Breaking New Ground: WORKSITE 2000

A Report Prepared by Chicago Women in Trades
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Chicago Women In Trades
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The history of the tradeswomen's movement has been one of sharing our stories, documenting our struggles to survive as pioneers in a "man's" world, and seeking solutions to change the conditions that prevent women from being fully integrated into the world of well-paid blue-collar jobs. We have joined together to form organizations that can give an empowered voice to the tradeswomen who every day, with courage and determination, step into worlds where they are not always welcome.

Chicago Women in Trades (CWIT), after ten years of advocacy and service to increase the number of women in the trades and improve our working conditions, undertook this project to document the barriers tradeswomen face and to propose solutions. The resulting publication, BREAKING NEW GROUND: WORKSITE 2000, gives voice to tradeswomen.

Many people made substantial contributions to this project. We are especially grateful to all the tradeswomen who assisted, by serving on the advisory committee that created the survey, by completing the survey, by participating in focus groups and by telling their stories in interviews.

We also appreciate the support of non-tradeswomen who have taken our struggle to heart and assisted in this project, the employers, apprenticeship program coordinators and public agency representatives who participated in discussions of the recommendations, and the friends who reviewed drafts of this work.

Special thanks to CWIT's staff for guidance and assistance in carrying out this project.

We also acknowledge the generous support of the funders of this work, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Employment and Training Administration of the U. S. Department of Labor.

We strongly urge that the recommendations for change presented here be implemented to the fullest extent possible. We encourage their use by tradeswomen's organizations, public agencies, employers and unions nationwide.

Finally, we dedicate this report to the pioneering tradeswomen of the seventies and early eighties, whose courage in stepping beyond proscribed roles inspires future generations.

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Women make up only 2% of the skilled, well-paid construction trades such as plumber, electrician, carpenter, etc., despite federal legislation and regulations designed to increase their numbers. Moreover, women who have managed to enter the trades encounter difficult working conditions.

There is considerable anecdotal information about these conditions, but there is very little quantitative data. Chicago Women in Trades (CWIT), a support and advocacy group for women working in the skilled trades, conducted the first quantitative research on these conditions in the spring of 1992, using surveys, focus groups and interviews.

The quantitative data as well as anecdotes from focus groups and interviews make it clear that the conditions tradeswomen face are appalling. Tradeswomen describe discrimination in hiring, layoffs, in training and in treatment by unions. They tell of hostile work environments and isolation from other women. They relate almost routine incidents of sexual harassment, from unwelcome sexual remarks to sexual assault. Racism presents an additional burden for women of color. Conflicts between work and family also present problems for tradeswomen.

Results of the research showed relatively few statistically significant differences between women who have left the trades and those who stay. Women who have left the trades tend to be older and tend to have started in the trades in the earlier years (the “pioneer” tradeswomen); they tend to be more isolated from other women, and they have more formal schooling. Sexual harassment (“being touched or asked for sex” on the survey) is most likely to influence the decision to stay on a particular job.

However, it is usually a combination of factors which work together to cause a woman to leave the trades. In interviews and focus groups women reported leaving the trades because they became tired of the grind of working in a world that was traditionally reserved for men.

CWIT also learned that women can cope with these conditions and that some women can be very successful in spite of a hostile environment. However, CWIT believes that individual strategies for coping should not be necessary, and that success or failure should be based on a woman’s ability to do the work, not on her ability to cope. Working conditions must change.

To facilitate this change, Chicago Women in Trades proposes WORKSITE 2000, a vision of a construction industry which has increased numbers of women workers who are treated equitably on the job. WORKSITE 2000 offers recommendations for all sectors of the construction industry: contractors, unions, training programs and public agencies. It also offers guidelines for a model construction worksite. Highlights of the recommendations follow.

### In the survey, tradeswomen report experiencing the following on their jobs:

- Pictures of naked or partially dressed women: 88%
- Unwelcome sexual remarks: 83%
- Being touched or asked for sex: 57%
- Remarks about being a lesbian: 36%
- No toilets or dirty toilets: 80%
- Being given the heaviest or dirtiest assignments: 60%
- Not given proper training: 54%
- Remarks about race or ethnicity: 49%
- Unfair layoff practices: 44%
- Employers who have not hired them because they are female: 38%
Executive Summary — WORKSITE 2000 Recommendations

▶ For Model Construction Worksites

A model worksite will have:

- Goals for numbers of work hours for women laborers of 30%, apprentices of 25% and journey level of 10%.
- Teams consisting of the project sponsor, contractors, affirmative action specialists and tradeswomen's organizations that will promote recruitment and integration of women.
- Clear policies and training on preventing sexual harassment, including prohibition of sexually degrading pictures, posters, calendars and graffiti.

▶ For Unions

CWIT recommends that unions improve recruitment of women, work to decrease isolation from other women and work for contract language that meets women's needs. It also recommends that unions:

- Have clear policies on sexual harassment and provide training on sexual harassment to both officers and members.
- Establish women's committees that will advance women's issues, promote women's support networks and promote women's leadership in the union.

▶ For Apprenticeship Programs

CWIT recommends that apprenticeship programs improve recruitment, help women develop support systems and train coordinators and teachers in creating an equitable workplace. In addition, apprentice programs should:

- Have written standards for training that are adhered to strictly and provide equitable job placement assistance.
- Monitor job assignments to ensure that all apprentices have the full range of work experiences.

▶ For Pre-Employment Training Programs

Pre-employment training programs should have:

- Specific goals for numbers of women and recruitment targeted to women.

- High training goals and adequate time and resources to meet these goals.
- High placement goals, and an aggressive job development component with staff training in advocating for placement of women.
- Training in physical conditioning and in coping skills.

