

Apprenticeships: Expanding Access to Good Jobs for Women

Connecticut Higher Education and Employment
Advancement Committee, January 20, 2022



Ariane Hegewisch
hegewisch@iwpr.org



About IWPR

As a leading national think tank, we build evidence to shape policies that grow women's power and influence, close inequality gaps, and improve the economic well-being of families.

Apprenticeships: Expanding Access to Good Jobs for Women

- *Why now*
- *Who are women apprentices in the trades*
- *What are the challenges for growing gender diversity in trade apprentices*
- *How to meet those challenges*

Women and Building Trades Apprenticeships

Why now

- **The need**
 - COVID-19 highlighted women's concentration in the lowest paid jobs, and many of these jobs have not (may not) come back
 - 2/3 of apprenticeships are in the trades, with starting wages around \$15 with benefits
- **Extraordinary moment**
 - Highest number ever of women in the trades, including of women apprentices
 - High growth in women's numbers in apprenticeships across race and ethnicity since 2016
 - Urgent need to replenish skilled workforce as experienced workers are retiring
 - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
- **The challenge**
 - The construction workforce does not reflect the population: women are just 4%
 - New money comes with high expectations (e.g. goal of 23% women apprentices)
 - Many women (and also men) who enter the industry do not stay

The 2021 IWPR Tradeswomen's Retention and Advancement Survey

Lifting Up Tradeswomen's and Trade Apprentices Voices and Experiences on What Needs to Change in the Industry to Build on the Current Momentum

- **What did we asked**

- What attracts you to the trades? How did you learn about trade opportunities?
- What is it like to work in the trades? As a woman of color? As an apprentice? As a mother?
- Is anything pushing you out of the trades?
- What helps you succeed in the trades?

- **Who answered the survey**

- 2,635 tradeswomen and nonbinary tradespeople
- 63% are **union** members
- 46% journey, 23% **apprentices**, 23% experienced other
- Responses from 50 states and DC

- **When and how**

- Winter 2021 on-line
- Distributed through tradeswomen's groups, social media, women-focused pre-apprenticeship programs, NABTU Women's Committee

Who are Tradeswomen Apprentices?

- **Mothers and Parents**
 - 54% of apprentices have kids
 - 18% of apprentices have kids under 6
- **Diverse**
 - 5% Asian American and Pacific Islanders
 - 17.9% Black non-Hispanic,
 - 16.4% Latina
 - 2.7% Native American non-Hispanic
 - 55% White non-Hispanic
 - 3.5% More than one race or other
- **Earning Good Wages (2019)**
 - 30% earned at least \$50,000 per year
 - 46% earned between \$25,000 and \$50,000

How can we grow the number of women apprentices

What are the challenges

- **Make it easier to get in: Finding out about the trades is haphazard**
 - Only 6% of apprentices learned about opportunities in the trades from their high school counsellor (12% in MA)
 - 47% came in through friends and family
- **Create more welcoming worksites: Being held to higher standards than men is exhausting:**
 - 37% say there are frequently or always held to a higher standard than men
- **Fix discrimination at the heart of the apprenticeship model**
 - 19% say they are never or rarely treated equally with men when it comes to *respect* or *on-the-job training*
 - 22% say they are never or rarely treated equally when it comes to *work assignments*

