

SKYLINES

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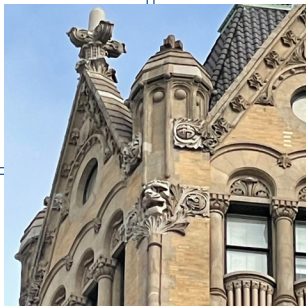
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IMAGE: TWITTER

NEW DOB COMMISSIONER

On April 27, New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced the appointment of **Jimmy Oddo** as the commissioner for the New York City Department of Buildings. DOB Acting Commissioner **Kazimir Vilenchik, P.E.** will return to his previous role as the agency's first deputy commissioner.

Commissioner Oddo will lead the administration's critical building and construction safety work while continuing to support the city's economic recovery. "Commissioner Oddo is an expert at building and running high-functioning teams, and he will bring the leadership the Department of Buildings needs to oversee our city's buildings and protect New Yorkers who work in construction and walk on our streets," said **Mayor Adams**. "Jimmy Oddo brings the highest level of passion, empathy, and smarts to public service, and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Operations has been the grateful beneficiary of the 'Oddo Effect,'" said Deputy Mayor for Operations **Meera Joshi**. "In his new role, his excellent leadership and acumen will ensure the Department of Buildings meets the real and pressing needs of New Yorkers who depend on it to ensure safety standards are in place and for building continuity. I truly look forward to working with Commissioner Oddo in his new capacity, and I am deeply appreciative to First Deputy Commissioner Vilenchik for serving in his acting capacity."

"I am grateful for Mayor Adams' continued belief in me, and I am excited to continue serving this city at the Department of Buildings," said **DOB Commissioner Oddo**. "Ensuring the safety of every New Yorker and workers alike will always be the top priority. As we undertake that critical work, we will continue reorienting the agency to be more efficient and customer friendly. Having built and been a part of highly successful teams, I will work every day to foster a culture within the agency that best positions the talented professionals there to address and advance our agenda — from keeping New Yorkers safe and deploying cutting-edge technology to do so to reinvigorating our city's public space. I am grateful to Deputy Mayor Joshi for her partnership these last 16 months, and I am thrilled to be able to continue to closely work with her and the talented operations team." [Read the Office of the Mayor press release.](#) ■

OVER \$12M IN GRANTS FOR WORKER SAFETY, HEALTH TRAINING

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ANNOUNCED THE AVAILABILITY OF MORE THAN \$12.7 MILLION IN FUNDING TO MAKE MORE GOOD JOBS AVAILABLE TO THE U.S. WORKFORCE BY SUPPORTING TRAINING INITIATIVES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACES THROUGHOUT THE NATION

Administered by the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Susan Harwood Training Grant Program includes funding opportunities for Targeted Topic Training, Training and Educational Materials Development, and new Capacity Building training grants for nonprofit organizations. Grants will support recipients' efforts to provide instructor-led remote and in-person hands-on training for workers and employers in small businesses; industries with high injury, illness and fatality rates; and vulnerable workers, who are underserved, have limited English proficiency, or are temporary workers. Specifically, the Harwood grants will fund training and education on how to recognize, avoid and control hazards, and inform workers of their rights and employers of their responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Funding will be available in the following categories:

Targeted Topic Training:

Supporting educational programs that identify and prevent workplace hazards. Applicants must conduct training on OSHA-

designated workplace safety and health hazards.

Training and Educational Materials Development:

Supporting the development of quality classroom-ready training and educational materials that identify and prevent workplace hazards.

Capacity Building: Supporting organizations in developing new training programs to assess needs and plan for full-scale safety and health education programs, expanding their capacity to provide workplace safety and health training, education and related assistance to workers and employers. Applicants must register with [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) to apply for a grant opportunity. Submit applications at www.grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. EDT on July 7, 2023. OSHA awards grants to nonprofit organizations, including community, faith-based, grassroots organizations, employer associations, labor unions, joint labor/management associations, Indian tribes, and public/state colleges and universities to provide free workplace safety and health training.

