



“

A mind that is stretched by new experiences can never go back to its old dimensions.”

— Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.



EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATION

Supporting the Commercial Real Estate Industry  
in the Washington, DC Metro Area



“

We have these big, beautiful office buildings to run and manage and without bright, talented, energetic, educated, enthusiastic individuals we just simply cannot do it.”

— Kathy Barnes, Akridge



“

It's something we have been trying to do for years on our own... to find the exact way to bring people into this industry to help them understand what the building engineering field is all about.”

— Justin Norton,  
The RMR Group

The mission of the AOBA Educational Foundation (AEF) is to **address a commercial real estate talent crisis by focusing on the critical need to promote careers in property management engineering and maintenance.**

The Foundation grew out of recommendations made by an Engineering Talent Task Force which was established by the AOBA Board of Directors in late 2016 to provide strategic direction and to develop solutions for this workforce challenge. The report prepared by the Task Force formed the basis of the Foundation's mission and programs. The Foundation incorporated in August 2017, and applied for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in February 2018.

### **A UNIQUE ROLE IN ADDRESSING THE TALENT CHALLENGE**

The AOBA Educational Foundation is uniquely positioned to address the DC region's building engineering and maintenance talent pipeline crisis. While public, private, and nonprofit organizations in the region are addressing workforce needs, no other local organization has taken a leadership role in this specific industry sector.

AOBA, whose members own or manage approximately 200 million square feet of commercial office space, is nationally affiliated with **BOMA International** and the **National Apartment Association** — bringing a wealth of industry partnerships and opportunities for collaboration.

To support this workforce development initiative, AEF is actively seeking additional partnerships and strategic investments with those who want to build a pipeline of qualified candidates to support the commercial real estate industry and the local economy.

### **AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUE FACING THE DC REGION**

Recruiting, training, and retaining building engineers is widely believed to be one of the most significant challenges facing the commercial real estate industry.

According to the Greater Washington Community Foundation, local employers face challenges in finding skilled workers. Nearly 800,000 individuals in the DMV have no education past high school — and the vast majority of these individuals have no knowledge about the lucrative careers that are available in building operations.

This lack of knowledge about building operations positions in commercial real estate, coupled with both increased competition for skilled workers in other industries as well as a societal discouragement from pursuing “blue collar” careers, is expected to exacerbate the challenge facing us.



## **A STRATEGIC, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION**

AEF will develop dynamic educational, marketing, and recruitment outreach, as well as professional development programs, to promote building engineering and maintenance careers throughout the region. A member survey in 2016 identified emerging building engineering needs, and AEF will continue to solicit and track related data to help inform its short-term and long-term programs.

To support our efforts, AEF is partnering with a number of local constituencies, including trade organizations like BOMA and NAA, vocational/technical/trade schools, high schools, and colleges to implement its programs. The Foundation is targeting potential employees in selected high schools, trade/technical schools, community colleges, military members wishing to enter the civilian workforce, and career changers. The Foundation is also interested in increasing the number of women and minorities who work in commercial real estate operations.

## **PAID INTERNSHIP PROGRAM LAUNCHED**

In 2018, AEF launched a major undertaking—the Office Building Engineering Internship program. This eight-week, paid internship program will provide structured, full-time employment over the summer 2018.

Initially, nine AOBA member organizations will host 11 interns, who were selected on a competitive basis, to work alongside experienced building engineers at office buildings in Washington, DC, Northern Virginia, and suburban Maryland.

The internship program is just the first step in our effort to solve the engineering talent crisis in the region. In addition to expanding our internship program in future years, we also intend to better connect maintenance employees with training opportunities and to provide resources that will help them excel in their careers. In addition, we will partner with other trade organizations to “re-brand” building engineering as another way of bolstering the pipeline of high quality candidates who eventually pursue a career in building operations.

## Stepping Up to Engineer a Solution

Special thanks to the following firms that have agreed to host an AOBA Educational Foundation Intern:

**AKRIDGE**  
*Invested.*



TISHMAN SPEYER

Several key objectives are planned for the next three years. These include:

- **Expand the AEF online tool kit** to include career resources, training and educational opportunities and links to job openings at local property management firms
- **Work with education partners** to participate in their career/jobs fairs, provide industry speakers for classes, offer building tours and mentoring for selected students
- **Expand the intern program** to a larger group of institutional partners, sponsors, and interns
- **Undertake a major rebranding — through social media, PR, and a digital advertising campaign** to promote careers in local building engineering and maintenance

### 2018-2020 FUNDING NEEDS TO MEET THE CHALLENGE

AEF has developed a model which creates a comprehensive, regional solution to increase the pipeline for commercial building engineers and maintenance staff.

The Foundation provides an excellent opportunity for additional partners to invest in our effort to build a robust pipeline of high quality employees. These employees — local residents — will enjoy the benefit of lucrative, high-paying jobs — without having to incur the costs of attending a university.

AEF's efforts to build new partnerships with local educational and military stakeholders and launch its internship program have demonstrated success in only one year. **However, this is only the beginning.** Additional resources are needed to expand programs and conduct outreach to many more potential workers and partners.

Help us build and promote meaningful, sustainable career opportunities for area residents who can succeed without attending a four-year college. Jobs in building engineering are stable, lucrative, and growth-oriented.

AEF invites additional investment in promoting workforce development in the Washington, DC region to create opportunity, build futures, and fuel our region's economy.



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To get involved and for more information:

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