

Strategies for Addressing Equity in Infrastructure and Public Works

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PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by **Lifting Up What Works**®.

Preface

This PolicyLink series, *Building an Inclusive Economy*, brings together national best practice scans of specific sectors and strategies that work to create economic opportunity for disadvantaged populations. The four briefs in this series were originally created for the City of New Orleans to help the Mayor's Office, local anchor institutions, and community organizations develop strategies to address the 52 percent unemployment rate among African American men in that city. These briefs have subsequently been adapted for a national audience—including the federal Sustainable Communities grantees—that are working to advance equitable outcomes in their municipalities and their regions.

The briefs—*Strategies for Addressing Equity in Infrastructure and Public Works*, *Strategies for Strengthening Anchor Institutions' Community Impact*, *Strategies for Health-Care*

Workforce Development, and Strategies for Wraparound Services for African American Men Seeking Employment—demonstrate successful policies and practices for incorporating disadvantaged workers and firms into employment and procurement opportunities in various sectors and for ensuring an integrated approach to their workforce success.

Introduction

Public works and infrastructure projects are considered major economic drivers in most communities. Beyond job creation, the potential for equitable economic development resulting from public works and infrastructure expansion also involves the opportunity for wealth creation through policies and programs for inclusion of businesses that are owned by minorities and women—businesses that are historically excluded from contract opportunities. Infrastructure and capital development projects can create unprecedented economic opportunity—a chance to lessen inequities in income, earnings, assets, and wealth that have defined cities' sociodemographic profiles for decades. By implementing best practices to address equity in these projects, cities can bridge the opportunity gap and connect unemployed, underemployed, disadvantaged, disaffected, and hard-to-employ citizens to family-supporting job opportunities through the billions of dollars that are spent on infrastructure projects around the nation.

Capitalizing on the potential for equitable economic development will, however, take more than the demands of the market for labor and contractors. Achieving the goal of economic equity cannot be the product of the *laissez-faire*; instead it requires strategic efforts that are targeted to cities' economically underserved populations, focused on outcomes, guided by best practices, and driven by leadership and tone-setting.

Key Findings and Strategies

The literature on infrastructure, opportunity, and equity provides a number of strategies and programs with the potential for connecting hard-to-employ job seekers, men of color, and low-income residents to temporary and permanent job opportunities. Much of the research focuses on infrastructure projects implemented with targeted first-source hiring and contracting programs implemented through community workforce agreements (CWAs), community benefit

agreements (CBAs), and/or project labor agreements (PLAs) as an overarching policy and programmatic guidance for promoting equitable economic opportunity. Considerable research has been conducted on the overall effectiveness of these policies and programs for inclusion, and this research draws on specific projects that represent the potential to provide pathways to opportunities for the targeted population of men and boys of color in disadvantaged communities. Key strategies and case studies illustrating best practices are described in this brief.

Strategies to Create Pathways to Employment and Careers

- **Use a workforce intermediary** to ensure effective, consistent connections between job seekers and employers. Use of an intermediary or comprehensive job center provides an effective user-friendly system for both job seekers and employers and it serves to better ensure compliance with first-source and targeted local hiring goals. Public and private intermediaries that can be considered include building and construction trade unions, local workforce boards, and nonprofit organizations.
- **Coordinate with labor unions on development pathway** to address labor shortages, changing industry, entry-level jobs through targeted training programs, and green jobs pipelines. Unions can be critical in creating a reliable infrastructure employment pipeline.
- **Use community-based outreach** as an effective practice for connecting hard-to-employ citizens to opportunities, particularly disaffected residents who have dropped out of the labor market. Nonprofit partnerships and community coalitions and collaborations are strategies for bridging the gap between local residents and infrastructure development job opportunities.
- **Remove barriers for ex-offenders** through identification of projects that could be exempted from criminal background checks. Notably, while some projects require criminal background checks to meet federal safety requirements, identification of new construction projects on sites with controlled access provides an opportunity to afford access to citizens transitioning from incarceration.
- **Create pathways for new entrants to the labor market** through programs such as contract provisions that require targeted hiring of new apprentices to fill labor force needs.
- **Provide for full employment** to ensure that local skilled journeymen are included in first-source hiring provisions. As such, contractors can be prohibited from hiring skilled

journeymen from outside the impact area until all local journeymen are employed.