[Read the US DOL press release.](#) ■



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SCAFFOLD LAW REFORM

H.R.2542 - INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION ACT OF 2023 "WOULD PROTECT FEDERAL MONEY FROM SCAFFOLD LAW"



IMAGE: AVA PUKATCH, WRVO

During the introduction of his bill to reform scaffold law, Rep. Brandon Williams said that, with the current unprecedented strain on state and local budgets, the federal government cannot continue to waste valuable infrastructure dollars.

On May 20, 2023, Rep. Brandon Williams (R-Sennett) introduced [H.R.2542 - Infrastructure Expansion Act of 2023](#) which proposes to reform the scaffold law that puts absolute liability on employers and property owners for gravity-related injuries and is only found in New York. As [Ava Pukatch, WRVO Public Media, reports](#) Williams said his bill would bar absolute liability from being imposed on any claims against a project receiving federal financial assistance. "This would protect federal money from the scaffold law and ensure that money we get for the state goes toward infrastructure and workers that are building

infrastructure projects, not to pay trial lawyers," Williams said, adding that the scaffold law is outdated and leads to higher construction costs. "With [Micron \[Micron Technology, Inc., the world's fourth-largest semiconductor company\]](#) coming to the area, this is more important than ever," Williams said. "Housing is already a big challenge for us here in central New York and it's only going to become worse with the influx of additional workers. My bill will make it easier for us to build the housing stock that these workers need." [More than 30 organizations have signed Williams' letter](#) to

Congress showing their support for his bill.

[Mary Thompson, of Homebuilders and Remodelers of Central New York](#) which signed onto a letter of support, said the absolute liability standard can make it difficult to give insurance to contractors. She also said standards have changed since it was first enacted. "It was put in place in the late 1800s," Thompson said. "Since then we have OSHA, we have workman's comp, we have all the things in place to help. It's just New York state that has this still stuck on the books." The bill was referred to the House Judiciary Committee." ■

"...And ensure that money we get for the state goes toward infrastructure and workers that are building infrastructure projects, not to pay trial lawyers"

Rep. Brandon Williams



Introduction 970 would establish new design requirements for scaffolding, such as allowing the structures to be painted in several different colors and raising their minimum height to 12 feet, as well as creating alternatives to scaffolding.

(IMAGE: SPRING SCAFFOLDING)

LEGISLATION PACKAGE TO ADDRESS SCAFFOLDING

BILLS AIM TO SPEED UP THE PROCESS FOR TAKING DOWN SCAFFOLDING, ALLOW FOR LESS INTRUSIVE ALTERNATIVES TO BE USED, ENSURE THE SCAFFOLDING BETTER INTEGRATES WITH THE BUILDING, AND CONSOLIDATE FAÇADE INSPECTIONS ON ANY GIVEN BLOCK IN NYC

Council Members Erik Bottcher, Keith Powers, Pierina Sanchez, Shaun Abreu, and Chris Marte have introduced a package of legislation to address scaffolding in New York city.

"All too often, these 'temporary' structures stay up for years at a time, and in the process hurt small businesses, make streets feel less safe, and rob New Yorkers of their streets. The oldest scaffolding in the city dates back to 2006 - a time when George W. Bush was President, the iPhone had yet to be released, and *The DaVinci Code* was all the rage. Much has changed in the world since then, but the scaffolding endures," said City Council Member **Eric Bottcher** in his March 16, 2023 [press release](#), after having introduced the following bills:

[Introduction 954](#) protects our City's green spaces by requiring scaffolding to avoid obstructing playgrounds and parks. Scaffolding in these areas would have to be a minimum of 12 feet high and avoid use of cross-bracing.

[Introduction 955](#) makes scaffolding brighter and safer - especially at night - by updating lighting requirements to LED lights that have at least 90 lumens per watt as opposed to the current 45.

