

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.

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Oregon Tradeswomen first received EPA funding in 2004, then again in 2007, 2009, and 2012. What makes their program unique? How does it work? Are there special issues to consider when placing women in environmental jobs?

Overview of Oregon Tradeswomen's environmental workforce program

Objective

- Enrolled 94 students
- Graduated 76 students
- Placed 64 graduates (over 84%)

Key partners

- Portland Brownfields Program including river and harbor cleanup, Superfund cleanup, and bridge repair and upgrade
- Groundwork Portland
- Portland Development Commission
- Verde and Worksystems, Inc.
- Numerous additional contractors and private sector employers
- Organized labor construction trades
- Numerous partners and customized placement with contractor network

Curriculum

- Oregon Tradeswomen is unique in that it provides primary general training in construction trades.

Pathways to Success

- A 7-week, women-only, pre-apprenticeship class to help women prepare for a high-skill, high-wage career in the trades
- Three days per week—(Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. is also beginning an evening program)
- Intensive attention is provided to students (4 to 1 instructor student ratio)
- Basic training for the first 7 weeks
- Day 1—Classroom—Safe skills
- Day 2—Industry awareness—Working with tools

- Day 3—Fieldwork—Trips to local sites of interest, cleanup, employers, and construction sites
 - A key objective of the basic program is to establish student interest and motivation in a specific trade.
- Additional life skills training includes strength training and presentation skills.
- The goal of the basic tool use course is to provide those proceeding to environmental training extensive tool and safety skills.
 - Basic life skills, strength training, and safety training is provided prior to the start of the environmental core curriculum.

At this point, students will have:

- OSHA 10-hour safety
- Numerous OSHA construction trade safety certifications

Select students are then invited to apply for additional environmental training. Environmental training provides supplemental environmental credentials in addition to traditional basic construction skills and credentials.

The core environmental training program includes EPA mandatory training, 40-hour HAZWOPER.

Additional environmental curriculum is dynamic depending on employer needs, and may include:

- RRP
- Solid waste management and material recycling
- Innovative and alternative treatment technologies
- Environmental health and chemical safety
- 16-hr asbestos operations and maintenance worker
- Training related to cleanup activities at the Portland Harbor Superfund site
- Certified erosion control
- Certifications
 - Multiple state and federal certifications including asbestos and RRP

Placement and tracking

- Graduates are tracked for two years.
- 84% placement rate
- 42% enter apprenticeship programs
- One-on-one placement program with graduates and employers
- Extensive emphasis is placed on preparation for employment and placement.

Oregon Tradeswomen takes full responsibility in matching graduates with employers, relying less on outside organizations.

Student recruitment

- When recruiting a diverse participant population including women, insure that marketing materials, including instructional staff, are shown to be diverse. All male graduate class pictures and all male staff do not attract serious female participants.
- Oregon Tradeswomen is targeting unemployed and under-employed women.
- Women veterans are a special target group with additional coordination with partner organizations.
- Unique student recruitment process
 - Similar to a “tryout” recruitment strategy
 - Students first complete a basic construction skills and safety program.
 - Students demonstrating interest and aptitude are invited to apply for environmental supplemental training.

Student screening and support

- Graduates of the 7-week basic training program must apply for the supplemental environmental training program.
- HS Diploma or GED
- Driver’s license with clean driving record
- Drug and alcohol free (testing during program)
- Fitness test
- Basic English
- Serious about a construction career

Additional programs and services provided by Oregon Tradeswomen

- [Building Girls](#)—educates middle and high school girls about careers in the building, construction, mechanical, and utility trades
- [Tradeswomen Organized for Outreach, Leadership and Support \(TOOLS\)](#)—builds the leadership skills of tradeswomen to advocate for equal representation for women in the trades
- [Tradeswomen Social Hour](#)—last Tuesday of each month from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the Lucky Labrador Tap Room
- [2013 Building Girls Summer Camps](#)—week-long camps for middle and high school girls in Grants Pass and in Portland
- [Pathways to Success Information Sessions](#)—first and third Thursday of each month from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in Portland and Vancouver