▶ For the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training and for State Apprenticeship Councils

Programs that regulate apprenticeships should:

- Enforce regulations already in existence, and budget for adequate resources to do so.
- Develop a national/state outreach program for women apprentices.
- Develop written standards of apprenticeship training to ensure equitable training for all apprentices.

▶ For the Office of Federal Contracts Compliance Programs

The OFCCP should:

- Enforce regulations already in existence, and budget adequate resources to do so.
- On projects with budgets of $75,000,000 or more, require guidelines of WORKSITE 2000. On smaller projects, provide technical assistance in setting up an equitable worksite.
- Develop and maintain updated resources files on community-based women's employment programs.
- Review all WORKSITE 2000 recommendations for inclusion in existing regulations.

The recommendations in WORKSITE 2000 will help contractors, unions, training programs and public agencies prepare for the workforce described in "Workforce 2000", a U.S. Department of Labor document which predicts that two-thirds of all new entrants in the labor market will be women and minorities. We urge tradeswomen and tradeswomen's groups, contractors, unions and public agencies to work together to create this equitable worksite of the future.
**Introduction**

Rosie the Riveter, the tradeswoman of World War II who filled in while the men were off at war, was welcomed and respected in the factory and on the construction site. When the war was over and the men came home, however, she was sent back to her kitchen or to her low-paying job.

Since that time, women have been segregated in just 20 of 440 occupations, most of them “pink-collar,” low-paying service jobs such as secretary, factory assembly worker or waitress. At the same time, the percentage of women in the workforce is growing, from 37% in 1980 to 45% in 1990. Women who have tried to enter the skilled, well-paid construction or industrial trades have encountered tremendous opposition. They make up only 2% of the construction work force,¹ despite federal legislation and regulations that prohibit gender discrimination in hiring,² set goals for numbers of women working for federally financed contractors³ and require recruitment of women apprentices.⁴

Those women who have managed to enter the trades find that their struggle has just begun. Although there are federal guidelines that prohibit sexual harassment and unequal treatment of women on the job, the working life of a tradeswoman remains very difficult. Tradeswomen tell appalling stories of the conditions they encounter: discrimination in hiring, in layoffs, in training and in treatment by unions. They describe hostile work environments and isolation from other women. They relate almost routine incidents of sexual harassment, ranging from unwelcome sexual remarks to sexual assault. Racism presents an additional burden for women of color.

These difficult conditions, coupled with the growth of the women’s movement, led to the beginning of the tradeswomen’s movement in the early 1980’s. Chicago Women in Trades (CWIT) began as an informal support group for women in the trades in 1981. At the same time similar groups were forming in New York, Cleveland, San Francisco and Seattle. Both CWIT’s numbers and its goals grew, and CWIT incorporated and hired its first staff in 1986. In addition to supporting women working in the trades, CWIT has added training and advocacy to its agenda. It now serves the city of Chicago with a variety of programs.

Although there is considerable anecdotal evidence about the conditions women find on their jobs, there is very little quantitative data. CWIT wanted to document the conditions that tradeswomen encounter as part of its effort to advocate for a better working environment and to make recommendations for change. Funding from the U.S. Department of Labor and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has made this possible.

CWIT conducted its research in the spring of 1992 through surveys, focus groups and interviews. The results, described below, delineate clearly the conditions tradeswomen face. The findings are followed by recommendations for WORKSITE 2000, an overall concept of a construction industry where women are treated equitably. WORKSITE 2000 describes the conditions of the model construction worksite of today and the future; it also includes recommendations to unions, employers, training programs and government agencies.

The WORKSITE 2000 recommendations are both important and timely for several reasons. The first reason stems directly from our research. Through focus groups we learned one very important fact: when someone in authority has a commitment to equitable treatment of women, conditions change.

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¹ All employment statistics are from the U.S. Department of Labor, Women’s Bureau, 1990
² Civil Rights Act, 1964
³ Executive Order 11246, as amended, 1978
⁵ Federal guidelines on sexual harassment, issued for Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, 1980
The second reason is that **equitable treatment of women now means good business.** “WorkForce 2000,” a U.S. Department of Labor workforce study, predicts that by the year 2000 two-thirds of all new entrants in the labor force will be women and minorities. That means that when tradeswomen (and minorities) are used efficiently and effectively, business will prosper. Better conditions for tradeswomen will mean higher productivity and lower turnover. In addition, these improved conditions should also garner widespread goodwill, which is useful in obtaining both contracts, particularly government contracts, and favorable publicity.

The change in the workforce will also lead to changes in the relationships between tradeswomen’s groups and unions and employers. It is very clear that these relationships can and must become more cooperative. Contractors and unions now need the assistance of tradeswomen’s groups as they attempt to attract women. The **WORKSITE 2000** guidelines are important, therefore, because they help to make the new relationships between tradeswomen’s groups and unions and employers more productive. In Chicago the initial response to the **WORKSITE 2000** guidelines, from unions, from contractors and from government agencies, has been extremely positive. The guidelines were accepted, in draft form, as part of the bid process in the construction of a county building.

The recommendations are timely for yet another reason. The **tradeswomen’s movement has flourished and is ready and eager to advocate for the changes we recommend.** There are now more than twenty tradeswomen’s support and advocacy groups in the United States, and more are forming each year. In 1989 a national conference of tradeswomen in Chicago attracted 700 women from all over the United States and around the world. A national network was formed at this conference to coordinate the efforts of all tradeswomen’s support groups in the country.