[Introduction 956](#) establishes penalties for property owners

who fail to apply for a work permit within 6 months of installing scaffolding.

"New York City is the only city in the world with sidewalk sheds all over the place. This is a public policy failure. That's why I'm so proud of this package of legislation that my colleagues and I are introducing to reduce the amount of scaffolding as well as heighten their design and lighting standards. Thanks to my colleagues for their incredible support in moving this important legislation forward," said Bottcher.

City Council Majority Leader **Keith Powers** is introducing five bills as part of this package of legislation:

[Introduction 970](#) will establish new design requirements for scaffolding, such as allowing the structures to be painted in several different colors and raising their minimum height to 12 feet, as well as creating alternatives to scaffolding.

[Introduction 972](#) will create timelines for the removal of scaffolding if no active construction is taking place over an extended period of time. Instead, the City would be allowed to step in and correct unsafe conditions on building façades, and then bill the property owner.

[Introduction 973](#) will allow newly constructed buildings to have their first façade examination

take place in eight years instead of five since they use safer materials. It would also require the Department of Buildings to coordinate inspections on the same block so façade repairs happen simultaneously.

[Introduction 971](#) will protect the City's tree cover. It will require any trees that are damaged or removed when setting up equipment to be repaired or replaced within six months.

[Introduction 452](#) will allow the City to establish a pilot program to use drones, in conjunction with physical examinations, for the inspection of building faces.

"Scaffolding shouldn't be one of the first things people associate with NYC," said Powers. "It's time we reclaim our streets, and I'm proud to be introducing a series of bills that represent a comprehensive approach to reforming a well-intentioned but outdated system. These bills will dramatically improve our streets and I look forward to seeing them become law."

City Council Member **Chris Marte** is also introducing a bill as part of this package:

[Introduction 966](#) requires the Department of Buildings to inspect scaffolding every six months and issue an administrative fee per inspection.

"The only thing that's more overdue than our city's ever-present scaffolding is the solution to address it. Estimates show there's enough scaffolding to border all five boroughs 14 times. My legislation won't allow the city or contractors to ignore these eyesores any longer and will mandate periodic inspections to see if any construction is even happening, and invoke penalties for scaffolding that's overstayed its use," said Council Member Marte.

"Old, rotting scaffolding sheds not only blight our city's beautiful architecture, they obstruct sidewalks and damage green space. We must commit more resources and attention to getting scaffolding down efficiently," said Council Member **Shaun Abreu**. "This package of legislation does just that. These bills streamline the scaffolding process while promoting necessary alternatives to scaffolding for safe building compliance. It has my full support."

"For as long as I can remember, sidewalk sheds have been eyesores in our city, making our streets feel darker and less safe. With building owners leaving sidewalk sheds up for longer and longer, it is past due that we institute reforms and provide support. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this issue," said Council Member **Pierina Sanchez**. ■

DISTINCTIVE AND ENDURING CAST STONE AND GFRC REPLICATIONS

VESTACAST'S PRODUCTS ENHANCE THE CITY SKYLINE TODAY AND FOR THE FUTURE



"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

Aristotle

Thomas (Tommy) Caruso, president and co-owner/co-founder of [Vestacast](#) with Piotr (Peter) Kaminski, vice president and co-owner/co-founder, closes all his emails with the quote attributed to the Greek philosopher. It's his way of pledging unsurpassed quality to his customers. Of course, Aristotle lived over 2400 years ago, a time when speed may not have been as paramount and 5G wasn't deemed the apex of expediency. Yet for Caruso and Kaminski the standards for excellence remain immutable. Says Caruso, "It's what we do." It's what they've always done. In 2007, the longtime co-workers and friends decided to pool their combined total of 50 plus years in the restoration industry to found Vestacast. Both brought family legacies to the mix: Caruso's grandfather was a project manager for Safeway Scaffold in Long Island City, Kaminski's grandfather and father ran a successful carpentry business in Poland.



