

Portland City Council Agenda Written Testimony  
Document Number 2025-156

	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
1	Ironworkers Local 29	Support	Registered Apprenticeship and training agent requirements on contractors help to create pathways to family wage jobs for people of color, women, and the local community.	Yes	04/10/25 12:18 PM
2	Dave Peticolas	Support	Apprenticeship is a critical pathway towards economic opportunity and this is an important resolution on those merits alone. In addition, Portland has a critical housing shortage and needs to build both homes and supporting infrastructure. This resolution will help ensure the skilled workers needed for that effort will be available.	No	04/13/25 6:25 PM
3	Portland YouthBuilders	Support		Yes	04/14/25 1:55 PM
4	Michelle M. Harper, UNCF Portland Leadership Council Chair	Support	We are in the midst of critical times where leadership at the national and local level are taking valuable support resources for children and families, e.g., dismantling the Department of Education, Health & Human Services, as well as resources being taken away from schools, businesses, organizations, etc. We must do whatever to maintain stability during this challenging time.	Yes	04/14/25 10:20 PM
5	Play Grow Learn	Support		Yes	04/15/25 7:29 AM
6	Andrew McGough	Support		Yes	04/15/25 10:14 AM
7	Soul District Business Association	Support		Yes	04/15/25 10:45 AM
8	Patricia Daniels, Constructing Hope	Support		Yes	04/15/25 11:05 AM
9	Constructing Hope	Support		Yes	04/15/25 11:27 AM
10	Step-Up Mentorship Program	Support	This organization saves lives and keeps vulnerable marginalized groups of young people away from the streets, helps them build confidence, helps them begin building their resumes, and encouraged them to become self-disciplined enough to begin working towards their future career dreams. This program helps to ensure that our youth go onto successfully enter our society as functional young adults, and helps to ensure that our addiction, crime, and homelessness rates don't raise. It only makes sense to keep programs such as these available	No	04/15/25 11:32 AM
11	Frank Caropelo, Superintendent, Reynolds School District	Support		Yes	04/15/25 12:04 PM
12	Constructing Hope	Support		No	04/15/25 1:45 PM
13	Worksystems	Support	Funding for pre-apprenticeship programming, an construction careers in the region as a whole, are vital as the industry continues to grow steadfast with the Silver Tsunami looming as workers age out into retirement. Since July of 2022, COEP funding has led to over 275 trainees completing Pre-Apprenticeship Training with almost 75% of those graduates placed in Registered Apprenticeship or Construction Careers. The average wage across that timeline is \$23.57 for unsubsidized employment and \$24.67 for folks entering Registered Apprenticeship. When looking at demographics, almost 29% of individuals enrolled in COEP programs self identify as female. Over 54% of enrollee' self-identify as People of Color as well. The funding has been integral in building a diverse workforce in the construction industry.	No	04/15/25 3:57 PM
14	Travis Stovall	Support		Yes	04/15/25 4:04 PM
15	REAP	Support		Yes	04/15/25 7:39 PM
16	Elevate Oregon	Support		Yes	04/16/25 11:19 AM
17	Sokho Eath, on Behalf of Lee Po Cha, The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)	Support		Yes	04/16/25 12:28 PM

# CONSTRUCTING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE:

EXAMINING UNION AND NON-UNION CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AND THEIR OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN AND WORKERS OF COLOR



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The construction industry serves as one of the most important sources of family-wage jobs in Oregon and across the country. Construction employment has been growing since 2010, and the Oregon Employment Department projects that the industry will add nearly 11,900 new jobs between 2019-2029, making construction the third fastest growing industry in the state.

Construction apprenticeships have long provided workers with valuable on-the-job and classroom training, high wages, and clear career pathways. Research suggests that apprenticeship programs also help reduce social inequalities. Because apprentices do not require the same financial investment as community or four-year colleges, they are more likely to attract low-income individuals and promote upward socio-economic mobility. Moreover, apprenticeship programs offer strong pathways to earning a steady income without attending college: workers without a college degree typically earn less than \$40,000 a year, while the mean wage for Oregon workers in construction and extraction occupations was \$59,010 in 2020. However, construction has historically been one of the most gender segregated industries in the United States, with particularly low representation of women of color. In 2020, women made up just 10.9 percent of the construction workforce.

The boom in construction jobs has created labor market gaps in some areas, as more construction workers reach retirement, and new jobs need to be filled. Given this opportune time to recruit apprentices, stakeholders in the greater Portland area, including public agencies, unions, and community-based organizations, have partnered with the Portland Metropolitan Service District (Metro) to form the Construction Career Pathways Project (C2P2) Public Owner Workgroup in order to improve recruitment and retention of women and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in construction apprenticeships.

As more workers join construction apprenticeship programs, and as firms in the industry make targeted attempts to recruit and retain women and workers of color, we conducted this research in order to assess the state of construction apprenticeships in Oregon, including a comparison of apprenticeship outcomes for historically marginalized workers, in both union and non-union programs.

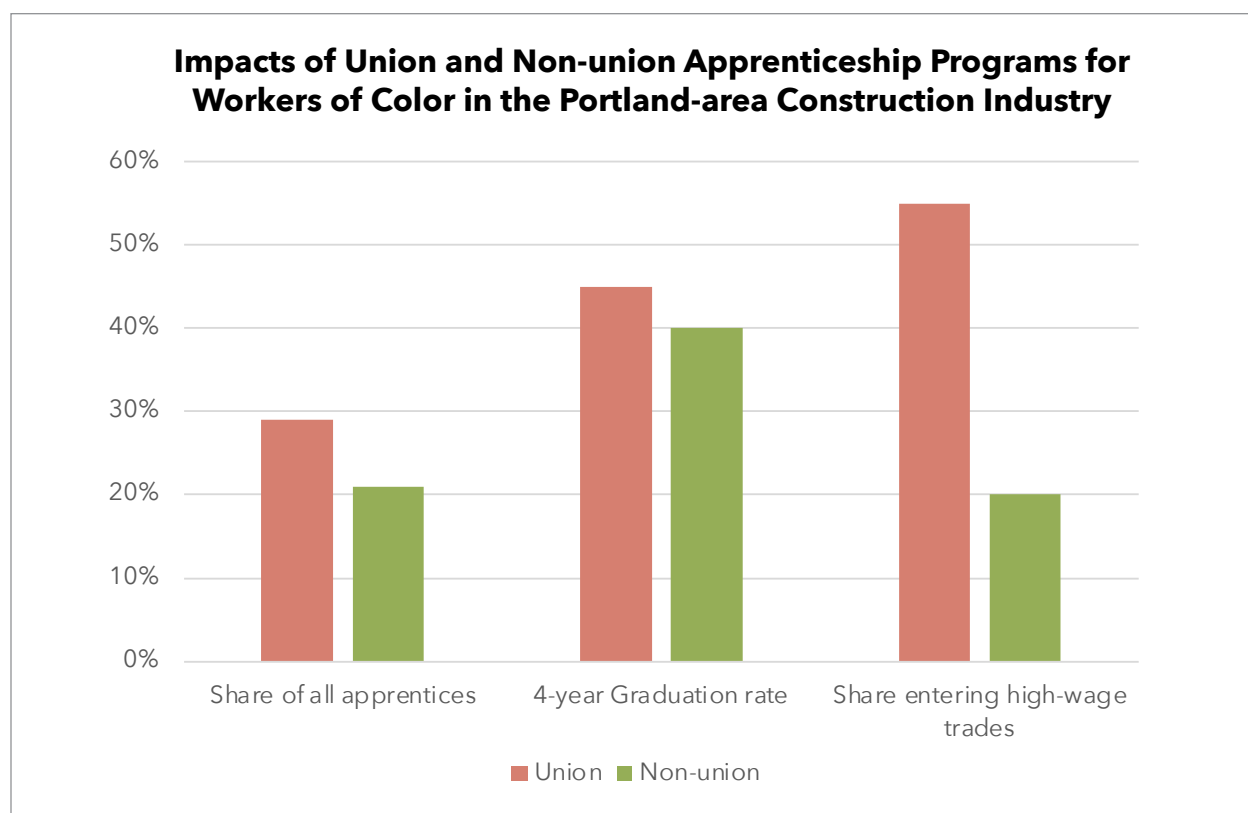
Drawing upon data from the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), this report analyzes outcomes for 17,964 people who were enrolled in apprenticeship programs in the greater Portland area between 2011-2020. This report includes aggregated and disaggregated data to examine enrollment, graduation, separation, and wage rates across various gender categories and racial/ethnic groups, including comparisons between union and non-union programs.

In measuring progress towards more equitable employment practices, these findings show that union apprenticeship programs provide significantly better outcomes overall for women and BIPOC compared to non-union programs, suggesting that an investment in union apprenticeship programs would support the construction industry's stated goal of making positive strides towards greater equity and inclusion.

## KEY FINDINGS

### ENROLLMENT

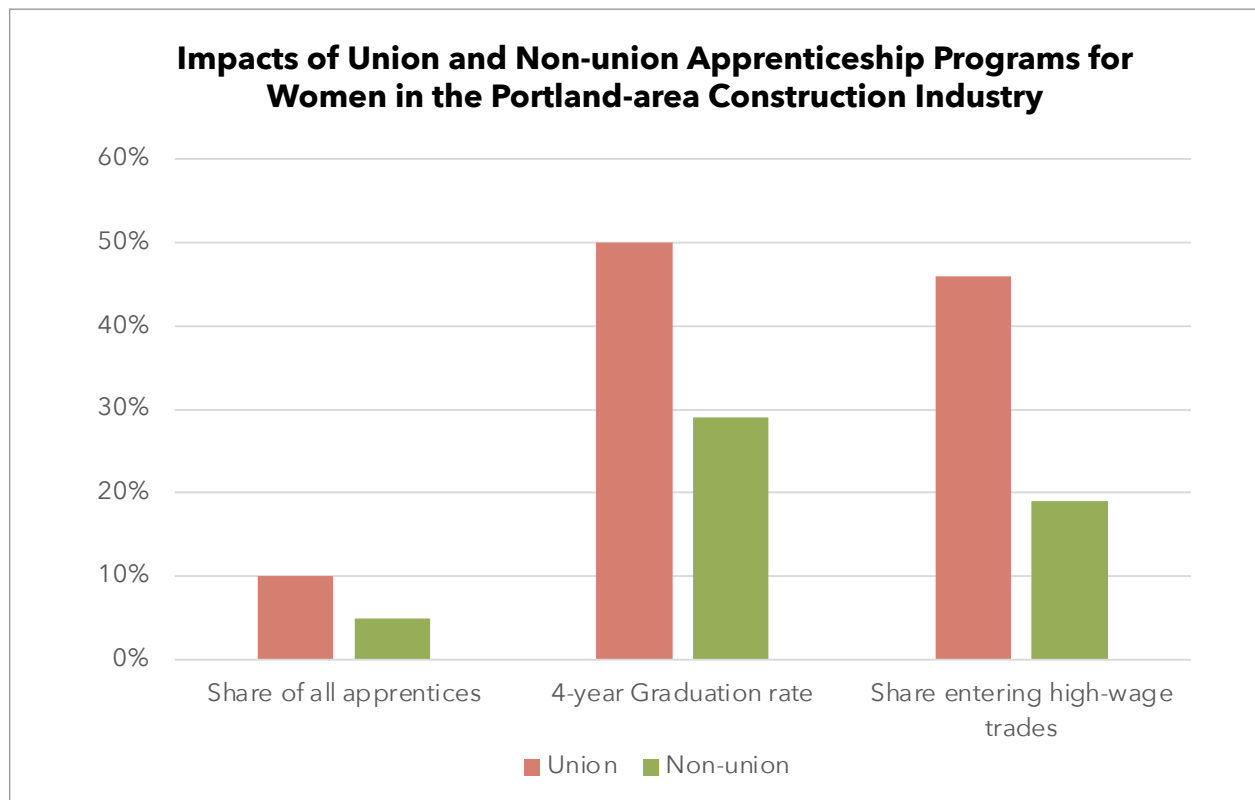
- Construction apprenticeship enrollment in the greater Portland area more than doubled between 2011 and 2019, with 2,647 new enrollments in 2019, up from 1,206 new apprentices enrolling in 2011. Between 2011-2020, the majority of construction apprentices (72%) were enrolled in union programs.



- Union programs have greater apprenticeship diversity, in terms of gender and race, compared to non-union programs.
- In union programs, 64% of apprentices are white men, 26% are men of color, 7% are white women, 2.5% are women of color, and less than 1% are white non-binary people



- More women and BIPOC have enrolled in apprenticeship programs in the last decade. In 2020, 11% of all newly enrolled apprentices were women, a 57% increase from 2011. In 2020, 31% of newly enrolled apprentices were BIPOC, a 55% increase from 2011.
- Union programs continued to recruit a higher proportion of women and BIPOC apprentices compared to non-union programs between 2011 and 2020.
  - In non-union programs, 75% of apprentices are white men, 20% are men of color, 4% are white women, 1.5% are women of color.



## GRADUATION

- Fifty-three percent of apprentices who enrolled in programs between 2011-2015 graduated.
- In trades represented by both union and non-union programs, unions graduate a significantly higher proportion of apprentices. Unions had a graduation rate of 58% while non-union programs had a graduation rate of 36%.
- Men graduated at higher rates than women, and white apprentices at higher rates than BIPOC. Forty-five percent of women who registered between 2011 and 2015 completed their programs by 2020, compared with 53% of men in the same cohort. A smaller proportion of apprentices of color (44%) graduated compared to white apprentices (55%).

- Women and BIPOC are significantly more likely to finish their programs when enrolled in a union apprenticeship compared to a non-union apprenticeship. Of the 416 women enrolled in union programs between 2011 and 2015, 50% completed, compared to only 29% of the 108 women enrolled in non-union programs. People of color also had higher rates of completion in union program (45%) compared to non-union programs during the same period (40%).
- Black apprentices experienced the lowest graduation rates of all racial/ethnic groups (30%). However, a substantially higher proportion of Black apprentices in union programs graduated (33%) compared to non-union programs (23%).