The organized advocacy of the tradeswomen’s movement, coupled with changes in the workforce, has already led to new initiatives and legislation supporting women in the trades. In 1990 a federal initiative called for coordination and monitoring of apprenticeships and provided funds for studies of tradeswomen's working conditions; in 1991 legislation was passed allowing (for the first time) punitive damages for victims of sex discrimination, and requiring goals for women in training programs. Legislation mandating equitable working conditions for tradeswomen is the next logical step.

**WORKSITE 2000** is the construction worksite of the future, where tradeswomen work as equals to men, as Rosie the Riveter did during World War II. Through implementation of **WORKSITE 2000** CWIT and all tradeswomen, past, present and future, hope that the conditions described in this research will soon be history.

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6 Department of Labor Skilled Trades Initiative, 1990  
7 Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 1991  
8 Non-Traditional Employment for Women (NEW) Act, 1991
Research Methodology

The Survey

A survey was developed with the assistance of an Advisory Committee of current and former tradeswomen. It was sent to 488 women, 360 of them on CWIT’s 1991 membership mailing list and 128 on CWIT’s 1988 membership mailing list. There were three mailings, the first in January of 1992. Those who did not respond were sent a reminder postcard after two weeks. A second survey was sent five weeks after the first, and three weeks after that a selected group of women completed the survey over the telephone with the assistance of a trained interviewer.

The overall response rate for the questionnaire was 44%; the response rate for women on the lists who are tradeswomen and whom we were able to locate was 59%. This is an excellent rate for a survey with limited follow-up and respondents who are hard to locate. It is also one of the largest responses that CWIT has had to any of its activities. CWIT’s members were clearly eager to share their experiences.

Focus Groups and Interviews

In April of 1992, after analyzing survey results, CWIT held three discussion groups in which tradeswomen provided more in-depth information about their experiences. One group consisted of women who had been in the trades more than two years; the second consisted of women who had been in the trades less than two years, and the third consisted of both former tradeswomen and women who had been in the trades for more than two years. In addition, CWIT conducted in-depth telephone interviews with eight women who had left the trades.

Our Respondents

182 women who have worked in the trades completed the survey. Of these, 62% (114 women) are currently working in the trades. Of the 57 women not currently working in the trades, 65% (37 women) plan to go back to the trades and 35% (20 women) do not plan to return.
Demographically, 50% of the respondents are the only wage earner in their households, and 68% are the main wage earners. 53% live with a partner, and 48% have dependent children. Their average age is 35. 52% are white; 35% are African-American, 4% are Latina, 3% are at least part Native American, and 4% are Asian or other.

In response to a question about their highest level of education, only 2% indicated that they have less than a high school diploma. 20% are high school graduates; 49% have had some college, and 25% are college graduates. 8% have some trade school training, and 33% completed trade school.

In terms of employment status, 56% of the respondents to the survey are employed by private construction. 23% work for city, county or state government, and 7% are self-employed. 68% go to a construction site to work. 70% are union members; 20% are former union members, and 10% have never joined a union.

Carpenters were best represented in our survey (23%), followed by the electrical trades (15%), laborers (12%), the pipe trades (7%), and fire fighters/police officers (6%). Each of the remaining trades, including painting, plumbing, operating engineering, masonry, iron and metal work, consisted of less than 5% of the total.

More than half of the women began working in the trades before 1986. 16% began in the 1970’s, 28% began between 1980 and 1984, 52% began between 1985 and 1989, and the remaining 4% began in 1990 or later. The majority (57%) work at journey level. 18% are apprentices, 1% are pre-apprentices, and 24% function at other levels (for example, contractor or officer).
Research Results

Conditions for women in the trades

In addition to the basic information reported above, the survey asked two series of questions. The first series asked questions that applied to the work experience of all women. They included: Have you ever left a job in the trades to have a baby? to get more training or to go back to school? because of lack of steady work? Responses to these questions are given in percentages; i.e., the single most important reason women gave as their reason for leaving the trades was lack of steady work (26%).

The second series of questions was specific to the trades. It asked whether respondents had encountered specific conditions on the job, including sexual remarks, remarks about race, and unfair layoffs practices. These responses are also reported in percentages (i.e., 38% of the survey respondents feel they have not been hired because they are female).

Finally, the responses of current tradeswomen were compared with those of women who had left the trades on all questions to see if the differences between the two groups are significant (i.e., women who reported “being touched or asked for sex” were more likely to leave the trades than those who did not report this).

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment in various forms is a fact of working life for almost all tradeswomen. Complaints include sexual assault, being touched in sexual ways, working around “pin-ups” of naked and nearly naked women, and unwanted sexual remarks, including comments on appearance. Women tell of co-workers spreading vile rumors and of playing “pranks” such as putting condoms on their car aerals. Women report threats of physical harm and many prefer to work in areas with several workers. They also complain of other, more subtle forms of sexual harassment, including being stared at constantly.

Sexual harassment is a significant factor in why women leave the trades. Our survey shows that women who reported “being touched or asked for sex” were more likely to leave the trades.