Since 2007, the dedication of Tom Caruso (right) and Piotr Kaminski (left) continues to create architectural elements from basic shapes to highly ornate, replicating stonework that restoration contractors, architects and engineers can depend on to renew, refresh and preserve the beauty of the built environment.

Vestacast, which derives its name from a term related to stone fabrication in Italy, Caruso's ancestral home, launched the business in a vacant 5000 square foot warehouse in Maspeth, Queens. The pair began by hiring two mold makers, five office workers and a comptroller for a total of eight employees plus the two owners. Vestacast now has 36 employees: a corps of highly skilled artisans and assistants in the shop, a laboratory technician and office staff. Since 2017, it resides in a 17,000 square foot building located nearby, though Caruso claims "we could still use more room." There are seven departments: Drafting, Model

Restoration, Color Matching Lab, Mold Fabrication/Carpentry, Casting, GFRC and, most importantly, Quality Control.

GROWING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS

"We jumped right in!" Caruso explains. "We always offered a full range of products: brackets, planters, columns, copings, moldings, cornices, balusters, and much more." One of the largest projects, circa 2008, was a residential building located at 241 Holland Avenue in the Bronx that required reproducing 260 stones for an ornate parapet. Today Vestacast is working on a project almost tenfold larger, replicating 2300 stones for the

New Yorker Hotel. On average, Vestacast produces 600 to 800 stones per project – a daunting number as new molds are required for approximately every 6 to 10 castings, depending on the original stone's shape and detail. Over the years, the company has grown almost entirely through word-of-mouth with more and more restoration company project managers, supervisors, and masons as well as architect and engineer subcontractors glad to recommend Vestacast and testify to its excellent work. "We've built ourselves through relationships, not marketing," says Caruso. "Our clients are our partners

and more than that, our friends,” agrees Kaminski.

REASSEMBLING, REPLICATING AND REPLACING THE FINEST STONEMWORK

The stonework fabricated at Vestacast replicates the appearance of sandstone, limestone, slate, granite, marble or travertine in building exteriors, replacing stones that have deteriorated over time through weathering, movement – expansion and contraction - and other natural forces. Restoration contractors deliver carefully removed stone fragments from a building’s façade to the shop which are then painstakingly reassembled puzzle-like to exactly replicate the original shape and ornamentation of the piece to be reproduced. A mold is created from wood forms and other compounds.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RAW MATERIALS

Sourcing raw materials is an extremely complex and costly process. Crushed limestone, gravel, sand, fine gravel and specialty aggregates ordered from manufacturers nationwide and internationally are added to the highest grade of cement for the design mix. As the industry is moving towards increasing “green” standards nationwide, all cement products will soon be required to include 15% crushed limestone to make their product more sustainable.

2020 - A CERTIFIED MEMBER OF THE CAST STONE INSTITUTE

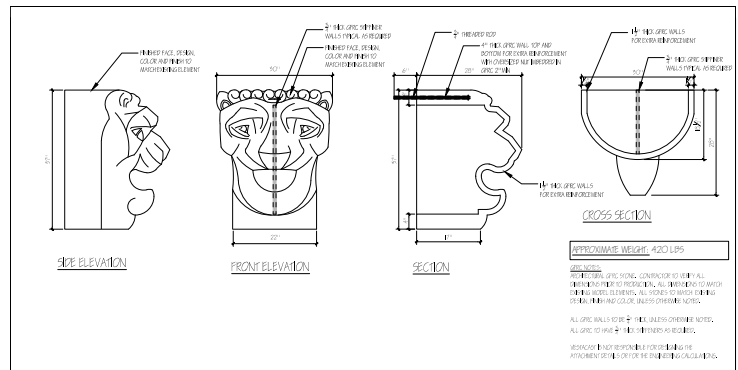
In 2020, Vestacast became a certified member of the Cast Stone Institute (CSI). CSI adheres to ASTM C1364 requirements, standards that are legally binding and have been adopted by the 2018 International Building Code. Furthermore, all CSI members must provide a 10-year Limited Product Warranty for the cast