**Women and BIPOC are significantly more likely to finish their programs when enrolled in a union apprenticeship.**

*Photo: Dawn Jones Redstone, Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.*

## SEPARATION

- Separated workers include both those who were involuntarily terminated and those who voluntarily ended their apprenticeship. Overall, there were comparable proportions of workers who separated (38%) from union and non-union programs.
- On average, workers of color separated at higher rates than white workers, 44% compared to 35%, and women separated at higher rates than men, 41% compared to 37%. White women have lower separation rate than both men of color and women of color, with women of color having the highest separation rates of any group.

- Forty-seven percent of people of color enrolled in non-union apprenticeship programs separated, versus 43% in union programs.<sup>1</sup>
- A significantly higher proportion of women separated from non-union programs (51%) than from union programs (38%).

A greater proportion of BIPOC workers separated during their probationary period (a time in which an apprentice can be terminated without cause) than did white apprentices. Four percent of Indigenous workers, 2.5% of Asian-American workers, 4% of Black workers, and 4% of Latinx workers separated during their probationary period, compared with less than 2% of all white apprentices. As a group, workers of color made up 40% of all those separated during their probationary period, despite accounting for only 26% of all apprentices.

**Women and workers of color are more than twice as likely to enter a high-wage trade if they go through a union- as opposed to non-union apprenticeship program.**

## WAGES

- White men still dominate the ranks of apprentices in the highest-paid trades. But apprenticeship programs are serving to improve both racial and gender wage inequalities – particularly union apprenticeship programs.<sup>2</sup>
- Forty-six percent of all women in union apprenticeship programs are entering trades with an average hourly wage of \$40 or higher, compared to 19% of all women in non-union programs.
- Similarly, 55% of BIPOC in union programs are enrolled in trades with an average hourly wage of \$40 or higher, versus just 20% of BIPOC in non-union programs.

# INTRODUCTION

After being hit particularly hard by the 2008 housing crisis, the Oregon construction industry has been growing steadily since 2010. The Oregon Employment Department is projecting an addition of nearly 11,900 new jobs in construction over the next decade, making construction the third fastest growing industry.<sup>3</sup> In 2018 there were 51,000 total jobs in construction in Oregon, with an expected increase of 18.6% by 2026.

**Construction is the third fastest growing industry in Oregon.**

The federal government is planning multi-billion-dollar investments in infrastructure such as bridges, public school buildings, and roads, along with public services. President Biden writes that “it has never been more important for us to invest in strengthening our infrastructure and competitiveness, and in creating the good-paying, union jobs of the future.”<sup>4</sup>

At the same time that infrastructure investment is booming, the construction industry is also experiencing a sharp rise in the demand for labor.<sup>5</sup> Many construction workers, about 17% of the workforce, are nearing retirement age, creating an urgent need for replacement workers.<sup>6</sup> Apprenticeship programs have long been a successful way to recruit and train skilled workers in the construction industry, and they provide a steady stream of workers destined to become highly-skilled experts in their trade. Construction apprenticeships typically last between two and five years, depending on trade requirements. Requirements in each trade are informed by minimum standards set by the Oregon Apprenticeship and Training Council (OSATC). Though standards differ by apprenticeship program, all apprentices are required to complete a specific number of on-the-job training hours as well as a specific number of hours of classroom training. State-registered apprenticeships provide workers with paid on-the-job training, mentorship by a journey-level worker and worksite experience, as well as classroom instruction.<sup>7</sup>

Workers often enter apprenticeship programs because they provide opportunities to earn relatively high wages and pursue a clear career pathway.<sup>8</sup> Construction wages for public projects are determined by Oregon’s Prevailing Wage Rate law, ensuring “public expenditures maintain and reflect local market standards for wages in benefits.”<sup>9</sup> Construction apprenticeships offer a critical pathway to well-paid jobs for workers without a college degree. For example, while workers without a college degree typically earn less than \$40,000 a year,<sup>10</sup> the annual mean wage for Oregon workers in construction and extraction occupations in 2020 in Oregon was \$59,010.<sup>11</sup> Because apprentices do not require the same financial investment as community or four-year colleges, they are particularly valuable for low-income individuals seeking a path to upward mobility.<sup>12</sup>

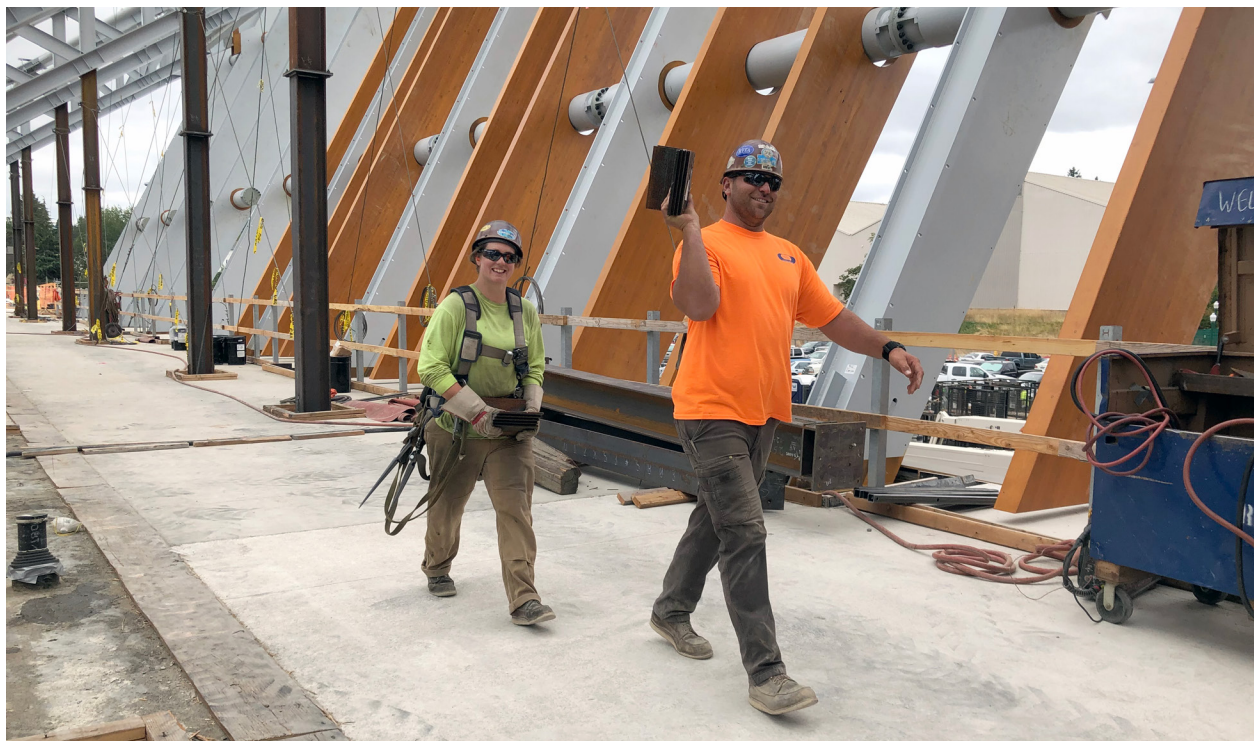


## Addressing Inequities in Construction Apprenticeships

The construction industry has historically been dominated by white male workers, with particularly low representation for women of color.<sup>13</sup> While recent decades have seen an increase in the number of both women and workers of color in the industry, there is still much to be done to insure truly equal access. In 2020, for instance, women made up just 10.9 percent of the construction industry, the lowest of any major industry.<sup>14</sup>

Women may remain underrepresented in construction for several reasons: there is still a common perception that construction jobs are “men’s work,” women may not have had experience developing the technical skills needed for construction trades; and women tend to lack networks of workers in construction who could provide a pathway into the industry.<sup>15</sup>

Apprenticeship programs can provide an important entry point for women into construction jobs, with union-contractor joint programs being an especially effective pathway.<sup>16</sup> Still, while construction apprenticeships may offer a pipeline to construction jobs for women and workers of color, recruitment and retention in apprenticeships remains an issue, especially as women and BIPOC in construction apprenticeships face workplace discrimination and harassment, often a result of formal recruitment and employment practices as well as more informal jobsite culture. For example, despite the requirement of on-the-job training, programs do not have an obligation to guarantee job placement, because the availability of hours depends on contractors having work for apprentices to take on. Most companies employing apprentices rely on an out-of-work list, where workers are called to work based on how long they have been out of work, providing little opportunities for employers to discriminate against women



or BIPOC. However, white men have often been able to avoid the out-of-work list altogether by developing strong relationships with employers, staying at the same company and moving from project to project, even during apprenticeship.<sup>17</sup>

Ultimately, developing strong relationships and networks is crucial to gaining the hours needed to progress through the program. Scholars have shown that the “good old boys’ club” culture in construction can be a barrier to succeeding in an apprenticeship program, as developing relationships with potential employers and experiences interacting with colleagues are shaped by gender and racial/ethnic identity.<sup>18</sup> In other words, inequality in construction apprenticeships is reproduced by formal and informal policies and processes that reinforce racist and sexist practices, hindering the ability of women and BIPOC to succeed in these industries.<sup>19</sup> In this context, union membership can help eliminate some of these barriers, and have a substantial positive impact on BIPOC and women’s likelihood of graduating from apprenticeship programs and receiving quality training.<sup>20</sup>

To address gendered and racialized barriers to entry and success in construction apprenticeships, Metro convened the Construction Career Pathways Project (C2P2) Public Owner Workgroup (Workgroup) in 2018. The goal of C2P2 is “to develop a regional approach to construction workforce equity for the Greater Portland metropolitan area.”<sup>21</sup> The Workgroup includes 16 agencies including the City of Beaverton, Multnomah County, Oregon Department of Transportation, TriMet, Portland State University, and more. Some of the strategies this group suggests include setting clear workforce diversity goals, project thresholds, workforce agreements, and worksite anti-harassment policies, for both journey-level workers and apprentices.

Construction employers, both union and non-union apprenticeship programs, and government agencies have all made significant investments in recruiting and training apprentices. This investment is lost when apprentices drop out prematurely. As more and more workers join apprenticeship programs, as funding for construction projects continues to increase, and as organizations like the Oregon Tradeswomen and C2P2 make targeted attempts to recruit and retain women and BIPOC, up-to-date research is needed to assess the state of construction apprenticeships in Oregon. Specifically, there is a pressing need to identify gaps present in retention strategies in order to retain a more diverse population of apprentices.

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study builds on Byrd’s (2004, 2009) statewide analyses of Oregon construction apprentices. That research demonstrated that union programs enrolled and graduated a larger number and greater proportion of women and workers of color compared to non-union programs, though these groups still faced barriers as compared to their white male counterparts. This report updates much of Byrd’s earlier research, as well as extending this work by analyzing new data on separation and industry-specific wage rates.

The data used in this report come from the Apprenticeship and Training Division of the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) spanning the period 2011-2020. These data include information on all apprentices enrolled in programs active in the Portland, Oregon tri-county area and therefore slightly differs from previous statewide studies.<sup>22</sup> These data contain detailed demographic information on ap-

prentices, including their race, gender, and veteran status. While this report primarily compares the experiences of white workers and workers of color, the BOLI data include rich demographic information which we draw on where possible. Disaggregated data include the following racial/ethnic groups: American Indian (which we identify as Indigenous), Asian-American, Black/African American (which we identify as Black), Hispanic (which we identify as Latinx), Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander. Throughout the report, we've also grouped Black, Indigenous, and people of color using the acronym BIPOC. In cases where there is not disaggregated data included for specific racial/ethnic groups, this is largely due to the presence of a small number of observations in the relevant subgroup. Still, some disaggregated data on gender and race is provided in this report where statistically meaningful, in order to analyze and compare the experiences of women of color, men of color, white women, and white men.

While Oregon recognizes “mixed” union and non-union apprenticeship programs, all programs in the present study were exclusively union or non-union.<sup>23</sup>

Much of the analysis conducted below is based on descriptive statistics, though there is also some regression analysis. Regressions are a statistical tool for identifying relationships between dependent and independent variables, while controlling for other independent variables. For example, a regression can show the impact race has on the likelihood of apprenticeship graduation, controlling for other factors such as gender or age. In using regression analysis, variables are able to be held constant, which means we were able to test what the relationship between two variables of interest is, largely independent of the influence of other variables. It is important to note the small numbers of women and BIPOC in specific apprenticeship programs, which limits the ability to conduct further robust regression analysis.



## Data and Definitions

This report analyzes workers in the greater Portland metro area who completed an apprenticeship program, who were currently active at the time of this study, who have separated, and who had been suspended at some point in their tenure as an apprentice between 2011 and 2020.



Apprentices are categorized as terminated when a Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee has determined a reason for termination, such as failure to submit records, failure to complete related classroom instruction, or failure to communicate with the committee. Apprentices who have voluntarily withdrawn their apprenticeship are also considered terminated. There are not disaggregated data available from BOLI on workers who voluntarily or involuntarily terminated their apprenticeship agreements. For this reason, we use the term separated to more accurately reflect the experience of workers who BOLI categorizes as terminated.

Workers who were categorized as suspended at the time of the data collection likely returned to work after the suspension period. Workers are typically categorized as suspended when they are on leave so it's important to note the non-punitive status of this categorization.

This report excluded deceased people (n=33) and apprentices who transferred to another apprenticeship program (n=1,045).

This study examines construction apprenticeship programs certified by BOLI. A list of these programs can be found in Appendix I. The list includes programs in existence between 2011 and 2020, some of which have since been dissolved or merged with other programs.

## **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

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### **CURRENT ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment in construction apprenticeships in Oregon has increased dramatically since the early 2000s. In 2007 there were 5,558 apprentices enrolled in construction trades in the state of Oregon, up from 4,497 in 2004.<sup>24</sup> As apprenticeship enrollment is correlated with the unemployment rate, apprenticeship enrollment dipped in the Great Recession, but has risen steadily since 2012,<sup>25</sup> with totals now exceeding 6,544 workers actively enrolled in apprenticeship programs in the greater Portland area alone in 2020.

