

Proposal Title: Timber Framing Workforce Development – Train the Trainer

Project Dates: February 1 – November 1, 2026

What need for preservation training does this proposal address? What are the project’s goals?

The Timber Framers Guild seeks to address the national need for high-quality preservation training in historic timber structures by expanding access to rigorous, technically grounded instruction in traditional and modern timber framing. Our educational programs preserve centuries-old building knowledge while translating that craft into contemporary training that strengthens technical skills, supports career advancement, and sustains a skilled workforce essential to the long-term preservation of historic structures. The Guild’s Education Program encompasses Pre-Apprentice and Apprentice Programs, curriculum and module development for workshops and Community Building Projects, and specialized training in engineering, design, software applications, and related technical topics. Each component is designed to strengthen technical capacity, advance preservation practices, and ensure that heritage structures and traditional timber technologies can be conserved, repaired, and rebuilt with accuracy and integrity.

Within our Pre-Apprentice and Apprentice Programs—cornerstones of our national workforce development initiative—we are significantly expanding instructor capacity to meet growing demand for preservation-focused timber training. The proposed Train the Trainer series directly supports this goal by developing standardized instructor materials and providing structured training by seasoned timber framers who are also professional educators. This effort will elevate instructional quality, increase teaching consistency across the Guild, and ensure that the next generation of instructors is prepared to teach the technical, craft, and safety competencies required for the preservation of historic timber structures.

How does the proposed project meet the need(s) and goal(s) identified above?

The proposed project directly addresses the need for high-quality, preservation-focused instruction by equipping skilled timber framers with the pedagogical tools, safety competencies, and inclusive practices necessary to teach effectively within the Guild’s expanding education portfolio. Although the Guild benefits from a network of accomplished timber framers who are deeply committed to passing on their craft, many work independently, have limited formal teaching experience, and lack structured preparation in how to train others in technical preservation skills. Strengthening this instructional capacity is essential to sustaining a national pipeline of practitioners capable of stewarding historic timber structures with accuracy and professional rigor.

To meet this need, the project will deliver three Train the Trainer seminars for instructors who lead Guild Community Building Projects, workshops, and our Pre-Apprentice and Apprentice programs. These two-day sessions will introduce foundational teaching theory tailored to the skilled trades, with practical guidance on how to communicate complex technical concepts, sequence hands-on learning, and evaluate skill acquisition in preservation settings. Training modules will emphasize critical safety practices specific to timber framing and historic structure repair, ensuring that instructors can model and reinforce safe worksite behavior while teaching preservation techniques.

The seminars will also include focused instruction on inclusive teaching strategies, helping instructors effectively engage participants from traditionally underserved communities and reduce barriers to entering the preservation trades. By learning how to identify skill levels, recognize learning styles, and match novices with appropriate tasks and training pathways, instructors will be better equipped to guide emerging craftspeople toward successful placement in preservation-related careers. Together, these efforts strengthen the Guild's ability to deliver consistent, high-quality, and accessible preservation training—directly supporting our overarching goals of expanding a skilled workforce, safeguarding historic timber structures, and preserving the craft traditions that underpin this important field.

How will HPEF Partners in Training funds be used to further the project?

The HPEF Partners in Training funds will play a pivotal role in advancing our Pre-Apprentice and Apprentice Programs by enabling the timely development and implementation of high-quality training modules for our instructors and mentors. This investment directly supports our goal of establishing a consistent, rigorous instructional framework that elevates the technical preservation training offered across all Guild programs. With HPEF's *Partners in Training* support, we will be able to accelerate this work, ensure instructional excellence, and expand access to preservation-focused timber training nationwide.

Provide a brief overview of the organization and how its previous activities position it to meet the needs and goals identified above.

Founded in 1985, TFG seeks to enrich community through craft by advancing timber framing through research, education, and industry. Now celebrating our 40th year, we continue to teach, share, and expand knowledge, connecting people to sustainable building, design, restoration, and the science of timber. TFG is the only national organization teaching the full craft of timber framing, from traditional joinery to modern timber craft, through immersive, collaborative education. Unlike conventional trade schools, our programs are mobile and community-based, reaching rural, historic, and underserved areas with rare access to specialized training.

Through our Education Program, we transform centuries of craft into modern training that strengthens skills, careers, communities, and the environment. Our Education Program offers Pre-Apprentice and Apprentice Programs, develops educational modules and curriculum for workshops and our Community Building Projects, builds relationships with trade schools and colleges, presents training around engineering, design, software, and technical topics, and more.