



Metro

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Board Report

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REVISED
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MARCH 27, 2025

Motion by:

DIRECTORS HORVATH, HAHN, DUTRA, SOLIS AND YAROSLAVSKY

Meeting the Moment: A Regional Approach to Realizing LA Metro's Workforce Equity Goals Motion

Related to Item 13: Female Participation In Project Labor Agreement/Construction Careers Policy
Construction Projects

In February 2023, the Metro Board approved Motion 29 (Horvath, Mitchell, Bass, Solis, Hahn, and Dupont Walker) directing staff to commission a refresh of the Agency's 2019 Construction Workforce Disparity Study. The motion further directed staff to report back on the study's findings and recommendations; the potential application of cultural competency requirements in contractor and staff training and similar qualitative metrics that could be used in Metro's proposal evaluation and contracting processes; and the feasibility of creating bid preference incentives that can be applied to increase the number of women working on Metro funded construction projects.

In April 2024, Metro commissioned the Workforce Disparity Study, which aims to determine the availability and participation of female workers to meet the demand for future infrastructure projects, and address gaps in workforce diversity with a focus on increasing female representation. While Metro's female construction worker utilization (3.6%) exceeds the regional average (1.8%), it still falls short of the goal set by federal guidelines and adopted by LA Metro (6.9%). Women's participation varies significantly across different construction trades, with higher engagement in fields like laborers, electricians, and plumbers, but less in trades such as inspectors and operating engineers.

The study highlights numerous barriers to female participation, including challenges in recruitment, retention, and career advancement in a traditionally male-dominated industry. Women face difficulty accessing training opportunities and support networks, which affect their long-term success in the field, as well as systemic barriers, including childcare accessibility, reliable transportation, supportive work environments, and a workplace culture which continues to hinder women's retention and career advancement in construction. Additionally, over 20% of the region's female construction workers are over the age of 55, signaling an aging workforce that may face a shortage of younger female workers entering the industry.

The study goes on to outline critical strategies to increase female representation in the construction workforce, address barriers, set clear targets, and foster collaboration for long-term systemic change. These recommendations include, investing in services such as childcare and ensuring harassment and discrimination-free workplaces; establishing a regional coalition to address broader challenges facing women in construction; the enforcement of stronger hiring goals for women across all construction trades, ensuring contractors make concerted efforts to meet the 6.9% target; and utilizing procurement levers, such as bid preferences for contractors with strong diversity records, to encourage companies to hire more female workers.

Metro has done significant work toward realizing its female participation goal. Since the initial workforce disparity study, Metro has launched several initiatives, including outreach efforts to high schools that promote careers in construction and launching the Women Breaking Ground website, which serves as an essential one-stop resource for prospective female workers that has successfully supported to over 900 individuals eager to start a career in construction.

Additionally, Metro's ongoing partnership with Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles (WINTER), a non-profit organization dedicated to workforce development for women, has reinforced the Agency's commitment to these efforts by offering employment assistance to program graduates.

In response to the updated study, Metro has identified a series of next steps intended to bolster female participation outcomes. These next steps include the expansion of Cultural Competency Plan requirements and the integration of workforce commitments like female participation into RFP procurements; the establishment of a regional roundtable with key stakeholders to develop a strategic action plan to enact meaningful, lasting change in the construction industry; hosting a Women in the Trades Regional Summit; establishing a Construction Female Advisory Group intended to provide mentorship, guidance, and best practices in fostering a more inclusive and diverse workforce; and launching a targeted social media campaign (Built By Her) to help build a stronger and more diverse pipeline of talent.

However, in the wake of the rescission of Executive Order 11246 (1965) which established contractor participation goals for minority and female employment and training on federally-funded or federally-assisted construction projects, there is a need to provide the region's contractor community with clarity on Metro's workplace goals and objectives, such as providing for an inclusive workplace culture, supportive work environments, a zero-tolerance policy for workplace harassment and effective reporting mechanisms, reliable transportation, and the provision of childcare resources, among others. As such the Next Steps provided in the associated Board report (2025-0036) should be established as Board policy.

Additionally, the 2025 Construction Workforce Disparity Study offers a series of procurement levers to advance gender diversity in the construction industry, such as instituting new contractor requirements on policies, procedures, and training programs to combat harassment and discrimination in the workplace; making female hiring goals a part of Metro's procurement process for Jobs Coordinators; and revising Cultural Competency Plan requirements to include distinct community benefits and workforce equity components. Ensuring contractor accountability is key to reaching Metro's workforce objectives and the Agency should be evaluating and scoring a contractor's past performance and whether prior commitments to hiring goals were met, along with proposals to provide childcare

resources to their workforce, among other criteria.

**SUBJECT: MEETING THE MOMENT: A REGIONAL APPROACH TO REALIZING LA METRO'S
WORKFORCE EQUITY GOALS MOTION**

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Motion by Horvath, Hahn, Dutra, Solis and Yaroslavsky that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. expand the Cultural Competency Plan requirement to integrate Community Benefits and Workforce Equity components into RFP procurements, and identify mechanisms to embed workforce commitments, such as childcare accessibility, reliable transportation, supportive work environments and an inclusive workplace culture, ensuring alignment with Metro's broader workforce initiatives;
- B. establish a regional roundtable with the Program Management Office (PMO), general contractors' associations, contractors, the Los Angeles Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), LA/OCBCTC, union trades, and other key stakeholders to develop a strategic action plan. Discussion should include, but not be limited to consistent goal setting for regional public contracting agencies, the provision and/or subsidization of childcare services similar to that of "TradesFutures" childcare pilots in Milwaukee and New York City, and "Care That Works" in Boston, and apprentice/journeyman ratios on construction sites. The roundtable should provide a unique forum for stakeholders to address the systematic barriers that confront the participation of women in the trades;
- C. conduct a Women in the Trades Regional Summit to bring together public agencies, trade unions, workforce development boards, and academic institutions to foster collaboration, share best practices, and drive commitments to increase female participation in the construction workforce;
- D. establish a Construction Female Advisory Group composed of experienced women in the Trades, which will provide mentorship, guidance, and best practices to help dismantle barriers for women in construction; and
- E. launch a targeted social media campaign (Built By Her) focused on women, youth, and mentorship opportunities. The social media campaign should be complemented with outreach to potential partners in the field of women's sports and the creative arts.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Chief Executive Officer be directed to report back in June 2025 with a series of workforce equity components that could be embedded in RFP procurements, such as a contractor's previous commitments and attainment of workforce hiring goals, the maintenance of an inclusive and harassment-free workplace, and the provision or subsidization of childcare resources, that would generate more accountability for a contractor meeting proposed hiring goals.

DUPONT-WALKER AMENDMENT: Report back in May on the status of efforts to address cultural

competency requirements for the rest of the historically underutilized, including the other cultural sensitivities and the disparities that continue to exist and what factors to consider, and include best practices of those that took the scorecard seriously.