THECHICAGODEAL.US

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The People's Freedom & Quality of Life **COVENANT**

COVENANT INDUSTRY 01

SKILLED BUILDERS

Proven capacity converted into licensed work and worker-owned companies.

THE CHICAGO DEAL

Born in Chicago. Led by the people who lived it. Built for everybody.

DOCUMENT FAMILY

Covenant Industry

STEWARDS

Bo Deal

Powers B. Miller

HONORED BROTHER

Mack Mecca

David Penn · In Memoriam

OCTOBER 2026 LIVING EDITION

The Skilled Builders Covenant

An Industry Covenant Under the People's Freedom and Quality of Life Covenant

Benefits follow the person. Ownership follows the work. Community wealth follows the value created.

October 2026 Living Edition · Covenant Industry 01

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All Glory to God.

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Opening — This Is the Deal

The Skilled Builders Covenant Industry is not a jobs program, and it is not a labor pool. It is a national rebuilding lane, led by people who have already proven they can build.

It sits beneath the Chicago Deal and the People's Freedom and Quality of Life Framework because building touches nearly every practical part of quality of life. Housing, water, power, manufacturing, public facilities, data centers, and the physical backbone of the economy all require people who can build and the skill to build it right. Work like lead-pipe replacement — a national public-health priority — is a natural first proof lane: visible, urgent, and close to the people.

America says it has a skilled-labor shortage. Take that claim at its word. For skilled labor, the country already has a door, and it has had it for a century: the union. Anyone who needs skilled labor can go to the union — to the same institutions that, for generations, decided who climbed the ladder and who was shut out. Go to them. And find out how short the country still is.

The covenant is not competing for that door. The covenant industry is something else: skilled builders. America does not lack people who can build. It lacks a lawful system that can reach the builders it already has, respect them, equip them with skill, pay them seriously, and move them toward ownership.

Our people are builders in fact, not in theory. Denied the lawful trades and written off by the official economy, they did not stop building. They built organizations, crews, supply lines, markets, logistics, and command — under conditions most enterprises would not survive a week in. The covenant does not have to teach them to build. It brings the lawful skill, the standards, the credential, and the lane. The builders bring the building.

The order matters. The people drive the bus. Others may align, contract, support, or participate in defined lanes. But the covenant model remains the covenant model, and the builders remain at the center.

This lane answers to the Seven, the standard of the People's Freedom and Quality of Life Covenant: Health, Stability, Peace and Safety, Family, Opportunity, Ownership, and Truth and Respect.

Health: safe jobsites, clean water, and benefits that follow the builder.

Stability: serious wages that hold a household together.

Peace and Safety: lawful work that beats the street.

Family: the Family Accelerator and the father in the home.

Opportunity: a fast on-ramp to journeyman standing.

Ownership: worker to crew to contractor to owner.

Truth and Respect: an honest account of who was shut out, and who builds now.

The lane is judged by those outcomes, not by dollars spent or slots filled.

I. The Shortage Is Real, and the Builders Are Already Here

The country does not need to be persuaded that building hands are needed. The evidence is already public.

Associated Builders and Contractors estimated that construction needed roughly 349,000 net new workers in 2026 and would need about 456,000 in 2027. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects about 649,300 construction and extraction openings per year, on average, across the 2024–2034 period. Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute project that manufacturing may need as many as 3.8 million workers between 2024 and 2033, with 1.9 million jobs at risk of going unfilled.

That is before the full physical demand of the AI economy is felt. Artificial intelligence may sound digital, but its infrastructure is physical: concrete, steel, power, substations, cooling, water, fiber, roads, security, and maintenance. This is not one workforce gap. It is a national rebuilding gap.

And here is the tell. The unions have been the official answer to skilled labor for a hundred years, and the shortage is still this large. The old door cannot fill the gap, because the old door was never built to let everyone through. That is not an argument to tear anything down. It is the reason a second lane is needed.