“There was a lot of harassment. One time one man said to me in front of about twelve men, ‘I'd like to eat the lining out of your stuff.’ I ran out of that trailer crying. One man came out of the trailer and said, ‘He's just high, don't let it bother you.’ But it did bother me. The other men started making lots of remarks after they found I was going to file a suit. I fell in a mud hole and almost drowned after that; I wasn't focusing on my work. I got hurt on my next job because of that; I wasn't focusing.” (former laborer)

Tradeswomen report the following forms of sexual harassment:

- 88% pictures of naked or partially dressed women
- 83% unwelcome sexual remarks
- 57% being touched or asked for sex

“The sexual harassment was low level, but it was constant. They were always eyeballing me, from the front, from the back, from the side. I had to be careful what I wore. I never wore tank tops, even though the shop was hot. The problem is that you can't really put a finger on the low-level stuff. And, if it had gotten to a higher level, if you reported it, there would have been problems with even the more normal guys.” (former carpenter)

“I had oil poured in my coat pocket; I had a rubber hung on the aerial of my car. After the first month in school I actually got in front of the podium and told these guys that I was there to stay. And some of the looks on their faces - I was the only female - and I loved auto mechanics, but I hated going there every day. I felt like a pioneer. But I did it. There was not another woman in the class, and it was a year-long class.” (former auto mechanic)
“For classroom training when I was an apprentice we used one big room divided with partitions that didn’t go all the way to the ceiling. One day I was undressing in the section that was the women’s locker room, and it got real quiet in the other part of the room. I looked around me and I saw they had put in a mirror so they could see me undressing.” (painter)

“I had a guy grab me. I made a commotion, but I didn’t go to the EEO. My union steward was in the meeting to talk about it, but he didn’t say anything. A month later, he was promoted. One supervisor said, ‘There’s one of you, but there’s all of us.’ And there’s no way I wanted to take on all of them. You’re ostracized to begin with - the last thing you want to do is to take everybody on. Something happens to you - you’re the victim. Then you’re the asshole. You get the repercussions. They don’t talk to you; they dislike you.” (operating engineer)

“Some days they would say, ‘I really need a woman, I’ll pay you, I’ll pay you.’ I felt like a prostitute or something. I said, ‘I’m not here for that, I’m here to do my work.’ I told my boss about it, he didn’t do anything. I told the foreman, the one that hired me. He told me, ‘If that happens again, pick up something, hit him as hard as you can and his job will be gone tomorrow morning. I don’t take that, you’re not here for that. That’s harassment and it won’t be tolerated on this job.’” (laborer)

“One day they all got ready to drop their pants to see a measurement on each other. I just walked away.” (pipefitter)

“You have to treat them like they treat you. I was talking to a guy and the whole time his eyes were on my breasts. Finally I said to him, ‘Tom, my face is here. How would you like it if I talked to you like this all day?’ and I put my eyes down. I don’t have a problem any more.” (dry wall finisher)

“There was one guy who always said something when he went by, you know, like, ‘Hey baby, how are you doing?’ and I would nod or wave or something. One day he said, ‘One day I’m going to pull your coattail.’ Then one day he actually did it - pulled the bottom of my coat. I was upset - no one has a right to touch me. I said, ‘You don’t have a right to touch me, you don’t know me, you’re not related to me.’ So he picked me up by my jacket collar and said, ‘I’ll touch you any time I want.’ I was holding a broom, and I tried to hurt him; finally I hit him with my knee. He let me down, and I was running as fast as I could to the foreman’s office with the guy chasing me. The foreman saw me and closed the office door. I was beating on the door and yelling and he finally let me in. He said, ‘I didn’t see anything, and I didn’t hear anything and to make a complaint you need a witness.’ Finally they had us work in separate areas, but they always acted like I was the one causing the problems.” (former steelworker)

“Some of the pictures they had on their lockers made me sick. I don’t mean Playboy stuff, although I don’t like that either. It was the Penthouse and the Hustler stuff that made me feel so angry.” (painter)

► Sexist Attitudes of Male Co-Workers and Supervisors

The construction industry has been overwhelmingly male for years, and on many sites women’s presence and work has very little value. Tradeswomen find this sexist attitude (and accompanying behavior) as wearing as sexual harassment. They report negative behavior on a continuum from belittling remarks and constant checking of their work to threats of physical violence. 52% of the survey respondents reported that men have refused to work with them.

Stereotypical “male” behaviors are common in the trades. Many tradeswomen are uncomfortable around the almost routine swearing and explicit talk about sex that they report. (In focus groups, several tradeswomen remarked that some tradesmen behave completely differ-

52% of tradeswomen report that men have refused to work with them.
ently when they are around their wives and children.) Swearing and sexual talk, however, are mild behaviors compared to others reported. Tradeswomen tell of threats of physical harm, sabotaged work and being placed in dangerous situations by co-workers.

“The year the Sears Tower was capped off I applied for an apprenticeship with the iron workers. The men who were applying formed groups and sent someone from each group to talk to me. They threatened me. They said, ‘You may get this job because of the government, but you won’t leave it alive. We’ll be on a site with you some day and we’ll take care of that.’ At another job every morning the men came in, punched the time clock and then spat on the floor in front of me.” (former welder)

“The competency thing was worse than the sexual harassment. If you’re good at something, it’s in spite of the fact that you’re a woman. If you’re bad, it’s because you’re a woman. Or they would compliment you on how well you did very simple things you were trained to do.” (former carpenter)

“The problem is that there’s a mixture of skills you don’t have as a woman and at the same time you’re dealing with hostile men. You could deal with the dangerous work if the men treated you all right, or you could handle the men if the work wasn’t so dangerous. It’s the combination that’s so hard.” (former carpenter)

“Men would sabotage my work. Once they welded all my tools to the bench. They’d fill my helmet with water; they put oil in pipes.” (former welder)

“I was told specifically that I should be at home, barefoot and pregnant.” (pipelifter)

“When you’re a tradeswoman, you’re a second-class citizen, because to a lot of men, unless they’re very progressive, you’re a threat. They’re the breadwinner and they have their wives at home. You have to prove yourself time and again in order to get their respect. They really resent your being there.” (auto mechanic)

“I’ve never had any male-female problems because I have the attitude that I’m here to do my job - we’re both here to do a job. I don’t deal with anything else.” (laborer)

“I’ve been an apprentice for three years. But every time I attempt a project it’s already wrong before I even get started. After three years you’d think I could do something right, but unfortunately in three years I haven’t learned anything, to hear them tell it.” (cement finisher)

“Some tradesmen feel like you have their brother’s job, or their friend’s job. And if you complain, it’s thrown at you that you’re working - in other words, be grateful you’re working.” (laborer)

“When I was in apprenticeship school the whole subject was sex, drinking and how many parking tickets or accidents they had had. And it wasn’t just 20-year-olds. To me it was depressing. I said, ‘How do you go home and turn this mouth off. Can you talk like this to your kids?’ And they said they didn’t.” (carpenter)

“In the mines, when you first start working there, each day you go to the bottom of the elevator shaft. The only thing I can compare it to is like in grade school, choosing up sides for the softball team. The general labor pool stands there and the different section bosses pick who they want to go with them that day. It was always a couple of women standing there at the end - we were sent off to shovel a belt-head or something away from production, where the high-paying jobs were.” (former mineworker)

Problems Finding Work

Keeping employed steadily in the trades is difficult for both men and women because of the nature of the work. Because workers are laid off when a job is completed, a tradesperson may work at a particular site for a period of time ranging from one week to two years. In addition, work in the trades may be seasonal; many men as well as women expect to work only part of the
year. People in the trades, consequently, look for work much more often than in other kinds of jobs. Because there are so many occasions when tradeswomen are laid off or when they look for work, the discrimination in hiring and in layoffs which they report is very significant.

Problems in finding work are significant for another reason as well. To move from apprenticeship (the first stage in the trades) to journey level (the next stage), tradespeople must work a specified number of hours. If a tradeswoman cannot find work, she will not be promoted through the apprenticeship; she will not get raises, and she may be barred from attending classroom training.

Respondents report:
26% have left jobs in the trades because of lack of steady work

Tradespeople find work several different ways. In some trades (electricians, for example), contractors contact the union, which refers workers to them; thus electricians do not look for work on their own. In other trades (carpenters and pipelayers, for example), tradespeople find work two ways: through union referral or on their own, by applying at sites. To find work on their own easily, tradespeople need a network of contacts, which women often lack.

26% of the survey respondents reported leaving the trades because of lack of steady work. They report considerable discrimination by employers. 38% of the survey respondents feel they have not been hired because they are women, and 44% of the respondents feel that they have been laid off unfairly at some point in their careers.

While unions have been instrumental in improving the welfare of workers, they have not always met women’s needs. 23% of the women responding to our survey report that their unions have withheld job referrals. In focus groups, some women reported that their unions are supportive only part of the time and usually on issues that affect men as well as women. Interestingly, women in unions with open systems of referral (where all job openings and those who are assigned to them are made public) find their unions helpful.

“If they told me I could work steadily I’d go back in a heartbeat. I loved it more than doing anything else. I really did enjoy it. But if you’re a woman, they say there’s no work, so they lay you off. Then you go back two weeks later, and there’s somebody doing the job you used to do.” (former carpenter)

“My girlfriend worked for the Department of Transportation, and she was guaranteed 1000 hours. Now I could plan a little bit better if someone said, ‘I’ll promise you 1000 hours - after that we’ll talk again.’ Or if somebody said, ‘I’ll give you the opportunity I give the other guys - you want 33 years? 10 years?’ Then I could live - I could rest a little bit knowing that I could work steady. Now I understand if there’s no work; that would be different. But a little bit of security would be great.” (electrician)

“The union didn’t do a damn thing for me in finding jobs. I did it myself, or my former supervisors did it for me.” (former carpenter)

“We can’t look for our own work. It’s a union rule. When you’re out of work, you’re out of work because there is no work. Not because you’re black, not because you’re a woman, not because you don’t work good - none of that. Because there is no work. You can go and check.” (electrician)

They report extensive gender discrimination:

44% say they have encountered unfair layoff practices
38% say they have encountered employers who have not hired them because they are females
23% say their unions have withheld job referrals
“I had a foreman come in, and the first thing he said was, ‘Oh, another broad in the union.’ He made it very clear to me that he didn’t want women in the union. There’s very few women that come in every year, an average of three, and they act like they’re doing you a big favor. I can be sure they won’t help me get work.” (Pipefitter)

“For unions, you call and put your name on the out-of-work list. Then you wait. You can call back. When I finished school in February, I felt bad because even though I had won student awards, everybody seemed to get a job but me. So I looked for my own job. I didn’t need my union hall help, and I didn’t need my school’s help - I kept calling the man who did the placements, but nothing happened. So it made me even more determined to go out and make these companies hire me.” (Carpenter)

“When I first got out of school, they sent me out to one company to apply for work. I went out there and I saw one of my buddies from class working, and they said, ‘We’re not hiring.’ And I just knew it was because I was a woman. I went to the school and I said, ‘They just don’t want me. They say they’re not hiring, but I saw John working.’ So they placed me somewhere else.” (Carpenter)

“In my union all the officials were white males. The recording secretary was a woman, but they thought that was women’s work. The union was in bed with the company because they wanted to keep things the way they were. They kept the blacks and the women out of the really good-paying jobs. They had their token black male and their token white female. But Heaven forbid that they have more than a token worker.” (Former metal fabricator)

Problems with Training

Problems with training are extremely common. Survey results showed that (a) not getting proper training, tools or equipment, and (b) getting the heaviest or dirtiest assignments are significant factors in why women leave the trades. In focus groups women reported great frustration at always being assigned menial tasks and not being allowed to learn all the aspects of their trades.

