



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

INVESTING IN AMERICA:

Best Practices to Expand Access
to Jobs and Economic Opportunity
Through Transportation Infrastructure
Investments





Investing in America:

Best Practices to Expand Access to Jobs and Economic Opportunity Through Transportation Infrastructure Investments

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is the largest investment in infrastructure in recent history and is expected to create millions of jobs across the transportation industry including jobs in construction. Already, a little over two years into implementation, [the economy has added 670,000 construction jobs](#) with the sub-sectors that are heavily impacted by BIL funding like heavy and civil engineering showing the fastest growth. To ensure these investments expand economic opportunity to underserved communities, BIL directed the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop a report to Congress that details the barriers for underrepresented populations to access construction jobs and to create recommendations for states and local jurisdictions on how to expand access to jobs in the construction workforce.

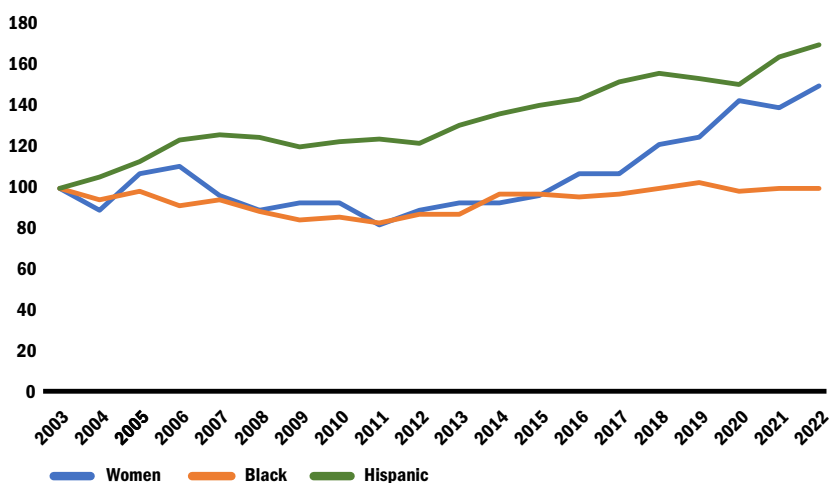
As construction ramps up on the first round of major projects funded by BIL, now is the time for state and local transportation agencies to implement policies and programs that will expand access to construction jobs on their projects. There has already been some improvement in gender and ethnic diversity in construction. Intentional efforts can accelerate these trends and begin to increase racial diversity.

This report includes detailed recommendations on how state and local transportation agencies can expand access to jobs and opportunity for several underrepresented groups including women, young people, justice-involved, and people of color. This

report also explains how DOT has been successful in getting more transportation agencies to include workforce plans for their projects and to make use of tools such as local and economic hiring preferences.