- **Create experiential learning and on-the-job training** through use of apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and workforce incubation programs. While apprenticeship programs generally involve state licensed programs through the building and construction trade unions, pre-apprenticeship includes union, nonprofit, and public sector partnerships to connect hard-to-employ populations to infrastructure projects.
- **Monitor outcomes**, including use of public/private oversight committees and task force structures with responsibility for monitoring outcomes and reporting to the community. Monitoring of local hiring should include reporting by all contractors of certified payroll documents to enable monitoring both of hiring and of retention of local residents.
- **Incorporate first-source hiring and living wage provisions into post-construction operations and maintenance** to institutionalize equitable hiring into public agencies. The components of community workforce agreements and living wage requirements can be incorporated into airport operations and maintenance contracts and lease agreements, as well as in sewer and water construction, maintenance, and operations.

Strategies for Equitable Access to Contracts and Procurement

- **A Small Business Boot-Camp** can build the capacity of small, minority- and women-owned businesses and provide an effective practice for meeting contracting goals.
- **Business Advisory Committees** are a promising practice for getting input and feedback from businesses on policies and practices guiding the contracting and hiring processes. Like the monitoring oversight committees used for local hiring, these advisory committees are also responsible for monitoring and reporting contracting outcomes.
- **Connect minority- and women-owned businesses and unions.** Although achieving this goal has long been a challenge because union agreements allow hiring halls to determine who will staff the project, a minority-business bring-along program allows minority-owned businesses to maintain some of their workforce and to use union labor without becoming signatory to the agreement.
- **A Business Coordination Center** is a one-stop-shop for small, minority- and women-owned businesses. The center provides access to information on contract opportunities, as well as technical assistance, and assistance with bonding and insurance requirements for infrastructure projects.

- **Disparity studies** that allow local government entities to utilize race-based goals is a re-emerging practice, given the Supreme Court's requirement for narrow tailoring and strict scrutiny for federally funded projects, which have contract requirements for inclusion.
- **Mentor/protégé programs** build the capacity of disadvantaged businesses to participate on infrastructure programs and are a recommended best practice by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Case Studies

Los Angeles Unified School District,¹ Los Angeles, California

At the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the benefits of the agency's Project Stabilization Agreement accrue to both local residents and targeted low-income citizens and people of color. Described by the Partnership for Working Families as "new pathways into construction careers for targeted workers," LAUSD's Community Workforce Agreement connected at-risk workers, people of color, and women to family-supporting construction career opportunities.

The Project Stabilization Agreement was negotiated in 2003 for the \$20 billion capital program, which included new construction, rehabilitation, and modernization of district schools in Los Angeles County. The agreement required 50 percent local hiring (the maximum allowed by California State Law) with 30 percent of job opportunities reserved for apprentices. Moreover, of the apprenticeship opportunities, 40 percent were reserved for first-year apprentices, creating a pathway into construction employment for new entrants in the labor market. The agreement was applicable to all LAUSD projects of \$175,000 or more.

With regard to placement of ex-offenders, the Project Stabilization Agreement waived Department of Justice provisions on all new construction projects as the workers on these sites would have no access to school-age youth. As such, many of the construction job opportunities were accessible to ex-offenders and citizens transitioning from incarceration. Moreover, hiring preferences were handled by zip code and the Building and Construction Trades Council, acting as hiring intermediary, suspended hiring hall practices to prioritize placement based on proximity.