stone they supply. Although Vestacast needed to make a sizeable investment of time, equipment and funds to meet the rigorous standards, in fact Vestacast has fabricated cast, not precast stone, since its inception. Says Caruso, “We always produced the highest quality cast stone, but now we decided to go the extra mile through the testing and monitoring required.” Precast stone has a lower psi (pounds per square inch) standard than cast stone. Cast stone cannot have bugholes or voids in the surface.

The tests for cast stone required for CSI submissions performed in Vestacast’s on-site laboratory by their certified lab technician are:

1. Air entrainment - This gauges the stone’s movement.
2. Compressive strength - Precast stone needs to withstand 5000 psi; cast stone must withstand 6500 psi meaning that it is a more durable product. The test is administered on 2” x 2” cubes to the point of breaking.
3. Water absorption - The stone is oven dried then placed in a water bath. After 28 days it is tested to ensure it has not increased by over 6%.

An additional test, freeze thaw, is conducted twice a year at an outside lab located in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Stone is tested for 300 cycles of freeze thaw and must show a cumulative weight loss no greater than 5%. The third-party lab also redoes the compression and absorption tests Vestacast has conducted in-house to confirm results. Additionally, Vestacast is required to submit a log to CSI on a bi-yearly basis recording tests conducted for every 500 cubic feet of product that works out to be weekly to meet Vestacast’s production volume. A CSI inspector comes unannounced each year to all members to conduct tests.



	LION HEAD		JOB ADDRESS: 874 BROADWAY NEW YORK, NY 10003	DRAWN BY: SAE	DATE: REVISION #2 5/18/19
	TITLE: GFRP ELEMENT	JOB #: V-4702B	SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"	DRAWING #: 006	

874 Broadway terra cotta lion's head replacement. Replica stone fabricated in GFRC, as illustrated above.

ADDING GFRC TO THE PRODUCT LINE - REPLICATING THE BEAUTY OF TERRA COTTA

In 2015, Vestacast added GFRC or Glass Reinforced Concrete to its line of products, a stone that replicates and replaces terra cotta elements on building exteriors. Terra cotta, a ceramic

clay product that is baked, is the most fragile of all stones. GFRC stones have a smooth finish, are lightweight and composed of alkaline resistant fiber. They are hollow and 3/4 to 1" thick. Terra cotta's propensity to crack over time has made the stones a longtime safety concern for the

IMAGES: VESTACAST



IMAGE: VESTACAST

Vestacast has an extensive library containing thousands of sample colors with formulas catalogued.

construction industry due to the risk of fragments falling from buildings onto sidewalks and streets.

Vestacast's decision to expand its line was in response to an industry need. There is a scarcity of terra cotta fabricators with only two or three remaining in the U.S. and Europe. The knowledge required to correctly blend aggregates into concrete to create long-lasting GFRC stones takes a comprehensive background in the field that is rare. GFRC now represents approximately 30% of Vestacast's work.

AN EXTENSIVE LIBRARY OF COLORS

With all cast stones and GFRC, pigmentation is a huge

component of the finished product. Vestacast has an extensive library containing thousands of sample colors with formulas catalogued. Most stone fabricators can reproduce approximately 15 shades. Caruso explains that the firm's huge palette is based on 13 formulas that are manipulated to create numerous options.

A strong supporter of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and The New York Landmarks Conservancy, Kaminski notes that Vestacast's colors "Can match any landmark in NYC."

Caruso adds, "Our clients have a comfort level when working with us. They know they'll get the right product."

