



**Oregon Tradeswomen Inc.  
 “Pathways” Trades and Apprenticeship Career Class  
 Portland, Oregon**

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the success of women in the construction trades. It educates girls and women about careers in the construction-related trades, provides pre-apprenticeship training to women interested in entering the construction trades, and offers support and leadership opportunities to women in those trades. Its Trades and Apprenticeship Career Class (TAC) offers the “Pathways” pre-apprenticeship program. The “pathways” curriculum is designed to help women prepare for a career in the trades. Along with job readiness, remedial math and hands-on construction trades training, the curriculum includes courses in environmental remediation and green construction techniques. Oregon Tradeswomen was formed in 2004 and has recently added the green components, aided by a grant from US EPA. The program is free to participants.

This case study is current as of April 2009. For more information, visit <http://www.tradeswomen.net>, or contact Dawn Jones, [dawn@tradeswomen.net](mailto:dawn@tradeswomen.net).

<p><b>Training methodology</b></p>	<p>Oregon Tradeswomen’s “Pathways” is a 7-week Trades and Apprenticeship Career (TAC) class that includes such topics as math and measuring skills, construction culture, and creating a trades resume – training to prepare one for jobs in the trades. Program includes visits to apprenticeship programs and instruction in how to use power tools and basic job site safety. Classes are 30 hours of hands-on training, plus two weeks of environmental remediation and construction safety classes that lead to certifications in these areas. Afterward, students have opportunities for pre-apprenticeships, working alongside professional builders and crafts people to learn specific trades. Classes include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Life Skills/Career Planning Curriculum</li> <li>2. Construction culture &amp; structure</li> <li>3. Communication skills</li> <li>4. Preparing for your workday: food, sleep, time, transportation, family needs</li> <li>5. Building allies/dealing with discrimination</li> <li>6. Introduction to apprenticeship</li> <li>7. Math for construction and measurement, and</li> </ol>
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**This case study is meant to give a snapshot of the program profiled here. For the most up to date information on this program, please visit their website**

	<p>Basic Hands-on Construction Curriculum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction to hand tools and safety in using hand tools</li> <li>2. Introduction to power tools and safety in using power tools</li> <li>3. Safe handling and lifting of materials</li> <li>4. Tool and material practice</li> <li>5. Practice using wheelbarrows and hand trucks for safe material handling</li> <li>6. Safe and effective use of ladder</li> </ol>
<b>Participants and how recruited</b>	<p>All of the participants are women and most of them are low-income women. About 85 percent of participants have incomes that are less than half the state's median income. About 25 percent of participants are women of color and 44 percent of participants are mothers. About 10 percent of participants have incarceration records. Our "To Go" program reaches out to girls in local middle schools and high schools to encourage them to learn about jobs in the construction trades.</p> <p>Recruitment efforts include extensive advertising, posters &amp; brochures distributed to over 300 locations about 5 times annually, communication about the program to other community-based organizations, electronic bulletin boards, word of mouth from graduates and Oregon Tradeswomen's "Women in Trades" Career Fair.</p>
<b>Green program from the outset?</b>	<p>We are actively adding green to our construction program by training instructors. We have a small grant from the EPA to do a one-day green curriculum that will be ready by June.</p>
<b>Length and frequency of training</b>	<p>Each new session is six weeks long and involves 110 hours of training. Each year we conduct five training sessions with 15 to 24 students in each. Graduated 92 women from the program in 2008.</p>
<b>Include on-the-job training or paid apprenticeships?</b>	<p>Oregon Tradeswomen tries to place graduates in apprenticeship programs. The program itself involves 35 hours of hands-on training on simulated job sites. This is unpaid work done for non-profits like Habitat for Humanity or those serving low-income seniors.</p>
<b>Funding</b>	<p>Funding comes, in a fairly even split, from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Job Training grant</li> <li>- City of Portland Bureau of Housing and Community Development grant</li> <li>- Industry sponsors (employers and apprenticeship programs mostly, some government)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small amount of WIA funding \$30,000 last year</li> <li>- Total budget of \$470,000 to recruit, train, place, retain 92 women</li> <li>- City of Portland's Bureau of Housing and Community Development</li> <li>- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.</li> </ul>
<b>Key relationships</b>	<p><u>Employers:</u> We have a number of employer representatives on our advisory board, Women in Trades Career Fair planning committee. Some employers host field trips for our students to their job sites.</p> <p><u>Community Colleges:</u> We have some good connections/relationships with some staff, in general, we are too small for college policy or planning folks to bother with. One community college department has been our fiscal sponsor for many years for a state Dept of Ed grant that requires this.</p> <p><u>Labor Unions:</u> Excellent for the most part, many union apprenticeship programs are sponsors, members, host field trips.</p> <p><u>Workforce Investment Board:</u> mixed, funding from them is unpredictable and difficult to apply for. Most WIA funding goes to the community colleges.</p>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<p>To enter the program, a woman must be 18 years or older and have a high school diploma or GED. Also must have a stable living condition, six months of being clean and sober, able to pass a drug test, able to get a driver's license, be in good physical condition so as to be ready for physical labor in a construction or utility setting, English language proficiency and basic math skills. Pathways program offers lots of math brush-up and math tutoring. Participants must pass a math competency test that includes measuring, fractions, area and perimeter problems.</p>
<b>Credentials</b>	<p>Graduates receive certification from the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council that a participant has passed a pre-apprenticeship program. Participants also receive a 40-hour HAZWOPER or hazardous materials handler certificate.</p>
<b>Placement and follow-up services</b>	<p>The Pathways program helps women with job readiness and job seeking skills tailored for the construction trades. Specifically, it offers classes in interviewing, creating a trades resume, developing a fitness plan, developing a transportation plan and developing a childcare plan. Also helps participants become familiar with the</p>

	<p>industry by arranging for industry speakers and field trips to apprenticeship program and job sites. Oregon Tradeswomen spends about \$7,000 annually on support services in job search, job readiness and follow-up.</p> <p>Tracking includes: current address &amp; phone, graduation, placement, job retention, wage gains, career ladder gains (for example: starting as electrical material handler and moving up to electrical apprentice).</p>
<p><b>Reflections</b></p>	<p>Three of Oregon Tradeswomen's staff are from the trades which has helped us teach our students what it takes to be successful in terms of hand-on skills and what is expected (attitude needed, construction culture, dealing with harassment and discrimination). These staff also help build excellent relationships with employers, apprenticeship programs and unions.</p> <p>Oregon Tradeswomen works to build a community of tradeswomen who can mentor and support each other and build tradeswomen's leadership skills. They send staff to volunteer coordination training and community organizing training, and are in the process of adding community organizing training to our pre-apprenticeship training. If we truly want women to have access to these jobs, we need to have a strong advocacy program in addition to training.</p>