In addition to local hire and apprenticeship provisions of the Project Stabilization Agreement, LAUSD implemented a pre-apprenticeship program called We Build to better ensure

access to construction trade apprenticeships by local residents. We Build is a joint effort between LAUSD and the building trade unions and involves a collaboration of community-based organizations for recruitment and intake of local residents. It has been noted that none of the We Build trainees were labeled as disadvantaged or at risk even though the program targeted low-income citizens and people of color. The project evaluation conducted by UCLA Institute on Labor and Employment, titled “Project Labor Agreements in Los Angeles: The Example of the Los Angeles Unified School District,” documents a methodology for tracking and monitoring local hire outcomes through the regular reporting of the general contractor’s certified payroll records. The practice of tracking both percentage of workers and percentage of hours worked by local residents was an effective mechanism for demonstrating worker retention.

Relative to disadvantaged businesses, the LAUSD Project Stabilization Agreement included strategies to connect historically underutilized businesses to contract opportunities, providing a six-week small business enterprise boot-camp to prepare disadvantaged businesses to participate on the project. The training program includes capacity building relative to bonding, financial management, and compliance, including compliance with the provisions of the agreement.

The Project Stabilization Agreement also included creation of the Small Business Advisory Committee, which affords an opportunity for small businesses to provide input and feedback on policies and practices. The Advisory Committee comprises representatives of small business trade or affiliate associations, and, while not a policymaking body, the committee informs policies and practices of the LAUSD.

Population Served: The program targets low-income people of color and female workers living in the construction impact areas. First priority was given to residents living in the same zip code as the construction project.

Key Organizational Partners: The Los Angeles Unified School District was the lead agency in partnership with the Building and Construction Trades Council and the local Workforce Investment Board.

Outcomes: Of the 73,700+ jobs created through the LAUSD project, over 27,800 or 38 percent went to residents hired from within school district geographic boundaries. Relative to Los Angeles County, 67 percent of the project’s workforce were local with average earning of \$29.58 per hour or approximately

\$60,000 per year. As well, over 23,200 workers or 31 percent of the project’s labor force were apprentices in skilled trades, with 31 percent of apprenticeship opportunities afforded to first-year apprentices. Apprenticeship opportunities cover the spectrum of construction skills, with the top five building trades used on the project laborers, carpenters, electrical workers, painters, and iron workers. The project was still in implementation with current local employment attainment of 52 percent as of July 1, 2014.

LAUSD’s pre-apprenticeship program, We Build, ensured better access to construction trades apprenticeships by local residents. Of the 905 We Build graduates, 54 percent were Hispanic, 31 percent African American, and 13 percent were ex-offenders.

Key Strategies:

- Use a workforce intermediary.
- Waive DOJ requirements that prohibit ex-offender participation on new construction projects.
- Prioritize hiring by proximity to the project and suspend hiring hall practices around tenure.
- Use pre-apprenticeship program as a pathway to construction careers.
- Monitor outcomes based on percentage of workforce and percentage of hours worked.
- Establish a small business boot-camp for small, minority- and women-owned businesses.
- Create a small business advisory committee to provide a forum for input and feedback into policies and practices of the program.

More Information: Visit the website at

Washington Nationals Stadium,² Washington, District of Columbia

In 2007 the District of Columbia, the DC Building and Construction Trades Council, and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenters entered into a project labor agreement (PLA) with the developers of the Washington Nationals Stadium. The PLA included a community workforce hiring agreement requiring 50 percent of all apprenticeship opportunities be afforded to local residents; 51 percent of all new hire opportunities be afforded to local residents; 25 percent of all trades designated for apprentices; 100 percent of all new apprentice opportunities be afforded to local residents;

and 50 percent of all journeyman jobs designated for local residents. The project also included a Helmets-to-Hardhats provision for access to construction trades by military veterans.

The DC Department of Employment Services (DC DOES) served as the workforce intermediary for connecting local residents to opportunities working with only 48 hours to fill a vacant position. While all of the local hiring goals were not met, the project was heralded by local residents and community advocates as “a model for future public works.”