Don Peebles has publicly described Black people, and especially Black men, as one of America's most untapped resources. If the country has a building shortage while that workforce remains underused, undertrained, undercapitalized, and too often pushed toward survival economies, then part of the shortage is self-created.

The builders already exist. They are in the trenches, in returning-citizen status, and in roles that pay a fraction of what serious work pays. The covenant target should be scaled to the size of the need, and a working ambition of one million builders states the scale plainly. But the number is not a quota to defend. The point is simpler and stronger: the supply is real, and the people are not waiting to be saved. They are building the architecture and making a deal.

II. Straight to Journeyman: An Education Model That Equips Builders

The traditional path asks a worker to spend two or three years in apprentice survival mode before reaching real wages. For someone who has been surviving on the street, two or three years can feel like the rest of his life. He will not take it, and no honest plan should pretend otherwise.

The covenant's education model is built to move trained, vetted builders onto journeyman-level standing far faster than the traditional timeline — through disciplined, education-led, work-based training, in partnership with trade educators and union programs that already demonstrate accelerated journeyman pathways are possible. The on-ramp must be fast enough to compete with the street and serious enough to build a real career.

That model is work-based, wage-based, skill-based, project-based, and ownership-based. It begins with real projects that need real builders and builds the training around the work itself: intake, readiness, safety, tools, jobsite conduct, trade math, documentation, and direct connection to paid work. It does not stop there. It continues into crew leadership, company formation, contractor capacity, estimating, bonding, compliance, procurement, and ownership.

This is the difference between training someone for a job and equipping a builder to own. Training without work is not enough. Work without standards is not enough. Standards without access are not enough. Access without serious wages is not enough. Wages without ownership are not enough. The covenant requires all of it, and it requires the on-ramp to be fast.

III. Two Lawful Lanes: Journeyman Wages and Apprentice Cost Discipline

The covenant is honest about wages and honest about cost. It brings two lawful lanes at the same time.

The first lane is trained United States citizens moved quickly onto journeyman-level standing. The country has a shortage; the covenant supplies vetted, trained, lawful builders ready to do the work at a serious wage. The second lane is apprentice labor that keeps project costs down. Apprentice wages have their place — they control cost and they build skill — and even apprentice wages in a lawful covenant pathway pay far more than the shadow economy pays in the dark.

So the cost objection fails before it is raised. The covenant does not inflate cost; it disciplines it. The Lead Pipe 2050 plan lays out how covenant-aligned crews can cut

replacement costs substantially while paying serious wages. The country gets trained builders, lawful wages, and cost discipline together — not as a trade-off, but as one package.

That is the answer to anyone who claims a serious-wage workforce is too expensive: the covenant brings its own cost discipline, its own training pipeline, and its own accountability, and it does so with American builders brought into the light rather than labor kept cheap by keeping it hidden.

IV. Serious Wages, or the Street Wins

A lawful alternative that cannot compete with the underground economy is not a real alternative. It may look good in a report, but it will not change the street.

There is a major difference between asking a man who has learned to survive in an informal or illegal economy to take a fifteen- or twenty-dollar-an-hour job with no ownership, no dignity, no benefits, and no future, and placing him into a disciplined covenant pathway built around serious wages, lawful income, benefits, ownership, and a respected role rebuilding the country. The first offer tells him to shrink his life. The covenant tells him to rebuild it.

The wage reference point in the Chicago model is serious from the beginning, and it is real. Since June 1, 2026, the base wage for a covered construction laborer in the Chicago area has been fifty-three dollars an hour, before benefits, under the right project, trade, contractor, compliance, and wage structure. That is not a projection or a sales figure; it is the published union rate, the kind of covered wage the Lead Pipe 2050 work is built on, well above the national average for comparable entry work and far above the containment jobs the people have been offered for years. The exact figure is not the point. The point is that serious money is on the table from the start.