The number of new registrants enrolling in construction apprenticeship programs each year is rising. New construction apprenticeship enrollment more than doubled between 2011 and 2019 in the greater Portland area, from 1,206 new apprentice enrollments to 2,647, respectively. This increase mirrors national trends, where the number of apprentices newly registered each year grew by 128% between 2009 and 2019.

This report focuses on apprentices in programs that serve the greater Portland area.<sup>26</sup> In total, we analyzed conditions for 17,964 workers enrolled in apprenticeship programs active in this geographic area between 2011 and 2020 (see Table 1).<sup>27</sup>

**Table 1: Apprenticeship Status between 2011-2020**

Union	Currently Active	Completed	Suspended	Separated	Total
Non-union	1,827	1,279	29	1,899	5,034
Union	4,717	3,278	78	4,857	12,930
Total	6,544	4,557	107	6,756	17,964

Union programs in the greater Portland area make up the majority of all construction trades apprenticeships. In 2020, there were only 15 non-union apprenticeship programs compared to 36 union programs in the greater Portland area. In this data, 72% of apprentices were enrolled in union programs and 28% were enrolled in non-union programs. Thus, even though unions accounted for only 21.9% of all construction workers in Oregon as of 2019, they provided more than two-thirds of the state's apprenticeships.

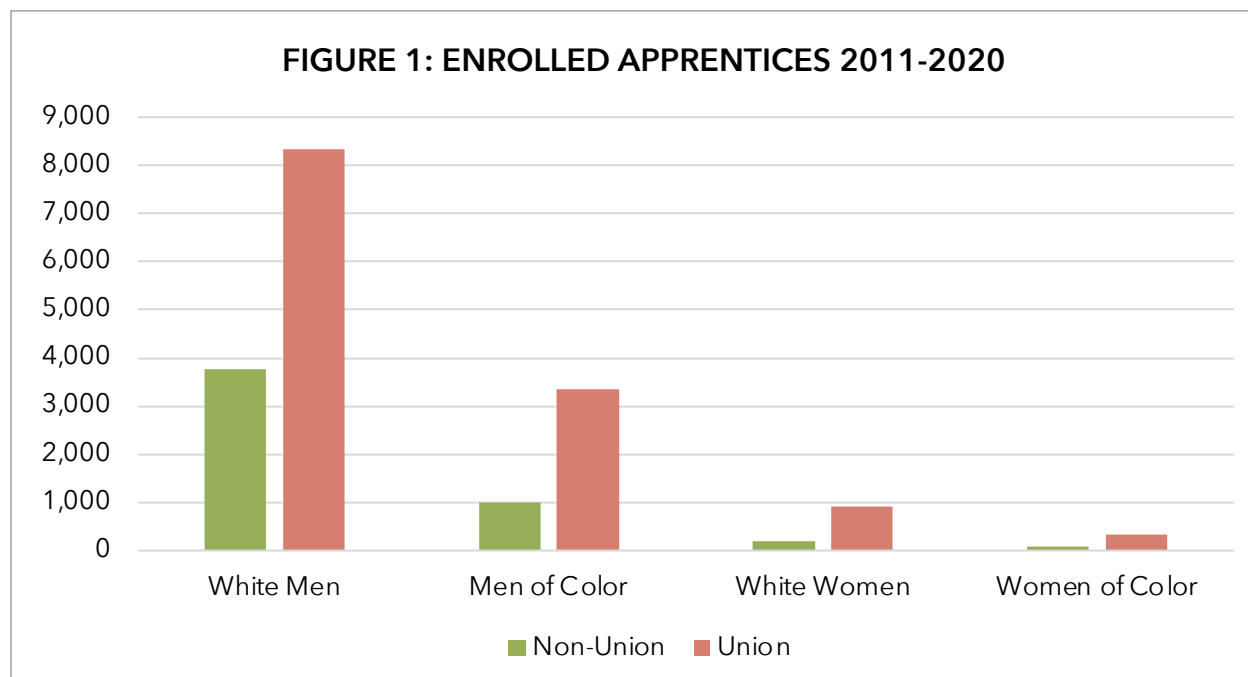
## Apprentice Diversity

Appendix II provides data on the status of men and women, BIPOC, and white apprentices who enrolled in union and non-union programs in 2011-2020. Of 17,964 apprentices enrolled in programs between 2011-2020, 74% were white while 26% were Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). Indigenous apprentices made up 3% of all apprentices, Asian-American apprentices 2%, Black and



*Photo: Dawn Jones Redstone, Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.*

African American apprentices 6%, Latinx apprentices 15%, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander apprentices made up less than 1%. The racial/ethnic makeup of construction apprentices in Portland is fairly comparable to the makeup of the racial/ethnic population in Portland, where Blacks/African Americans make up 5.8%, American Indians 0.8%, Asians 8.2%, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, 0.6%, Hispanic or Latino 9.7%, and white alone (not Hispanic or Latino) 70.6%. Ultimately, Latinx and white apprentices are particularly overrepresented, while Asians are quite underrepresented.



While there are significantly more women enrolled in union than non-union apprenticeship programs, women remain greatly underrepresented in the industry as a whole: despite making up 57.3% of people aged 16 and older in the labor force in Oregon, women made up only 8% of construction apprentices in the greater Portland area.<sup>28</sup>

White men made up the largest proportion of apprentices in the data, at 67%, while white women made up 6% of all apprentices enrolled between 2011-2020. Men of color were the second most represented group, at 24%, while women of color were the least represented group, at 2% of the apprentices in the data.

The racial composition of apprentices by gender is equivalent, where 1,114 (74%) of the female apprentices are white and 12,093 (74%) of the male apprentices are white, while 398 (26%) of female apprentices are BIPOC and 4,357 (26%) of male apprentices are BIPOC. Figure 1 illustrates the race and gender composition of apprentices in the greater Portland area between 2011-2020.

Union programs are more diverse compared to non-union programs. As shown in Table 2, while white men made up 75% of apprentices in non-union programs, they made up 64% of union programs. Women were better represented across all racial categories in union programs, with white women

making up 4% of non-union programs compared to 7% of union programs, and women of color making up 1% of non-union programs compared to 3% of union programs.

**Table 2: Apprentices in union and non-union programs between 2011-2020 by gender and race/ethnicity**

Sex and Racial/Ethnic Group	Non-Union	% of Non-Union	Union	% of Union	Total	% of Grand Total
White Men	3,755	75%	8,338	64%	12,093	67%
Men of Color	1,006	20%	3,351	26%	4,357	24%
White Women	199	4%	915	7%	1,114	6%
Women of Color	74	1%	324	3%	398	2%
White Non-binary	0	0%	2	0%	2	0%
Non-binary People of Color	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	5,034	100%	12,930	100%	17,964	100%

## Currently Enrolled Apprentices

Of the 17,964 apprentices in the data, there were 6,544 active apprentices, namely apprentices who were currently enrolled- but had not yet completed- an apprenticeship program. The demographic characteristics of actively enrolled apprentices mirrored those of all apprentices in the data.

Examining only apprentices who were actively enrolled as of June 2020, white workers made up 74% of active apprentices, Latinx apprentices made up 16% of active apprentices, Black workers 4%, Asian-American and Indigenous workers each made up 3% of active apprentices, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander apprentices made up less than 1% of all apprentices. Overall, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) made up approximately 26% of all actively enrolled apprentices.

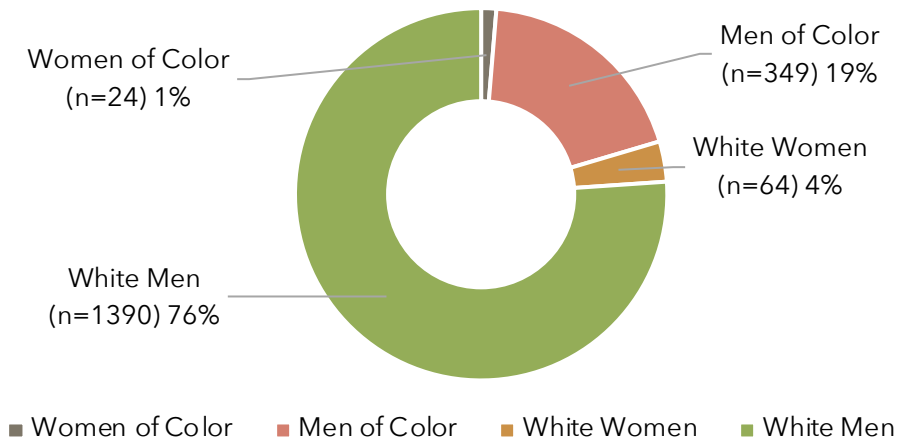
As shown in Figures 2 and 3, for both union and non-union programs, white men were the most represented group. 4,424 (68%) white men were actively enrolled between 2011-2020 in both union and non-union programs. Among actively enrolled apprentices, men of color were the next most represented group (24%) followed by white women (6%) and women of color (2%).

White men made up a larger proportion of active enrollments overall in non-union programs (76%) compared to union programs (64%). In other words, women and BIPOC had higher enrollment rates in union programs compared to non-union programs.

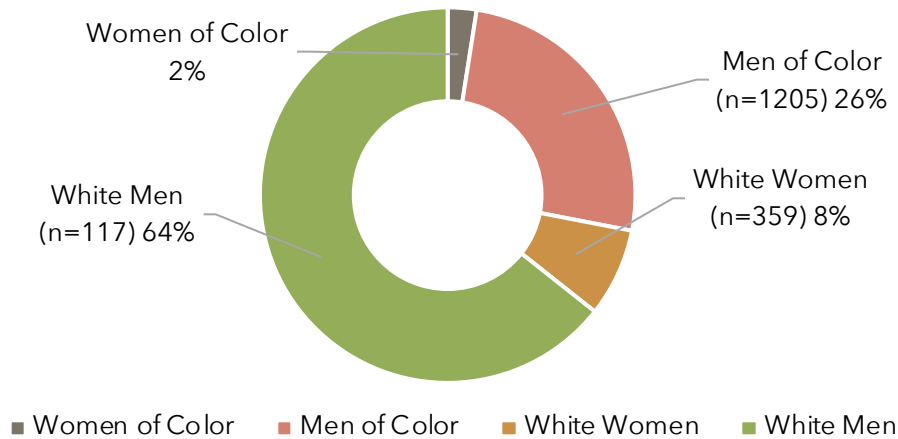
## Suspended Apprentices

Very few apprentices in the data were suspended (107 or <1%). Between 2011-2020, less than 1% of women of color, men of color, and white men were suspended, while 1.6% of white women were suspended. Overall, women made up 21% of all suspended apprentices, despite making up only 8%

**FIGURE 2: APPRENTICE DIVERSITY IN NON-UNION PROGRAMS FOR ACTIVELY ENROLLED**



**FIGURE 3: APPRENTICE DIVERSITY IN UNION PROGRAMS FOR ACTIVELY ENROLLED**



of all apprentices. BIPOC also made up a high percentage of suspended apprentices (31%), despite making up 26% of all apprentices. Higher rates of suspension among women may be reflective of the barriers to success that are well-documented by researchers, such as issues with workplace harassment or finding childcare.<sup>29</sup>

## OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

The number of apprentices in each of the 45 different trades in our data varied widely (see Appendix I for list of trades). Twenty-seven percent of the trades in our data trained 50 or less apprentices, 36%



trained between 51 and 200 apprentices, 14% trained between 201-500 apprentices, 11% trained between 501-1,000, and 11% trained over 1,000 apprentices.

For actively enrolled apprentices, inside electrician trades had the largest enrollment of both non-union and union programs, with enrollment at 731 (11%) in non-union programs and 841 (13%) in union programs. For non-union programs, inside electricians make up 40% of all apprentices, while inside electricians make up only 18% of all union programs, owing to the wider range of trades that have union apprenticeship programs. Looking at all apprentices during the period 2011-2020 (which includes active, completed, separated, and suspended apprentices) those in union programs were most commonly enrolled as carpenters (19%).

## GRADUATION RATES

Graduation rates, or an apprentice's ability to complete a program, are a strong indicator of the training an apprentice has received and the participating employers' commitment to training workers.

In this report, graduation rates refer to the percentage of apprentices who started their training between 2011-2015 and completed their training sometime between 2011 and 2020. We chose the 2011-2015 cohort because many programs take about 4 years to complete, so we did not want to include cohorts of people that may not have graduated yet because they are still within the average period required to complete their program.<sup>30</sup>

Overall, 3,594 of 6,830 (53%) apprentices who enrolled between 2011-2015 graduated. Graduation rates in 2015 were lower than in 2011, at 49% and 57%, respectively.



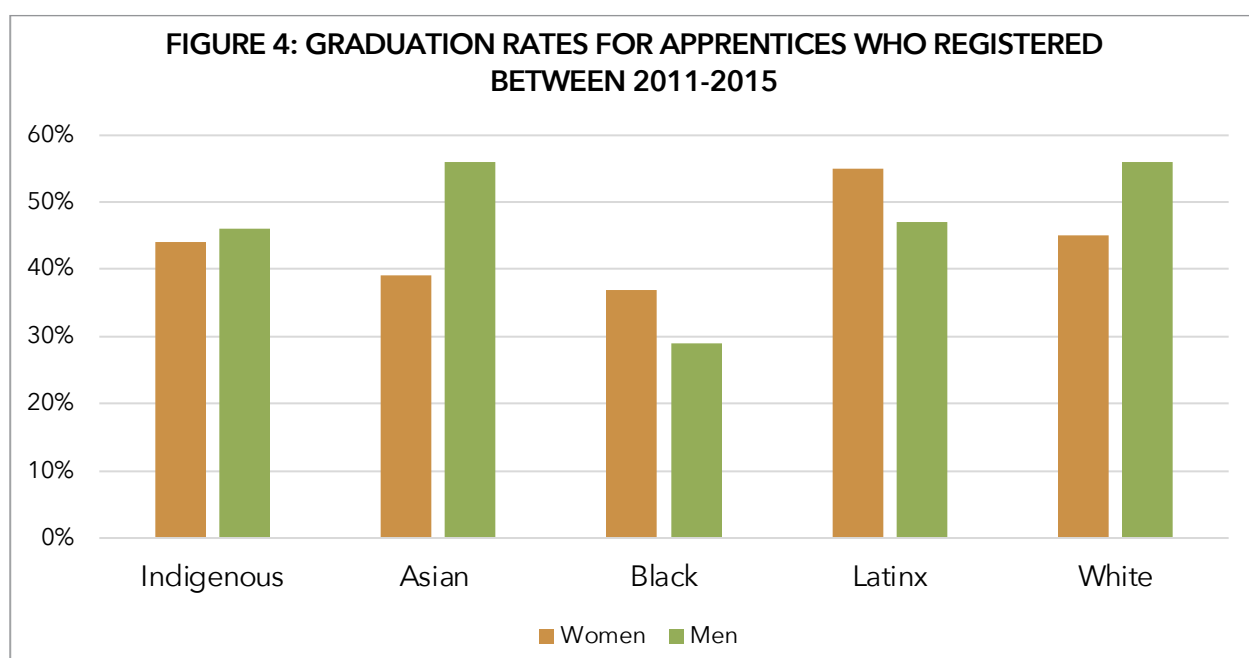
*Photo: Dawn Jones Redstone, Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.*

Men graduated at higher rates than women across union and non-union programs. Two-hundred thirty-eight (45%) of the women who registered between 2011 and 2015 completed their programs, compared to 3,356 (53%) of men in the 2011-2015 cohort who graduated at some point between 2011 and 2020. A greater proportion of white apprentices (55%) graduated compared to BIPOC (44%). Of women who graduated, an equal proportion were white and BIPOC. A substantially higher proportion of white men in the same cohort graduated compared to men of color, at 56% and 44% respectively. Black men and Black women experienced the lowest graduation rates of any group, at 29% and 37%, respectively (see Figure 6).

