

Increasing Women in Traditionally Male-Dominated Trades

Recruiting, Supporting, and Placing More Women in GJIF Programs

How can your program increase the number of women represented?

Increasing the number of women in your programs — many of which are predominately male — should be part of your program's broader effort to increase the quality and quantity of your participants. In predominantly male trades, women offer an untapped market of new workers.

Efforts to increase the number of women you enroll and train should be incorporated into your employer engagement strategy, especially for employers who are also Federal contractors. See the box on the right side of this page for Federal requirements on employing women in construction.

How do you increase the number of women you serve?

See our "Top 5" list of elements to think about how to recruit, support, and place more women through your programs:

1. **Market Directly to Women**
2. **Rethink Traditional Orientations**
3. **Create a Gender Neutral Environment**
4. **Ensure Face Time with Employers**
5. **Target Apprenticeship & Entrepreneurship**

* The recommendations include content from the U.S. Women's Bureau and your peers, JFF and OICA Summit Academy. See "List of Resources" on page 3, and the Registered Apprenticeship study, "An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 States: Final Report"

Why Focus on Women?

Increasing your Talent Pool

If women are underrepresented in your program and/or the trades you serve, then women are an untapped resource for you. Statistically, women are underrepresented in many occupations in green industries where they can earn a family-supporting wage:

1.5% of electricians

1.9% of carpenters

9% of electrical engineers

14% of architects and engineers

29% of environmental scientists and geoscientists

Employer Engagement

Your local employers may need to comply with Federal requirements regarding employing women on construction sites. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) enforces Executive Order 11246, which prohibits qualifying Federal contractors from discriminating against women and minorities and requires them to take affirmative action to ensure equal employment opportunity.

Goals for Women: The current goal for the employment of women in construction fields is 6.9% of total work hours and applies to all of a contractor's construction sites regardless of where the Federal or federally assisted contract is being performed. Federal contractors must make good faith efforts in outreach and recruitment to meet these goals. For more details on EO 11246, see:

http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/ca_11246.htm

For more information on OFCCP, you may visit the website at www.dol.gov/ofccp. You may also contact OFCCP at (800) 397-6251 (TTY: (202) 693-1337) or OFCCP-Public@dol.gov.

Top 5 Actions

1. Marketing Directly to Women Works

Effectively recruiting women to traditionally male-dominated trades requires going out of your way to market directly to women. In effect, you are reversing years of recruiting that have reinforced male-dominated environments by only targeting men. As a result, women may not think to even consider the trades your program serves. This cycle leaves women out of traditionally male-dominated industries – but many programs have discovered strategies that work to reverse it, allowing some programs to benefit from the hidden talent pool: women. Ideas from your peers:

- Put images of women on recruitment materials
- Leverage local organizations, venues and media that already attract women in your area
- Use your female alumni to recruit other women

Grantees have found that it makes a big difference if women can see themselves in the field, literally. Use real people – bring in women to speak to your participants – when you can. Video testimonials, pictures, and write-ups are also effective. For more details on the tactics listed and other strategies, see the “[Pink to Green](#)” toolkit from your GJIF peer, Jobs for the Future (JFF). For example, at the end of each program cycle, JFF’s program, Apprenticeship and Non Traditional Employment for Women (ANEW) asks their female completers questions like, “How should we market to women like you?”

Similarly, a recent study surveyed women participants about how to better serve women in apprenticeship. The number one recommendation was increasing targeted outreach to women. Specifically, four of the state Registered Apprenticeship (RA) directors agreed that school-age girls should be a target audience for advertisements about RA in the skilled trades. They explained that teaching girls and young women about the trades through career fairs, summer camps, subsidized summer employment programs, and visits to schools may help break down stereotypes that women should not or cannot work in industries such as construction. To read more, see the report: “An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 States”

<https://21stcenturyapprenticeship.workforce3one.org/view/2001222062738577473/info>.

Other Quick Links from JFF’s “Pink to Green” Toolkit:

- [Adding a Gender Lens to Employment: Recruiting Women to Green Jobs Programs](#);
- [Assessing Your Organization’s Ability to Recruit Women](#); and
- [Creating an Outreach Plan](#)

2. Rethinking Your Traditional Orientation Process

Traditional orientations for training programs in traditionally male-dominated trades are not often designed to meet the unique needs of women. Furthermore, supporting women in their transition into a predominantly male environment before it is fully inclusive requires shifting your program’s culture. Effective program orientations to prepare women will cross both practical and cultural elements of your program environment – especially during the initial transition phase of the program. Effective orientation programs will balance a realistic portrayal of the trade with the assurance that gender is not a determinant of