Most trades use apprenticeship training; non-union trades use a less formal system in which a helper works with an experienced tradesperson. Union apprenticeships last three to five years. During an apprenticeship workers receive classroom training sponsored jointly by the union and the employer (the Joint Apprentice Training Committee). Classroom training is coordinated with on-the-job training at a worksite. An apprentice’s pay depends on the number of hours he or she has worked. When training is complete, an apprentice becomes a journey-level tradesperson.

Hostility and harassment are part of nearly every tradeswoman’s classroom experience. Getting proper on-the-job training, however, is an even bigger problem. In principle, apprentices work with a journey-level worker on a series of increasingly difficult tasks to learn on the job. In practice, women find that they often are not given the variety of assignments they need to learn their trade, but are instead assigned to routine, unskilled tasks like cleaning up and sorting tools. Instead of progressing to more complex tasks, they do the same task over and over. For example, one apprentice carpenter caulked windows for six months, while another stuffed insulation for over a year. The end result is that women leave apprenticeships without knowing their trades, which, in turn, leads to problems in hiring.

Women report that:
54% have not been given proper training
60% have been given the heaviest or dirtiest assignments

“If I had gone in as an unskilled laborer I’d still be in the trades. It’s frustrating not to learn. They take you into a job because it’s federal money and they need a woman. But then they give you laborer’s work because they don’t want to train you. The laborers are pissed at you because you’re getting paid more for doing the same work and the carpen-
ters are pissed because you’re not holding up your end.” (former carpenter)

“Nobody really talked much to me on my first day on the construction site. But at the end of that first day one fellow said, “I’m not going to train her so she can take my job.” (cement finisher)

“They don’t make so many remarks as they used to, but as far as giving me help in learning, even if I ask them what they’re doing, they don’t know how to answer it. They know how to do it, but they don’t know how to explain it.” (cement finisher)

“The trade I went into, the men were fairly intelligent, so I never had a problems with out and out harassment. It was more with subtle stuff. Not being shown how to do things, not being allowed to do certain types of things because I had to do heavy lifting. They assumed I didn’t know anything, so they always gave me the simpler stuff, even after I’d been there for a while.” (carpenter)

“They won’t show how they’re actually feeling. But they do these little snotty things, set things up backwards and so on. I learn how to do things the backwards way before I learn the right way. You have to figure it out for yourself.” (cement finisher)

“They have to teach the apprentices better. They don’t know what to do, and the guys out there, they don’t have time to teach them. So you find yourself standing around. So the boss comes around and it looks like you don’t know what to do. And you don’t, because no one told you what to do.” (cement finisher)

“During the training period women really have to watch what the men are getting to work on - that there’s a lot of inequality there. If they’re good organizers, they’ll be sent to the shop day after day to straighten the tools out. They’ll never even see the work. Or to sort the fittings. Or to sweep up. Women have to be aggressive. They have to say, ‘Joe started when I started and he’s welding and I’m not. Mike started when I started, and he’s installing walls, and I haven’t even been up to that floor yet.’ Unless they push that every step of the way - with a notebook, to document it - once they pick up on a pattern, if they’re not aggressive about that pattern, that’ll just be the order of the day. That’s been brought up repeatedly. And then management says that women don’t know the work.” (carpenter)

“In two months I’ve done one day of real pipefitting and today I got to direct the crane, to be the signal person. The rest of the two months I’ve been sorting fittings, getting what the guys need, loading and unloading trucks, but not doing the work I’m supposed to be doing.” (pipefitter)

“I had an old man tell me that, ‘I don’t have to teach you anything.’ If they don’t like you, you won’t learn anything. Some of them won’t even let you watch. They’ll make you go sweep.” (carpenter)

“My supervisor thinks he’s doing well by us (women) by having us doing the easiest jobs, but I’m almost a third-year apprentice, and I should be more advanced. He’s one of those overprotective kind of people.” (electrician)

“I didn’t get too hung up on where the males were and how they related to me because that was their problem. The only thing I had challenges with was dealing with the foreman putting me in those very mediocre jobs, because I wanted to work construction.” (electrician)

**Inadequate Toilet Facilities**

Tradeswomen complain bitterly about toilet facilities on worksites. The conditions they encounter are very difficult. Most construction worksites use portable toilets. At some sites these toilets are extremely dirty and are health hazards for women. Some sites have no toilets at all; the men use "pee cans" and the women have nothing. Sinks for washing hands are non-existent.

Privacy is often a problem. Women report finding peepholes in toilets. Some toilets have no tops, so women can be seen from above. Toilets are often
Research Results — continued

several blocks away, or, in a high-rise building, many floors from where women are working. The best sites have separate, clean, locked and accessible toilets and changing sites for women.

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80% of tradeswomen have encountered worksites with no toilets or dirty toilets.

Multiple Discrimination

Tradeswomen cope with multiple discrimination. In addition to sexism, women of color encounter racism. Both lesbian and heterosexual women report hate language about lesbians. Multiple discrimination is especially difficult because it can pit one woman against another.