It is also important to be cautious when interpreting some of these results because of the small numbers of observations in particular subgroups. While there were more than 100 men in every racial/ethnic group in the cohort of registrants between 2011-2015, and nearly 400 white women in the cohort, there were less than 50 women of color across every racial/ethnic group (25 Indigenous women compared to 196 men, 18 American Asian women compared to 134 men, 38 Black women compared to 320 men, and 47 Latinx women compared to 770 men). While Black apprentices experienced the lowest graduation rates of all racial/ethnic groups (30%), a substantially higher proportion of Black apprentices in union programs graduated (33%) compared to non-union programs (23%).

Of the 416 women enrolled in union programs 50% completed, compared to only 29% of the 108 women enrolled in non-union programs. People of color also had higher rates of completion in union program (45%) compared to non-union programs (40%).

Importantly, graduation rates may vary from trade to trade, with licensed trades in particular taking longer to complete.<sup>31</sup> For example, apprentices may take longer to graduate if they have not been able to receive the number of hours necessary to complete the program. With this in mind, it's particularly useful to compare graduation rates between men and women, and white workers and workers of color





## Women and people of color enrolled in union programs had higher graduation rates compared to those enrolled in non-union programs.

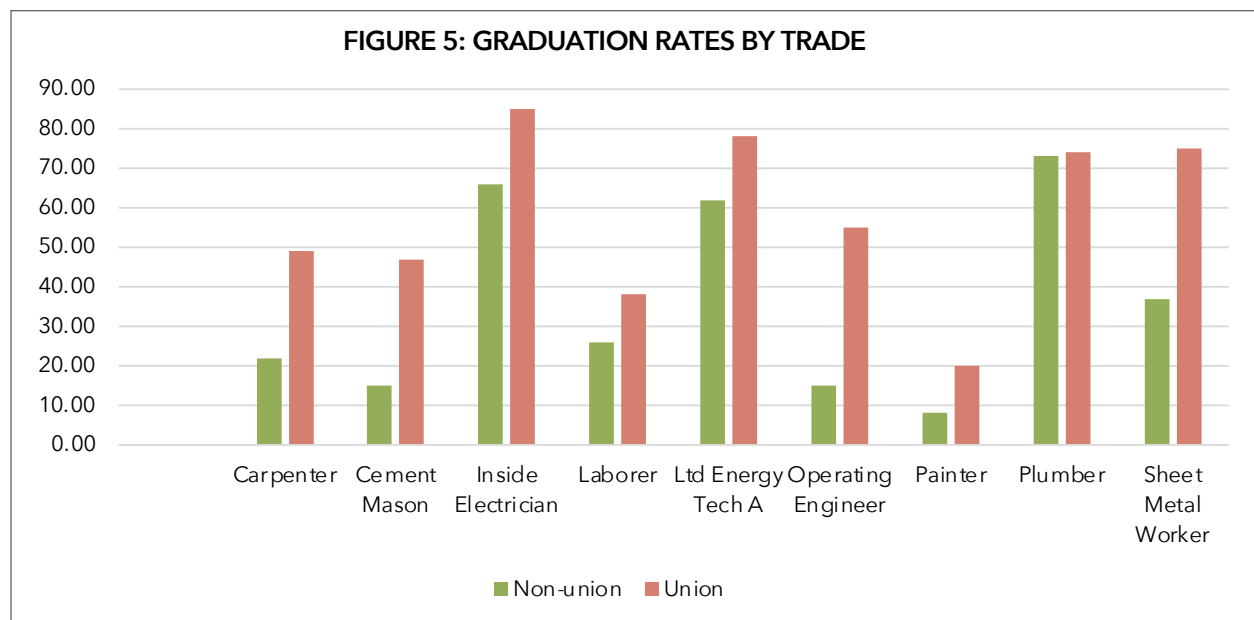
within trades rather than across all trades. In order to compare differences in graduation rates between union and non-union programs, we analyzed the nine parallel trades in the data: Carpenters, Cement Masons, Inside Electricians, Energy Technicians, Operating Engineers, Painters, Plumbers, and Sheet Metal Workers.

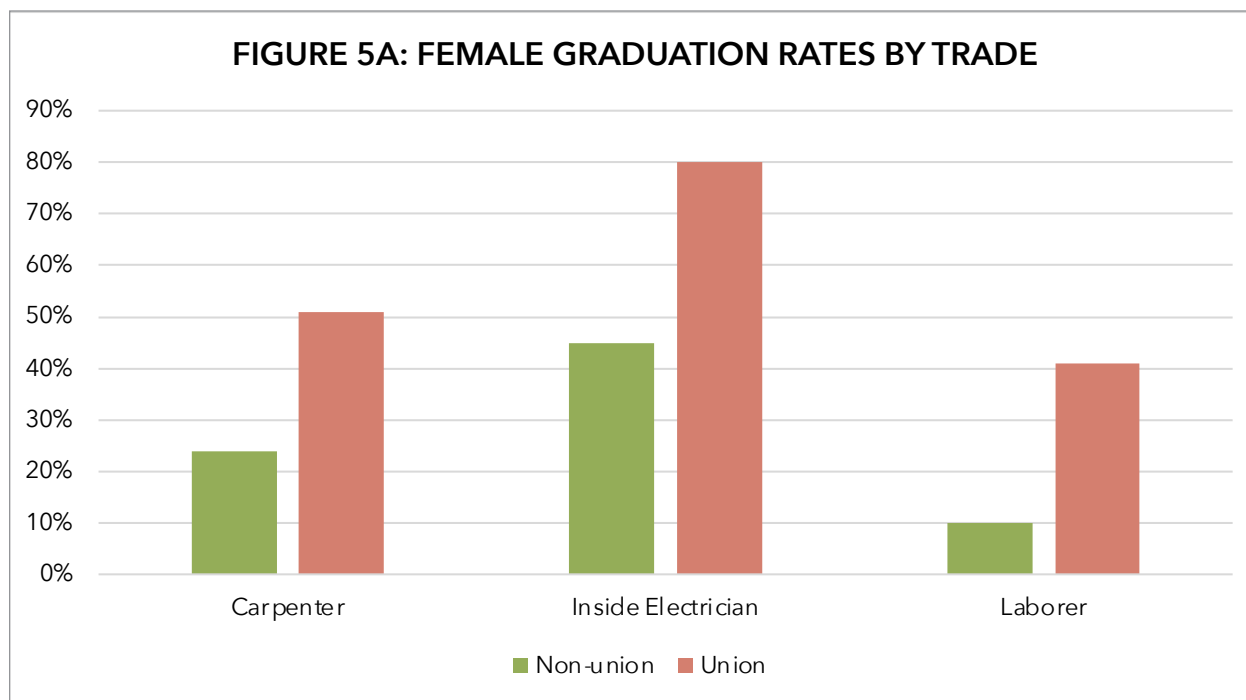
Across these trades, union programs graduate a higher proportion of apprentices than non-union programs (see Figure 5). Unions had a graduation rate of 58% while non-union programs had a graduation rate of 36%.

As shown in Figure 5A, union programs graduate a higher proportion of women than non-union programs do in all trades where there are comparable programs. For these comparisons, we have limited ourselves to programs which had 20 or more apprentices enrolled from each gender and racial/ethnic group.

Similarly, as shown in Figure 5B, union programs tend to graduate a much higher proportion of their apprentices of color than non-union programs. Figures 5, 5A, and 5B show the percent of workers who were registered between 2011-2015 and who graduated between 2011-2020 among parallel union and non-union programs.

These figures show that gender and racial/ethnic disparities in graduation rates are largely the result of disparities in graduation between union and non-union programs. As the data show, being enrolled in a union program results in much higher graduation rates especially for women and BIPOC.



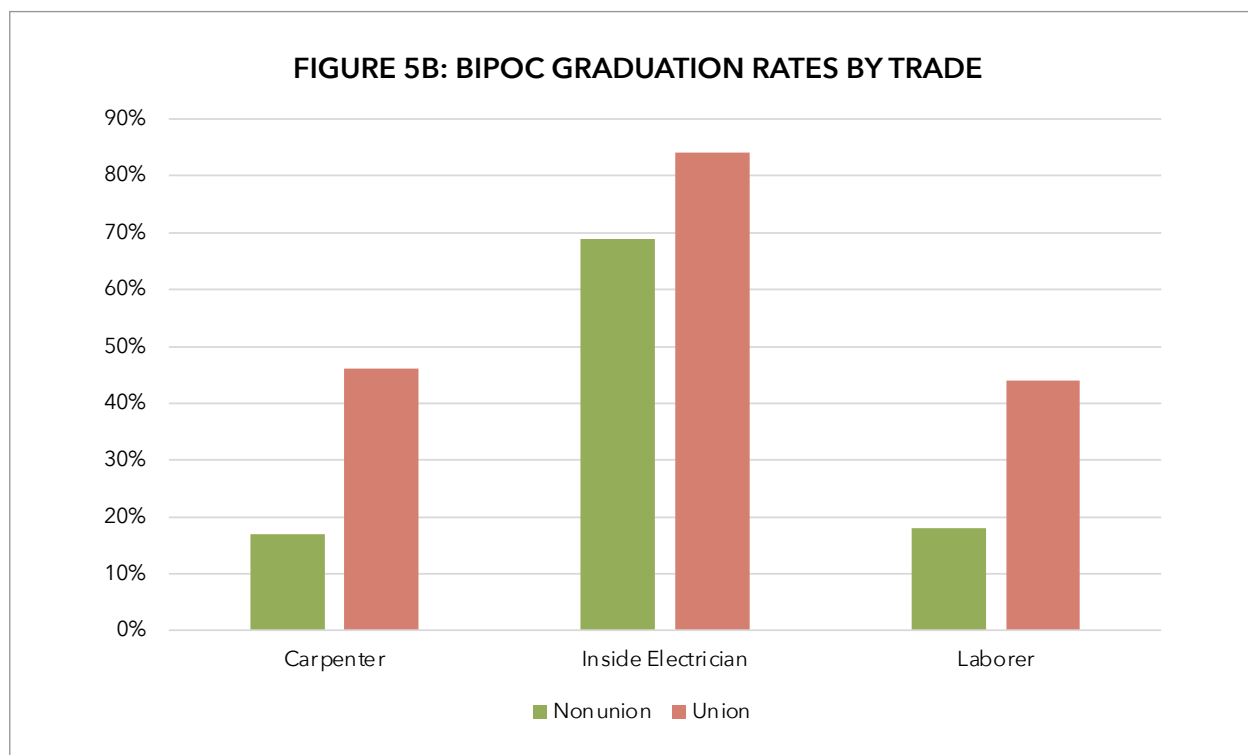


We also ran logistic regressions to determine the average likelihood of graduation by racial/ethnic group and gender. Because graduation rates can vary from trade to trade, running a logistic regression that holds trade constant can be a helpful measure to assess gender and racial/ethnic equity.

Based on the data, on average, women apprentices were 16% less likely to complete an apprenticeship as compared to men, holding trade constant.<sup>32</sup> Results show that, on average, being a person of color as compared to a white apprentice is associated with an approximately 35% lower chance of completing an apprenticeship, holding trade constant.<sup>33</sup> Black workers faced the highest barriers to completing an apprenticeship program. Black apprentices were 55% less likely to complete an apprenticeship as compared to white apprentices, holding trade constant.<sup>34</sup>

However, these industry-wide data mask dramatic differences between union and non-union apprenticeship programs. Holding trade constant, BIPOC workers in a union program had a 20% greater likelihood of completing their program compared to workers of color in non-unionized apprenticeships.<sup>35</sup> Even more substantially, women in unions experienced a 70% greater likelihood, on average, of completing their program compared to women who were in non-unionized apprenticeships.

These findings highlight the persistent barriers for women and workers of color, particularly for Black workers, to complete apprenticeship programs, and require industry-wide changes. In many cases, the inability to complete a program results from structural inequalities. For example, arranging childcare may keep parents, especially mothers, from being able to find the hours necessary to move through the program. Research shows that for women in particular, a lack of meaningful tasks and sexism experienced at the worksite slows down progress and leaves women with lower quality training compared to men, making it more difficult to advance through the program.<sup>36</sup> Other inequities experienced by women and workers of color can be working fewer hours, not being part of core crews (the contrac-



tor's permanent workforce), and on-the-job harassment. In general, apprentices may also experience difficulty completing their programs as a result of financial hardships associated with regular periods of unemployment in the construction industry.<sup>37</sup>

These results show that institutions like unions play an important role in mitigating labor market inequalities. The stark race and gender differences in graduation rates in non-union apprenticeship programs show that institutions such as unions reduce gender and race discrimination.

