



Los Angeles faces a dual crisis: a severe housing shortage and a construction workforce shortage. To meet its housing goals, the city will need more than 50,000 additional workers. Yet low wages, immigration raids, misclassification, and wage theft are driving many skilled workers away from the industry.

Today, residential construction is dominated by large firms that subcontract nearly every aspect of a project—sometimes involving up to forty subcontractors and more than one hundred specialized tasks. This “race-to-the-bottom” system rewards contractors who cut corners, exploit workers, and sacrifice quality. We cannot afford a “Hurricane Katrina” model that imports workers from out of state, only for those wages to leave our communities. Los Angeles needs a long-term, stable, local workforce that invests in and sustains our city.

The consequences of inaction are clear: the median construction worker in Los Angeles earns just \$35,400 per year (adjusted for cost of living)—the second lowest in the nation. Families cannot thrive on these wages, and our housing goals cannot be met without a reliable, fairly compensated workforce.

At St. Joseph Center, we have spent nearly 50 years working alongside low-income and unhoused Angelenos to provide housing, mental health, and workforce development opportunities. We know that living-wage jobs are essential to breaking cycles of poverty and homelessness. Just as we work every day to ensure homes are built for those who need them, we also believe the workers who build those homes deserve fair wages and benefits that allow them to live in dignity. Supporting this campaign is an extension of our mission: creating pathways to stability and ensuring Los Angeles becomes a city where everyone can thrive. That’s why we stand with the Western States Carpenters in urging the city to prioritize building a strong, local workforce—one that can afford to live in the communities they help build. This begins with establishing a fair minimum wage and health benefits for residential construction workers on qualifying projects.

We invite you to join us in building a fairer, stronger Los Angeles.

In Community,

Dr. Ryan J. Smith
President & CEO
St. Joseph Center