Among the best practices identified in the project was the creation of a task force for monitoring and enforcement of the agreement. Such use of an oversight committee is an emerging strategy for ensuring equity on public works projects, with clearly defined roles for members, and composition drawing from relevant stakeholder organizations. The Nationals Stadium Task Force, which was chaired by a local community leader, met monthly to review the project’s outcomes. The composition and make-up of oversight committees is subject to negotiation with the parties to the community workforce, community benefits, or project labor agreements. Best practice research suggests that interested and relevant stakeholders should be engaged in the process before the agreement is finalized.

Population Served: The program targeted unemployed, unskilled, local residents; local, skilled journeymen; and military veterans.

Key Organizational Partners: Key partners included the City of Washington DC, the DC Building and Construction Trades Council, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenters, the DC Department of Employment Services, and the stadium’s private development team.

Outcomes: Cornell University’s School of Industrial Research reports that 51 percent of new hires were DC residents and that 70 percent of apprentice hours were worked by local residents (exceeding the 50 percent goal). For journeyman hiring, the project attained only 26 percent local residents, total skill trades performed by apprentices were 19 percent, and local hiring of new apprentices was 85 percent. Overall wages on the project ranged from \$15 to \$28 per hour and the project is reported to have generated over \$12 million in wages for local families in DC.

Key Strategies:

- Use a workforce intermediary.

- Require new apprenticeship opportunities for local residents.
- Require first-source opportunities for journeymen to better ensure 100 percent employment by local skilled craftsmen.
- Monitor outcomes through a task force.

More Information: Visit the websites at [\[link\]](#).

Community Workforce Provision,³ New York City, New York

The Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York has project labor agreements that include \$6 billion in public works projects involving the City of New York, the New York School Authority, and the New York City Housing Authority with apprenticeship opportunities targeting 30,000 new construction jobs. The provisions of the agreement reserve 10 percent of apprenticeship opportunities for graduates of public high schools who complete a construction skills program, 10 percent for veterans, 10 percent for graduates of a pre-apprenticeship program, 10 percent for residents of public housing who have graduated from either the construction skills or pre-apprenticeship program, and 5 percent for qualified employees of certified minority- and women-owned businesses.

Like the DC Nationals Stadium Project, the New York PLA has an oversight committee—the New York City Committee of Construction Work Force and Contracting Opportunity—which is responsible for evaluating outcomes and goal attainment, and for publication of an annual report. The committee includes city government, housing authority, and school district representatives; representatives of the building and construction trades unions; construction employer representatives, who must include minority- or women-owned business representatives; and a representative appointed by the speaker of the city council.

Relative to disadvantaged businesses, it is noted that minority- and women-owned businesses are generally not signatory to union agreements, and as such special provisions are required for these companies to fully participate in the PLAs. Accordingly, the New York City PLAs have special provisions for minority- and women-owned businesses that are not historically signatory to union agreements called the bring-along provision. Under the bring-along provision, certified minority- and women-owned firms receive specific “bring-along” which allows them to bring some of their non-union workforce to the project (in lieu of union-provided labor). For minority- and women-owned businesses that become signatory to the unions they have access to union training and standards for proficiency for all of their employees.

The success of the program is attributed to the combined efforts of the building and construction trades unions and the pre-apprenticeship program, which is considered a key component of effective implementation and successful outcomes for community workforce agreements. As well, the

flexibility of targeting hiring goals based on the realities of the local labor market is also noted as a success factor for the program, and the research notes that there are no one-size-fits-all PLAs or CWAs.

Population Served: The program targets residents of public housing, graduates of New York City’s public high schools, veterans, unskilled job seekers, and employees of minority- and women-owned businesses.

Key Organizational Partners: Key organizational partners include the City of New York, the New York Housing Authority, the New York City Public School District, and the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York.

Outcomes: Results from the first year of the agreement indicate that the program exceeded most of the goals, including targets for high school graduates, pre-apprenticeship program trainees, and employees of minority- and women-owned businesses.