## Time to Completion

Of apprentices who completed their programs, 44% were enrolled for 3 years or less. The average time to graduate for apprentices who enrolled between 2011 and 2015 was 3.8 years.

Overall, women took slightly longer to graduate compared with men; the average tenure for women who enrolled between 2011-2015 and completed their programs was 3.9 years compared to 3.8 years for men. The time to completion was comparable for white and BIPOC apprentices, at 3.8 years. Taking a closer look at one highly enrolled-in trade, Carpenters, important racial disparities in time to completion emerge between non-union and union apprenticeship programs.

According to the Associated General Contractors Oregon-Columbia Chapter, it typically takes apprentices about four years to become a journey-level carpenter.<sup>38</sup> For workers who enrolled between 2011-2015, apprentices in union programs completed in an average of 3.2 years, while non-union apprentices completed in an average of 4 years.

**Unions play an important role in reducing gender and race discrimination. Without institutions like unions, the persistent barriers faced by women and workers of color will continue to shape labor market outcomes.**

Carpenter apprenticeships also had particularly high enrollment. In non-union Carpenter apprenticeship programs, men graduated within an average of 4.03 years while women graduated more slightly more quickly, in an average of 3.8 years. Again, we must be cautious when drawing conclusions because of the small number of apprentices in specific subgroups. White workers typically graduated in 3.78 years, while workers of color typically graduated in 4.46 years in non-union programs. Though there were only three Black workers enrolled in non-union Carpenter programs, they each took five years before graduating, a year longer than average. Of all apprentices enrolled in non-union Carpenter apprenticeship programs, those who took 3 years or less were all white, while those who took five years, or more were all BIPOC.

In union Carpenter apprenticeship programs, where average completion time in the data is 3.21 years, men graduated after an average of 3.16 years, compared to 3.64 years for women. White apprentices completed the program after an average of 3.29 years, compared to 3.03 years for workers of color in union Carpenter apprenticeship programs.



Photo: Dawn Jones Redstone, Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.



## SEPARATION RATES

While graduation rates offer an important lens for analyzing gender and racial equity in construction apprenticeship programs, separation rates can also highlight many of the barriers women and workers of color encounter in this industry. Separation can happen voluntarily, when apprentices leave the program, or involuntarily, when they have their apprenticeship contract terminated.

Apprentices may voluntarily leave the program for a number of reasons, the most common being financial challenges, lack of consistent work, harassment and discrimination, lack of mentorship and training, difficulty of work, and cost and time away from home resulting from travel to worksites.<sup>39</sup> Separated white women in particular amass fewer training hours than their white male counterparts, which may, at least in part, explain women's dropout rates.<sup>40</sup>

Between 2011-2020, 6,756 (38%) apprentices who had enrolled in programs in the greater Portland area had terminated contracts. The data shows that apprentices who separated from their program make up an equal proportion of non-union programs compared to union programs, at approximately 38%.

Apprentices of color separated more frequently than white apprentices. While workers of color comprise 26% of the apprentices in the data, they made up 31% of all separations. In comparison, white apprentices were 74% of the total and 69% of the separations. Women were 9% of all separations and 8% of total apprentices.

Of all women, 41% separated from their apprenticeships, compared to 37% of men. An even greater proportion of BIPOC separated apprentices (44%) compared to white apprentices (35%).



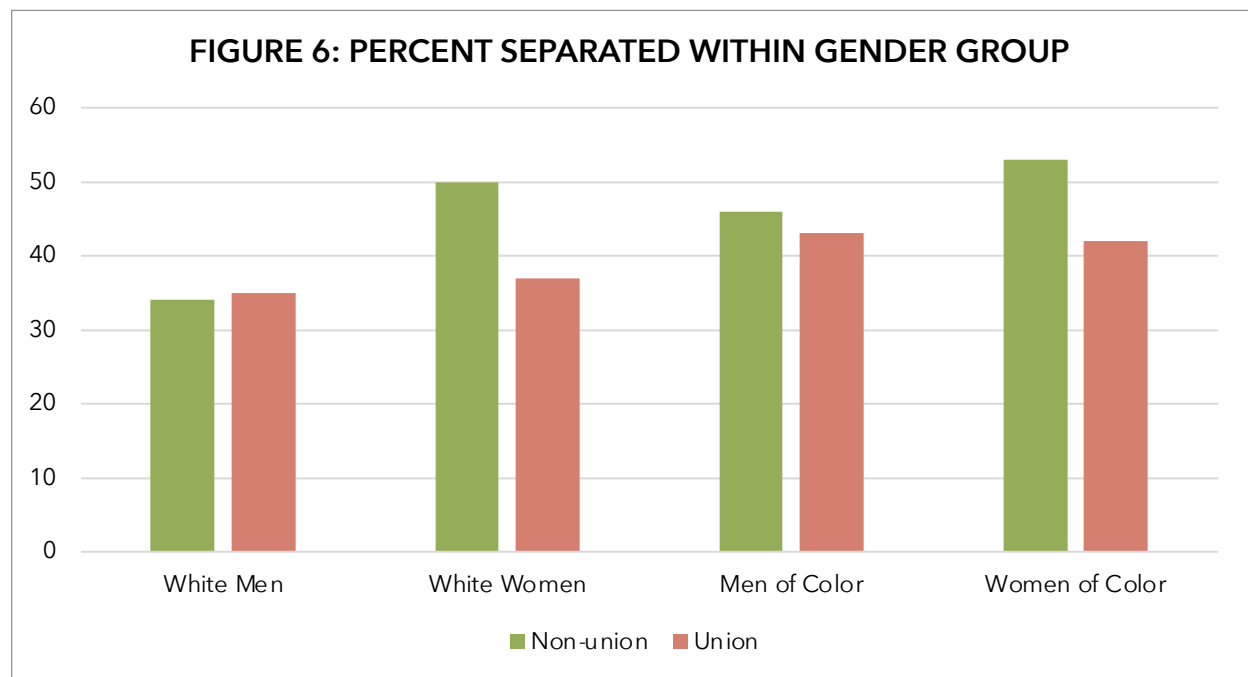
Photo: Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council (OSBCTC)

When examining the difference between union and non-union programs, clear gender and racial/ethnic disparities are apparent. A smaller proportion of women separated in union programs (38%) compared to non-union programs (51%). Similarly, a smaller proportion of people of color separated in union programs (43%) than non-union programs (47%).

As shown in Figure 6, smaller proportions of women of color, men of color, and especially white women separated in union programs compared to non-union programs. Compared to all racial/ethnic groups, Black apprentices in both union and non-union programs experienced the highest proportion of separations, though the proportion was slightly higher in non-union programs. Higher proportions of Indigenous and Latinx workers separated across union and non-union programs, compared to white workers, as well.

With the exception of Indigenous apprentices, non-union programs had higher rates of separation among workers of color enrolled in their programs than in union programs. Again, we ran logistic regressions to determine the average likelihood of separation by racial/ethnic group and gender.<sup>41</sup> BIPOC apprentices were approximately 41% more likely to separate as compared to white apprentices, holding trade constant. Black apprentices faced particular barriers as evidenced by separation rates. Separations were 159% more likely for black apprentices compared to white apprentices, holding trade constant. This may reflect the fact that 17 of 23 trades that had above-average separation rates also had above-average concentrations of BIPOC apprentices.

Apprentices of color had a higher likelihood of separation than their white counterparts within non-union programs compared to union programs. Within union programs, BIPOC apprentices were 37% more likely to separate than white apprentices. In comparison, in non-union programs, BIPOC apprentices were 56% more likely to experience a separation than white apprentices.<sup>42</sup>



## Separations during Probationary Period

Separations most commonly occur during the first year or two of an apprenticeship program (approximately 76% of all separations—see Table 3).

**Table 3: Percent of apprentices separated within years of tenure**

# Years Enrolled	# Separated	% of all Separations
0	2,077	31%
1	3,070	45%
2	982	15%
3	418	6%
4	156	2%
5	36	1%
6	15	0%
7	2	0%
Total	6,756	100%

Probationary periods are those in which apprentices can be terminated for any reason. The length of such periods varies from program to program, though probationary periods are most commonly the first year of employment or 25 percent of the length of the program. After the probationary period, apprentices are no longer at-will employees, and can only be terminated as a result of “good cause.”<sup>43</sup> However, the problems that lead to lower graduation rates for women and workers of color – including the burden of managing family responsibilities during a period of erratic work hours, high commuting costs and the increased difficulty of forming relationships with employers that result in steady work – may cause more women and workers of color to voluntarily quit their apprenticeships within the first year, which would also contribute to a higher probationary period termination rate.

BIPOC apprentices had a higher rate of separation during their probationary period than did white workers. Despite making up only 26% of all apprentices, workers of color accounted for 39% of all workers who separated during their probationary period. While less than 2% of all white apprentices were terminated during their probationary period, 4% of Indigenous workers, 2.5% of Asian-American workers, 4% of Black workers, and 4% of Latinx workers separated during their probationary period. Women accounted for 11% of all separations during the probationary period, despite making up only 8% of all apprentices. Men, on the other hand, were slightly underrepresented among workers who separated during the probationary period: men accounted for 92% of all apprentices, but just 89% of all apprentices who separated during their probationary period.

Table 4 provides data on apprentices terminated during the probationary period by gender and race/ethnicity.



**Table 4: Apprentices Separated in Probationary Period by Gender and Race/Ethnicity**

Gender and Racial/Ethnic Group	Number	% of Total	Separations during PP	% Separated during PP	Separations after PP	% Separated after PP
<i>Men</i>	16,450	92%	425	89%	5,717	91%
Indigenous	522	3%	21	4%	193	3%
Asian-American	393	2%	11	2%	115	2%
Black/African American	876	5%	37	8%	481	8%
Latino	2,557	14%	99	21%	953	15%
Native Hawaiian	4	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Pacific Islander	5	0%	0	0%	0	0%
White	12,093	67%	257	54%	3,975	63%
<i>Women</i>	1,512	8%	55	11%	559	9%
Indigenous	85	0%	5	1%	34	1%
Asian-American	39	0%	0	0%	14	0%
Black/African American	119	1%	6	1%	61	1%
Latino	155	1%	8	2%	47	1%
White	1,114	6%	36	8%	403	6%
<i>Non-Binary</i>	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%
White	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,964</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,276</b>	<b>100%</b>

These data do not provide information on the reason for separations. Separations may have been the result of an employer decision or could be the result of workers voluntarily leaving the field. Despite common perceptions that apprenticeship success is a result of hard work, it's important to remember that barriers such as lack of pre-existing trade-specific knowledge or skills; difficulty developing relationships with other apprentices, journey-level workers, or supervisors; lack of mentorship; and the challenge of acquiring sufficient hours have been particularly acute for women and people of color. This may provide some insights into the higher separation rates for women and BIPOC.<sup>44</sup>

## WAGES

Compared to many other jobs, construction trades and apprenticeship programs offer strong pathways into well-paying, middle-class careers. During an apprenticeship program, apprentices' wage rates are set as a percentage of journey-level wages, with that percentage increasing according to the number of hours completed in the apprenticeship program. Pay also varies according to trade, and within trades as a result of being in a union or non-union program.

Below is an examination of wage differentiation between union/non-union programs and by gender and race/ethnicity. Wages refer to the starting wage for a journey-level worker (the wage the worker will make once completing the apprenticeship program).<sup>45</sup>

Once apprentices reached journey-level status, wages ranged from \$21 per hour to \$56 per hour, with an average of \$38 per hour. The most common wage was \$40.32 per hour. Comparing only trades where there were union and non-union equivalents, unions paid at journey-level status an average of \$37 per hour, while non-union apprenticeships paid a journey-level status worker an average of \$31 per hour.



Photo: Dawn Jones Redstone, Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.

After running a linear regression that held status, tenure, union, and license constant, data showed that BIPOC workers are enrolled in apprenticeship programs that are associated with a \$1.60 per hour lower average wage than white workers.<sup>46</sup> Black workers are enrolled in apprenticeship programs that are associated with a \$2.47 per hour lower average wage than white workers.<sup>47</sup> Latinx workers are enrolled in apprenticeship programs that are associated with a \$1.83 per hour lower average wage than white workers.<sup>48</sup>

Thirty-one percent of non-union apprentices are enrolled in programs with an average hourly wage of \$40 per hour or higher, compared to 60% of all union apprenticeship programs.

**46% of all women in union apprenticeship programs are enrolled in trades with an average hourly wage of \$40 or higher, compared to 19% of all women in non-union programs.**

Similarly, while only 20% of BIPOC workers in non-union programs are enrolled in trades with an average hourly wage of \$40 or higher, 55% of BIPOC in union programs are enrolled in trades with an average hourly wage of \$40 or higher.

Women in union apprenticeships were almost 2.5 times more likely to make at least \$40 per hour compared to women in non-union appren-

ticeships. BIPOC union apprentices were nearly three times more likely to make at least \$40 an hour compared to their non-union counterparts.

**While only 20% of BIPOC in non-union programs are enrolled in trades with an average hourly wage of \$40 or higher, 55% of BIPOC in union programs are enrolled in such high-wage trades.**

The data also show that in union programs women and workers of color were distributed more or less evenly across apprenticeship programs, whereas in non-union programs, more women of color were concentrated in programs leading to lower-wage occupations.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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This report analyzed data from the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries on construction apprenticeship enrollment, graduation, separation, and wage rates for apprentices in the greater Portland area. Comparing differences in union and non-union programs, and differences in completion rates across gender and racial/ethnic lines, the data show that union apprenticeship programs enroll a more diverse population of apprentices, and produce better outcomes for women, Black, Indigenous and people of color than do non-union apprenticeship programs. However, both the union and non-union sides of the construction industry must continue to bolster efforts to recruit and retain historically underrepresented workers.

