



Orientation Basics

Orientation is an important way for women to learn about apprenticeship and other job opportunities in industries unfamiliar to them. It's a method for informing women of the expectations and requirements of the job, as well as a way get them acquainted with training program coordinators who can provide more information to women who are serious about applying.

Some apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs require attendance at an orientation as a first step in applying to a training program, but it can be used to share information about apprenticeship in general and does not necessarily need to be a required activity for interested applicants. At Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. (OTI), orientation is the first step in being admitted to the pre-apprenticeship training program.

OTI holds three orientation sessions a month. Orientation sessions are two hours long and are held at social service agencies which provide services for low-income women and for women of color. When participants enter the room where we are holding orientation, we have videos playing that depict tradeswomen at their job sites and include interviews with them about why they love the trade they work in and what is empowering about working in the trades. These videos play until we start orientation. We lock the door promptly at the time orientation is scheduled for with a sign that says the session is closed and if a potential attendee is late they will have to come to a different orientation.

We begin orientation with an hour-long PowerPoint presentation about OTI's mission as an organization and our various programs. We also discuss the trades in general, what it is like to work in them. We include messages from tradeswomen about what they love about working in the trades and also what they find challenging about trades work. We describe the kind of work ethic and the physical demands that trades work requires. We briefly explain apprenticeship and then discuss our pre-apprenticeship training program. After the presentation we take a short break, which permits people to leave if they are not interested in continuing. Those interested in our program stay and fill out an application and sign up for an intake interview with one of our career counselors.

Below is a sample checklist of outreach activities and orientation materials that may be useful for planning orientation sessions:

- Program posters and flyers are mailed twice a year to social service agencies, churches, and community-based organizations providing services to women in poverty and to



women of color. These also include information about how to sign up for an orientation session.

- Orientation sessions are advertised on our website three weeks prior to them occurring. Participants register for sessions through the website so staff has a good idea of how many materials to bring.
- Two days before orientation, calls are made to registrants to remind them of the session, provide any special instructions for accessing the building, and to remind them that the doors lock promptly at the state time orientation starts and no late admittance will be granted.
- Prepare a playlist on YouTube of tradeswomen videos. Seeing women doing the work and talking about how it has impacted their lives allows women attending orientation to picture themselves doing the work. (See the “Tradeswomen Video Gallery” on womeninapprenticeship.org for examples and videos you can use.)
- Your presentation materials, including PowerPoints and other documents, should be packed with pictures of tradeswomen. You can’t be it if you can’t see it, and this is the first time many attendees have ever seen pictures of tradeswomen in action.
- Bring materials that will allow you to follow up with orientation attendees. Examples are applications or sign up sheets that request contact information.
- Clearly outline for your attendees what the next step is for getting into your training program or applying to your company, and give them a point of contact so they know who to call or email with questions or concerns.