



The PGTI Model: Integrating supply and demand for women in the construction industry



The Policy Group on Tradeswomen's Issues (PGTI) is a regional collaboration of construction industry stakeholders, including tradeswomen, building trades unions, contractors, government representatives, community organizations and researchers. Co-convened by the UMass Boston Labor Resource Center, the Metropolitan Boston Building Trades Council, the New England Regional Council of Carpenters and the Dorchester/Roxbury Labor Committee, and the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, PGTI has met bi-monthly since 2008 to work on the persistent policy failure to open up good jobs in the construction trades to women.

Despite activism, advocacy and government policies, the percentage of tradeswomen has been stuck at 2-3% in the US for decades. Two important changes make PGT's efforts different from what went before.

- We do not oppose—in fact, we support-- double and triple counting of women as “female, minority and/or resident” for the purposes of collecting diversity data. In so far as women of color are double counted, it incentivizes their access to these jobs and that is a good thing.
- Thousands of women have been trained in the trades since the 1970's and very few of them are working now. PGTI balances efforts to supply women to the industry with an emphasis on demand for qualified tradeswomen through training the industry on HOW to recruit and retain women.

PGTI's participants have produced the following collaborative products:

- **“UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Building Equality for Women in the Construction Trades,”** a review of previous research providing definitive evidence that the exclusion of women from careers in construction is due to gender discrimination and an absence of political will and that the solutions to this complex social failure lie in complex strategies for change.
- **“Finishing the Job: A Best Practices Manual for a Diverse Workforce in the Construction Industry,”** a practical hands-on guide which includes checklists for construction owners, developers, managers, contractors, subcontractors, building trade unions, and community-based organizations.

Eight years of collaboration have brought modest advances in women's access to good paying careers in the construction trades in Massachusetts.

- The Building Trades' “Building Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship Program” has graduated over 200 low-income Boston residents. Fifty present are women, 95% are people of color and 85% have been placed in apprenticeship and are working in the industry. Building Pathways has expanded to Worcester and Springfield.
- The UMass Boston Project Labor Agreement's ISC is the *first project in the history of the Boston* to meet or exceed all the Boston Resident Jobs Policy targets of 50% residents, 25% minorities and 10% residents.
- The City of Boston's compliance data is available to the public online and searchable at www.boston.gov/departments/economic-development/employment-standards-boston.
- Demographic data on gender and race for all state-approved apprenticeship programs is online at www.mass.gov/lwd/labor-standards/das.
- Between 2008 and 2016, women's hours on covered projects in Boston more than doubled from 2% to 5%.
- Half of the tradeswomen working under monitored projects in Boston are women of color.
- Between 2012 and 2016, the number of women apprentices in Massachusetts has increased from 180 to 433. The percentage of apprentices who are women has increased from 4.2 to 6.3. (6.7% in union apprenticeship programs).
- Both of the casinos under construction and all projects being built by the UMass Building Authority are using the PGTI Best Practices for increasing women's workforce participation.

PGTI's mantra: *We are in this together. There is no silver bullet.
We will never never give up.*

March 2014 rev Sept 2016