

# Why Hire a woman?



Women—the construction  
workforce of the future



## Good workers are in short supply

- For every four people who leave the trades, through retirement or otherwise, the apprenticeship programs supply only one new person to enter the trades.
- The average age of today's construction worker is 39 years old.
- The Department of Labor estimates that the construction industry will need to hire about 240,000 new workers each year for the next five years. But only about 150,000 new workers will come into the trades, creating a continuing shortage of skilled workers.
- If you're a prime or subcontractor working on a federally-funded project, 6.9% of your workforce in each craft must be female.
- The worker shortage in the construction industry creates opportunities for women to enter the field.
- As more women enter the trades, recruitment of women will increasingly easier. However, successful recruitment of involves different outreach strategies than are currently being utilized.
- Many women already do physical jobs that require lifting, coordination, and a serious work ethic such as hospital work, restaurant work and child care. Women working in these low-paid jobs could be ideal recruits for high wage, high skilled construction careers.
- Women are the largest untapped resource for the construction industry. While women can benefit from entering construction careers, the industry also benefits by expanding its recruitment pool to include the other 50% of the population.

## Successful strategies for recruiting women

*You may have enough good workers today, but what about three, five, ten years from now?*

- **Pre-apprenticeship grads are great recruits:** Many programs exist (sometimes known as “pre-apprenticeship programs”) that introduce potential construction workers to the tools and to the different trades. Often these programs offer “soft” skills training, information about health and safety, and explain how apprenticeship works. Graduates of these programs are proven to be more successful apprentices—better prepared for the rigors of the trade. Consider recruiting female graduates of these programs as your newest apprentices.
- **Use current tradeswomen as role models:** Most people enter the trades because they have a relative or neighbor who tells them about the opportunity. But most of these role models are men; young women don't see other women in these positions to serve become as an example for themselves. If you attend career fairs, bring women female employees who work with the tools to give demonstrations of their craft and talk about the work. If you have a website or produce printed materials, be sure to include images of tradeswomen. Contact BC3 for Women CAN Build Virginia recruitment posters and brochures.
- **Basic skills and test preparation:** Find a community partner to help those you recruit successfully meet your testing and physical requirements—this may be a pre-apprenticeship program, community college, or vocational program. Contact NAWIC for more ideas.