“There are lots of problems with racism. We’re not supposed to be able to learn anything as blacks. One boss told a foreman I couldn’t read a rule. It got so bad - that statement - it followed me to another job. They were always checking me and blaming errors they made on me, so I learned to document everything - write down what they told me to do.” (pipefitter)

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“If you play stupid, you get along real well with those people. I had a boss tell me they wanted me to just sit around and do nothing. They had hired me to fill quotas - you know, black and female. But I said that I didn’t want to do that, that I wasn’t getting paid to sit around.” (carpenter)

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star 3 shaking it. If I had fallen I’d be dead - I was just that high. I said, ‘Stop shaking the ladder,’ but he kept shaking it and laughing, saying ‘She’s scared, she’s scared.’”  (laborer)

“One friend quit a job because she said that they had her cutting 25’ studs and she had to carry them to the journeyman who was going to lift them. While she was carrying them she used to bump into people, bump into pipes. Everybody was talking about her, laughing at her, saying, ‘Oh you dumb apprentice, get the fuck off my site.’ She said she did it for about half an hour, she tried and tried and tried. Finally she just dropped the studs and walked off the job.”  (electrician)

“Sometimes they drop things on you, hammers and wrenches - dangerous things like that, supposedly by accident, from ladders or scaffolding. I just throw it back and say, ‘You dropped this and I don’t want you to have to come back down for it.’”  (piper)

“I’m still an electrician after 14 years, but I don’t recommend that women stay in it that long. I think that women should think about other things, in terms of the physical problems. I have a really easy job and I don’t have to do all this hard stuff any more. But all women don’t have the opportunity to get easy jobs. See, when guys get older, they carry each other. You don’t have a woman out there to carry you when you get older.”  (electrician)

“I never got over my fear of heights. I think women have a harder time with the physical things. They don’t have confidence in their physical skills. I never played in high places, but I chase my son and his friends off the garage roof every day.”  (former carpenter)

Problems Common to all Careers

Women also leave jobs in the trades for reasons which can affect workers in any career: to have a baby, to take care of sick family members, to resolve childcare problems and to get more training.

Tradeswomen indicate that employers are often insensitive, uninformed or overprotective with pregnant workers. They also report problems finding childcare during construction hours, especially for the last-minute overtime that is common in the industry.

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<td>to have a baby</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to take care of sick family member</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child care problems</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>family wanted to leave</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>to get more training</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“I knew they’d tell me I couldn’t work if they knew I was pregnant, so I just wore big clothes and said nothing. No one knew, and I worked through my eighth month.”  (ironworker)

“When I got pregnant my company agreed to give me light duty. But then they laid me off when everybody else was still working. My union wouldn’t help me get another job after that, even though they were usually pretty good.”  (asbestos worker)

“I worked up to the last day when I was pregnant. But I had a hard birth and was off three months recovering. When I came back to work they held me back from completing journey level, even though I’d worked steady my whole apprenticeship and even had extra hours. I’ve filed for lost wages, but the union won’t help me.”  (sheet metal worker)

“I told the city I was pregnant and that my doctor said I’d need less physical activity. I was in line for a foreman position, but when one came open they brought in an engineer from outside.”  (electrician)

“When I asked for a job in the fabrication shop instead of climbing a ladder and working the sledge hammer, the safety director told me he had a problem with me working at all since I was pregnant.”  (boilermaker)
Differences Between Women Who Leave the Trades and Those Who Stay

One of the goals of this research was to find the differences that exist between women who have left the trades and those who stay. We found that although there were relatively few statistically significant differences, these differences are both compelling as well as amenable to change.

- Women who have left the trades tend to be older and tend to have started in the trades in the earlier years (the “pioneer” tradeswomen).
- Women who have left the trades tend to have been more isolated from other women, and they are less likely to have gone to a construction site.
- Women who have left the trades have more formal schooling; they report leaving the trades to go back to school or to get more training.
- Sexual harassment (“being touched or asked for sex” on the survey) is most likely to influence the decision to stay on a particular job.
- Other factors which influence the decision are not being given proper training, tools or equipment and being given the heaviest or dirtiest assignments.

In focus groups and in interviews participants indicated that it is usually a combination of factors which work together to cause a woman to leave the trades. Dealing with the negative attitudes of men and dangerous working conditions are the reasons one woman cites for leaving the trades, while another talks of frustration at poor training and difficulty finding work. Isolation in combination with constant low-level sexual harassment may be the reason why another leaves.

Whatever specific reasons they cite, many women who leave the trades simply become tired of the grind of working in fields traditionally reserved for men.

"I was worn out with being the only woman, the first woman, so I left. I didn’t want to be a pioneer any more. I was older and less inclined to argue. I never worked with another woman welder. At my last job at least there were other women in the building, so I could sit with someone at lunch and I could talk to somebody when it got really terrible.” (Former welder)

"I left even though I wasn’t badly hurt and I had learned what I was supposed to. I just got to the point where I said, ‘Enough is enough.’ I got tired of having my hands and my body torn up, not getting anywhere. I felt burned out.” (Former machinist)
How Tradeswomen Cope

In spite of the difficult conditions described above, many women stay in the trades, and some thrive. Women in focus groups report that they like being outdoors; one woman said, “I wouldn’t last three days in an office.” They also report that they like physical work and the feeling of accomplishment that comes with construction. They also need the wages paid in the skilled trades: 50% are the only wage earners in their families; 68% are the main wage earners, and 48% have dependent children.

Each tradeswoman creates her own strategies for survival, and individual strategies are very different. Some women are quiet and reserved, while others are very outgoing. All agree that tradeswomen have to have determination and courage. Almost everyone says, “Never let them see you sweat.”

