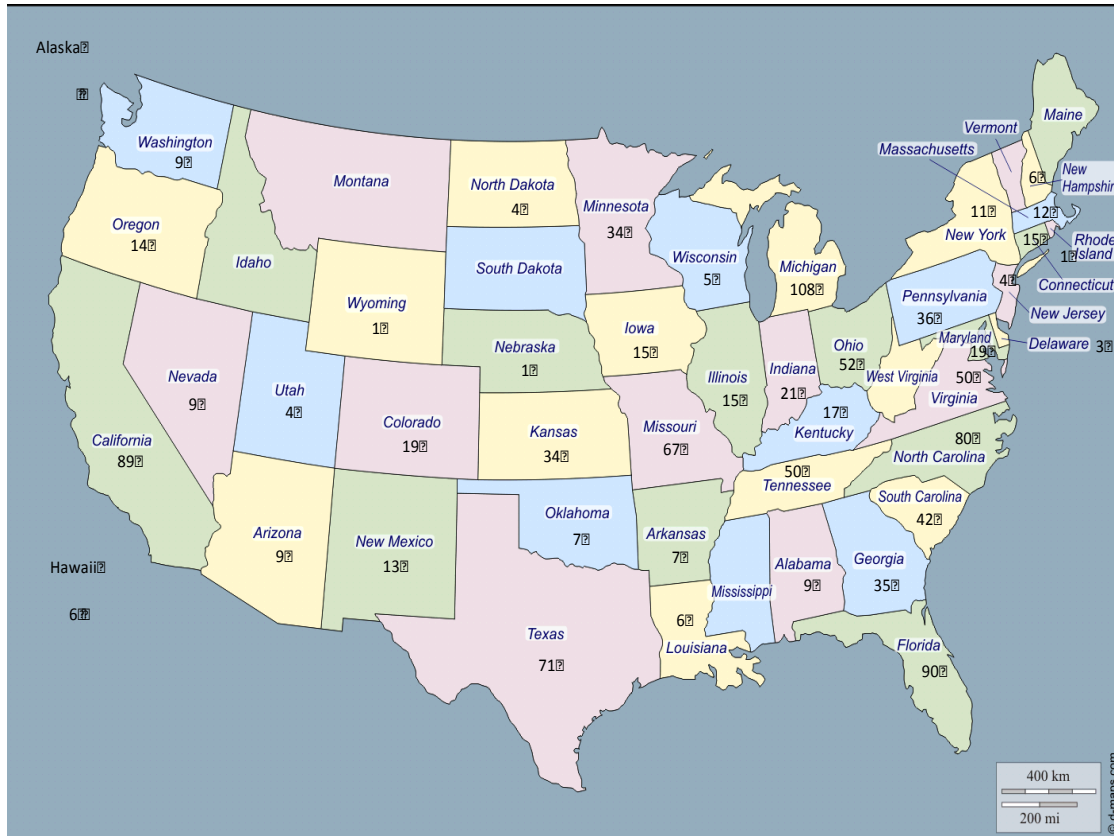


Ceramic Tile Education Foundation 2015 Annual Report

The Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF) is supported by all segments of the ceramic tile industry, and for many years has emphasized education and certification of installers as its two primary objectives vital to the growth of the market. CTEF is headquartered in Pendleton, South Carolina, near Clemson University and in close proximity to the offices of the Tile Council of North America (TCNA). This has allowed for the Foundation to provide visitors who receive educational training a unique opportunity to visit with TCNA leaders.

Shortly after CTEF was established, industry leaders identified that the single biggest detriment to the growth of the tile trade was poor installation. Thanks to a strong effort from leaders of the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) to promote this to its members, the Certified Tile Installer (CTI) testing program was established. The CTI exam includes both an online knowledge test and a physical skills assessment. As with many certification programs, the process took some time to gain momentum. Many dedicated leaders have spent years investing time and resources to get this program where it is today. In 2014, the CTEF proudly announced it had reached 1,000 certified installers who had passed the exam. CTEF expects to reach 1,200 CTI's by the end of 2015, with a realistic goal of 1,500 to be reached by the end of 2016. The map below identifies the impact CTEF has had on the market with its CTI program. The numbers shown on each state indicate the actual certified installers as of July 31st, 2015.



As the CTI program grew, Foundation staff and volunteers identified a need to establish advanced level tests that could highlight the specific skills of highly trained tile installers, creating a new level of confidence for project owners, designers, architects, specifiers and consumers. To accomplish this, the CTEF Board of Directors realized that the entire industry needed to support this effort. NTCA, TCNA, and CTEF approached the leaders of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (IUBAC), International Masonry Institute (IMI), and signatory contractors of the Tile Contractors Association of America (TCAA). This effort resulted in the creation of the Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers program, known as ACT. To date, there are seven specific advanced certification tests offered in the ACT Program. In order to qualify to take these exams, the installers must have either completed and passed the CTI test administered by the CTEF, or have successfully completed the three year Apprenticeship Program administered by the IUBAC. The ACT program is now underway, and modules have been constructed in numerous regional locations around the country. Initial testing was conducted at national tradeshow, Surfaces and Coverings, and it is expected that the program will escalate in 2016.

In 2013, voting members of the TCNA *Handbook* Committee supported an effort from the contracting community to include language promoting the importance of qualified labor in the specifications. Both the CTI and ACT certification tests were included in this submission. The result has been an increased awareness of these programs, with many specifications now calling for these skills to be present on both commercial and residential projects.

CTEF is a non-profit 501c 3 Foundation that utilizes all of its resources to promote the education and certification tile installers. Seeing the need and having the vision to assist CTEF achieve these goals, the Board of Directors of COVERINGS, the international tile and stone show held annually in North America, voted to provide the much needed support to the Foundation. During the last eight years, COVERINGS has provided over \$1,000,000 toward the operation and expansion of the CTEF programs. The owners of the COVERINGS show that have generously provided this support include; the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA), the Tile Council of North America (TCNA), the Italian Ceramic Tile Manufacturing Association (Confindustria Ceramica), the Spanish Ceramic Tile Manufacturers Association (ASCER) and the Ceramic Tile Distributors Association (CTDA) .

Several years ago, a fundraising effort mutually supported and promoted by the TCNA and the NTCA was established, creating levels of sponsorship that offer value and benefits in return for that support. On the last page of this report, we have included the extensive list of our generous and valued sponsors. We would like to take this opportunity to thank each sponsor for their unwavering support and dedication to the betterment of the tile industry.

CTEF has met many goals and objectives with limited resources in the past few years. The support of the industry, including financial and marketing support, is integral to the success and future growth of the Foundation. In order for the program to escalate, significant logistical support from distributors and manufacturers is necessary. In addition, contract labor must be utilized to administer and conduct an expanded testing program. Finally, a strong effort to educate the architectural and design community and enlighten consumers as to the value of certification will be necessary to take the program to a new level.

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