

The Masonry Foundation Grant Application

Submitted by: Jenny Stephenson, Association Director – Masonry Institute of Iowa

Project Objective

To create a workforce development initiative within the Iowa Department of Corrections that introduces and trains current inmates in masonry using the NCCER masonry curriculum. Through this initiative, our goal is to increase the Iowa masonry workforce and provide sustainable career options for inmates upon release. This initiative began November 2019.

Scope of Project

Inmates incarcerated in the Iowa prison system will have the opportunity receive masonry training. Once the inmate is released, MII will work to place them as a bricklayer and in conversations with MII member mason contractors, they are willing to hire applicants who have been incarcerated. Every effort will be made to place a bricklayer on the jobsite, but the inmate must also hold themselves accountable for their job performance to keep employment. There are also several tax credits and other incentives for employers to hire those with a record; MII will make sure to educate prospective employers on those credits.

This is the first time in Iowa that industry has led the training within the prison and because of this, there were extra considerations that MII and DOC worked through. For example, the biggest hurdle was staffing as a corrections officer (CO) must be present during all training. DOC identified one CO and we were looking at offering the program either twice a week for a few hours or one afternoon a week for the whole afternoon. MII also worked with the DOC to secure a proper area for training. Space was found that included an area for classroom set-up as well as ample space for bricklaying practice. It was also secure that the supplies and tools could be locked up when not in use. At the time the prison shut down, the DOC was working on an application form for an inmate to fill out to apply to the masonry training program. MII would receive the applications and choose who they would like to interview. MII and DOC decided to start the program out with 12 inmates and adjust accordingly in coming years.

The DOC is working to train their staff to teach Core Curriculum. For this first year, this has not been put in place yet and MII will be relying on volunteers to teach and test the modules, with the exception of the power tools, which will need to be handled by DOC staff.

The DOC is looking at registering this training with the DOL as an apprenticeship. Currently they are working to determine how inmates can do the on-the-job training hours needed – whether it be work inside the prison or through a work release program.

For 2021, the goal is to start a masonry training program at another prison location – Mt. Pleasant. The goal will be to identify additional prisons to host masonry training in upcoming years. The current instructor has agreed to teach at both locations in 2021.

Implementation Timeline Update

Implementation began in 2019 but due to COVID, visitors are not allowed in the prison system at this time. The prison was shut down late March. DOC does not have an idea of when visitors will be allowed back in the prison, but in conversations with the DOC, as soon as it is allowed, the training can begin. Below is a timeline of what has been implemented to date:

- November 2019: Instructional meeting that over 35 inmates voluntarily attended to learn about masonry, the training program and career opportunities. Informational forms were handed out to collect data on those interested.
- January 2020: A hands-on demo was held for inmates to try brick and blocklaying. Nearly 30 attended.
- January 2020: MII met with new warden and other vested parties at the prison to discuss logics and timeline.
- January 2020: Received and inventoried the tools that were donated for the program.
- February 2020: Worked with DOC to secure a location for the training and a correctional officer to be responsible for being on-hand during the training. Discussion also included how to pick the 12 inmates.
- February 2020: John Blow was certified as a NCCER craft instructor.
- March 2020: DOC purchased Core Curricula, Masonry Level 1 and Masonry Level 2 books for the training
- March 2020: prison volunteer training was postponed due to COVID. Five volunteers were going to attend.
- April 2021: MII began recording the Masonry Level 1 Powerpoints into video for the prison to use.

Anticipated Impact

Though this program is only being implemented in Iowa, it will be a good model for other states to show how industry is leading the training in the prison system. Masonry is a highly skilled craft – many instructors in the prison system teach a variety of construction, however, none teach masonry. Because of this, MII and its partners have the opportunity to introduce a skilled trade to the prison population that otherwise would not have the chance to explore.

Budget

MIl is seeking a grant from The Masonry Foundation for the second year to supplement the cost of instruction along with the industry volunteering hours to teach and donate materials. With the success of finding more workforce, the goal will to make the program self-sustainable with industry support within five years. John Blow will the paid instructor and will be on MII's payroll as an independent contractor.

At the Anamosa State Penitentiary, the inmates do not have access to the Internet or computers to watch the any self-study materials. MII is asking for additional money this year to provide DOC-approved tablets for the inmates to check out to watch the recorded Powerpoints. MII is currently recording the Masonry Level 1 Powerpoints as videos to be broadcasted over the Closed Caption TV at Anamosa – which would be broadcasted to the entire population and would only be available to watch at certain times.

- Anamosa Penitentiary:\$3,000 to pay an instructor (100 hours @ \$30/hour)
- Mt. Pleasant Prison: \$1800 to pay an instructor (60 hours @ \$30/hour)
- Tablets for Anamosa (for the self-study portion): \$1,200

Total Amount Requested: \$6,000

Additional Funding Sources

MIl has already invested more than \$4,000 into NCCER accreditation and training. MII members

have committed to donating nearly 85 hours of volunteer time in addition to the paid instruction. Suppliers have also agreed to donate the brick, block and practice mortar for the program.

Budget

MII is seeking a grant from The Masonry Foundation for the second year to supplement the cost of instruction along with the industry volunteering hours to teach and donate materials. With the success of finding more workforce, the goal will be to make the program self-sustainable with industry support within five years.

At the Anamosa State Penitentiary, the inmates do not have access to the Internet or computers to watch any self-study materials. MII is asking for additional money this year to provide DOC-approved tablets for the inmates to check out to watch the recorded Powerpoints. MII is currently recording the Masonry Level 1 Powerpoints as videos to be broadcasted over the Closed Caption TV at Anamosa – which would be broadcasted to the entire population and would only be available to watch at certain times.

John Blow will be the paid instructor and will be on MII's payroll as an independent contractor.

- Anamosa Penitentiary: \$3,000 to pay an instructor (100 hours @ \$30/hour)
- Mt. Pleasant Prison: \$1,800 to pay an instructor (60 hours @ \$30/hour)
- Tablets for Anamosa (for the self-study portion): \$1,200

Total Amount Requested: \$6,000