➔ **Retention: 44% have seriously thought about leaving the trades**

More than 4 in 10 apprentices have seriously thought about leaving the trades

Most common “very important” reasons for thinking about leaving for apprentices

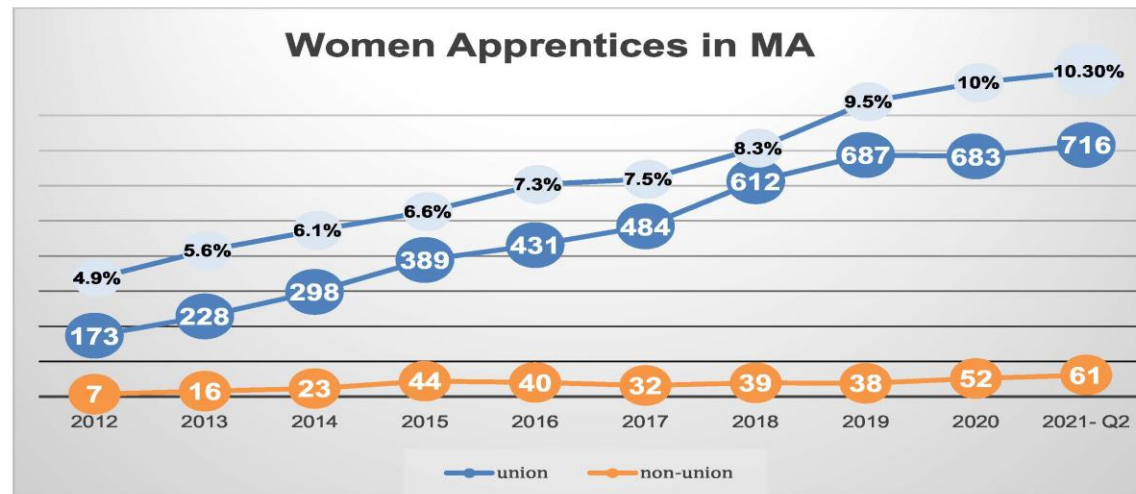
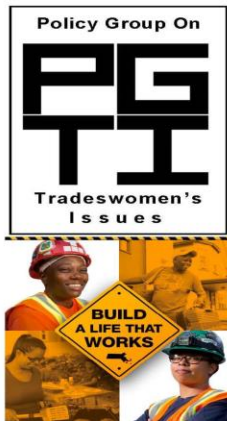
- 51% Lack of Respect/Harassment
- 40% Lack of opportunity to build full skills set/low quality of training
- 37% Difficulties Finding Stable Work/not Enough Hours
- 36% Problems I raised were Not Taken Seriously
- 34% Yelling Culture
- 33.5% Lack of Promotion and Advancement Opportunities
- 33% Difficulties finding Childcare
- 31.5% Lack of Pregnancy accommodation

➔ **With exception of childcare (perhaps): fixable!**

What helps to increase apprentice diversity in recruitment and retention: Massachusetts

PGTI: *Crushing the barriers to women's entry into the union construction trades!*
www.policygroupontradeswomen.org

Current demographics of women and people of color in Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Massachusetts- Q2 2021 Report



Sponsor type	Active apprentices	Women	Women's participation	People of color	People of color participation
Joint union	6941	715	10.30%	2068	29.79%
Non-union	1828	61	3.34%	358	19.98%

Percent of women apprentices in Massachusetts who are enrolled in Joint Union programs: **92%**

Percent of apprentices of color in Massachusetts who are enrolled in Joint Union programs: **85%**

*Data provided by the Division on Apprenticeship Standards, 08/21 <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/labor-standards/das>

#20percentandbeyond
 August 2021

What helps to increase apprentice diversity in recruitment and retention: Massachusetts

*Focus on supply **and** demand*

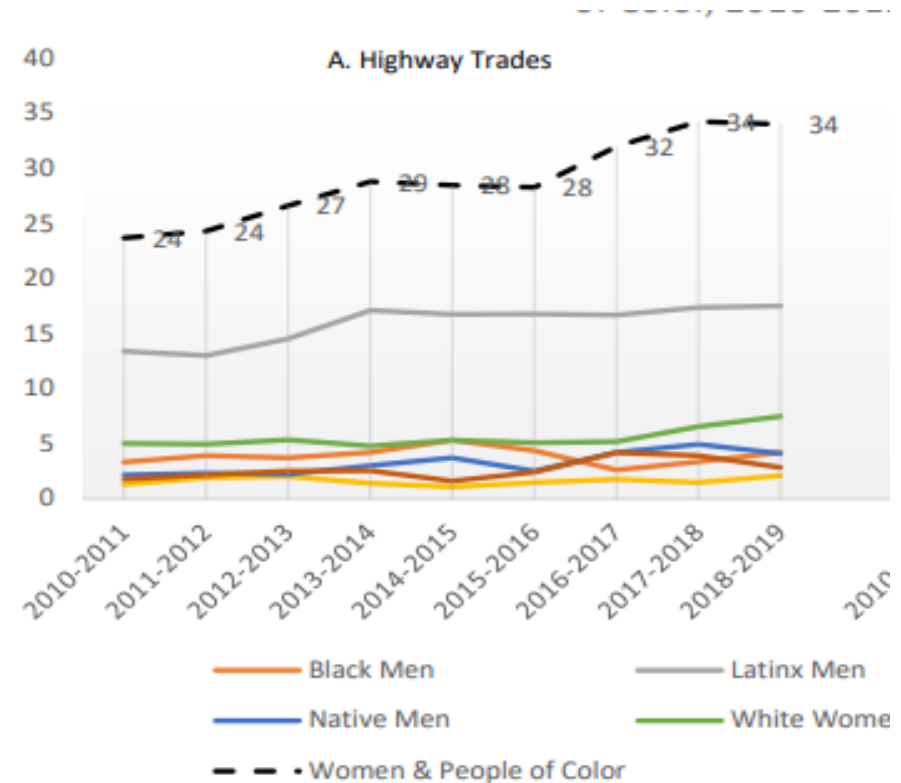
- **Collaborate** across stakeholder groups- Policy Group on Tradeswomen's Issues
- Set **ambitions targets** and follow the data
- **Focus on the largest projects** and provide technical assistance
- **Pre-apprenticeship program** Boston *Building Pathways* (co-founded by now U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh)
- **High schools and vocational schools** – women's share of MA Vocational & Technical Education programs increased from 14.6 to 21.1% between 2012/13 and 2020/21
- **Get out the word to women:** *Build a Life* Social media and advertising

