

Constructing Hope: Interview of Patricia Daniels

Patricia Daniels is Executive Director of [Constructing Hope](#), a Portland OR-based non-profit organization that strives to create career paths in the construction industry for people including the formerly incarcerated, homeless, and in recovery.

Jathan Janove: Please describe Constructing Hope's mission.

Patricia Daniels: Constructing Hope seeks to rebuild the lives of people in our community by encouraging self-



sufficiency through skills training and education in the construction industry.

Jathan Janove: Why the construction industry?

Patricia Daniels: We decided on the construction industry because they do not disqualify the formerly incarcerated or deny employment opportunities to those with felony backgrounds. Construction work begins with livable wage, not minimum wage, and this path offers unlimited opportunities to build a career, move into management and start your own business.

Jathan Janove: What are the core competencies of successful program graduates?

Patricia Daniels: There are six core competencies that you can expect from a Constructing Hope graduate:

1. **Work Ethic:** They arrive at 6:30am for class at 7:00am; they understand that on time is a half-hour early.
2. **Skills:** Constructing Hope teaches basic carpentry skills – graduates are proficient with basic hand tool and power tools.
3. **Building:** floors, framing, roofing and cement form building.
4. **Certifications:** OSHA-10, Confined space, First Aid-CPR and Flagging with hands-on experience driving a forklift and scissor-lift.
5. **Applied Construction Math:** including how to use construction calculators.
6. **Life Skills:** Construction Culture (physical and mental toughness), resume writing, portfolio of work, and how to make good life choices outside of work.

Jathan Janove: How does the program work?

Patricia Daniels: It begins with an information session. They are held every Monday. Applications are provided after the session. Complete the application and bring the following supportive documents:

- State Identification or ODL
- High Schools Diploma or GED
- Social Security Card or proof of citizenship or work Visa
- Attend an orientation at the nearest WorkSource Center – Complete the welcome process and verify income
- Take the National Career Readiness Certification test

Return all documents and schedule an interview and drug test. Applicants must pass a drug test to enter the program.

Jathan Janove: Please share a success story.

Patricia Daniels: When Ericha Watson joined our summer program in June 2017, she was struggling to find a life direction. She explained that she'd been unemployed for several years and was dealing with addiction.

Ericha was diligent in her ten weeks of training and advanced quickly. After graduation, she went through a mock interview where people in the trade you're interested in interview you. They give feedback on what you should brush up on and what to add to your portfolio.

Although it was supposed to be a mock interview, Ericha's application was set in motion. Two weeks later, she was apprenticing through the Carpenters Institute earning \$18.46/hour.

In Ericha's words: "The most important thing about Constructing Hope was the relationships that I formed with the staff and the amount of support they gave me. I could tell them anything and they never looked down or judged me. You can tell the people are there because they care and they want to see their community succeed. They want to see you stay out of jail, stay off drugs, better your life, and better your family's life. They would do anything within their power to help us succeed."

Jathan Janove: For interested civic leaders in communities that don't have a program like yours, what do you recommend?

Patricia Daniels: I started by contacting the state Bureau of Labor & Industry to learn the standards for creating a State Certified Pre-apprenticeship Training Program.

Meet with each union and non-union trade to determine what a successful applicant looks like.

Because the work culture is very different, case management and on-going mentoring are key components for apprentices to be successful.

Find other organizations to collaborate with. At Constructing Hope, we target formerly incarcerated adults, minorities and low-income populations. We collaborate with other pre-apprenticeship training programs such as Oregon Tradeswomen Inc. (adult women only), youth programs (Portland Youth Builders and Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center), Job Corp 18 and older, and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs in high schools.