Serious wages create serious choices. Serious choices create public safety. Public safety tied to ownership creates durable community change. That chain is the whole argument.

V. Our People Go to the Front of the Line

The trades were closed to Black men, and to others, for generations. The historical record is clear: early labor structures and many craft unions excluded Black workers, and the effects of that exclusion in apprenticeship and construction have been documented for decades. Those unions built apprentice and journeyman ladders and decided who climbed them. That history should be acknowledged honestly, not relitigated endlessly.

Here is what the record does not always say plainly: the people who were shut out did not stop building. They built in the only economies left open to them. Now the country has a shortage, and the builders who were kept out are bringing the solution. So it is neither strange nor unreasonable that the builders the covenant equips go to the front of the line. In truth, it is not an ask at all. It is the structure of the deal. The people created the covenant. The people supply the builders. The people the old system shut out now lead the answer to the shortage that system created.

This is fairness and supply at the same time. The country needs builders; the covenant delivers trained citizens; and the communities that paid the longest price are placed first in line for the lawful work they were once denied. No one should be surprised that the people who build the deal expect to be first through the door.

VI. The Builders Were Always There: From Underground to Lawful

The covenant does not glorify the underground economy, and it does not romanticize what survival cost. It does something more honest: it recognizes the builders the underground economy proves already exist, and it gives them a lawful place to build.

Look plainly at what that economy required. Recruitment. Crew discipline. Territory knowledge. Logistics. Negotiation. Risk management. Loyalty. Command under pressure. Books kept in the head because they could not be kept on paper. Those are not the marks of people waiting to be saved. They are the marks of builders operating without a lawful lane — misdirected only because the lawful economy was too narrow, too slow, too disrespectful, or too weak to compete.

The covenant redirects that proven capacity into lawful work. Informal skill becomes verified skill. Street discipline becomes jobsite discipline. Crew command becomes contractor leadership. Survival income becomes lawful income. Lawful income becomes benefits. Benefits become family stability. Family stability becomes ownership. Ownership becomes community power. That is the conversion principle — and it works because the builder was there the whole time.

It applies directly to returning citizens. Reentry without serious wages is not real reentry. A person cannot be told to change his life while the lawful path offered to him cannot feed his children. Building can become a reentry lane strong enough to matter, because it can lead to real wages, visible work, pride, discipline, and ownership.

VII. The Strongest Tool on Immigration

The covenant is the strongest tool any administration has on immigration — stronger than enforcement alone, because it changes the economics that enforcement alone cannot reach.

Here is the trick that keeps the country divided. A shadow economy of cheap, undocumented labor benefits the people who profit from it. One side defends that labor; the other side fights it; and the division itself protects the arrangement. As long as the lawful economy refuses to pay seriously, the shadow economy keeps its supply, wages stay suppressed, and everyone stays at each other's throats while the profit flows quietly upward.

The covenant changes the board. It offers a lawful way for people to raise their hand and come into the light — at wages that beat the shadow economy. Even apprentice wages inside the covenant pay more than the underground market pays in the dark. When lawful work pays more than hidden work, the incentive to stay hidden collapses, and the engine of the shadow economy loses its fuel.

Enforcement still matters, and the covenant does not blur it. Separate the criminal from the worker. Go after the criminals. Give the worker a lawful path — order, safety, wage standards, taxes, documentation, workplace learning where needed, and a route toward legal status where federal law permits and where Congress must act. The covenant does not expand the shadow economy. It drains it.

That puts Congress in a clear quandary. A member can defend the shadow economy and the cheap labor that depends on it, or back a lawful, trained, better-paid American workforce that arrives with its own cost discipline, its own training pipeline, and a lawful path for those willing to step into the light. Stated plainly, that is not a comfortable position to oppose. It takes the trick out of the hands of those who profit from keeping the country divided.

VIII. Ownership Architecture: Worker to Crew to Contractor to Owner

The covenant cannot stop at placement. Placement alone leaves the people as labor while others keep the ownership. The covenant must build an ownership architecture.

The pathway should move in stages: worker, skilled builder, crew leader, crew company, contractor, supplier, developer, owner. Not everyone moves through every stage, but the system must make the path real. That requires company and crew formation, back-office support, payroll, insurance, bonding, procurement help, legal structure, tax compliance, estimating, project management, and access to capital.

This is how the covenant avoids becoming another version of the old system. The old system manages poverty. The covenant builds power. It does not hand the people a wage and keep the ownership somewhere else; it builds the ladder all the way up and makes sure the builders own what they build.

IX. The Family Accelerator: Wages That Rebuild the Household and Build Generational Wealth

The covenant does not stop at the builder, and it does not stop at the business. It reaches the household, because the household is where quality of life is either built or broken. The mechanism that carries the covenant into the home is the Family Accelerator.

The Family Accelerator is simple to state and serious in effect: covenant wages are not only spent, they are structured to build. With the worker's consent and under the worker's control, a portion of what serious work pays is organized toward the things that change a family's trajectory — homeownership, healthcare access, retirement, emergency reserves, financial literacy, and the children's future. The worker keeps ownership of his money and his choices. The covenant simply builds the rails so that serious wages turn into lasting wealth instead of disappearing.

We are not a union, and unions do not do this. A union bargains for the wage and the benefit inside one employer's walls. The Family Accelerator does something a union has never done: it converts the wage into ownership, and it carries that wealth into the next generation. That is the difference between fighting for a better paycheck and building a family that owns.

This is where the covenant meets one of the administration's signature commitments. The Working Families Tax Cuts created Trump Accounts — tax-advantaged investment accounts opened for American children, seeded by the Treasury for newborns and built up over time by families, employers, philanthropy, and the states, with contributions opening on the Fourth of July, 2026, the nation's 250th birthday. The promise is generational: money invested from the start of a child's life compounds into something that can change that child's future.

But there is an honest gap in that promise, and Congress's own analysts have named it. The families who most need a head start are the families least able to fund these accounts, because no one can contribute what they do not earn. A program built on what a household can set aside will do the most for households that already have the most to spare — unless something closes that gap.

The covenant closes it. Serious covenant wages give families the margin to fund their children's accounts for the first time. Covenant contractors and companies, as lawful

employers, can make the employer contribution the law allows directly into the accounts of their workers' children. And the covenant can organize aligned philanthropy and contributions toward the children of covenant families as a class. The Family Accelerator is, in plain terms, a delivery system that fills these accounts in exactly the communities where they would otherwise stay near empty — and it arrives in the program's first year, the nation's 250th.

There is a deeper repair underneath the numbers. For a long stretch of the last century, the rules of public assistance in practice penalized the household that had a working-age man in it. Support was easier to keep when the father was absent than when he was present, and a regime of policy — since widely criticized and reformed — taught families that the man in the home was a liability to their survival rather than its foundation. The damage to the family, and especially to the standing of the father as provider, is part of the truth this covenant refuses to step around.

The Family Accelerator answers that history directly. It is built around the man as provider, the father in the home, the builder whose serious wage feeds his children and funds their future. It does not pay a family to keep him out. It pays him to stay, to build, and to own. Restoring the provider is not nostalgia; it is one of the most practical antipoverty and public-safety measures there is, because a present, paid, invested father changes everything that follows.

This is why the household belongs in the covenant and not in a footnote. The builder is also a father, a son, a husband, a returning citizen, a neighbor, a future homeowner, a future contractor, and a future civic voice. The covenant is built for the whole person because the goal was never labor extraction. The goal is freedom and quality of life — and a family that owns its future is the clearest proof that the goal has been met.

X. Alignment, the Public Record, and the Ground Game

The timing matters. America marked its 250th birthday on July 4, 2026, and a new Congress takes office in January 2027.

