



High quality certification program benefits construction students, educators, and employers.

Mississippi Construction Education Foundation  
SUCCESS STORY »



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## Top 10 Hardest Jobs to Fill

1. Skilled Trade Workers
2. Restaurant and Hotel Staff
3. Sales Representatives
4. Teachers
5. Drivers
6. Accounting and Finance Staff
7. Laborers
8. IT Staff
9. Engineers
10. Nurses

[Manpower Group's Talent Shortage Survey, 2014]

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## » MCEF Overview

The Mississippi Construction Education Foundation (MCEF) is a non-profit educational Foundation whose mission is to promote careers, recruit capable individuals, and train a quality workforce for the construction industry and the State of Mississippi.

## » Challenge

Back in 1996, three major construction associations in Mississippi realized that, by 2010, their local workforce would be short about 25,000 construction professionals. In addition, they wanted to ensure that the workers they did hire were qualified and trained to an industry standard.

## » Solution

To meet this challenge, state education and construction industry professionals developed an innovative partnership. They funded an education foundation, MCEF, to train young people considering a career in the construction industry. The foundation is funded exclusively by industry through the proceeds of contractor licensing fees.

Experts at the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) created an industry standardized training and credentialing program. They partnered with Pearson to develop curricula in more than 70 construction and maintenance related craft areas. As part of the relationship, Pearson delivers, print textbooks, a unique online delivery system (NCCERconnect), high stakes exams, and instructor supplements to educators in a variety of settings including secondary, post-secondary, and industry. MCEF sponsored schools throughout Mississippi use the NCCER curriculum.

Additionally, major employers that operate within the state of Mississippi use the NCCER curriculum to train their workforce. Yates Construction uses NCCER materials to train its employees. The standardized program makes it easy to provide a consistent educational experience as they move from project to project across the country.



## » Solution (continued)

When Tim Fanguy, Director of the Forest Scott Career and Technology Center, first got started as an educator he had over 20 years in the construction field, but no teaching experience. The NCCER curriculum gave him a much smoother transition into teaching because of its standardization and comprehensive training program. The curriculum and credential program helps keep educators informed of employers' needs. The Core Curriculum is a 72.5 hour program with an additional 15 optional hours available.

The program also offers an online segment through NCCERconnect. The teacher portal includes lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations, and even a progress tracking tool for students. Instructors can have their students complete the guided lessons in the classroom or at home before ever stepping into the shop with real materials.

In addition, the NCCER assessments are both knowledge-based and performance-based, so students are asked to demonstrate technique and practical knowledge. "I think that really gives the curriculum validity. A lot of times students can pass the test but can't necessarily cut a rafter out or design a building," Fanguy notes.

## » Results

Since 1996, the MCEF program has expanded greatly. After originally starting at the secondary level, it has since expanded into postsecondary as well. Today, over 6,500 students are enrolled in 186 programs using NCCER curriculum across both the high school and community college levels.

The importance of career and technical education training is astounding. About 43% of certified workers earn more than those with an associate's degree, and 27% earn more than those with a bachelor's degree (Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, Valuing Certificates, Presentation, 2009). Yates Construction reports that the credentials tend to increase pay and preference. Entry level professionals with NCCER credentials tend to receive higher hourly rates upon hire than un-credentialed hires. Mike Farrar at Yates Construction reports, "NCCER credentials are preferred when we look to bring on new employees. They go to the front of the line."

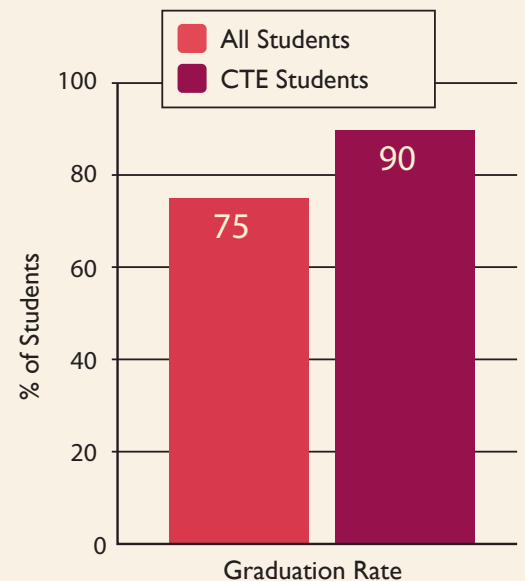
*"[NCCER] credentials got me a better pay rate and a job right out of high school."*

*– Blake Faulkner,  
Community College Student*

*"[NCCER] credentials are preferred when we look to bring on new employees. They go to the front of the line."*

*– Mike Farrar,  
Director of Corporate Training,  
Yates Construction*

FIGURE 1:  
CTE Students Have Higher Average High School Graduation Rates



*US Department of Education 2007-2008 data,  
National Association of State Directors of Career  
Technical Education analysis*

## » Results (continued)

This is great news for employers like Yates Construction, who tend to hire credentialed students more often than non-credentialed students. Fanguy asserts that NCCER credentials improves their college and construction job prospects after completion. In one instance, he recalls a new coal mining company in the area reaching out to all local schools that any students with their NCCER credential would be guaranteed a job.

Employers feel comfortable hiring them because they can see their transcript and know what modules and studies they've completed since it's a nationally standardized curriculum. Employers are assured that these students are already aware of proper safety procedures, techniques, and planning. And employers save time and money since students have already participated in the 72.5 hours of NCCER Core Curriculum training.

NCCER credentials never expire, but professionals are encouraged to continue their education by branching into different modules to learn more and expand their workforce viability, with the transcript being a record of all their training. "With new modules getting added to my transcript, it was like brownie points for me. I was motivated to continue because it put me closer to getting a job in construction," Faulkner states. Similarly, Mike Farrar at Yates Construction notes that new hires with NCCER credentials have a desire to continually improve themselves and learn new skill sets.

Another way to expand their training and job prospects is to compete in SkillsUSA competitions. These performance-based competitions test various career and technical education skills. Blake Faulkner has competed several times and came away with a state championship in carpentry, making his teacher, Tim Fanguy, very proud to see his student go on to compete in nationals in Kansas City. "It's a wonderful experience," Faulkner says. "You're competing against people your age; you can learn from each other and make friends. I even received some job offers after the competition."

For more information about the NCCER-Pearson partnership, visit  
[www.nccer.org/bookstore](http://www.nccer.org/bookstore)

## » Additional Resources



[mcef.net](http://mcef.net)



[nccer.org](http://nccer.org)



[wgyates.com](http://wgyates.com)