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Tradeswomen Now and Tomorrow

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN IN THE TRADES

The construction industry faces a severe shortage of skilled workers in the coming years. The average age of today's construction worker is 39. For every four workers who retire, one new apprentice enters the trade. Although women are the fastest growing sector of the labor movement today, they still comprise fewer than 3 percent of building trades members. Women are the greatest untapped resource to fill the skilled worker shortage.

The average joint apprenticeship program invests \$9,000 per year in all apprentices, however less than 50% of those apprentices complete their first year. In addition to recruiting more women as new apprentices, we need strategies for making sure they journey out and succeed in their trade.

Women face unique challenges to entering and succeeding in male dominated careers: isolation, lack of role models and mentoring, discrimination in hiring and layoffs, and menial assignments. Although women have been in the trades for more than 25 years, few women are represented in leadership positions in local unions, training programs, and internationals.

To ensure that more women know about, enter, succeed and advance in skilled trade careers, Tradeswomen Now and Tomorrow proposes:

Recruitment

- ✓ Recruit women from low wage, unorganized physical jobs (maintenance, janitorial, factories, hospitals and nursing homes)
- ✓ Design and implement promotional campaigns targeted to women
- ✓ Create women's apprenticeship preparation programs and support existing programs
- ✓ Sponsor career fairs for women
- ✓ Use women as role models for all outreach activities

Retention

- ✓ Convene meetings of tradeswomen by craft or occupation
- ✓ Establish and support women's committees at local, statewide and regional levels
- ✓ Establish and support mentoring programs for women at the local union level
- ✓ Create policies to support women's equity through contract language, bylaws and constitutions

Leadership Development

- ✓ Set goals for bringing women into leadership positions such as business agents, coordinators, instructors and organizers
- ✓ Promote diversity of slates for delegates and union officers

Tradeswomen Now and Tomorrow (TNT)

- ✓ Establish and support women's leadership networks
- ✓ Conduct leadership development training for women

Building Structures for Progress

- ✓ Assign point persons for women's issues on the local, state, regional, and national levels
- ✓ Create advisory committees for women's issues
- ✓ Assess and report on women's recruitment, retention and leadership development progress on an annual basis
- ✓ Designate and implement activities to enact a National Tradeswomen Day
- ✓ Adopt resolutions at local, state, and national levels supporting women's issues
- ✓ Support local, state and national legislation to advance tradeswomen's issues
- ✓ Disseminate best practices and successful models
- ✓ Ensure adequate financial resources for recruitment, retention, and leadership development for women

Who We Are

Tradeswomen Now and Tomorrow (TNT) is a national coalition of organizations and advocates in over 40 states dedicated to increasing the numbers of women in skilled trades and technical careers. Inaugurated in 1999, TNT gives voice to and creates visibility on national tradeswomen issues.

Most TNT member organizations are regional training/advocacy programs that work closely with their local building trades unions and councils and their signatory contractors to recruit, place and retain women in union apprenticeship programs, jobs and careers. The majority of TNT's Board of Directors are building trades union members in good standing, who either hold union staff positions or represent these regional programs. TNT promotes union programs and policies at local, regional and national levels because it recognizes that union careers offer women (and men) the best training, benefits and worker protections.