The Skilled Builders Covenant is nonpartisan, because the people's quality of life is not owned by a party. But nonpartisan does not mean vague, powerless, or quiet. The administration has already named many of the priorities this covenant serves: skilled trades, apprenticeships, non-four-year pathways, American workers, infrastructure, manufacturing, and public safety. The covenant gives those stated goals a people-built delivery system — and, on immigration, the strongest practical tool available.

There is a natural alignment in the moment itself. This is a building administration in a rebuilding country, marking 250 years by pouring concrete, raising power, and reshoring industry. An administration that calls the country to build should recognize the largest untapped force of builders it has — and the covenant brings exactly that

force, trained, lawful, and ready. Builders meeting builders is not a slogan; it is the shape of the deal.

There is a direct value proposition for any administration willing to legitimize the deal. The covenant does not only serve the administration's stated workforce goals; through the Family Accelerator it accelerates the administration's signature generational-wealth program, filling children's accounts in precisely the communities where uptake would otherwise lag — and it does so in the program's first year, the nation's 250th. That is alignment a serious administration can see and value.

There is a civic benefit as well. The workforce this covenant reaches is present in the major communities that decide national outcomes, and much of it is currently outside the civic process. When those builders are recruited, trained, paid seriously, and connected to ownership, they do not become a party's voters. They become engaged, accountable, organized civic participants — present in their neighborhoods, visible in their work, and invested in the outcome. That is what a real ground game looks like heading into any election, and the covenant builds it lawfully, in the open, without asking anyone to trade their independence for it.

Once the deal is on the table, candidates and members of Congress face a clear civic question: are you with the covenant or not? That is not a partisan loyalty test. It is a quality-of-life test. Do you support serious wages, lawful work that beats the underground, reentry strong enough to matter, families that build wealth instead of managing poverty, and a lawful path that brings shadow labor into the light — or not? Those questions will live in neighborhoods, churches, barbershops, job sites, and family conversations, not only in policy rooms.

The covenant asks government for recognition, alignment, and the lawful tools to scale what the people are building: recognition by the administration as a delivery lane for its stated goals; action by Congress to make the framework permanent through law; transparent public contracts that connect real work to real builders; and aligned industry and capital that respect the order of the covenant. In return, the covenant delivers builders, projects, public safety, infrastructure progress, lawful and taxable income, reentry conversion, immigration order where lawful, family stability, generational wealth, contractor development, and community ownership. That is why it is a deal, and why permanence through law is the objective. The public record is the leverage: every member and every candidate, of every party, answering where the people can see.

Closing — We Are the Builders

America does not have to choose between public safety and opportunity. It does not have to choose between immigration order and human dignity. It does not have to

choose between skilled-trades standards and expanded access. It does not have to choose between infrastructure and community ownership. It does not have to choose between workers and technology. It does not have to choose between strong families and strong wages. It does not have to choose between the administration's stated priorities and the people's quality of life.

The Skilled Builders Covenant brings these things together. It is a workforce plan, an infrastructure plan, a public-safety plan, an ownership plan, an education reset, an immigration solution, a family-restoration plan, and a lawful civic-accountability tool. Above all, it is a covenant.

A covenant that says those who were left out will now help lead. A covenant that says serious wages must replace empty promises. A covenant that says the underground must be given a lawful path into the light. A covenant that says building is honorable work. A covenant that says ownership must follow labor. A covenant that says the father belongs in the home and the family must build wealth, not just survive. A covenant that says the communities closest to the pain must be closest to the solution. A covenant that says America cannot build the future while wasting the people most able to build it.

Here is the plain truth the country keeps stepping around. If you are looking for skilled labor, there is a union, and you already know where to find it. If you are looking for the builders who can rebuild this country at the scale the moment demands, they are here — and they have been building all along. The covenant brings the skill. The builders bring the building.

