



February 2025

[bwiny.org](http://bwiny.org) ►

# NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Shawn,

In the opening months of the new year, shifts in federal leadership have heightened social and economic uncertainty for communities across New York City. **BWI remains steadfast in our commitment to support all New Yorkers**—including foreign-born individuals, LGBTQ+ persons, and those who rely on social safety net programs like Medicaid and SNAP—in accessing pathways to stability. Furthermore, as we close out Black History Month, we reaffirm our organizational values and celebrate diversity, equity, and justice. Below, we share a glimpse of what we've accomplished recently and what we're working toward.

We're highlighting two achievements, the **99th cycle of our Brooklyn Networks program** and an **award from *City & State New York*** for our Director of Media Programs, Venus Anderson. We are also sharing a recent op-ed we published about the effectiveness of our Housing Career Pathways program in connecting to **economic opportunity within the affordable housing industry**.

This year marks **BWI's 25th Anniversary** of building access to living-wage careers for low-income New Yorkers. In this newsletter, you'll find details for our upcoming celebration on **May 29th**.

As we look to the work ahead, we are grateful for your support and dedication to BWI's mission.

Sincerely,

**Aaron Shiffman**  
Executive Director

# GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

## *Celebrating Brooklyn Networks' 99th Cycle*

Graduates of BWI's Brooklyn Networks Cycle 99 are entering the low-voltage cabling industry with strong momentum, thanks to their hard work and the hands-on training they received. In February, the cohort participated in mock interviews, where they had the opportunity to sharpen their job readiness skills with other professionals, including members of BWI's Board of Directors. Already, their dedication is paying off—13 of 14 graduates have passed the BICSI exam, a key industry certification, and are now focused on securing employment in this high-demand field.

As Brooklyn Networks looks ahead to this landmark 100th cycle, we celebrate the achievements of Cycle 99 and the many graduates before them who now work in security and alarm system installation and install and upgrade commercial voice and data communications networks and AV systems—they have built a strong foundation for the program's continued impact.



## EXTRA, EXTRA

### *An Award for BWI's Director of Media Programs*

BWI is thrilled to celebrate the recognition of **Venus Anderson**, the **Director of Media Programs at BWI**, as one of *City & State New York's 2025 Black Trailblazers* for her incredible efforts to connect hundreds of low-income New Yorkers to careers in the TV and film production industry. A graduate of BWI's "Made in NY" Production Assistant Training Program herself, Venus now leads the very initiative that helped launch her career. Under her leadership, the "Made in NY" Production Assistant Training Program has enrolled 50 cohorts and helped more than 800 people break into the media industry—creating real opportunities for those who have historically been left out. Read about Venus



and the other trailblazers [here](#).

## EVENT SPOTLIGHT



The poster features a dark blue background with a starry pattern. At the top center is the Brooklyn Workforce Innovations (BWI) logo, which consists of a gear with 'BWI' inside and the text 'Brooklyn Workforce INNOVATIONS' to its right. Below the logo is a collage of golden icons: a gear, a film strip, a Wi-Fi symbol, a plug, a circuit board, a building, a camera, and another gear. To the right of these icons is the text 'th'. The main title 'ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION' is written in large, bold, golden letters. Below the title, the date 'THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2025' and the time '6:00 PM - 9:00 PM' are listed in smaller golden text. At the bottom, the address '501 UNION STREET, BROOKLYN NY' is provided in the same color.

**ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATION**

**THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2025**  
**6:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

501 UNION STREET, BROOKLYN NY

## MUST-READS

### *Op-Ed Highlighting Housing Career Pathways*

“Right now, roles in the affordable housing sector remain unfilled, and working-class New Yorkers continue to face unemployment or find themselves stuck in jobs with little potential for economic mobility.” BWI’s Director of

Strategy and Innovation, Shawn Hegele, recently authored an op-ed in partnership with one of BWI's dedicated employer partners, Wavcrest Management. The piece, found in [City Limits](#), shines a spotlight on the important role workforce development can play in addressing the affordable housing crisis and highlights the success of BWI's innovative Housing Career Pathways program. Give it a read and consider sharing it with your network!

### Opinion: Our Affordable Housing Workforce Must Reflect the Communities It Serves

By Shawn Hegele and Christina Harsch. Published January 30, 2025

"Right now, roles in the affordable housing sector remain unfilled, and working-class New Yorkers continue to face unemployment or find themselves stuck in jobs with little potential for economic mobility."



(Michael Appleton/Mayoral Photography Office) A "topping off" ceremony for an affordable housing project in 2021.

With a new presidential administration comes uncertainty around the future of our institutions and the national economy, but one thing is certain: the economic strain caused by rising living costs and a critical shortage of affordable housing is



BWI congratulates our friends and supporters at [Eastern Effects](#), who are celebrating 25 years of serving our community as a leading rental house and sound stage provider!

Follow us on social media to get the most up to date information on our programming!



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