

Woodworking Network

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03/25/2015 AT 11:55 AM EDT

Brooklyn Woods Has Trained Over 700 in Cabinet Manufacturing

Here is a training program that should definitely be on the radar of those advancing careers in wood manufacturing.

Founded in 2000 by Scott Peltzer, Brooklyn Woods offers professional-level preparatory training, in a full time grant-funded program for unemployed and low-income New Yorkers in woodworking skills.

Upon completion, participants have received a solid foundation to begin a career in woodworking, cabinetmaking and furniture fabrication. Brooklyn Woods runs five 7-week cycles per year and trains 50-60 individuals per year.

Cumulatively, Brooklyn Woods has trained and placed an estimated 700 workers to the wood industry. That's a real accomplishment.

In 2006 it became part of the larger Brooklyn Workforce Innovations, sharing administrative support with other job training programs.

During a typical training cycle, which meets Monday to Friday 8 a.m to 4 p.m. for 7 weeks, trainees receive an introduction to the proper use of power tools and machinery and a comprehensive introduction to a variety of woodworking and cabinetmaking techniques, learn how to read shop drawings and cut lists, identify wood, finishing techniques, cabinet hardware and cabinet installation. (Find graduates here.)

Brooklyn Woods also operates a social enterprise cabinetmaking shop, which fabricates cabinets, bathroom vanities and custom wood projects utilizing environmentally-friendly materials, primarily for affordable housing developments throughout New York City. The shop is staffed with selected graduates of the Brooklyn Woods training program.

Since 2002, Brooklyn Woods has built cabinets for 320 kitchens and, in the past four years, the shop has constructed nearly 1,000 bathroom vanities for developers such as Habitat for Humanity, Fifth Avenue Committee, Hudson Companies and Dunn Development.

Sustainability is a core value at Brooklyn Woods. All materials used to build cabinets and other woodwork are FSC-certified and have no added urea-formaldehyde. Woodwork is finished with low VOC water-based lacquers. Off-cuts from Brooklyn Woods' production are used in the training program for projects, including a cutting board.

Brooklyn Woods graduates have gone on to work for a wide variety of businesses including custom cabinetmakers, production furniture makers, general contractors, store display companies and general fabrication. Graduates are trained to be skilled entry-level woodworkers and fabricators. Brooklyn Woods also operates a cabinetmaking social enterprise.

The training facility is also great, with CNC, sliding table saw, and all the accouterments of a professional grade establishment. Brooklyn Woods occupies a modern 8,000 square foot space in Gowanus, Brooklyn that combines classroom space, a benchroom for training as well as a large production woodworking shop.