Key Strategies:

- Use an intermediary to ensure that first-source hiring requirements are seamless and consistent.
- Create a pathway to construction trades for unskilled and hard-to-employ citizens through pre-apprenticeship programs.
- Use an oversight committee for monitoring outcomes and reporting to the community.
- Base flexible hiring targets on the reality of the labor market.
- Set hiring goals for employees of minority- and women-owned businesses to provide an added incentive for disadvantaged business utilization.
- Connect minority- and women-owned businesses, who are typically non-union shops and not signatories to union agreements, through bring-along programs.

More Information: Visit the website at

Los Angeles International Airport,⁴ Los Angeles, California

The \$11 billion Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) expansion project was initiated in 2004 with an agreement with Los Angeles World Airports, the City of Los Angeles, and a coalition of community groups involved in the development of a community benefits agreement (CBA) for the project.

The CBA calls for job training, first-source hiring, and disadvantaged business and minority- and women-owned business participation. A living-wage provision is also included in the agreement in accordance with local policy. The CBA specified paid work experience programs to connect unskilled local residents to job opportunities in addition to the job training component. Low-income residents were prioritized in first-source hiring requirements. Disadvantaged business enterprise requirements included a bonding assistance and capacity-building program for businesses owned by minorities and women.

Relative to disadvantaged and minority- and women-owned businesses, the airport has established a coordination center that houses program staff, consultants, and a Surety Bond Liaison to help small and disadvantaged businesses participate on capital and infrastructure projects. The center serves as a clearinghouse for information on business, employment, and educational opportunities. The CBA requires coordination of the airport authority and the City of Los Angeles, which has responsibility for the agency's small, minority and disadvantaged business utilization programs.

For minority- and women-owned business inclusion, Los Angeles International uses the policies and guidance of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program for federally funded projects. For locally funded projects, the airport has race-based contracting requirements that are supported by a disparity study and, as such, are legally defensible.

One of the substantive practices emerging from the CBA is the requirement that the airport authority incorporate the provisions of the agreement into all airport contracts and lease agreement. As such, the CBA for Los Angeles International has equitable economic development and outcomes institutionalized into ongoing airport operations.

Population Served: First-source hiring targeted low-income residents of Los Angeles County. First priority was given to low-

income residents living in the project's impact area for at least one year and special needs residents. Second priority was given to low-income residents of Los Angeles County.

Key Organizational Partners: Key partners in the project include the Southbay Workforce Investment Board, the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department, the Los Angeles World Airport Corporation, and the LAX Coalition. The LAX Coalition is an unincorporated association comprised exclusively of organizations that are signatories to the agreement. The organizations include AGENDA, AME Master's Alliance, Clergy and Laity Unity for Economic Justice, Coalition for Clean Air, Communities for a Better Environment, Community Coalition, Community Coalition for Change, Environmental Defense, Inglewood Coalition for Drug and Violence Prevention, Inglewood Democratic Club, Lennox Coordinating Council, Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Nation of Islam, Natural Resources Defense Council, Physicians for Social Responsibility Los Angeles, Service Employees International Union Local 347, and Teamsters Local 911.

Outcomes: Hiring goals for the agreement through June of 2012 were established and progress reports indicate that as of December 2012 the agency had achieved 996 confirmed job placements. Notably, the hiring requirements of the CBA include both construction and permanent job opportunities at the airport.

Key Strategies:

- Create a comprehensive coalition of community stakeholders.
- Use a workforce intermediary.
- Include living-wage provisions.
- Institutionalize the program into operations through contracts and lease agreements.
- Create a business coordination center.
- Provide small-business bonding assistance.
- Prepare a legally defensible disparity study to support race-based procurement on non-federally funded projects.

More Information: Visit the website at

Baltimore Center for Green Careers,⁵ Baltimore County, Maryland

The Baltimore Center for Green Careers, a Civic Works venture, launched its first iteration in 2003 with its original B'More Green Training program. The center provides unemployed and underemployed individuals pathways toward finding employment within the growing green and environmental industries. The two programs offered by the center include the Brownfields Remediation Training Program and the Energy Retrofit Training Program.

