



LABOR DAY STORY:

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VISUALS: Day laborers in industrial-sized shop classroom learning U.S. building techniques and safety standards. Still images of the first class, including their graduation ceremony, are attached.

INTERVIEW SUBJECTS: We can provide a recent graduate of the program. B-roll of the current class can be arranged, as well as interviews of current students and the instructor.

LOS ANGELES--Los Angeles is leading the nation in bringing U.S. safety and construction standards to the day laborer population by offering free, intensive courses that train workers, some of them undocumented, in the building trades.

The first “Becoming a Journeyman” class of 27 students graduated in August. A new session with 40 day laborers is underway. Classes meet from 6 to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday in Sequoia Hall at Los Angeles Trade Technical College, 400 W Washington Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90015.

Students are learning OSHA-approved techniques, tackling progressively more complicated projects: first a tool box, later a scale model of a house, and finally, solar panel installation, a highly marketable skill in sunny Southern California.

“We really stress that because it’s an industry that’s taking off,” said Tessie Borden, a spokeswoman for CARECEN, one of several immigrant and labor groups involved in the innovative program. “It gives them a chance to be at the front end of the industry, instead of the back, where these folks often end up.”

Workers in the first group, many of them older men, commented that they've been doing this type of work for a long time but didn't know how to do it correctly. One man said he had two work-related accidents that he could have avoided if he knew the proper way to do the work.

Students were recruited by seven day laborer centers in the city of Los Angeles run by the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), Pomona Economic Opportunity Center (PEOC) and Institute of Popular Education of Southern California (IDEPSCA), and in partnership with Los Angeles Trade Technical College. The classes are grant funded.

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