



Understanding Barriers to Reaching & Recruiting Women to Trades Apprenticeships

In order to successfully reach out to women and help them become trades apprentices, it's important to first get a grasp on the barriers that prevent women from entering apprenticeship. Work that specifically addresses these barriers will result in more effective outreach and increased numbers of women entering trades apprenticeships.

Barrier 1: Women are (typically) less prepared for entry level trades jobs than men, so they are seen as less competitive applicants for apprenticeship.

- Girls are less likely to benefit from fathers' trades knowledge than boys;
- Girls and women are less likely to receive CTE training such as shop class in high school and community college; and
- Women's prior work experiences tend to be less physical than jobs typically held by men.

Barrier 2: Society's stereotypes about construction trades careers prevent women (and some men) from seeking out employment in the trades.

- The persistent myth that working in the trades requires extreme physical strength (rather than physical fitness), combined with the expectation that women are weaker than men discourages women from applying to apprenticeship; and
- The equally problematic perception of work in the trades as being low quality, undesirable work with low pay prevents women from being interested in the industry.

Barrier 3: Women aren't told about trades job and apprenticeship opportunities.

- Official sources such as career counselors, school guidance counselors, and one-stop shops don't steer women towards job opportunities in the trades; and
- Unofficial sources – referrals by and career guidance from fathers/brothers/in-laws (the "F.B.I. network") are directed to male friends and family members, meaning these job opportunities are hidden from women.

Barrier 4: Trades jobs aren't marketed to women, so they don't know that these careers are for them.

- Job advertisements depicting trades workers rarely feature women, so women assume that the jobs are not meant for them; and
- Women are not directly invited to apply for jobs by trades employers.



Barrier 5: Apprenticeship program requirements are not transparent and can be confusing for an inexperienced person navigating their way through the apprenticeship application process.

- Information on apprenticeship opportunities and openings is limited and not advertised in the same places as many other job opportunities, and application cycles don't normally resemble that of traditional work;
- A clear description of the skills and experience required to successfully apply is not always available, and sometimes there are "hidden" requirements; and
- The process is confusing for a person unaccustomed to

Barrier 6: Female communication styles tend to be less valued by interviewers who evaluate apprenticeship applicants.

- Women have a tendency to be more modest about their accomplishments and experience than their male counterparts, which can give interviewers the impression that female candidates are less qualified.