Summary of observations and findings of current construction labor pool

Employed and unemployed construction workers

Overall, women make up just four percent of the total employed construction workforce in the Portland region. In addition, just one in five Portland metro construction workers are minorities. This can vary greatly by trade, both in numbers and in share. For example, there are over 7,700 employed Carpenters, as compared to only 56 Elevator Installers and Repairers. Of those Carpenters, 3% are female and 22% are minority; for the elevator occupations there are 0% female and 0% minorities. However, for trades employing the most individuals the level of diversity is fairly consistent. For females in the top five trades the percentage holds at anywhere from 2-10%. For minorities, the percentage is in the range of 9-26%.

When broken down by race, these percentages have more variation and are more difficult to generalize. The majority of racial/ethnic diversity is found in the Hispanic/Latino category, which is 14% industry wide and ranges from 6-18% in the top five trade categories. The remaining racial/ethnic categories primarily hover at 1-2%, including African Americans, American Indian, Asian, and those listed as two or more races.

There are similar demographic percentages found in construction jobseekers registered with the Oregon Employment Department. Of the roughly 2,008 registered jobseekers who listed a construction-related occupation as their primary experience as of June 2017, 6. % are female and about 15% are racial minorities. Twelve percent identify as Hispanic.

Registered apprentices

The demographic makeup of currently registered apprentices in Oregon over the last three years has not changed much, but the overall number has increased. In 2014, there were 5,129 registered active apprentices in Oregon. Of those 7.8% were female, 28% were women and minorities, and 22% were minorities. In 2015, there were 5,527 registered active apprentices and the makeup was the same. In 2016, the number of registered apprentices increased to 6,555 and the demographic share had a slight shift. 28.6% were women and minorities, 8.04% were female, and 24% were minorities. For all years the share of registered apprentices is about 70% in union programs and 30% in nonunion programs. Given that, both the share and the count of total apprentices is greater for union programs across all categories of race and gender. For example, females in union apprenticeship programs were 6.73% of total apprentices in Oregon and 1.31% were females in nonunion programs in 2016. There were 84 African American males in nonunion apprenticeship programs in 2016, accounting for 1.28%, while there were 195 African American males in union apprenticeship programs, accounting for 2.97%.

The growth in construction workforce demand is reflected in the growing enrollment of registered apprentices in Oregon. The number of registered apprentices enrolled per year in Oregon has significantly increased since 2009, when it was 599. In 2013 the number grew to 1,735 and in 2016 it was 2,348. Of annual enrollments, the share of women and people of color remained fairly steady between 2009-2014 at about 20-25% but increased to 33-35% for 2015 and 2016. For females, it has hovered at around 8%. For minorities, the share has fluctuated a bit more and has increased since 2011, when it was 20%. In 2016 the share for minorities was 27%. Trends in new enrollments are important to

note if the industry is interested in increasing racial and gender diversity in the trades: enrollment must be more diverse than the current apprentice pool to have the total makeup shift over time.

Journey level construction workers

Since 2008, 2,438 people have earned their journey card through the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), the State agency that grants this certification. Of those journey workers, 21% are women and minorities. Breaking this down a bit further, 5% are female, 1% are women of color, and about 16% are males of color. When disaggregated by race and ethnicity, 10% of journey workers are Hispanic, 3% are African American, and Asians and Native Americans make up roughly 2% each.

Percent apprentice to journey rates

For apprentices who entered into their programs in 2009, the completion rate five years later was 37% overall. This was the same in 2010, but has increased for those who entered in 2011 to 46% having completed within five years. This rate is slightly higher for males: 39%, 38%, and 47% respectively. For females, the overall completion rate is substantially lower: 18%, 28% and 38% for those same years.

For people of color, there is a similar trend, but can vary by race and gender. For example, the completion rate for Hispanic females was 60% for those who entered in 2011, but was 16% for African American males for the same year. It was 6% for African American males in 2009. Asian females have a completion rate of 0% for all three cohort years.

Union and nonunion completion rates are fairly similar but can have different implications when looking at the number of completers. For example, of those who graduated that started in 2011, 154 people completed a nonunion apprenticeship and 450 completed in a union program. Of those in the nonunion programs, 13% of the completers were women and people of color. For the union programs, 23% of the completers were women and people of color.

It would be important to further analyze the number of apprentices behind these rates to fully understand how these percentages equate into actual graduates. For example, a 50% success rate of 50 apprentices versus a 50% success rate of 2 can have very different policy implications and should be considered when looking at these figures.

Other notes

These data are from multiple data sources that all track people for different reasons and in different systems, such as the registered apprenticeship programs that the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) manages, the Oregon Employment Department, and regional economic data pulled from payroll records, among other sources. Given that, it is possible that a journeyworker that earned their journey card from BOLI is also registered with the Oregon Employment Department or may be currently employed and captured on payroll data. These are robust data sources that can inform important insights and a snapshot on the regional construction workforce supply, but do need to be interpreted with this potential and likely level of overlap in mind.