A few of Vestacast's iconic projects are: The New Yorker Hotel, The Plaza Hotel, 760 Park Avenue, 220 Fifth Avenue, the Masonic Temple's Grand Hall on West 23rd Street, Brooklyn, the former printing plant for the *NY Daily News*.

KUDOS FROM CUSTOMERS

Caruso and Kaminski are consistently responsive to their clients and quick to answer phone calls at any time. It's part of their commitment.

Clients are also impressed by the cleanliness of the shop that remains scrupulously dust and contaminant free. "Tom and Peter really have their act together. They run a tight

ship," says Skyline Restoration Senior Estimator Emeritus, Peter Oxenham.

Skyline Restoration first worked with Vestacast in 2010 on the MacIntyre Building which later received the Lucy G. Moses award from the New York Landmarks Conservancy. Other collaborative projects with Skyline include 520 Clinton Avenue, 215 East 71st Street, and 325 Washington Square. Caruso recalls one of the most challenging projects with Skyline at 874 Broadway a.k.a. the MacIntyre Building a year ago when Vestacast needed to simulate a six-foot-tall lion's head and various ornate replacement stones from stones that were no longer on site. "We worked from adjacent

stone. There was tremendous interaction between project managers and supervisors. It turned out beautifully," says Caruso. He notes too that Skyline has played a substantial role enabling the growth of Vestacast "along with the lifelong friendships and relationships we've built with their entire team."

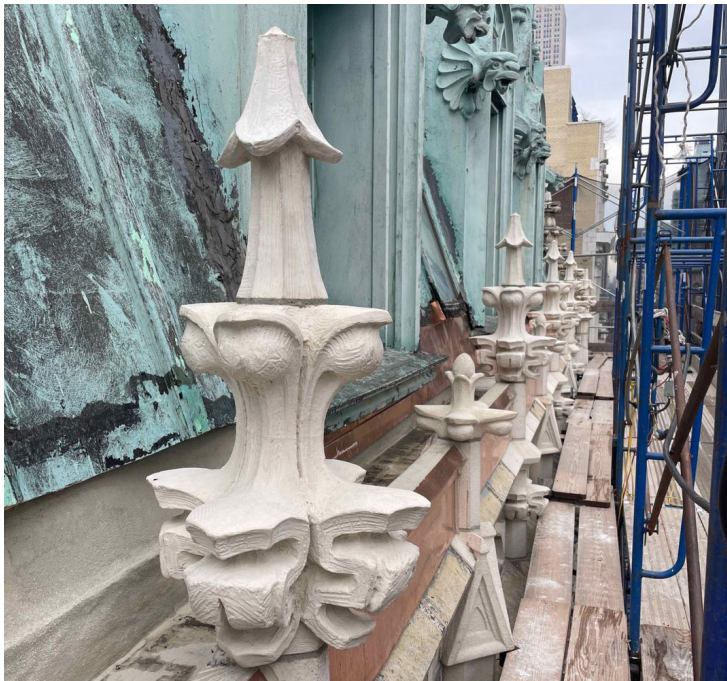
In the end, it's the results that truly make the difference and will for generations to come.

Says Kaminski, "There's a need in the industry for service that is quick and also won't compromise on quality- we know this since we came from the industry. We devote our lives to this business.

We've put our hearts into it. This is the only way to do it."

Caruso concurs, adding that the achievement extends to all involved. He says, "seeing the finished projects after our clients remove the rigging and scaffolding from the façade of the buildings gives our entire team a sense of pride that we were able to take part in the preservation of so many historically important landmark buildings throughout the City."

The exceptional work of Vestacast is the truest and most enduring reward not only for the team and its clients, but also for all who live in, work in, and visit the metropolitan area. ■



Original sculpture (left) and a Vestacast replica (right) at the Croisic Building. The company also produced the replicas (top) at the Fifth Ave. landmark.

