



Wider Opportunities for Women

Provide for Inclusive Hiring in Any Jobs Creation in Infrastructure Development

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To the extent that emergency legislation creates construction jobs, a model can be found in pending climate legislation for assuring that women, minorities and other low-income individuals currently underrepresented in the building trades get a share of new jobs. Such a provision should apply whether the new jobs are in clean energy, weatherization, transportation or other public works areas.¹ Beyond a limited demonstration program, future job creating legislation should establish goals for hiring underrepresented groups as a specific percentage of all work hours performed on construction projects.

Currently, women are less than 2.8 percent of the construction workforce, but the establishment of specific hiring goals has led to their participation rising to rates as high as 28 %.² Construction jobs with high-road contractors offer long-term careers at wages 20-30% higher than those traditionally held by women.

The Green Construction Careers Demonstration Project Model

Both bills establish a demonstration project to “promote middle class careers and quality employment practices in the green construction sector among target workers and to advance efficiency and performance on construction projects.” The Secretary of Labor, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, will identify projects, including residential retrofitting projects, funded or assisted under the Act which will be required to have a minimum proportion of hours worked by members of targeted groups. The bill leaves the number of projects and the percentage of work hours to the Secretary.

Targeted Worker – Both bills define a targeted worker as an individual who resides in the same market area as the project and who is:

- Eligible under the Work Opportunities Tax Credit, excluding ex-offenders;³

¹ See the Green Construction Careers Demonstration program in [The Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act](#) (Sec. 303), introduced by Senators John Kerry and Barbara Boxer, now pending in the Senate; and [The American Clean Energy and Security Act](#) (H.R. 2454), introduced by Rep. Henry Waxman and Rep. Edward Markey, which passed the House on June 26.

² High goals as part of a comprehensive pre-apprenticeship program designed specifically for women resulted in up to 28% women employed by one contractor on the U.S. Postal Service Chicago headquarters project according to Chicago Women In the Trades.

³ Recipients of TANF, food stamps, SSI and long-term disability assistance; veterans; high-risk youth; vocational rehabilitation referrals; summer youth employees and ex-offenders. Although the climate legislation excludes ex-offenders, we believe they should be included in future job-creating measures.

- Resides in a census tract where at least 20% of the households are below the Federal poverty guidelines, or is part of a family who did not make more than 200% of the Federal poverty guidelines in the last two years; or
- A displaced homemaker (an individual who has been dependent on the income of another family member while providing unpaid care to family members in the home, is no longer supported by that income and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty getting or upgrading employment.)

Apprenticeship and other training - Each prospective contractor and subcontractor in the demonstration project must submit with its bid or proposal assurances that it participates in a qualified apprenticeship or training program, with a qualified pre-apprenticeship program, for each craft or trade that will be employed. The Secretary may approve other types of DOL-registered apprenticeship and training programs if no programs exist in the locality that qualify as employee welfare benefit programs under ERISA.

Community Benefit Agreements: - The Secretary may require contracting agencies and recipients of federal assistance to enter into labor-management agreements for projects over \$25 million, as encouraged in Executive Order 13502 signed by President Obama on Feb. 6. Such agreements are pre-hire collective bargaining agreements between employers and one or more labor organization. Such agreements help make Federal procurement more efficient, produce project stability, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations governing safety, health, equal employment opportunity, labor, and employment standards.

Evaluation - After three years, the Secretary is to evaluate the success in achieving its purpose and may accordingly identify additional projects. The Comptroller General, five years after enactment, is to advise Congressional committees of the results of the demonstration and make appropriate recommendations.

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