



TNT c/o CWIT  
1657 W Adams Ste 401  
Chicago, IL 60612

Tel: (312) 942-1444 x202  
Fax: (312) 942-0802

info@tradeswomennow.org  
www.tradeswomennow.org

## **Tradeswomen Now and Tomorrow (TNT)**

# **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WOMEN IN APPRENTICESHIP AND NONTRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS (WANTO) ACT**

The Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-530) is a small but vital element in the workforce development system. WANTO's purpose is to provide technical assistance to employers and labor unions to encourage employment of women in apprenticeable occupations and nontraditional occupations. This is done through competitive grants to community-based organizations, which work with organized labor and local workforce boards to build lasting partnerships and provide needed technical assistance.

WANTO's ten-year history is one of success. Over 50 local projects have been funded, promoting a wide range of effective strategies for assisting women to enter and succeed in nontraditional and apprenticeable occupations. An independent study found that women were up to 47% more likely to be in a higher-paying technical job in areas where WANTO projects were implemented, compared to areas where there were no WANTO projects.

These important gains have been made in spite of very limited funding. Funding for WANTO has held steady at roughly \$1 million per year since its enactment, but the need is growing more urgent. The skilled trades are facing a growing labor shortage, with many current trades workers retiring, and fewer new workers entering the field. The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that jobs in construction will grow 13.3% – or more than 989,000 jobs – by 2010. At the same time, in many trades 45 – 70% of workers 45 and older are expected to leave their occupation by 2008. These realities make it clear that ensuring women's entry and successful participation in the trades is vital to industry. The pace and scope of WANTO's technical assistance projects must be expanded to meet this great need.

### **Continue WANTO technical assistance grants as a distinct grant program.**

This has proven to be a highly effective approach and should be continued. Subsuming this important technical assistance function under general duties in any agency would lead to its diminution or elimination.

### **Expand funding to ensure more comprehensive delivery of technical assistance throughout the country.**

Additional funds should be made available so that more communities can benefit from the positive effects of WANTO projects, including assistance in addressing the skilled trades labor shortage. This would also make it possible for grantees to have adequate resources to carry out projects of a more significant scope.