



T.O.O.L.S.



UNIVERSITY OF  
Nebraska  
Omaha



## About Our Mission

Nebraska Center for Workforce Development and Education (NCWDE) is focused on increasing the qualified workforce in Nebraska by creating opportunities for Omaha's young people to gain exposure to and pursue careers in the trades, while also developing the skills to support the infrastructure of the State of Nebraska.

## The Challenges



Local businesses and labor unions are struggling to find a large enough and qualified workforce in Nebraska to grow the economy.



Inner-city school districts throughout the U.S. are in a constant struggle with declining graduation rates. Here in Omaha, students are failing competitive apprentice entrance exams and are not prepared to enter the workforce.



Justice involvement, lack of a career path and community or familial support affect a participant's rate of success and, ultimately, the ability to make a living wage.

## A Collaborative Solution

The NCWDE was born out of a partnership between United Way and the AFL-CIO that dates back to 1941. We know we are better equipped to address the skill-gap in Nebraska's job market and help students secure stable careers in the trades when we unite Labor, businesses and government organizations.

Current partners include the Omaha Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, United Way of the Midlands, The William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies at the University of Nebraska – Omaha, local trade unions and members of the Greater Omaha business community.

## Nebraska Center for Workforce Development and Education Programming

Through its programming, the NCWDE aims to expand knowledge of and access to careers in the trades and prepare participants for apprenticeship programs, community college and four-year colleges with a focus on job readiness.



We organize and teach labor courses through The William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies at UNO and host the annual “Promoting the General Welfare Conference.” Courses taught include Employee Rights, Labor History, the Family and Medical Leave Act, Grievances, and various workers right’s topics.



We support the advocacy, organization, education and mobilization of union workers by employing two full-time Community Relations Labor Liaisons.



We organize outreach efforts and connect students to workers in the trades. Last year, **over 10,000 students** were reached by representatives from the Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local #15, Steamfitters Local #464, Laborers Local #1140, IBEW Local #22, Sheet Metal Workers Local #3, Plumbers Local #16, and NCWDE Trade Educators.



We have partnered with local unions, employers, and Federally Registered Apprenticeships to create a platform for justice-involved individuals to build a career path in the skilled labor and trades.

### **The T.O.O.L.S. Program**

**The Trades People Organized for Outreach and Leadership for Students** (T.O.O.L.S.) program provides relevant information about apprenticeship career training and opportunities in the trades industry while impacting low-income and at-risk youth in the Omaha Metro area. T.O.O.L.S. is a collaborative program geared towards seventh through twelfth graders in the Omaha metro area to provide year-round construction career exploration activities.

### **Project Reset**

Lack of a career path, family influences, and community factors can all impact an individual’s success and affect their ability to make a living wage. Local businesses and labor unions are currently struggling to find qualified workers in Nebraska to grow the economy. We know that one of the biggest needs of people coming out of a correctional setting, and avoiding it in the first place, is a good, well-paying job.

**Project Reset** helps justice-involved individuals obtain a career that provides financial stability, full benefits, and a pension plan. This affects recidivism rates, eliminates dependency on state assistance, alleviates strain on the criminal justice system, and ultimately breaks the cycle of generational criminality, poverty, dysfunction, and trauma in our community.

### **Blue Collar Boxing 2021**

AFL-CIO, NCWDE and United Way of the Midlands are excited to announce the second annual Blue Collar Boxing fundraising event will take place on November 24, 2021. Blue Collar Boxing is an exciting and competitive boxing event featuring local labor union members that raises money for our community.

We’re all fighting for the same thing: a better, stronger and more vibrant community. Proceeds from the event will strengthen our community by supporting the efforts of United Way of the Midlands and the NCWDE.