Researchers in Oregon have proposed a number of recommendations to improve the recruitment and retention of women, Black, Indigenous, and people of color in construction apprenticeships.<sup>49</sup>

These include:

- **Recruitment**
  - Assess current recruitment practices, including outreach strategies, makeup of the recruiting team, gendered language, and statements of commitment to diversity included in job postings, and the success rates of women and applicants of color.
- **Mentorship**
  - Establish mentorship programs in each apprenticeship program, ensuring mentors are trained for that role and that each woman and/or apprentice of color is paired with a trained mentor. Designate an ombudsperson specifically to mediate issues of equity, discrimination, or harassment and provide assistance and support to women and BIPOC.
- **Equitable Access to Work Hours**
  - Limit the amount of time apprentices spend on projects that require long hours, are far from

home, do not provide opportunities for skill-building, or entail schedules that conflict with family responsibilities.

- Develop project thresholds that require contractors to distribute a minimum number of hours to women and BIPOC apprentices. The Construction Career Pathways Project suggests the following thresholds:
  - A minimum of 20% of total work hours in each apprenticeable trade shall be performed by state registered apprentices.
  - A minimum of 14% of total work hours shall be performed by women and women-identified persons – both journey and apprentice-level workers.
  - A minimum of 25% total work hours shall be performed by persons of color – both journey and apprentice level workers.
- Establish flexible work hours
- **Establish Anti-Harassment Workplace Policies and Practices**
  - Incorporate anti-harassment training into apprenticeship training programs.
- **Support Outside of Work**
  - Provide financial support for gas, travel and childcare.
  - Develop a hardship fund
  - Provide pregnancy and maternity leave.
  - Provide childcare during courses, or classes that accommodate schedules of single parents.

While quantitative data can provide important information about trade and industry-level inequities, continued research is needed on the factors that reproduce these disparities – including the quality of training, on-the-job bias and discrimination, opportunities for networking and relationship building, task assignments, and access to childcare.

**As unions continue to be leaders in the recruitment and retention of women and Black, Indigenous, and people of color, state officials should look to union apprenticeship programs for opportunities to improve gender and racial equity in construction work.**

## About the Author

**Larissa Petrucci, Ph.D.** is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the School of Labor and Employment Relations at the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign, and former Research Assistant at the University of Oregon's Labor Education and Research Center. She has published research on irregular scheduling, fair work week legislation, online charter school costs and performance, women and non-binary people's collective responses to workplace inequity, and the intersections of gendered care work and environmental disaster. Current research focuses on issues of job quality, gig work, and in-home family childcare providers.



## About LERC

Since its inception in 1977, the Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) at the University of Oregon has been dedicated to the presence of a strong, inclusive union movement as an integral element of a just and democratic society. By integrating education, research, and public service, LERC helps to ensure that workers have the skills and support that they need to participate meaningfully in their workplaces and communities. LERC faculty conduct applied research and consult in areas such as labor sector analysis, curriculum development, labor standards and employment policy, race and gender equity in the workplace, and worker health and safety.<sup>50</sup>

## Acknowledgments

I would like to sincerely thank Lina Stepick for their extensive feedback on many drafts of this report, and their guidance throughout the data collection process. Thank you to Liza Morehead and Kelly Haines for acquiring the data for this report from the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). Thanks to Connie Ashbrook, Mark Brenner, and Gordon Lafer for their detailed feedback and suggestions on this report. I would also like to thank Larry Williams, Operations and Policy Analyst at BOLI, for gathering this data and for fielding questions throughout the analysis process. I want to thank Barbara Byrd for her important work on construction apprenticeships in Oregon, which provided the inspiration for this follow-up study. Thank you to Leigh Roberts for design and layout. Thank you to the Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. for the use of images licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Additional photos from Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council (OSBCTC), Creative Commons SLA 4.0.

## Appendix I: Construction Apprenticeship Programs in the Greater Portland Area, 2011-2020

Non-union Programs	Union-Programs
Bricklayer/Masonry	Bricklayer
Carpenter	Carpenter
Cement Mason	Caulker
Environmental Control System Servicer/Installer	Cement Mason
Inside Electrician	Drywall Finisher
Laborer	Elevator Mechanic
Limited Energy Technician Class A	Exterior Interior Specialist
Limited Energy Technician Class B	Finisher
Operating Engineer	Firestop Containment
Painter	Floor Coverer
Plumber	Glazier
Sheet Metal Worker	Heat/Frost Insulator
Sign Maker-Erector	Heavy Duty Repairer
Sprinkler Fitter	Industrial Maintenance Mechanic
Tile Trades Finisher	Inside Electrician
Tile Trades Setter	Ironworker
	Laborer
	Limited Energy Technician Class A
	Limited Energy Technician PDX
	Limited Residential Electrician
	Marble Setter
	Millwright
	Operating Engineer
	Painter
	Pile Driver
	Plasterer
	Plumber
	Roofer
	Scaffold Erector
	Sheet Metal Worker
	Sheet Metal Worker Systems Technician
	Steamfitter HVAC/R
	Steamfitter/LEB
	Technical Engineer
	Terrazzo Worker
	Tilessetter
	Traffic Painter

## ENDNOTES

- 1 With the exception of Indigenous apprentices. While the number of Indigenous apprentices were too small to do robust regression analyses, we wanted to be sure to highlight that the data reflects that this group of workers appears to face particular barriers in both union and non-union programs.
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- 35 This was statistically significant with a  $p < 0.05$
- 36 Berik, G, C. Biliginsoy, and L. Williams. 2011. Ibid.
- 37 Helmer, M. and D. Altstadt. 2013. Apprenticeship completion and cancellation in the building trades. Workforce Strategies Initiative: The Aspen Institute <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Apprenticeship-Completion-and-Cancellation-in-the-Building-Trades.pdf>
- 38 <http://www.build-oregon.com/real-story-profile/carpenter>
- 39 Kelly, M and L. Wilkinson. 2020 Evaluation of the Highway Construction Workforce Development Program. Sociology Faculty Publications and Presentation, 151.
- 40 Berik, G. et al. 2011. Ibid
- 41 The calculation of statistical likelihood yields a different number than simply comparing the difference between overall separation rates for different groups of apprentices, partly because the statistical measure controls for differences in each specific trade.
- 42 These results were statistically significant with a  $P > 0.000$
- 43 Termination for good cause may include, but is not limited to, failure to report to work, nonattendance at related training, failure to submit work progress reports and lack of response to committee citations as stated in the 2019 Oregon Statutes Chapter 660: Apprenticeships and Training; Workforce Development [https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills\\_laws/ors/ors660.html](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/ors/ors660.html)
- 44 Kelly, M, L. et al. 2015. Ibid.
- 45 I want to acknowledge that there may be many reasons (which are outside the scope of this report) why women and workers of color enter different trades and apprenticeship programs.

46 We ran several regression models with different control variables and found similar strong results. Here we include a control for license, as licensed trades are associated with higher average wages.

47 This was statistically significant with a  $P > 0.000$

48 This was statistically significant with a  $P > 0.000$

49 <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2019/11/04/construction-career-pathways-regional-framework-20190901.pdf>

Childers, C, A Hegewisch and L. Jackson. 2021. Here to stay: Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women in construction apprenticeships and employment. Institute for Women's Policy Research. [https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Here-to-Stay\\_revision2.pdf](https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Here-to-Stay_revision2.pdf)

Kelly, M. 2021. Recommendations for the Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Construction Workforce. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56c3899b4d088e9a22122e13/t/604a76dff4e3a742e6860d1d/1615492857521/Recommendations+for+the+Recruitment+and+Retention+of+a+Diverse+Construction+Workforce+%28no+voiceover%29.pdf>

50 <https://lerc.uoregon.edu/>

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Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of Portland YouthBuilders, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. PYB was founded in 1995, and since then we have offered low-income youth a pathway out of poverty. PYB provides free education, vocational training, counseling, career development, and long-term support services to over 200 folks who face significant barriers to success annually, all within a culture that embraces equity through a rigorous program guided by a harm reduction model that builds on the resilience on the folks we serve.

Pre-Apprenticeship programs and SummerWorks have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rana Uzzaman', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

**Rana Uzzaman, LMSW**  
**Executive Director**  
**Portland YouthBuilders**  
**503-286-9350 Ext. 220**  
**347-239-8115 - Cell**  
[Rana.Uzzaman@pybpdx.org](mailto:Rana.Uzzaman@pybpdx.org)

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**April 16, 2025**

**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of **UNCF Portland**, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being.

UNCF is an organization working directly with high school youth, providing education, tools, resources, mentorship, career exposure, and scholarship opportunities.

The UNCF Portfolio Project's mission is to increase the number of minority and low-income college and scholarship applicants. Our strategy is to “Engage, Enable and Ensure” that 11th and 12th grade students of color are equipped with the knowledge, access, and exposure **to reach their dreams and aspirations of attending colleges/universities, trade and vocational schools. The Portfolio Project is a college and career readiness program placing emphasis on increasing knowledge about student options for college and careers. The preparation for the next steps to successfully thrive, move through, and beyond to success.**

Our program provides access to college admissions professionals, essay writing workshops, and financial aid/financial literacy workshops, guest speakers, and mentorship from industry professionals.

We know firsthand the transformational impact that early workforce training, coaching, mentoring, and career exposure through youth employment experiences can have.

Programs like the **SummerWorks** have provided our students with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who

are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

Michelle M. Harper

UNCF Portland Leadership Council Chair

UNCF Portland

harpermichelle.m@gmail.com

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# Play Grow Learn LLC

465 NE 181st Street suite 166,

Portland OR 97233

April 15, 2025

City of Portland

RE: Support for Summer Works Program Funding

Dear Mayor and City Council Members:

On behalf of Play Grow Learn LLC, I am writing to express our strong support for continued and expanded funding for the City of Portland's Summer Works program. As a community organization serving low-income youth in the Rockwood/Gresham area, we have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact this program has on our community's young people and their families.

## Our Partnership with Summer Works

Play Grow Learn has proudly partnered with the Summer Works program for 6 years, hosting 10 or more youth employees each summer who receive valuable work experience while supporting our after-school and summer camp programming. These youth workers gain essential skills while serving as positive role models for younger participants in our programs.

## Critical Benefits to Rockwood/Gresham Youth

The Summer Works program provides irreplaceable opportunities for low-income youth in our community:

- **Meaningful Employment:** For many participants, this represents their first job and paycheck, building workforce readiness and financial literacy.
- **Mentorship and Guidance:** Youth receive professional supervision and coaching that builds confidence and workplace skills.
- **Positive Alternatives:** The program provides structured activity during summer months when youth crime and violence typically increase in our neighborhood.
- **Economic Support:** The income earned helps support many families struggling with financial hardships, while teaching youth the value of work.
- **Career Pathways:** Participants develop skills that open doors to future employment opportunities and higher education.

# A Vital Community Investment

In the Rockwood/Gresham area, where many families face economic challenges and youth are exposed to negative influences, the Summer Works program represents a critical intervention. By providing legitimate income opportunities, the program directly competes with illegal activities that might otherwise attract our youth.

The impact extends beyond individual participants. When young people see their peers earning an honest living, it creates a positive ripple effect throughout our community. Former Summer Works participants often return to volunteer in our programs, creating a continuous cycle of mentorship and community reinvestment.

## Our Request

We respectfully urge the City of Portland to prioritize and expand funding for the Summer Works program in the upcoming budget. Specifically, we recommend:

1. Increasing the number of available positions to meet the high demand among eligible youth
2. Extending the program duration to provide longer-term employment opportunities
3. Enhancing the training component to build more advanced job skills
4. Ensuring equitable distribution of opportunities to reach the most vulnerable neighborhoods

This investment represents one of the most effective uses of city funds, simultaneously addressing youth development, crime prevention, economic support, and workforce preparation.

We stand ready to continue our partnership with the Summer Works program and to support its growth and impact in whatever ways we can. Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to Portland's youth.

Sincerely,

Germaine Flentroy

Executive Director

Play Grow Learn LLC

503-719-1821



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## Written Testimony to the Portland City Council

**Subject:** Support Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative

**Submitted by:** Andrew McGough, Executive Director, Worksystems, the Portland Metro Workforce Development Board

**Date:** April 15, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Andrew McGough and I'm the Executive Director of Worksystems, the Workforce Development Board serving the City of Portland, Multnomah and Washington Counties. As the Workforce Development Board, we are designated by the Governor in collaboration with local elected leaders to receive and manage certain pots of federal and state resources that are intended to improve the quality of the workforce and support the regional economy. We combine and coordinate these resources with a variety of other funds to build a comprehensive approach to workforce development – one that aligns and maximizes available resources, increases our capacity to “meet people where they are” in a culturally and population responsive environment, reduces fragmentation and duplication, and increases scale, efficiency, sustainability and results.

The regional public workforce system is anchored by 5 WorkSource centers, including one in SE Portland and one in NE Portland, 2 express sites, and more than 35 education and community-based partners. Last year, the regional system served more than 25,000 people, including 1,666 participants experiencing homelessness, 1,023 participants receiving Limited English Proficiency assistance, 2,160 participants with prior justice involvement, and 6,470 BIPOC participants. In short, this system plays a key role in addressing some of the region's most persistent and significant challenges.

The City is an integral partner in the system. The reality is we're all facing funding challenges, and we need to work together to respond in a way that allows us to best preserve what works and position the City for better times ahead. To that end, I would be happy to meet with the Council or any of its members to do a deeper dive into the regional workforce system, how the City is served and participates, our goals, our partners, and our ideas to respond to current challenges and future opportunities.

While I think a bigger conversation is needed, today I want to share some information about two critical components of the regional workforce system – registered pre- apprenticeship programs and subsidized work activities for low-income youth. I have included fact sheets of these programs as part of my remarks.

Most of the funding we receive from the City to support pre-apprenticeship programs comes through the Community Opportunities and Enhancements Program (COEP). Worksystems manages the workforce components of the COEP on behalf of the City with a focus on building partnerships to diversify the



construction workforce. Pre-apprenticeship training and support is delivered by registered pre-apprenticeship programs, including POIC, Constructing Hope, Portland Youth Builders, and Oregon Tradeswomen. Community Outreach services are provided by Central City Concern and the Urban League, and Labors Community Services offers retention and advancement services. The COEP workforce network ensures we meet people where they are, enhances program access, and creates the collaboration needed to maximize resources and results.

Worksystems invests and connects additional state and federal resources to expand and support COEP services and improve results. Access to childcare, housing assistance, and long-term career coaching are made available to ensure participants have the services needed to engage and complete training.

