC), representing more than 42,000 skilled union carpenters, millwrights, floor coverers, pile drivers, dock builders, cabinetmakers, and other trade professionals across Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., Virginia, and West Virginia. The Council supports 2,500 signatory contractors through 25 Local Unions, 17 Training Centers, 15 regional offices, and nearly 4,500 apprentices. Through industry-leading training, strong labor-management partnerships, and a commitment to safety, productivity, and craftsmanship, the EASRCC helps develop the highly skilled workforce needed to build and maintain the region's infrastructure, commercial facilities, residential communities, and energy projects. As part of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, which represents more than 500,000 members across North America, the EASRCC is dedicated to creating career opportunities, strengthening communities, and advancing excellence in the construction industry. For more information, visit www.eascarpenters.org.

About Big Picture Learning

Big Picture Learning (BPL) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming education through personalized, student-centered learning that connects young people to real-world experiences, careers, and community opportunities. As a partner in New Jersey's START Center initiative, BPL supports the expansion of high-quality career pathways in the skilled trades by helping schools and communities design work-based learning experiences, strengthen employer partnerships, and create opportunities for students to explore and prepare for careers in high-demand industries. Through its expertise in internship-based learning and career-connected education, BPL helps ensure that students gain the skills, experiences, and professional networks needed for success in the skilled trades workforce. For more information, visit www.bigpicture.org.

About the Carpenter Contractor Trust

The Carpenter Contractor Trust is a labor-management trust that strengthens the relationship between union carpenters and qualified signatory contractors. CCT promotes the skill, productivity and professionalism of union construction while connecting contractors and developers with a highly trained workforce.

About the Carpenters' Apprentice Ready Program

The Carpenters' Apprentice Ready Program is a pre-apprenticeship program that introduces

participants to the fundamentals of carpentry and prepares them to pursue entry into a registered carpenter apprenticeship. CARP combines classroom education, hands-on instruction, safety training and career preparation to create accessible pathways into the union construction industry.

Media Contact

Chris Jackson

Chief Communications Officer

Big Picture Learning

Chris@bigpicturelearning.org

Tomislav S Peric

PERICPR

+1 856-874-0049

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/935414792>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.