The programs are free of charge and confer industry-recognized certification and direct connections with employers in the specific field of training through closed job fairs, as well as counseling until successful job placement. Participating employers are offered six months of financial incentive support with each job placement. The energy retrofit program places students directly into its sister initiative EnergyReady, a social enterprise.

The Green Careers Center brings together Open Society Foundation funding and other public sources, including a recent \$300,000 Environmental Protection Agency grant.

Graduates of the program receive federally and state recognized environmental and health safety certifications such as OSHA Hazardous Waste Site Worker (HAZWOPER), Asbestos Abatement Supervisor, Lead Abatement Worker, and Confined Space Operations. The average starting salary ranges from \$12 to \$16 an hour.

Population Served: Hard-to-employ populations are served including ex-offenders and veterans with barriers to job placement.

Outcomes: Since 2001, according to their website, B'more Green has trained 165 participants, representing a variety of ages and backgrounds, and placed 89 percent in full-time employment. Since 2005, 43 percent of participants have been veterans with significant barriers to employment and 70 percent of participants have been formerly incarcerated or have had a substantial history of arrest and conviction.

Key Strategy:

- Recruit unemployed and underemployed residents for free training with direct job placement and workforce incubation.

More Information: Visit the website at

CityBuild Academy,⁶ San Francisco, California

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) passed an environmental justice policy that then led to the creation of their Community Benefits Program. The Community Benefits Program invests in educational programs, policy initiatives, economic development, and neighborhood revitalization, with a major investment focused on adult and youth workforce development.

CityBuild Academy is an 18-week pre-apprenticeship and construction skills training program, which includes a construction-skills training academy, employment placement assistance, and a participant tracking system to support the trainees through their first year of employment. Disadvantaged residents are recruited through partnerships with community-based organizations.

Programmatic elements include building employment liaisons with construction contractors, assessing future workforce needs, and targeting of trainees to job placements upon completion of the academy. Through City College of San Francisco (CCSF), students can earn any number of certificates tuition-free that are relevant to the construction trades and different aspects of the emerging green construction field.

Eligible trainees are offered a small cost-of-living stipend during their training. Upon completion the regional liaisons help to place graduates into trade unions' apprenticeship programs or into jobs. Employment placement services are also accessible through San Francisco's First Source Hiring Program.

The Academy is offered two to three times a year and enrollment varies from 30 to up to 50 students per class. Bi-annually, a semester-long Construction Administration Training Program (CATP) is offered as well, where students are prepared for entry-level careers in construction office administration.

Population Served: Disadvantaged residents are targeted for participation in the program.

Key Organizational Partners: The host organization is the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD). The City's General Fund and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding are used to support the program in addition to foundation and other private support such as the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) through their Community Benefits Program. CCSF and the Carpenters Training Committee of Northern California work together to

innovate, design, develop, and implement curricula that meet evolving industry needs and emerging green building knowledge. CityBuild partners with community-based organizations, such as Access Point, to recruit job seekers, conduct initial intake and assessments, and offer supportive services to participants throughout their training, such as childcare and transportation assistance.

Outcomes: Since 2006, over 600 residents have successfully completed the pre-apprenticeship training and over 500 graduates have entered union apprenticeship programs in various construction trades.

Key Strategies:

- Establish a pre-apprenticeship program to assist underemployed and unemployed individuals.
- Include green building as an emerging field of opportunity.
- Conduct community-based outreach to obtain buy-in and participation.
- Provide job placement support to program participants.
- Work with construction trades and workforce development organizations.

More Information: Visit the website at

; information

specific to CityBuild Academy can be found at

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's (LADWP) Utility Pre-Craft Training Program,⁷ Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles County has set out, through a comprehensive plan, to align various training programs with the utility and labor unions to address both their impending labor shortage and a rapidly changing industry due to issues related to water shortages and increased occurrence of natural disasters. They have particularly focused on entry-level jobs to create a pathway for disadvantaged workers to enter the field.