From an economic perspective, the construction industry is a cornerstone of Portland's economy, is a critical engine for upward mobility, and can play an essential role in responding to economic challenges.

Yet the sector faces an escalating labor shortage:

- The Portland metro region employs over 60,000 construction workers, but nearly 25% of them are aged 55 or older, signaling a significant wave of retirements in the coming decade.
- Oregon expects to add over 17,000 new construction jobs by 2031, with replacement needs pushing that number even higher.

Meanwhile, construction jobs offer strong wages without requiring a four-year degree. As of 2023:

- The median wage for a construction worker in Oregon is approximately \$27 per hour, or over \$56,000 annually, with many skilled trades earning far more.
- Apprentices who complete their training can earn upwards of \$80,000 annually, often with employer-paid benefits and pensions.

Registered pre-apprenticeship programs—especially those serving women, BIPOC communities, and people facing barriers—are essential for preparing workers to fill these roles. They provide hands-on training and direct pipelines into registered apprenticeships, and good paying jobs, ensuring Portland has the skilled labor force it needs to build and maintain housing, transit, and climate infrastructure.

### **Summer Youth Employment: A Lifeline for Disconnected Youth**

At the same time, we must address the growing number of young people who are struggling in our community. In the Portland-Vancouver metro area:

- An estimated 11% of youth ages 16–24—nearly 27,000 young people—are disconnected from both school and employment (Measure of America, 2023).
- Youth disconnection is disproportionately high among Black, Indigenous, and Latino youth.



Summer employment programs provide young people with critical early job experience, exposure to career paths, mentorship, and income. Research shows that summer jobs significantly reduce involvement with the justice system, improve school retention, and increase lifetime earnings.

In a time of rising youth homelessness, violence, and economic uncertainty, these programs are not optional—they are a foundation of safety, opportunity, and hope.

SummerWorks started in 2009 and is currently co-funded by a variety of organizations including the City of Portland, Multnomah County, the City of Gresham, Tri-Met and Worksystems. Through this collaborative funding model, we have been able to serve more than 11,000 youth.

### **The Cost of Inaction vs. the Value of Investment**

Portland has long prided itself on being a city that leads with equity. Youth Employment and Pre-Apprenticeship programs are precisely the kinds of investments that reflect that value—even in tight fiscal times.

If we fail to invest in these young people and emerging workers today, we will pay far more tomorrow—in public assistance, emergency services, and lost productivity. By investing now:

- We grow a local, diverse construction workforce to meet critical infrastructure needs.
- We interrupt generational poverty and create long-term taxpayers and community leaders.
- We maximize state and federal matching funds, amplifying the City's impact.

I urge you to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment initiatives in this budget cycle. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Portland's future.

Thank you.

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Soul District Business Association  
6601 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Portland, OR 97211  
[www.souldistrictpdx.com](http://www.souldistrictpdx.com)  
info@souldistrictpdx.com | (503) 841-5032

**SUBJECT:** Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives  
**TO:** Portland City Council  
**RE:** Council Document 2025-156

April 15, 2025

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of the Soul District Business Association, we are writing in strong and unwavering support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative.”

Let’s be clear—this is not just about jobs. This is about justice. About breaking down the walls that keep Black and Brown youth disconnected from opportunity, from community, and from their own brilliance. We don’t support SummerWorks because it’s a good program—we support it because it *changes lives*. And we know, because we’ve seen it happen right in our office.

Take Stephen—one of our SummerWorks interns. Before joining us, Stephen was struggling. Despite his best efforts, he couldn’t land a job. Couldn’t find a community that saw his gifts. But when SummerWorks placed him at the Soul District Business Association, that changed. He found a home. We introduced him to a network of unapologetically Black creatives, entrepreneurs, and professionals who *believed* in him.

Stephen didn’t just complete his internship—he leveled up. He discovered he was a full-stack creator. He was mentored by a local Black doctor. Today, Stephen is in *medical school*, blending his creative tech skills in AR and AI with his passion for healing. He’s building a future where Black youth can see themselves in STEM, in medicine, in innovation—because someone gave him a chance.

That’s what SummerWorks does. It gives our youth a mirror and a map.

More than 11,000 youth have already walked through this program. Over \$20 million in wages have gone directly into the hands of young people—many of whom have never had the chance to earn, to lead, or to be seen. Programs like COEP and SummerWorks aren’t “nice-to-haves.” They’re *essential* infrastructure for equity and economic resilience.

So we urge you—fund this work boldly. Fund it like you believe in Black futures. Because we do.

With respect, urgency, and purpose,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JW' followed by a stylized flourish.

**John Washington**

Executive Director

Soul District Business Association

[chair@nnebaportland.org](mailto:chair@nnebaportland.org) | 503-841-5032

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**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of Constructing Hope, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with low-income youth and youth of color (ages 16 to 19), we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have. We offer these youth exposure to construction trades careers through hands-on training, academic instruction, site visits, mentorship, and certifications. Over the history of our summer youth program, all graduates have either moved into additional training followed by placement in construction careers or successfully returned to high school to complete the next school year. We are proud to put disadvantaged youth on track for high school graduation and attainable, sustainable careers.

Programs like these have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

Pat Daniels

Executive Director

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**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of Constructing Hope, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with low-income youth and youth of color (ages 16 to 19), we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have. We offer these youth exposure to construction trades careers through hands-on training, academic instruction, site visits, mentorship, and certifications. Over the history of our summer youth program, all graduates have either moved into additional training followed by placement in construction careers or successfully returned to high school to complete the next school year. We are proud to put disadvantaged youth on track for high school graduation and attainable, sustainable careers.

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Sincerely,

Pat Daniels

Executive Director

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**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

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We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with low-income youth and youth of color (ages 16 to 19), we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have. We offer these youth exposure to construction trades careers through hands-on training, academic instruction, site visits, mentorship, and certifications. Over the history of our summer youth program, all graduates have either moved into additional training followed by placement in construction careers or successfully returned to high school to complete the next school year. We are proud to put disadvantaged youth on track for high school graduation and attainable, sustainable careers.

Programs like these have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Patricia Daniels'.

Pat Daniels  
Executive Director

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April 14, 2025

**RE: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of the Reynolds School District, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of "Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative" (Council document 2025-156).

Since program inception in 2009, the Reynolds School District has steered hundreds of students through SummerWorks to gain critical first job workforce training, supportive supervision and essential paid summer employment.

Programs like SummerWorks provide our students with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. Youth from East Multnomah County encounter numerous systemic challenges. The existence of SummerWorks has been a critical support to them.

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with young people of color and diverse language and culture, we know firsthand the transformational impact that workforce training and youth employment can have.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

I urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "F. Caropelo".

Frank Caropelo  
Superintendent  
Reynolds School District





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**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of Constructing Hope, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with those that have been justice impacted (formerly incarcerated), low-income individuals and communities of color, we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have.

Programs like Pre-Apprenticeship & SummerWorks have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

Pat Daniels

Executive Director

Constructing Hope Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program

patd@constructinghope.org/ 503-281-1234

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Patricia Daniels'.

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April 15, 2025

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

As Vice Chair of the Portland Metro Workforce Development Board, a business owner, and the Mayor of Gresham, I am writing to express my strong support the Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Employment Programs included in Council document 2025-156.

These programs represent the kind of strategic investment our region needs. They are not only helping young people gain critical work experience and develop career aspirations, but they are also creating tangible solutions to workforce shortages and inequities in our most vital industries.

This is not just a Portland issue—this is a regional priority. The challenges we face around youth disconnection, workforce readiness, and economic inclusion do not stop at city lines. In Gresham, we have proudly partnered with The City of Portland, Multnomah County, TriMet, and Worksystems to co-invest in SummerWorks because we understand that our futures are linked. When we invest together, we all benefit. SummerWorks has changed the lives of thousands of young people across the metro area, connecting them to paid work experiences, mentors, and long-term goals.

In addition, the Pre-Apprenticeship programs supported through the Community Opportunities and Enhancements Program (COEP) are building a more inclusive construction workforce—one that reflects the diversity of our communities and is ready to meet the region's growing infrastructure needs.

These are smart, equitable investments. I urge you to protect and expand funding for these programs and to continue working in partnership across the region to ensure every young person and aspiring worker has a chance to succeed. I've attached fact sheets that dive deeper into the impact, outcomes, and community benefits of these essential programs.

Thank you for your leadership and for standing with us to invest in the region's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T Stovall", on a light-colored background.

Travis Stovall

Worksystems Board Vice Chair

CEO/Founder, eRep

Mayor, City of Gresham

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**SUBJECT:** Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of REAP Inc., thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with underserved youth we see the value for these work opportunities. We are dedicated to igniting, elevating and empowering the future generation, including building their capacity when it comes to their work experiences. We know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have.

Programs like SummerWorks have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers. Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Jackson  
Executive Director

*Hanae Gonzales*

Hanae Gonzales  
Director of Afterschool & Enrichment Programs





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# SummerWorks



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 2009, Worksystems created **SummerWorks** — championed by Councilor Loretta Smith — to **help young people develop essential workplace skills**, leading to meaningful employment opportunities at regional businesses. The program has an unassailable track record of success, particularly in creating opportunities for youth facing social and economic challenges. SummerWorks helps **build a diverse and strong local talent pool** that supports regional employers' growth and success.

## SINCE ITS INCEPTION

**11,014** Youth have completed a work experience

**1,730,032** Hours worked

**\$20,245,450** Earned

**91%**

Are Economically  
Disadvantaged

**71%**

Identify as  
Youth of Color

### SummerWorks provides invaluable career exposure for young people through:

- Paid real-world experiences in dynamic work settings
- Practical skill-building that boosts resumes
- Hands-on learning in safe environments where youth are encouraged to grow personally and professionally

### Participating Youth:

- ✓ Earn money while building their future
- ✓ Are more likely to return to and complete school
- ✓ Are more likely to enter post-secondary education

For more information, visit [worksystems.org](http://worksystems.org) or contact Adriel Person, Worksystems Youth Programs Manager at [aperson@worksystems.org](mailto:aperson@worksystems.org) or 503-478-7349.

# SummerWorks Services & Current Results



SummerWorks has now been expanded to include year-round opportunities.

## SERVICES TO YOUTH:

- Career Coaching: Personalized coaching and ongoing support to help youth develop skills, access resources, navigate training and employment services, and succeed in long-term career growth
- Essential skill development including soft skills like adaptability, collaboration, communication, self-awareness, and a solution mindset
- Financial literacy training
- Support services (i.e. uniforms, tools, and transportation)

## SERVICES TO BUSINESSES:

- Outreach and recruitment
- Supervisor training
- Payroll coordination and compliance
- Feedback collection and continuous improvement
- Program management and oversight

# 85%

of youth successfully  
complete their work  
experience

# 93%

of worksites express  
satisfaction with the  
program

## YEAR-TO-DATE RESULTS

July 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

**318** Youth served through **340** Work experiences

**124** Worksite hosts

## Helping Youth Who Need it Most

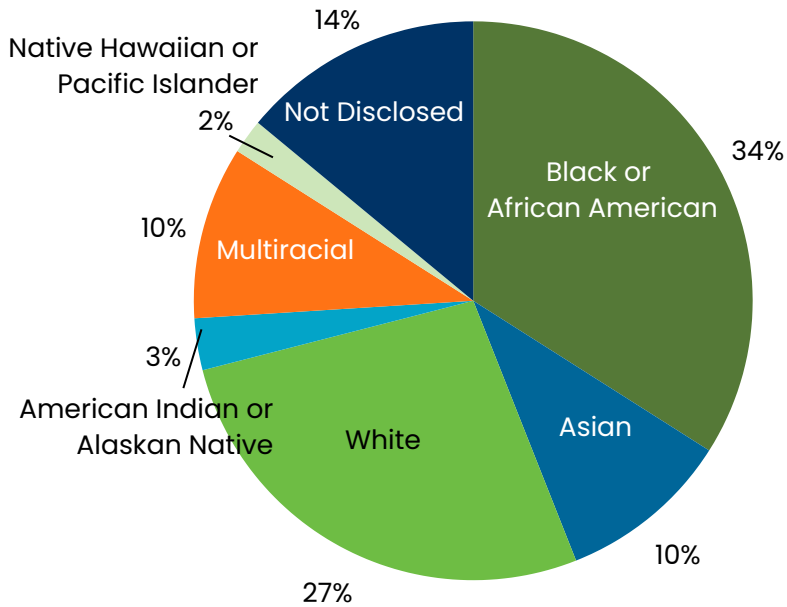
Pregnant or Parenting	3%
Experiencing Homelessness and/or Runaway	9%
LGBTQIA2S+	16%
In or Aged Out of Foster Care	10%
Experiences a Disability and/or May Need Accommodations in the Workplace	20%
Receiving Public Assistance	51%
Justice System Impacted	3%

# SummerWorks Demographics

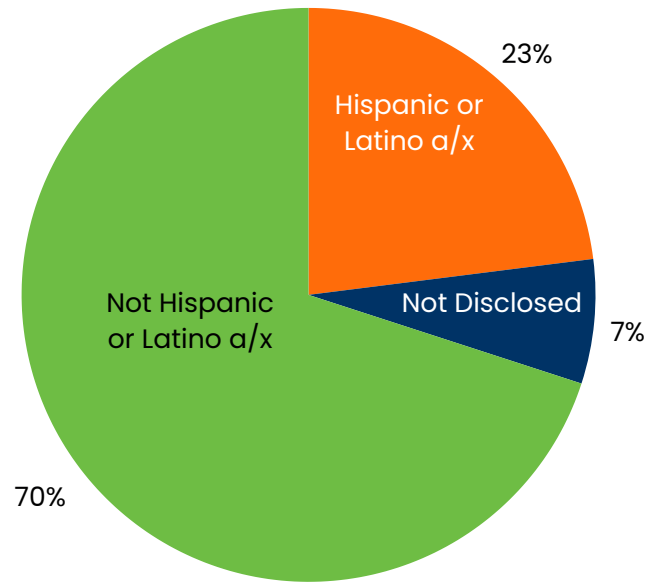
July 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025



