

BY PARTNERING WITH OR SUPPORTING THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM, YOU ARE BUILDING BETTER LIVES.

Our Impact

- Year after year, 75% of our trainees secure a job placement, enroll in advanced training or enlist in the military.
- We provide approximately 12,000 hours of service to a total of 120 youth annually.
- The Challenge Program is unique: our trainees earn competitive hourly wages while they learn – we pay an average of \$120,000 annually in total to our trainees in hard earned wages.
- We also use approximately \$15,000 of our unrestricted funds to eliminate trainee barriers such as court fines and emergency assistance.
- In the last 20 years, trainees have improved their own communities by helping us rehab 20 homes and restoring dozens of vacant properties in Wilmington neighborhoods with high rates of crime/gun violence.
- We produce approximately 4 GEDs and certify 20 trainees (OSHA, Forklift, Flagger) each year, and help 85% of eligible trainees earn their Driver's License.



**CHALLENGE
PROGRAM**

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THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM

CHALLENGE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM is a nonprofit construction training program serving youth with serious barriers to employment in Wilmington, Delaware since 1998. We provide vocational training in the construction and woodworking trades, combined with teaching solid work habits, basic job readiness skills, and life skills. The Challenge Program is in demand: we receive approximately 150 applications annually for 20 new trainee slots.

Our Mission

To provide vocational training for select Delaware youth to empower them with the confidence, skills and purpose to become highly employable and self-sufficient.

Who We Serve

- Youth aged 18 – 24, with at least one barrier to employment (criminal charges, educational barriers such as no high school diploma or GED, experiencing low income/poverty, in foster care, housing instability, mental or physical disability, pregnant or parenting, and others).
- We see past the barriers and look for two traits in our trainees: motivation and a positive attitude.
- At time of enrollment, 95% of our trainees present as low-income or from high poverty areas, 70% are offenders, 75% did not graduate traditional high school and the vast majority have experienced homelessness by lacking a fixed regular nightly residence.

What We Provide Our Trainees

- Full-time, paid work experience, basic education and GED preparation, industry-recognized certifications, case management services, and job search and placement assistance
- Approximately 6 months of paid, on the job construction training on one of three construction crews
- Compensation for other productive time spent in class, working on GED, earning certifications and job search

WE ARE ALSO AN AWARD-WINNING CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

Funded largely by contracts with the federal and local government, local foundations and corporate partners, the Challenge Program also generates earned income through construction and woodworking projects.

We bid and execute projects to keep 3 crews of trainees working and earning income full time, year-round. Trainees are paid a competitive hourly stipend and primarily rehabilitate low-income housing for local government and nonprofit agencies, as well as select creative projects and jobs with local contractors or on commercial construction sites.

Our scope of work includes house rehabs, timber frames, custom cabinet work, restorations, green roofs, urban gardens and restaurant tables.

Featured Projects

- **CSC Station:** The Challenge Program built hundreds of desks and conference tables for CSC's new co-work innovation hub located next to the Wilmington train station.
- **Le Cavalier:** We built the oak tables featured in this award-winning update of the stately Green Room at the HOTEL DU PONT.
- **Wilmington Brew Works, Pizzeria Metro, Sleeping Bird Coffee:** The Challenge Program built tables, bars, and a pavilion for all of the tenants in the recently completed renovation of the historic Harper Thiel site in North Wilmington.