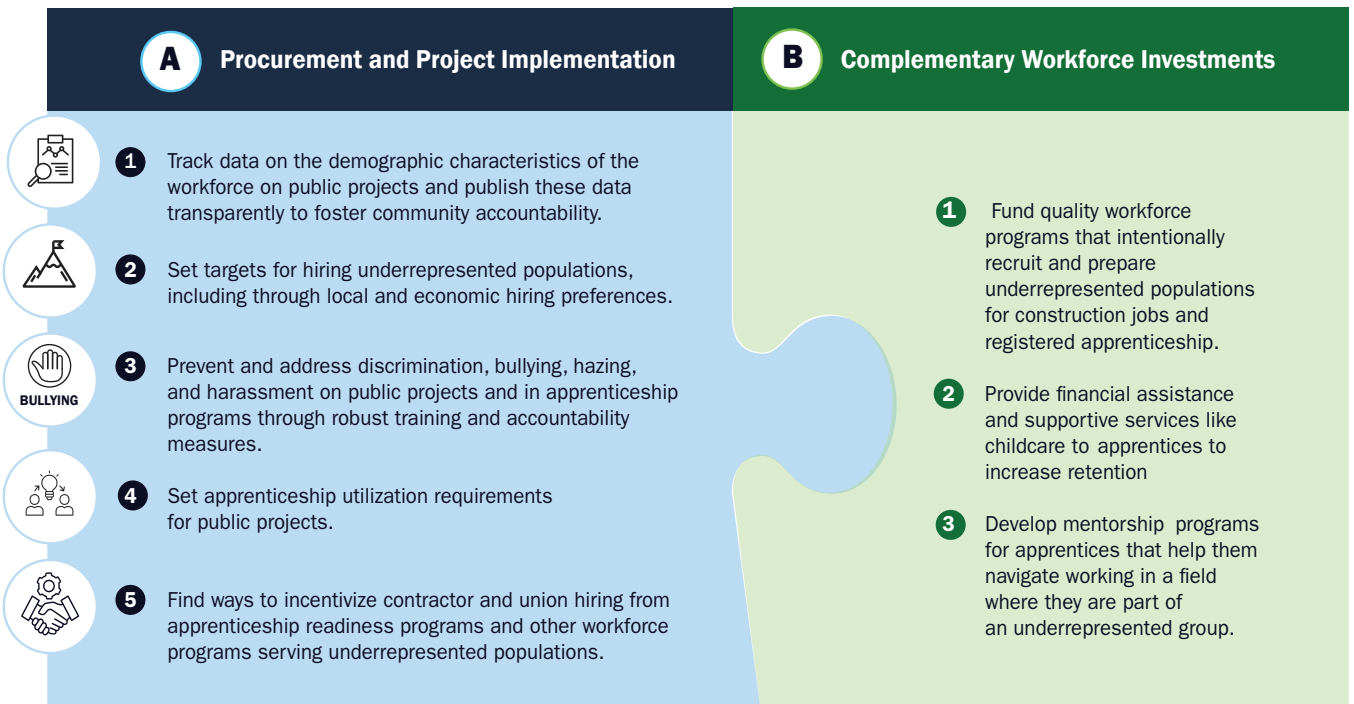
With the release of these recommendations, DOT plans to provide technical assistance and guidance to state and local leaders to further the adoption of these policies and programs that will expand economic opportunity.

Growth Over Time of Share of Workers In Construction and Extraction Occupations that are Hispanic, Black, and Female, 2003 to 2023 Comparison to 2003 Levels



Recommendations for State and Local Transportation Agencies to Enhance Construction Workforce Diversity

Based on interviews with cities and states that have seen increases in the diversity of the construction workforce on their projects, DOT recommends that state and local transportation agencies including, highway agencies, ports, transit agencies, and other DOT-funded entities, take the following actions to expand economic opportunity as they implement construction projects. The figure below separates recommendations into those that must be implemented through the procurement and project implementation by transportation agencies and those that can be implemented separately as complementary workforce policies. The report provides examples of how these policies are working in the following jurisdictions: Kansas City, Illinois, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Oregon, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Syracuse, and Vermont.



Characteristics of Quality Workforce Programs that Get Underrepresented Individuals into Construction Jobs or Apprenticeships

Based on interviews with non-profits with success in getting underrepresented populations into construction careers, DOT has identified eight characteristics of quality workforce programs and additional characteristics that are necessary to adequately serve particular sub-populations including: opportunity youth, individuals with justice system involvement, women, and workers with disabilities. Profiles of quality workforce programs are included from the following cities. Baltimore, MD; Birmingham, AL; Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Houston, TX; Milwaukee, WI; Minneapolis, MN; San Diego, CA; and Seattle, WA.



For All Underrepresented Populations:

1. Strong partnerships between industry (unions and employers) and community-based organizations
2. Individualized case management
3. Sufficient funding for supportive services, especially help accessing a personal vehicle and driver's license for work travel
4. Stipends for time in training
5. Mentorship
6. Exposure to variety of construction careers
7. High quality training developed with industry partners that includes hands-on experience, offered through the program or separately
8. Tracking results by demographics



Individuals with justice system involvement:

- Mental health support
- Engaging family and social network to prevent recidivism
- Industry partnerships that address stigma and bias against population



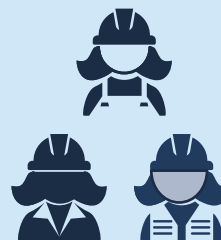
For Opportunity Youth:

- Job readiness skills
- Support attaining high school equivalencies or other academic credentials



For Workers with Disabilities

- Advocacy to employers about the skills of workers with disabilities
- Use of adaptive technology in training
- Support for employers on providing accommodations



For Women

- Supportive services that include affordable, high-quality, accessible, reliable childcare