

Workforce Topic Challenges and Opportunities

Demand Management Measures

Independent Technical Panel

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The Decision to Train

Employer:

- Will training increase productivity?
- Will increased productivity warrant the cost of paying for training?
- If employer pays for training, will employee leave company to work for a competitor after training is complete?
- Will employer have to pay trained employee more?

Worker:

- Will training result in wage increase or more opportunity?
- If employee pays for training, will wage increase equal cost of training?

External Conditions That Create Workforce Challenges

Cost of Water

Marketplace Ideas about What a Landscape Should Look Like

Underground Economy

- Sinking Underground: The Growing Informal Economy in CA Construction (Economic Roundtable, 2014)
- Level the Playing Field: Put California's Underground Economy Out of Business (Little Hoover Commission, 2015)

Several Internal Workforce Challenges

Barriers to entry are low in landscape construction and especially in landscape maintenance.

- This is the case with entrepreneurs as well as employees.
- Landscaping has traditionally been an occupation for immigrants.
- Immigrants often have minimal formal education and face language challenges.

Other construction trades are perceived as higher skilled.

Landscape maintenance is sometimes viewed as only one small step removed from farm labor.

More Internal Workforce Challenges

College ornamental horticulture programs have been in decline for many years.

“Low” pay:

- okay.
- CLCA Wage & Benefit Reports show that landscape contractors and employees are paid okay.
 - But landscaping is hard work, for business owners as well as employees!
 - It's a precarious career with a lot of churning: from 1968 to 2012, an average of 20% of construction workers were unemployed.
 - The Wage & Benefit Report is based on a CLCA member survey. CLCA members are likely to pay more than other landscape contractors.

The apprenticeship model of education and training, for all of its strengths, may encourage doing things the way they've always been done.

- Example: CSLB experience requirement.

Programs in Place to Address Internal Workforce Challenges

Certified Landscape Technician Program

Certified Water Manager Program

Other Certification Programs

CLCA Seminars

Supplier seminars

Landscape Educational Advancement Foundation
Scholarships

Additional Steps Industry Can Take to Fill Workforce Gaps

Landscape Water Conservation Foundation:

- Incorporated in March 2015
- Will solicit grants and other donations and use the resulting income to provide education, training, and certification opportunities for individuals in the California landscape industry as well as promote landscape water and natural resources conservation to the landscape industry and the general public.

State Can Help Industry Address Workforce Challenges As Follows

The state of California must devote more resources to underground economy enforcement.

- It can start by implementing some of the recommendations of the Little Hoover Commission.

DWR and urban water suppliers should devote more resources to educating the public about quality landscaping and how to find and hire competent, properly licensed contractors.

Public agencies should specify CLTs for construction and maintenance.

Public agencies should require that a certified water manager be assigned to all landscape maintenance sites.

DWR, the CUWCC, and urban water suppliers should encourage property owners to hire companies with certified water managers.

If a decision is made to require continuing education for the landscape workforce, the program should be administered by DWR, not the Contractors State License Board.

- CLCA is likely to support such mandatory continuing education.

The CSLB should consider adding more sustainability content on the C-27 licensing exam. This is not a panacea, however, as not much content could be added.