Peer Spotlight: OICA Summit Academy’s Marketing Success

Women Wear Hardhats, Too

OICA markets their program to employers as the ‘go to place’ for finding job-ready women to place in nontraditional trades. To increase the number of women served, Summit Academy executed a new marketing plan (see [OICA.ppt](#)) resulting in:

50% increase in enrollment

73% current retention rate

94% current placement rate

“Targeted marketing works – TV advertising with key messaging nearly doubled female attendance at info sessions”

Test Your Program: Surviving and Thriving in a Male-dominated Work Environment (OICA Quiz)

1. Does your staff have a deep understanding of the impact of gender stereotypes and hidden biases and the need for gender and culturally neutral, inclusive and sensitive practices in all aspects of our program?
2. Have you reviewed your assessment process to identify if there are any potential barriers, or any questions that may have a disparate impact on women being identified as strong applicants?
3. Does your assessment process help clients who may not have previous experience in the field, identify transferable skills and experience that can make them strong applicants to your program?

success. In addition, orientations should overtly demonstrate that women are welcome in the trade. Ideas from your peers:

- Give participants a realistic portrayal of what it takes to be successful as a woman in the industry beforehand (Example: Invite tradeswomen and alumni from your program to tell their stories)
- Showcase real women doing the work (Example, Job site tours and/or video clips)
- Expand supportive services that reduce barriers and concerns unique to women (Example: child care services)
- Provide women mentors and peer support

Research has found that connecting women with effective mentors and peer support is critical.¹ In fact, two Registered Apprenticeship site directors reported it is the single most important form of support for women in nontraditional trades. In addition, the respondents reported mentorship as an essential factor even if the women are not on the same job site. Tools for implementing an effective program orientation, developed by JFF, at:

[Strategies for a successful information or orientation session](#); and [Planning a Career Fair for Improving Women's Access to Green Jobs](#)

3. Creating a Gender-Neutral Environment

Just as the orientation portion of your program required changes, creating a supportive environment in the training portion of your program looks different for women participants in a traditionally male-dominated trade.

- **Set organization-wide goals about increasing female participation.** Set explicit goals for numbers of women applicants, participants, graduates and placements. Make sure they are organization-wide so that all staff are on board, and part of the effort. In messaging the new goals, emphasize equalizing your talent pool and leveling the playing field that is currently skewed, versus making special accommodations for women.
- **Ramp up policies that support women,** particularly during the initial transition into male-dominated environments and before the employment culture has been 'equalized.' Emphasize that the changes underscore policies that are required by law and benefit your program; they are not 'special' accommodations. Policies that support women in male-dominated environments include sexual harassment education, communication training, and support policies (like flexible hours and child care). For example, grantees have found that their female students are likely to exhibit a different classroom communication style than male students.
- **Set high expectations for your current staff.** The effectiveness of policies that support women depends on your staff. Build staff understanding of: sexual harassment and discrimination policies; the impact of gender wage inequity, gender segregation of the labor market, the impact of gender stereotypes and hidden biases, and the need for gender and culturally sensitive teaching practices.
- **Set high expectations for the women you serve.** Grantees have seen success by using women role models and peer support as well as hands-on activity and industry engagement. In fact, on the job exposure has been one of the most effective placement strategies for grantees – employers who observe women on the job often hire them.
- **Review, Refine, Repeat.** Create a feedback process to hear from your women participants about their experience. Use the information to refine your policies and practices so that women not only feel welcome, they succeed. For example, JFF's Seattle site conducts "Apprenticeship Academies" each year

Federal Laws and Regulations of Interest to Working Women

[Fair Pay](#)

[Help for Victims of Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor](#)

[Protections for Newborns, Adopted Children, and New Parents - the Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act of 1996](#)

[Qualified Domestic Relations Orders \(QDRO\)](#)

[Trafficking and Sex Tourism](#)

[Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act](#)

[Workplace Violence](#)

[Your Rights After a Mastectomy ... the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998](#)

From the DOL Website,
<http://www.dol.gov/dol/audienc/e/aud-women.htm>

¹ "An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 States"

to serve as focus groups for feedback on the Apprenticeship and Non-traditional Employment for Women (ANEW) program.

4. Ensuring Face Time with Employers

Employers are impressed with well-trained, skilled female workers, who also tend to have well-developed soft skills such as punctuality, taking instruction, and higher rates of retention. OICA Summit Academy, for example, reported a 50 percent increase in enrollment 73 percent current retention rate 94 percent current placement rate Go out of your way to create opportunities for employers to meet your female participants. Grantees have indicated that more often than not, employers are so impressed with women's skills that they hire women they observe. OICA markets their program as the 'go to' place for employers to find women workers in traditionally male-dominated trades, and in particular serving as a resource to help employers comply with federal guidelines. In fact, some grantees have reported that their employers want to hire women, but simply cannot find them. Ideas from your peers:

- Learn the federal requirements (see sidebar)
- Identify employers who must meet federal requirements and may be searching for job-ready female workers
- Promote the benefits of women workers by introducing your participants and showcasing their skills in person
- Promote your program to unions and other employers with low female membership
- Leverage compliance agency partners to target contractors with low female participation

Click here to view a [module on job Readiness](#) developed by JFF as part of the "Pink to Green" toolkit.