We are not waiting to be rescued. We are organizing to rebuild. We are not asking for permission to matter. We are proving we matter by bringing a solution the country needs.

We are not the burden. We are the builders.

Recognize us as builders. Align with the covenant. Make the deal. Let the rebuilding begin.

Sources

Citations are kept out of the main text so it reads and listens cleanly. These sources support the figures and history used above. The Chicago wage figure is the published laborers' rate effective June 1, 2026.

ID	Source Note	Link
S1	Associated Builders and Contractors, Jan. 15, 2026. Estimated construction	https://www.abc.org/News-Media/News-Releases/abc-

ID	Source Note	Link
	worker need: about 349,000 net new workers in 2026; about 456,000 in 2027.	construction-industry-must-attract-349000-workers-in-2026-despite-macroeconomic-headwinds
S2	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Construction and Extraction Occupations. Projected annual openings: about 649,300 per year, average, 2024–2034.	https://www.bls.gov/ooh/construction-and-extraction/
S3	The Manufacturing Institute / Deloitte, 2024 workforce study. Manufacturing may need up to 3.8 million workers by 2033; 1.9 million jobs could go unfilled.	https://themanufacturinginstitute.org/manufacturers-need-as-many-as-3-8-million-new-employees-by-2033/
S4	White House Executive Order, Apr. 23, 2025, Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future.	https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/preparing-americans-for-high-paying-skilled-trade-jobs-of-the-future/
S5	U.S. Department of Labor release, Apr. 23, 2025, describing the plan to reach one million active apprentices and expand access to in-demand occupations.	https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osec/osec20250423
S6	Don Peebles interview, The Breakfast Club / iHeart, Jun. 28, 2024. Peebles describes Black people, especially Black men, as	https://www.iheart.com/podcast/51-the-breakfast-club-24992238/episode/interview-don-peebles-on-his-mission-190140977/

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S10	University of Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab, 2025 apprenticeship brief on Chicagoland apprenticeship representation and completion disparities.	https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/attachments/9960b9ee25b249daf8759dda32fc98c2d19cd3f7/store/a2877f56e6c71c2b0caa472e194e3f4336e5dadffa56a6951366f9e44152/IEL%2BApprenticeship%2BDescriptive%2BBrief%2BMarch%2B2025.pdf
S11	IRS / U.S. Treasury, Trump Accounts (Working Families Tax Cuts; Notice	https://www.irs.gov/trumpaccounts

ID	Source Note	Link
	2025-68). New tax-advantaged children's accounts; one-time $1,000 Treasury seed for U.S.-citizen children born 2025–2028; contributions up to $5,000 per year per child; employer contributions up to $2,500 per year, tax-free; contributions opened July 4, 2026.	
S12	Congressional Research Service, Trump Accounts: Overview and Policy Considerations (R48910). Notes that households with higher income and wealth are more able to contribute to and benefit from the accounts.	https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48910
S13	Construction and General Laborers' District Council of Chicago and Vicinity, wage allocations effective June 1, 2026: base wage $53.00 per hour, before benefits.	https://www.liunachicago.org/know-your-wages

Edition Record

October 2026 Living Edition · October 31, 2026. The first public edition. It carries forward Draft Five (June 21, 2026), with these changes:

— Opening: the Seven added, so this lane answers to the same standard as the parent Covenant.

— Section III: Lead Pipe 2050 described as the plan it is.

— Section IV: the Chicago laborer wage updated to the $53.00 base rate in effect since June 1, 2026.

— Section IX: Trump Accounts described as live since July 4, 2026; a pointer to unpublished material removed.

— Section X: renamed Alignment, the Public Record, and the Ground Game, and brought up to date.

— Sources: kept in full, updated, and the wage source added.

— The credits and the closing aligned with the three leading documents.

— Draft Five's lift passages and working notes are kept in the private record.

One current Living Edition governs at a time. History remains visible; authority remains clear.

All glory to God. Let's build.