\$6 MILLION IN FUNDS TO REHABILITATE NEWLY DESIGNATED LANDMARK

(FORMER) COLORED SCHOOL NO. 4 IS ONLY KNOWN SURVIVING EXAMPLE OF RACIALLY SEGREGATED SCHOOL IN MANHATTAN

On May 23, 2023, New York City Mayor Eric Adams, New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) Commissioner Jessica Tisch, and New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) Chair Sarah Carroll announced \$6 million in funding for the rehabilitation of '(Former) Colored School No. 4' in Manhattan, which LPC voted to designate as an individual landmark earlier that day.

(Former) Colored School No. 4 is the only known surviving building in Manhattan that exclusively served Black Americans during the troubled period of mandated racial segregation in New York City Public Schools. Spanning the period between the Civil War through the post-Reconstruction era, the site is an important reminder of racially segregated education in New York City and illustrates how education afforded crucial opportunities and skills to Black students as they struggled against the discrimination and inequities that were part of their daily life. The Adams administration's decision to invest in the building's rehabilitation will ensure that this history is never forgotten. "As the second Black mayor in New York City history, the significance of this landmark designation is not lost on me, and I am proud we are investing \$6 million to rehabilitate (Former) Colored School No. 4 so that this painful, yet important, piece of history is preserved," said Mayor Adams. "Historic sites like this are crucial reminders of those who came before us, whose courage and ambition helped shape our city and chart the course to becoming the incredible city we are today. We stand on the shoulders of the young men and women that attended this school, and while they may be gone, I am honored to ensure they will never be forgotten."

(Former) Colored School No. 4 was constructed between 1849 and 1850 on West 17th Street in Manhattan and became one of New York City's racially segregated public "colored schools" in 1860. The school served the Black community that lived on Manhattan's West Side until it closed in 1894. It remained New York City property and was used for a variety of purposes, including by DSNY as a satellite office and locker facility, from 1936 through 2015. LPC and DSNY have collaborated throughout the designation and budgetary process, and the funding announced today by Mayor Adams will enable DSNY to stabilize and rehabilitate the building, which has been affected by water infiltration and general age-related deterioration. Engineering investigation and design work is currently underway, and the full rehabilitation is expected to be completed in 2027. DSNY will work with city agencies and local stakeholders to identify an appropriate long-term use for the facility, following the renovation.

[Read the LPC press release.](#) ■



OSHA & SITE SAFETY TRAINING

The Skyline Charitable Foundation launches a second round of its program for individuals wishing to enter the building restoration and construction industry once eligible for employment.

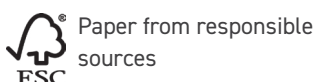


The Skyline Charitable Foundation (TSCF), with support from the City of New York, launched a second round of its free training program for asylum seekers wishing to enter the building restoration and construction industry once eligible for employment. The instruction and hands-on training take place at the Andromeda Building facilities in Long Island City, NY, where TSCF's main office is also located. Many of the arriving asylum seekers have a background within the construction and restoration industry and can greatly benefit from what this training offers,

which includes 62 hours of instruction and certifications in: OSHA 30; 10-Hour Site Safety Training (8-hr Fall Prevention & 2-hr Drug and Alcohol Awareness); 16-Hour Suspended Scaffold User; 4-Hour Supported Scaffold User/Refresher; 2-Hour Silica Awareness. The first round of training ended on May 2nd, with 32 graduates having successfully completed the 62-hour free-of-charge program (photo above). This initiative was formed to not only address the City's stated need for workforce development, but to aid in creating pathways

for the newly arrived individuals and families to obtain financial stability and the ability to successfully integrate into their new communities. Asylum seekers are introduced to TSCF's training program via organizations like **Fundavenyc** and **Monkwox Social Services**, while daily lunches are offered by **Hungry Monk**, **Tacombi**, and **Rethink Food**. The city, along with mutual aid groups, local non-profits and community leaders are all working diligently to ensure basic needs are being met. ■

PHOTO: THE SKYLINE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



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