

# Economic and Workforce Development Working Group



**Chair:** Stacie Gilmore

**Members:** Deborah “Debbie” Ortega, Albus Brooks, Mary Beth Susman, Robin Kniech

**Legislative Staff:** Debra Bartleson

**Reports to:** “BIZ” Committee

This working group will focus on successful strategies for spreading economic recovery to all neighborhoods in Denver through workforce development, hiring goals, and job training programs specifically geared toward middle-skilled jobs and low-income individuals aged 18-65.

## 8-21-17 Summary

Councilwoman Gilmore hosted a construction roundtable discussion with the following industry partners: Saunders Construction, Colorado Building Trades, Colorado Homebuilding Academy, Denver Area Labor Federation, Clay Dean Electric, Pipefitters Local 208, AGC, LiUna, PCL, Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters, Community College of Denver, MBR Electric.

The construction participants were asked to come prepared to answer the following questions. This summary will highlight each question’s responses and identify recommendations posed by the participants.

**Question 1:** How are organizations recruiting employees and/or apprentices?

**Question 2:** What gaps and/or barriers exist and how are you addressing outreach/recruitment, training gaps, and retention?

**Question 3:** What ways can we partner among stakeholders and with the city?

**Highlights: Question 1** - How are organizations recruiting employees and/or apprentices?

- 1) Establishing partnerships with Denver Public Schools, Denver Works, Servicios, Denver’s Sports Teams (Broncos, Rockies), Emily Griffith and other related apprenticeship providers, and colleges.
- 2) Attendance at community fairs/events, networking.

- 3) Utilizing social media platforms such as radio stations and Pandora (non-traditional methods).
- 4) Collaborating with community-based organizations such as community corrections and veteran's organizations.

### **Recommendations: Question 1**

- 1) Form an alliance to launch a comprehensive training program to assist with providing skills training and education to prepare for apprenticeship programs.
- 2) Conduct more targeted recruitments.
- 3) Provide "tool starter sets" to students after completing programs.

### **Highlights: Question 2 - What gaps and/or barriers exist and how are you addressing outreach/recruitment, training gaps, and retention?**

- 1) Barriers include individuals not having a high school diploma or GED, no or limited transportation, no driver's license (lack vehicle to obtain hours of driving required).
- 2) Lack of affordable housing in Denver in addition to transportation problems lessens the employment pool.
- 3) Drug testing. Companies follow federal requirements and is a liability/insurance issue. Legislation regarding insurance is loosening, but a liability to company related to injury. Individuals don't show up for the drug testing after having completed a training program.
- 4) Lack of a valid study to determine what is required for number of jobs in Denver for projects currently and in the future. This type of study would be cost prohibitive.
- 5) Lack of equipment/tools needed by individuals seeking employment.
- 6) Lack of providing comprehensive services such as child care and other social services.

### **Recommendations: Question 2**

- 1) The State requires a ratio of 3:1 (apprentice to journeyman) and Denver/prevaling wage ordinance requires a 1:1 ratio. Consider changing Denver's ratio to mirror the State to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities.
- 2) Provide funding for tools, services, transportation and housing vouchers, and vehicles.
- 3) It was suggested to provide shuttles and to work with homeless shelters to provide employment. Participants indicated that shuttle scheduling would be a nightmare because of varying schedules and that homeless individuals' issues are greater than the already identified barriers.
- 4) The Workforce Board has created a new incentive program that will pay individuals to get training. More advertising for programs is needed.
- 5) Approach the Workforce Centers to determine if they can conduct assessments.

### **Highlights & Recommendations to Question 3 - What ways can we partner among stakeholders and with the city?**

- 1) Work collaboratively to provide matching funds into the Colorado Work Act as it is a successful program.
- 2) Generate recruitment funds – ask the city to consider charging a \$50 fee on construction permits to go into a training and equipment fund.
- 3) The construction industry is focused on two primary goals – creating a website to help job seekers through training and employment and improving the image of this industry. Send other organizations to be a part of this process.
- 4) Address driver's license and transportation issues.
- 5) Recognize that these issues are regional and not just Denver's problem; as competition among companies also impacts employment pools.
- 6) The State list verses the eligible provider list does not work well; must find a way to integrate both.
- 7) Provide for and invest in supportive services.
- 8) Invite construction partners to all types of meetings to come speak about the need and to recruit people.

Councilmember Gilmore reiterated that any suggestions are welcome and the door is open for how the city and this industry can partner together to prepare individuals for employment on development projects in the future.

**Next Meeting is October 16, 2017 - Please note, due to budget hearings, the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting is canceled.**