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The unionized construction trades offer Chicagoans a proven pathway to economic security, providing workers with marketable skills, competitive wages, and full benefits. The Chicago Construction Workforce Equity Coalition seeks to leverage City of Chicago policies to better create these high-road employment opportunities for all Chicagoans, including women and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).

Currently there are systemic barriers that have historically excluded women and people of color – particularly Black individuals – from this workforce. The result?

- **A rapidly aging workforce:** According to ESMI data, 57% of skilled-trade workers in the Chicago region are nearing retirement.
- **An acute talent shortage:** IDES predicts nearly 20,000 annual employment openings in the Illinois construction trades through 2028.
- **A woeful lack of diversity:** Nationally, 3.6% of apprentices are women and 6% of Chicago construction workers are African Americans; and 2/3 of minority and women apprentices drop out of union apprentice programs prior to completion.

And our communities are hurting, in part, because of these exclusionary practices. Women and people of color, under-represented in the construction trades, are overrepresented among the ranks of the city's poor. The poverty rate for Black women in Chicago is nearly three times that of white men and more than 40% of Chicago's young Black men are out of school and unemployed.

Unionized construction has the potential to contribute a significant number of good paying, high-quality jobs for these marginalized groups. The city, state, and federal governments have committed to investing in our infrastructure, potentially putting hundreds and thousands of Chicagoans back to work after a harrowing year.

It is time for us to work together to ensure equitable access to these opportunities and for each stakeholder—the City of Chicago, contractors, unions, and assist agencies—to take responsibility for the role it continues to play in perpetuating inequities in our city.

Our coalition has identified four core recommendations for eliminating barriers and paving the path to a more equitable and thriving construction industry. **We call on the leadership of the Chicago City Council and the Mayor to pursue the following policies within the City's Project Labor Agreement and Municipal Code:**

- **Improve access to union apprenticeships for women and people of color.**
 - Provide funding for barrier removal and pre-apprenticeship training targeted at women and people of color.
 - Create accessible points of entry into apprenticeship programs including contractor sponsorship and direct entry from pre-apprenticeship training programs, and set aside spots in registered apprenticeship programs for underrepresented populations.
 - Establish apprenticeship utilization goals for all projects and create an equity plan for each project.
 - Publicize projections of needed workforce for projects as well as anticipated apprenticeship openings.

- **Improve access to, and retention in, employment in the construction trades for women and people of color.**
 - Set specific, graduating numeric participation goals for women, people of color, and women of color.
 - Address existing policy barriers to job retention and increase access to placement and retention services.
 - Ensure that adequate and diverse skill building is provided.
 - Create Equity Advocate positions at the City and within local unions to receive training, be point of contact for workers and job seekers, and provide oversight of the project's equity plan.
 - Advertise all job openings on a City website.

- **Ensure equity and safety on the job site.**
 - Require anti-harassment training at the work site and apprentice training center.
 - Expand the on-site monitoring process to review workforce training opportunities, work assignments, distribution of available overtime, and access to properly fitted PPE and sanitary facilities, and provide an opportunity for workers to complete a survey about their experiences.
 - Create and enforce strong policies that include harassment prevention, confidentiality and anti-retaliation.
 - Provide information and contact numbers to direct worker complaints or referrals for counseling.

- **Enforce the PLA, ordinances and provide transparency to the community.**
 - Collect and analyze hiring and payroll data regularly, and create a public website where project performance on equity goals will be shared.
 - Establish an oversight committee composed of representatives from relevant City Departments, labor unions, contractors and community assist agencies to promote compliance.
 - A "Good Faith Effort" claim will only be accepted if all parties of the oversight committee confirm that goals were not able to be reached.
 - Enact frequent site monitoring and enforcement of penalties for non-compliance, including liquidated damages and enforcing remediation plans.

- o Share and review information on registered apprenticeship programs' EEO plan, as well as demographics of union membership.

Together, we can create a system that increases opportunities for all Chicagoans to contribute to and benefit from the building of our city.

For more information, please contact Beth Berendsen at Chicago Women in Trades (bberendsen@cwit.org) or Manny Rodriguez at Revolution Workshop (mrodriguez@revolutionworkshop.org).

Signed,

Alderman Daniel La Spata, 1st Ward
Aldерwoman Pat Dowell, 3rd Ward
Aldерwoman Sophia King, 4th Ward
Aldерwoman Leslie Hairston, 5th Ward
Alderman Roderick Sawyer, 6th Ward
Alderman Gregory Mitchell, 7th Ward
Aldерwoman Michelle Harris, 8th Ward
Aldерwoman Susan Sadlowski Garza, 10th Ward
Alderman Patrick Thompson, 11th Ward
Alderman Marty Quinn, 13th Ward
Alderman Edward Burke, 14th Ward
Alderman Raymond Lopez, 15th Ward
Aldерwoman Stephanie Coleman, 16th Ward
Alderman Derrick Curtis, 18th Ward
Alderman Matt O'Shea, 19th Ward
Aldерwoman Jeanette Taylor, 20th Ward
Alderman Michael Rodriguez, 22nd Ward
Aldерwoman Silvana Tabares, 23rd Ward
Alderman Michael Scott, Jr., 24th Ward
Alderman Byron Sigcho-Lopez, 25th Ward
Alderman Roberto Maldonado, 26th Ward
Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr., 27th Ward
Alderman Jason Ervin, 28th Ward
Alderman Chris Taliaferro, 29th Ward
Alderman Ariel Reboyras, 30th Ward
Alderman Felix Cardona, Jr., 31st Ward
Alderman Scott Waguespack, 32nd Ward
Aldерwoman Rossana Rodriguez, 33rd Ward
Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, 35th Ward
Aldерwoman Emma Mitts, 37th Ward
Alderman Nicholas Sposato, 38th Ward
Aldерwoman Samantha Nugent, 39th Ward
Alderman Andre Vasquez, Jr., 40th Ward
Alderman Brendan Reilly, 42nd Ward

Alderman Michele Smith, 43rd Ward
Alderman Tom Tunney, 44th Ward
Alderman James Gardiner, 45th Ward
Alderman James Cappleman, 46th Ward
Alderman Matt Martin, 47th Ward
Alderman Harry Osterman, 48th Ward
Alderman Maria Hadden, 49th Ward
Alderman Debra Silverstein, 50th Ward

Blackroots Alliance
Bulley & Andrews
Chicago Jobs Council
Chicago Metro Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
Chicago United for Equity
Chicago Urban League
Chicago Women in Trades
Inner-City Muslim Action Network
Painters Local 184
Power Construction Company, LLC
Revolution Workshop
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation (SOUL)
St. Paul Community Development Ministries, Inc.
The People's Lobby
Women of 130
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago