



Los Angeles/Orange Counties

Building and Construction Trades Council

1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026

Affiliated with the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO

UNIONS AND METRO LAUNCH WOMEN'S RECRUITMENT Longtime Partners Seek to Increase Workforce Diversity

For immediate release

Contact: Anne-Marie Otey, 310-497-1554

amotey@laocbuildingtrades.org

LOS ANGELES, March 26, 2024—A website promoting women entering the Building Trades unions has gotten off to a strong start, with hundreds of applicants responding.

The website, www.womenbreakground.com, is a collaboration between the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council and the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. It went live on International Women's Day, March 6.

The Council's non-profit division, the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund, handles the new contacts. ARF oversees two dozen apprenticeship-readiness programs in LA and Orange Counties. The programs help those with little or no construction experience to find out more which Trade they may prefer. The programs run several weeks, with no tuition cost, and also include aid to overcome barriers to employment, such the need for child care, or lack of a driver's license or high school diploma.

To date, the ARF has placed almost 1,500 program graduates into union apprenticeships. About 20 percent are women—far above the national average of 3-5 percent women in the Trades.

“A win for us is a woman finding out about this site, contacting us, and then having a good conversation about whether a Trades career is for her,” said Ben Garcia, ARF Interim Executive Director. “We can connect her to a readiness program, or directly to an apprenticeship.”

The new website aims to be accessible and easy to use. Applicants simply fill out a short contact form. They will then hear from ARF staff within two business days, with personalized advice on how to choose a career in the union Building Trades, which include 14 Trades: Boilermakers; Brick/Tile Layers; Cement Masons/Plasterers; Electricians; Elevator Constructors; Operating

Engineers; Heat/Frost Insulators; Iron Workers; Laborers; Finish Trades; Pipe Trades; Roofers/Waterproofers; Sheet Metal Workers; and Teamsters.

The website is the latest example of collaboration between the Building Trades unions and Metro. Since 2012, Metro has had a Project Labor Agreement with the Building Trades that guarantees union labor standards on its construction projects. And the Building Trades stepped up in the political campaigns to pass Measure R in 2008 and Measure M in 2016, which fund more than half of Metro's ambitious construction, such as the K line light rail and the D line subway extension.

"The Building Trades welcome women to join our unions and enjoy the same benefits, pay and protection that all members receive," said Council Executive Secretary Ernesto Medrano. "A union contract doesn't discriminate—it treats workers equally."

Stephanie Wiggins, CEO of Metro, praised Metro and Council staff for their joint effort. "Women Build Metro Los Angeles was designed to increase the number of women in the transportation and construction industries and create better opportunities for women to improve their job prospects and their quality of life," Wiggins said.

For more information, please go to: www.womenbreakground.com.

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