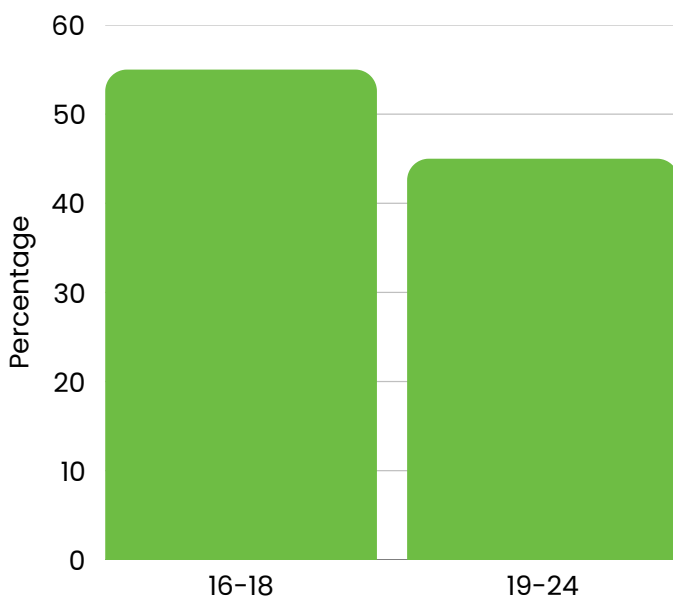
## RACE



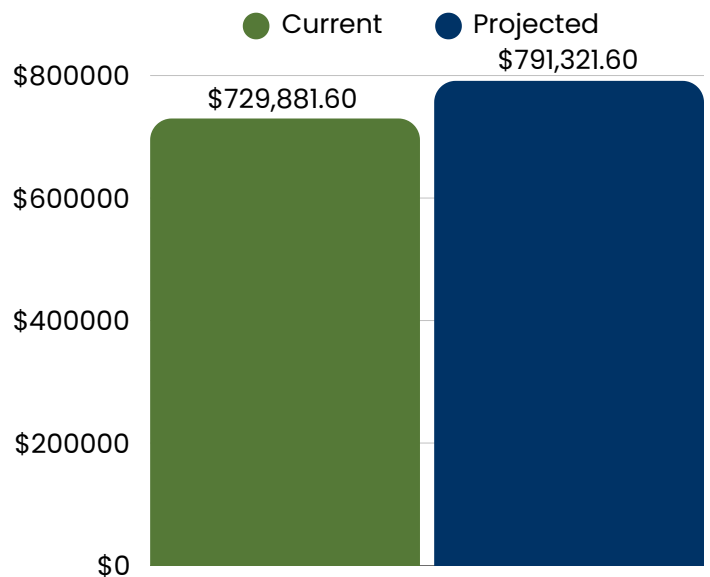
## ETHNICITY



## AGE



## WAGES EARNED



# SummerWorks

## Funding, Partners & Participants



FUNDER	BUDGET (July 2024 - June 2025)
Multnomah County	\$647,000
City of Portland	\$550,000
City of Gresham	\$300,000
Tri-Met	\$73,000
Worksystems	\$650,980
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,486,922</b>

## COMMUNITY-BASED CAREER COACH PROVIDERS



## SUCCESS STORIES

**Eva** completed 150 hours with Portland Parks & Rec Rangers, where she supported daily operations such as cleaning and maintaining ranger vehicles, notetaking during meetings, note taking, filing, and organizing. While there, she learned the value of communication, flexibility, and pushing outside her comfort zone. Inspired by her supervisor's leadership, Eva gained confidence and stayed aligned with her goal of becoming a crime scene investigator. She plans to continue growing through classes and future work experiences.

**Gabby** completed 160 hours with the City of Portland Hearings Office, where she worked on legal memos, attended hearings, and helped develop a civics program for high school students. Her experience deepened her understanding of city government and confirmed her goal of attending law school in 2025. She also secured a second internship with the Hearings Office.

**Raven** served as a drafter for Empowered Neighborhoods, completing 193.5 hours. They contributed to residential design projects and learned to apply creative skills in real-world problem solving. Raven praised their supervisor's guidance in helping her understand the importance of project management. Raven found the role aligned perfectly with their goal of becoming an architect, and they plan to return to PSU to complete their architecture degree.

**Munira** completed 130 hours with City of Portland - Vibrant Communities as a Workforce Development Research Intern. She gained hands-on experience collecting and analyzing survey data, attending events, and learning remote work practices. She was nervous to begin this work, but because her supervisor was supportive, communicative, and dependable she was set up for success. The internship boosted her confidence and research skills, and she hopes to return to SummerWorks next year while continuing her studies at Portland State University.

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of Elevate Oregon, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with under-served youth of color and those experiencing generational poverty, we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have.

Programs like Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive. At Elevate, we also strive to create "generational firsts," such as high school graduations and college acceptances, so we wholeheartedly support our community partners who do the same.

We strongly urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

Kesha Roper  
Chief of Staff  
Elevate Oregon  
[kesha@elevateoregon.org](mailto:kesha@elevateoregon.org)



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**The Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization**  
10301 NE Glisan Street, Portland, OR 97220

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**Subject: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship & Summer Works Youth Workforce Initiatives**

April 15, 2025

Portland City Council  
1221 SW 4th Ave  
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Council President Pirtle-Guiney and Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of The Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community wellbeing. As an organization working directly with immigrant and refugee adults and youths seeking employment opportunities in the Portland Metropolitan area, we know firsthand the transformational impact that youth employment can have. SummerWorks has provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

The impact of SummerWorks programming at IRCO is evident through its impact on clients served. For example, in 2024, SummerWorks served two remarkable and inspiring participants who are living proof of how youth empowerment programming truly transforms lives. One client recently immigrated from Iran, was initially referred to SummerWorks’ Learning Opportunities but struggled to complete the courses due to English language barriers. With continued support from her Career Coaches, she was matched with a culturally specific and meaningful internship at The Moody Persian – Mahsa’s Chai, owned by a fellow Iranian immigrant whose own experience resonated deeply with the client’s journey. In facing the challenges of adjusting to life in a new country, the client not only

found employment but a mentor who empowered her to grow both personally and professionally.

IRCO SummerWorks' second client has participated in numerous internships through the program since 2020, including at Supa Fresh Youth Farm and Winterbloom Landscaping. Through consistent effort and career coaching, the client honed his skills, built confidence, and demonstrated great dedication that landed him a full-time position at Winterbloom after completing his internship. Despite not attaining a traditional high school diploma, he set ambitious goals for himself, aiming to enhance his communication, literacy, and receptiveness to feedback. Through hard work, he not only achieved his goals but carved a path to a fulfilling career.

Together, both clients' stories illustrate how targeted and culturally specific programs with caring guidance and mentorship like SummerWorks, can help young people overcome employment barriers and build strong foundations for stable jobs and income to be successful citizens. Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,



Lee Po Cha  
The Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization  
(IRCO)  
(971) 271-6403 | leec@irco.org

	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
18	Labor's Community Service Agency	Support		Yes	04/16/25 1:30 PM
19	POIC	Support		Yes	04/16/25 3:24 PM
20	Oregon & S. Idaho Laborers Employers Training Trust	Support		No	04/16/25 4:35 PM
21	Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc	Support		Yes	04/16/25 4:38 PM
22	NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center	Support	<p>Dear Members of the Portland City Council,</p> <p>On behalf of NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of "Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative" (Council document 2025-156).</p> <p>We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with local pre-apprenticeship programs, high schools, and community based organizations, we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have.</p> <p>Our local Pre-Apprenticeship Program Partners (PATP) have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.</p> <p>Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.</p> <p>We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.</p> <p>Sincerely, Bridget Quinn Workforce Development Coordinator NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center</p>	Yes	04/17/25 10:13 AM
23	Charles Manigo - POIC	Support		Yes	04/17/25 10:21 AM
24	Anonymous	Oppose	Back to basics this isn't essential the state already provides employment opportunities through the employment department. We're cutting city programs and doing layoffs or cutting positions citywide and you want to spend on this? What the hell is wrong with this council	No	04/20/25 11:56 AM
25	Dana Spears-Talbert, Impact NW	Support		No	04/21/25 3:53 PM
26	Central City Concern	Support		Yes	04/23/25 7:40 AM
27	Anonymous	Support with changes	It does not make sense in our new form of government for a program to be specifically housed in a council office. "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative will be operated by Worksystems, Inc. and staffed by Councilor Smith's office". There is an entire Bureau of Human Resources, and many Workforce Development Teams embedded within the bureaus, who have participated in SummerWorks for decades. It doesn't make sense for a program as important as this to live in a legislators portfolio, especially since there is no guarantee that person continues to be elected. If we want sustainable and long term management of this program, actual subject matter experts within the City bureaus, of which there are many, should coordinate this program. Not the councilor's office. I thought we were trying to get away from that model with this new form of government. Legislator's aren't meant to be running programs that the bureaus and service areas are supposed to be running - this is what the Charter vote told us.	No	04/23/25 7:59 AM



LABOR'S COMMUNITY  
SERVICE AGENCY INC.

OFFICE - 503.231.4962

DIRECT - 503.905.9130

DIRECTOR@LCSANORTHWEST.ORG

WWW.LCSANORTHWEST.ORG

9955 SE WASHINGTON ST, SUITE 301

PORTLAND, OREGON 97216



**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of Labor's Community Service Agency, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of "*Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative*" (Council Document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners, advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with women entering the trades and families of color with youth seeking employment opportunities, we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have.

Programs like these provide critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and long-term career pathways. They serve those too often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, foster community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive, now and into the future.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, opportunity for underserved populations, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

Shammra Lacy  
Executive Director  
Labor's Community Service Agency  
[director@lcsanorthwest.org](mailto:director@lcsanorthwest.org) | 503.905.9130

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**Main Office**  
717 N Killingsworth Court  
Portland, OR 97217  
503.797.7222  
portlandoic.org  
@POIC

**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of POIC, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with POIC, and helping underrepresented communities, we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have.

Programs like Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joe McFerrin II'.

Joe McFerrin II  
President & CEO  
POIC



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**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of Oregon and Southern Idaho Laborers Training Trust, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization already working directly with underserved communities in the Portland Metro area with pre-apprenticeship programs, we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have.

Programs like POIC, PYB, CPELL, and Constructing Hope have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

Brenda NW Aranda

Executive Assistant to the Training Director

Oregon and Southern Idaho Laborers Employers Training Trust

[apprenticeship@osilett.org](mailto:apprenticeship@osilett.org)

541-745-5513

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Main Office  
717 N Killingsworth Court  
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portlandoic.org  
@POIC

April 16, 2025

**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of POIC, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with young people of color seeking employment opportunities, women entering the trades, and residents in North Portland impacted by workforce barriers we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have.

Programs like POIC Construction Pre-Apprenticeship Program and Work Experience Coaching programs have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Julia Mitchell'.

660CDF7CC8CC47A...

Julia Mitchell  
Chief Operating Officer  
POIC  
jmithcell@portlandoic.org

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16021 NE AIRPORT WAY  
PORTLAND, OR  
97230



P:503-262-9991  
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[www.nietc.org](http://www.nietc.org)

April 17, 2025

**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of "Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative" (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with local pre-apprenticeship programs, high schools, and community based organizations, we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have.

Our local Pre-Apprenticeship Program Partners (PATP) have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bridget Quinn".

Bridget Quinn  
Workforce Development Coordinator  
NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center  
[bquinn@nietc.org](mailto:bquinn@nietc.org)  
503-333-1277

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**SUBJECT: Support for Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks Youth Workforce Initiatives**

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative” (Council document 2025-156).

We are proud to stand with our workforce development partners in advocating for these essential programs that advance equity, economic mobility, and community well-being. As an organization working directly with adults ages 17 to 65, providing education, training, and job placement services to disadvantaged and underserved members of the Portland community, we know firsthand the transformational impact that pre-apprenticeship training and youth employment can have.

Programs like Pre-Apprenticeship and SummerWorks, have provided our community members with critical access to job training, mentorship, income, and career pathways. These programs support those who are often left behind—youth disconnected from school and work, women and people of color entering the trades, and individuals overcoming systemic barriers.

Workforce development is not just about jobs. These investments interrupt cycles of poverty, increase community stability, and grow the diverse talent Portland needs to thrive.

We urge the City Council to protect and expand funding for pre-apprenticeship and youth employment programs in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to prioritize equity, youth opportunity, and community-driven workforce solutions.

Sincerely,

Charles Manigo  
Program Manager  
POIC  
(971)940-6437

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April 23, 2025

RE: Support for Council Document 2025-156

Dear Members of Portland City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony on behalf of Central City Concern (CCC) in support of “Direct Funding for the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a SummerWorks Youth Employment Initiative.”

Located in Portland, Oregon, CCC provides a comprehensive continuum of affordable housing options integrated with direct social services, including health care, recovery, and employment. In 2024, CCC helped 15,991 people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with affordable and supportive housing, integrated health services, addiction recovery, and employment assistance.

Our Employment Access Center (EAC) serves individuals working to overcome significant barriers to employment, including histories of incarceration, homelessness, and substance use. Employment is a cornerstone of long-term stability: CCC clients who engage in employment services are **up to 5.5 times more likely** to secure permanent housing and **7.2 times more likely** to complete outpatient substance use treatment without needing detox.

We strongly support the continuation and expansion of the Workforce Pre-Apprenticeship Program. This initiative connects our clients to structured, supportive pathways into careers in the trades—offering hands-on job training, industry exposure, and a bridge to family-wage employment. Providing individualized employment services to clients in this population, along with financial supports that reduce their barriers to obtaining training or employment, is key to reducing homelessness and getting Oregon businesses talented employees to support industry growth in our region.

We urge the City of Portland to continue investing in workforce solutions like pre-apprenticeships that open doors for historically underserved Portlanders. Thank you for your commitment to inclusive economic opportunity and community-led workforce strategies.

Sincerely,

Chase Bissett, Director of Employment, [EAC](#)

Portland City Council Meeting  
April 23, 2025 - 10:00 a.m.  
Testimony List

	Name	Document Number
1	David Barron	2025-156
2	Antonio Jackson	2025-156