What helps to increase apprentice diversity in recruitment and retention: Oregon

Apprentice Diversity in Highway

Identify a funding source: ½ of 1% of federal highway funds:

Since Oregon DOT and Department of Labor began their initiative in 2010/11 the share of women in **all trade apprenticeships** rose from 6% to 9%, and from 9% to 12% in **highway related trades** (2018/19 latest data).



What helps to increase apprentice diversity in recruitment and retention: Oregon

Oregon Department of Transportation: Under the law, funding available for:

- (a) Pre-apprenticeship programs – **Oregon Tradeswomen** and Building Hope;
- (b) Pre-employment counseling;
- (c) Orientations on the highway construction industry- Career fairs for women and for middle and high school girls;
- (d) Basic skills improvement classes;
- (e) Career counseling;
- (f) Remedial training;
- (g) Entry requirements for training programs;
- (h) Supportive services and assistance with transportation;
- (i) Child care and other special needs; and
- (j) Job site mentoring and retention services.

Greater Portland Metro: goals for publicly funded projects – 14% women; 20% apprentices; 25% construction workers of color

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2019/10/29/Construction-Careers-Pathway-framework.pdf>

Safe from Hate: Contractor and other stakeholder initiative to address Jobsite Culture

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f04a6134b285c0da8c225dc/t/6052338908052c6b4817c08a/1615999883677/Safe+from+Hate+-+Pledge+and+Signatories.pdf>

In Conclusion

Change is necessary

- Skill shortages
- Federal diversity goals

Change is possible

- Intentional policies to build supply and ensure demand

Build on current momentum

Resources

A Future Worth Building: What Tradeswomen Say about the Change They Need in the Construction Industry” by Ariane Hegewisch and Eve Mefferd, 2021. Institute for Women’s Policy Research
<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/a-future-worth-building-report/>

Here to Stay: Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Women in Construction Trades Apprenticeships and Employment by Chandra Childers, Ariane Hegewisch and Lark Jackson, 2021. Institute for Women’s Policy Research and Chicago Women in the Trades <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/heretostay-black-latina-and-afro-latina-women-in-construction-trades-apprenticeships-and-employment/>

National Center for Women’s Equity in Apprenticeship and Employment at Chicago Women in the Trades “Best Practices” library <https://womensequitycenter.org/best-practices/>

Massachusetts Policy Group on Tradeswomen’s Issues: “Finishing the Job Best: Practices for a Diverse Workforce in the Construction Industry,” <https://policygroupontradeswomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Finishing-the-Job-Best-Practices-v.8-Sept-2018.pdf>

Oregon Department of Transportation. 2020. *Report on the Use of Federal Funds to Increase Diversity and Prepare those Entering the Highway Construction Workforce* (ORS 184.866).
<https://www.oregon.gov/odot/About/GR/Highway%20Construction%20Workforce%20Development%20Report.pdf> .

Questions?

Thank you!

www.iwpr.org
hegewisch@iwpr.org