



PRESS RELEASE

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Goodwill Industries of Arkansas Launches Skilled Trades Expansion with Support from Lowe's Foundation Gable Grant

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (April 2, 2025) — Goodwill Industries of Arkansas (GIA) is proud to announce the expansion of its skilled trades training programs through a transformative partnership with the Lowe's Foundation, supported by a prestigious Gable Grant. The initiative is part of the Goodwill® Skilled Trades Pathways program, which aims to build stronger, more inclusive career opportunities in construction and related industries.

GIA has been selected as one of up to five Goodwill organizations nationwide to receive a \$45,000 subgrant through Goodwill Industries International. The funding will support the growth of skilled trades training in Arkansas, with a specific focus on creating sustainable, career-driven pathways in electrical, plumbing, HVAC, construction, and appliance repair.

"This partnership marks a significant step forward in closing the skilled trades gap and empowering individuals across Arkansas to achieve economic mobility," said Edie Stewart, GIA senior vice president and chief mission officer. "With support from the Lowe's Foundation, we're enhancing our programming and expanding access to in-demand careers—especially for individuals who have historically been underrepresented in these fields."

The expansion will build on GIA's existing NCCER Core – Introduction to Basic Construction Skills program by adding pre-apprenticeship pathways in electrical and plumbing trades, aligning closely with Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) to ensure a seamless pipeline from training to employment.

The program also aims to build robust industry connections. Through the Gable Grant, GIA will work with Lowe's employees and trade partners to host job site tours, mentorship opportunities, industry panels, and trade skill demonstrations.

The skilled trades initiative will run through January 2026, with long-term sustainability ensured through public-private partnerships, state workforce funding, and internal investment from Goodwill.

About Goodwill Industries of Arkansas

Goodwill Industries of Arkansas is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to changing lives through education, training and employment. In the last fiscal year, our career services team helped 697 people find work at companies around the state. Through our various education, training and employment programs, GIA provided services to 7,866 Arkansans. Since opening in 2017, 233 adults in Arkansas have graduated high school

and earned their diplomas through The Excel Center®, Goodwill's high school for adults 19 years or older. The Academy at Goodwill, licensed by the Arkansas State Board of Private Career Education, is a trade school that provided training and certifications to 1,037 individuals in FY23 to secure new employment and advance careers. Goodwill also offers reentry services for those coming out of justice-involved situations to help train and find employment. Visit GoodwillAR.org for more information.