5. Targeting Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship

Two pathways that show promise for underserved groups – particularly women – are apprenticeship and entrepreneurship. Therefore, think about these options when you move from training to placement.

Women Entrepreneurs: Women-owned businesses grew at nearly twice the national average for all other business types between 1997 and 2006. See Chapter in "Pink to Green" toolkit on Women Entrepreneurs: http://www.dol.gov/wb/Green_Jobs_Guide/GreenJobs%20Ch%206.pdf

Women in Apprenticeship: Registered Apprenticeship offers a gradual pathway and access of support, which is valuable for women entering environments that have been predominantly male. Recognizing this, efforts are underway to increase women in apprenticeship. In 1992, the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations Act (P.L. 102-530) was signed into law for the purpose of providing technical assistance to employers and labor unions to encourage the employment of women in apprenticeship programs and nontraditional occupations. States and local areas are also undertaking efforts to increase women in apprenticeship. For example, Washington State has made an explicit goal to increase women in apprenticeship.

Peer Spotlight: Women in Apprenticeship JFF Apprenticeship & Non-Traditional Employment for Women (ANEW)

To address a shortage of women in apprenticeship, JFF leveraged the GJIF grant to support Apprenticeship & Nontraditional Employment for Women (ANEW) in Seattle, Washington. In October 2010, ANEW launched an on-line survey for active female apprentices and journeyworkers to gather further feedback and ideas to retain women in nontraditional trades employment. The information collected from this survey was compared with forum feedback, and both data sets were used to develop questions for the summative focus group. For more information, see: "[Recruitment and Retention of Women in Washington Apprenticeships](#)." In the study, "An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 States," assessed the effectiveness of Registered Apprenticeship including the barriers that women face in Registered Apprenticeship and the best practices for promoting their success. Among the findings are:

- Participants experienced increased earnings and significant social benefits from Apprenticeship programs
- The women interviewed see their participation in Registered Apprenticeship as a pathway to career advancement and higher pay

The study also found that women participating in Registered Apprenticeship programs face a different set of challenges than men. The implication for apprenticeship programs – and other training providers – is consistent with the ‘Top 5’ list offered in this factsheet: increasing women in male-dominated environments requires tweaks to the status quo. At the same time, it offers an opportunity to equalize male-dominated environments and bring in an untapped pool of participants to your program and to employers.

List of Resources

- 1) 21st Century Apprenticeship: <https://21stcenturyapprenticeship.workforce3one.org/>
- 2) Many GJIF grantees attended the 2012 July Institute, hosted by the National Governors Association, and heard the [presentation](#) by Ms. Nancy Santiago Negrón from the U.S. Department of Labor Women’s Bureau. Ms. Santiago Negrón shared lessons learned from a series of roundtables with a diverse group of 1,200 leaders who are shaping our nation’s green economic future. The U.S. Department of Labor Women’s Bureau www.dol.gov/wb
- 3) DOL ETA: Why is Green Good for Women?
http://www.dol.gov/wb/media/reports/Why%20Green%20is%20Good%20for%20Women_fact%20sheet_revised032310_2.pdf
DOL: Why Green is Your Color: A Woman’s Guide to a Sustainable Career. http://www.dol.gov/wb/Green_Jobs_Guide/
- 4) OICA Summit Academy’s Presentation “Women Wear Hard Hats, Too” during the July 2012 GJIF Institute: [OICA.ppt](#). Contact: Mr. Leroy West, Vice President, CAO Email: lwest@saoic.org, Website: <http://www.saoic.org/>
- 5) JFF [Why Green Is Your Color](#): A Woman’s Guide to a Sustainable Career is a comprehensive manual designed to help women find and keep higher paying jobs in the clean energy economy.
- 6) The Construction Contractors Technical Assistance Guide is designed to help Federal and Federally-assisted construction contractors and subcontractors comply with the Federal laws and regulations that prohibit discriminating in employment, and require that they undertake affirmative action to ensure equal employment opportunity in their workforces. Website: <http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/TAGuides/ctaguide.htm>.
- 7) OFCCP Worker Fact Sheets provide an overview of workplace rights for employees, including those related to disability and reasonable accommodation, pregnancy and childbearing discrimination, and protected veterans’ rights. Website: <http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/factsheets/>.