The Utility Pre-Craft Training program (UPCT) provides pre-apprenticeship training for entry-level workers who may be interested in careers with the utility, but who don't necessarily have previous experience. UPCT provides the opportunity for trainees to learn a wide variety of skills and to explore various career options within the utility. The curriculum was developed by the LADWP in conjunction with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 18. Following an extensive intake, assessment, and orientation process, candidates enter a four-week, 40-hour, basic skills and weatherization training program. Upon completion of the in-classroom training, trainees work full time for 18 months in a special pre-civil service classification job, earning trainee wages in an "earn-as-you-learn" approach. Every other week, trainees attend civil service exam preparation classes and learn about career pathways within the utility. The goal is to help each candidate to qualify for as many civil service examinations as possible, increasing their chances for permanent jobs with the utility after their participation in the UPCT program.

The trainees work on the weatherization of homes of low-income residents recruited through RePower LA's community outreach program. As of 2013, 5,500 homes were weatherized, including many multi-family units. Over the next four years, the LADWP plans to expand this work into direct installation of energy efficiency measures for some 40,000 small businesses and to Los Angeles Unified School District schools, currently the LADWP's largest customer.

The WorkSource Center supports candidates throughout their training, offering different services such as bus tokens or gas money to avert barriers that could lead to participants dropping out of the program. The WorkSource Center also provides placement assistance for candidates who do not make it through the UPCT initial screening. Of the first 50 applicants who were referred to the Center, 35 made it through this initial screening process and entered the program.

Initially funded by an \$8.5 million federal weatherization grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, LADWP, the largest municipal utility in the country, will continue to fund this training program through its general training and energy efficiency budgets.

Population Served: The project serves marginalized and underserved communities throughout LA County.

Key Organizational Partners: The training initiative implementation is driven by collaboration between LADWP and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 18. In addition, the Mayor's office works in conjunction with the utility and the union to develop and leverage other partnerships such as the South East Los Angeles County WorkSource Center. The RePower LA Coalition, an environmental advocacy group, also helps with coordination and outreach, by recruiting candidates from marginalized and underserved communities throughout LA County. Among initial recruits, 65 percent of trainees came from communities with rates of unemployment at least 50 percent above the average in Los Angeles County.

Outcomes: Advocates estimate that if the program continues to be funded and expanded over the next five years, it could create about 750 UPCT positions as well as a number of new permanent jobs for journeymen and supervisors.

Key Strategy:

- Integrate coordination with labor, addressing labor shortage, changing industry, entry-level jobs through targeted training programs, and green jobs pipeline.

More Information: Visit related websites at [www.ladwp.com](#) and [www.repowerla.org](#).

Camden SMART Initiative,⁸ Camden, New Jersey

The Camden SMART Initiative is focused on creating a comprehensive network to develop green infrastructure programs and projects for the City of Camden. SMART stands for Storm-water Management and Resource Training. While currently the focus has been on educational and service-oriented programs and projects, the long-term goals are to create green industry jobs and also reduce Camden's carbon footprint. This comprehensive initiative sets out to include neighborhood green infrastructure projects, storm-water management policy development, and green infrastructure training programs.

According to the website, the initiative is focused on issues of preventing neighborhood flooding; reducing combined sewer overflows; creating sustainable green jobs; improving air, water, and climate quality; developing environmental policy; increasing property values; providing economic development opportunities; adding recreational amenities and open space; and beautifying neighborhoods. Currently the Camden SMART team serves as an organizing entity to facilitate implementation.

The SMART Initiative brings together a diverse collaboration between the City of Camden, Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority, Cooper's Ferry Partnership, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, New Jersey Tree Foundation, and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. Within the first two years the initiative produced over 20 demonstration projects, including more than 20 rain gardens. There are several rain garden programs within area high schools and a curriculum is being created to educate youth on storm-water management and the emerging field of green infrastructure development. In addition, service projects have mobilized community residents to plant trees in areas that have experienced high levels of environmental degradation from the decay of industrial development.

Key Strategies:

- Create a comprehensive approach to green infrastructure programs and projects.
- Develop pathways into green building careers and entrepreneurship.

