

With its facility located on 40 Humboldt St., the program is in the second phase of a two-part vetting and construction training process. In the first half, Project Phoenix trainees renovate vacant "zombie" homes in Rochester through a partnership with City Roots Community Land Trust. Both parts of the program introduce and prepare individuals to work in all construction paths.

Berry, who is now the executive director of MAPP/Project Phoenix says, "Union construction is not a 'water cooler' job. There is a culture and attitude that goes along with it. We are busy working by 7 a.m. sharp no matter the weather."

About recruiting here in Rochester, Berry says that he walks right into the community.

"We go out in the neighborhoods and stop people on street corners. We pluck them out of the 'hood', we canvass--like a campaign--via word of mouth and online with social media," Berry said.

'In construction, you have to produce'

Not everyone makes it through the program.

Anyone with real interest, a high school diploma, or GED can apply. But Berry said, "Working in this field, there is a high-level work ethic. You have to be on time, ready to work and working. Not working hard at not working. In construction, you have to produce."

Since MAPP provides a stipend over the course of the program, participants can take time to choose their own path by experimenting with over a dozen different crafts.

"We are hands-on with everyone," Berry says. "Electricians, Sheet metal workers, Bricklayers, pipe Fitters, laborers, iron workers and more recruit through us. Training coordinators work closely with our students during the process helping and teaching them, showing them – knocking down walls – doing the work right there with us."

Students who are promoted from Project Phoenix and move on to complete the MAPP program enter into a union apprenticeship.

Art Miller, a Bricklayers, Tilers, and Allied Craft Workers (BAC Local 3) training coordinator, says, "I visit MAPP's home base throughout the year to meet students in the cohort. We open our training center up and let them try their hand at tile setting, bricklaying and block laying."