More Information: Visit the SMART website at [www.camden-smart.org](#); Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority, [www.ccmua.com](#); Cooper's Ferry Partnership, [www.coopersferry.com](#); and NJ Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Brownfield Reuse, [www.nj.gov/dep/office-of-brownfield-reuse](#).

Cincinnati Water Works Initiative,⁹ Project Groundwork, Cincinnati, Ohio

Over the past 16 years, with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Cincinnati and Hamilton County have focused on various initiatives and partnerships to create more opportunities for local training and job placement in the manufacturing and construction industries. There are a few targeted programs, such as the Get Skills to Work Initiative, which focuses on training veterans in manufacturing skills and then placing them in jobs through the Get Skills to Work Advisory Council, which consists of local manufacturing companies. In conjunction, the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board (SWORWIB) works to connect various workforce-training programs through the SuperJob center to broaden outreach and create mechanisms to place unemployed and underemployed applicants into living wage jobs or training programs that lead to living wage jobs.

Over the past year, the City of Cincinnati's water, sewer, and storm water departments teamed up to jump-start a city initiative to create more job opportunities for low-income residents with Project Groundwork, the Metropolitan Sewer District's \$3.2 billion sewer rebuilding venture. The Project Groundwork initiative is focused on building green infrastructure and developing a local economy that creates jobs and business revenues for local contractors and tradesmen working on sewer improvement projects. Many of the projects focus on issues of sewage overflow and water quality improvement. The SuperJob Center will be a vital partner in this endeavor.

Population Served: Local and low-income residents are the target population.

Key Organizational Partners: The City of Cincinnati, Project Groundwork, the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board, and the SuperJob Center collaborate on the initiative.

Outcomes: The city implemented an ordinance that any sewer or storm-water contract totaling \$400,000 or more must hire local workers to perform 30–40 percent of the project work, of whom 20 percent must be disadvantaged workers. Under the local-hiring contract requirements, contractors who perform for Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW), the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD), and Storm-water

Management Utility (SMU) must hire a local resident living in Cincinnati or Hamilton County whose income does not exceed 50 percent of the median family income as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Key Strategies:

- Create demand of local hiring for water and sewer contracts.
- Establish a comprehensive job center as a nexus for strengthened industry networks.

More Information: Visit the website at

Utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises

U.S. Department of Transportation Projects

According to *Best Practices for Transit Agencies for Increasing Participation of DBEs and Local Minority and Low-Income Employment*, utilization of intermediaries to connect DBE firms to contract opportunities is a key strategy for connecting new DBE firms to public works projects. The research suggests that establishing a trusted intermediary to identify minority firms that are job ready can increase DBE participation. Also, working in collaboration with local government, nonprofit, and for-profit financial institutions and business development programs, these intermediaries can build the capacity of minority-owned firms to meet the expectations of general contractors on major public works projects.

One effective intermediary for connecting minority workers to construction projects is the St. Louis Association for Construction Careers, Education, and Support Services (ACCESS). ACCESS is a nonprofit advocacy organization that promotes minority hiring coordination and linkage of job forecasting, job training, and job placement. ACCESS works with area trade councils, contractors, educators and trainers, and local governments, as a trusted intermediary.

Further, the research suggests mentorship opportunities for minority-owned businesses as a promising practice for creating entry point for small firms on public works projects. Accordingly, the data indicates that 43 percent of states have used mentor programs for DBE goal attainment and that 60 percent have found mentor/protégé relationships to be effective. The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration also recommends mentor/protégé programs as a best practice for infrastructure projects.

More Information: Visit the website at

For more information about best practices in addressing equity in infrastructure and public works, contact:

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Notes

- 1 All information in this case study was informed by Sebrina Owens Wilson, *Constructing Building and Building Careers: How Local Governments in Los Angeles are Creating Real Career Pathways for Local Residents* (Los Angeles, CA: The Partnership for Working Families, 2010)
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- 8 All information in this case study was informed by Governor's Award Honors Camden SMART Initiative Green Efforts led by RCE Water Resources Program", Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences,

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