“The last time I got hired for a job, I was down there at 5:30 every morning with my lunch for two weeks, looking for work. I ran into one of the general foreman, and he thought I was already on the payroll. So he hired me. That was determination.” (laborer)

“You can’t get ahead by being emotional. You’ve got to have the sperm mentality that men do - that go-getter attitude. It’s an uphill battle, up that canal. You’ve got to be the winner. A lot of them are trying to get up that canal and only one’s going to fertilize that egg, and you’ve got to decide you’re going to be that one. You’ve got to be the winner, whether you’re a man or a woman. That’s the name of the game.” (electrician)

“You should just be yourself. You don’t have to act like a guy. You’re a lady. I wear my makeup. If they say to me, ‘You walk like a construction worker,’ I say, ‘I am a construction worker.’ I’m cheerful. I smile. When they complain, I say, ‘I’m a laborer; I do what I’m told.’” (laborer)

“On the job site I’m just myself, basically that’s kind of laid back. I don’t approach you if you don’t approach me. I speak to you, but I don’t get off into all the jokes and the conversations.” (plumber)

“I’m a first year apprentice, and everybody knows me. The general contractor, every boss that comes down there knows me, because I just let everybody know where I stand. If you don’t like it, my attitude is, then fire me. I don’t expect you to change; don’t expect me to change. I’m gonna do what I’m gonna do, you’re gonna do what you’re gonna do.” (electrician)

“We have one young lady on the job that’s an electrician too. She hates it. The way she came in, when something wasn’t automatically the way she wanted it, instead of turning a deaf ear, she complained. The pictures on the wall, instead of complaining about them, don’t look at them. You have to bite your tongue sometimes.” (electrician)

“You got to speak up. About everything. Go raise up some sand. Go up and fuss and kick and shout.” (cement finisher)

“We’re breaking into their world. If we say, ‘Don’t say this, don’t say that,’ they will never accept us, they’ll always resent us. I don’t try to change them. They can have any book on the table they want, just don’t put it in my face. I let them be them and I’m me. Instead of trying to change them, you try to gain their respect as a person, then a woman. There are problems any person would have on a job. I have problems, not because I’m a woman or because I’m black, but because they’re just jerks. It’s nothing toward me.” (sheet metal worker)

“I’m a lady; I went on to the job as a lady, and I left as a lady. You have to be very strong minded to keep your dignity. But I was out there to work, and they knew it.” (laborer)

“Racism, sexism - they’re not unique to the trades. That is a world issue. It’s not just Polish guys, it’s not just Irish guys, it’s a male thing. There are black men who don’t want black women in the trades.” (electrician)

“You’ve got to have a lot of balls - you can’t let them break your spirit. You’ve got to be strong on the job. You can cry and kick the hell out of the door when you get home, but you’ve got to be strong on the job.” (laborer)

“The harassment I run into is redneck harassment. You just deal with it, because you know that’s where they’re coming from. It’s no more than any kind of harassment that you’d experience on the street. That’s my attitude about it.” (cement finisher)
Good Worksites

In focus groups women reported that on job sites where there is a genuine commitment to having women work, conditions are much better. This commitment can be informal (for example, an owner or a foreman who wants women on the jobsite) or structured.

“I don’t have the problems I used to, mostly just intimidation. I’ve sort of established a relationship with the owner. He told the men to shake their asses or leave, because I was going to be there. If they didn’t want to work with me, they could leave. He comes by to see how I’m doing day by day, and it throws the guys off from making such derogatory statements to me. But if it wasn’t for the owner, I’d still be buried in the back, not knowing how to do anything. No one would praise me for doing what I do, for knowing what I know.” (cement finisher)

“I worked on a job with a woman’s company. There was some stress - there were many very early mornings, and a lot of work had to get done, a truckload of material wouldn’t come in - the normal pressures were there, but they were easier to bear. People communicated and there was no energy spent on making fun of other people, for no matter what reason. If more women moved into management, it would change, just like that. It’s going to change when there’s a woman I can go to, when my boss is a woman.” (carpenter)

One Company’s Answer

A very structured commitment to women is found on construction projects of Stein & Company, a Chicago developer with a female president. Women working on these sites report a much more positive environment than usual. Stein works with contractors, affirmative action specialists and community-based groups, including Chicago Women in Trades, to recruit and retain women on their worksites. At times there are as many as 35 tradeswomen on a site; a total of 85 women worked on one project. Having large numbers of women changes the environment significantly.

Supervisors are trained in creating an equitable workplace. Women workers receive support services, including counseling, intervention and mediation to deal with workplace issues, and they are informed about support groups both on-site and off-site. Pornography and sexual graffiti are not tolerated. Women have separate, locked, clean toilets and changing areas. The number of women working (as compared to goals) and women’s complaints are evaluated continuously, and all women who leave the worksite are interviewed.

Working on a Stein site can be a positive, confidence-building experience for an apprentice on her first job, or a beneficial breather for a woman who has been in the trades for some time.

“My first day a friend dropped me off. The site was a hole two stories deep, and with the crane and all the noise I was scared to death. I said, ‘I can’t go down there.’ But my friend said, ‘Go and get that job.’ Another friend who’s been in the trades for three years was working there. She showed me around, showed me where to put my tools. The guys said, ‘Oh no, not another one.’ But after the job opened up you walked by and no one paid any attention to you. There were 30 women there then. My friend had a hard time - she was the first woman. But after that one came every week, in the different trades. The men just said, ‘Well, we’re stuck with them.’” (laborer)

“There were lots of women at my first job site. I worked at the new federal building (a Stein development). There were women of all the trades there. We just blended in. It’s the best job I’ve ever been on.” (painter)
Conclusion

The problems made clear through surveys, focus groups and interviews - sexual harassment, sexist attitudes, finding work, training, hygiene facilities, racism, isolation and unsafe conditions - are appalling. While it is heartening that women learn to cope with these problems and that some women are very successful in spite of a hostile environment, individual strategies for coping should not be necessary. Success or failure should be based on a woman's ability to do the work, not on her ability to cope. Women simply should not have to confront what is described in this report. Working conditions must change.

Changing conditions, however, does not mean special treatment for women. Tradeswomen want only to work beside men in an environment that treats all workers with respect. They want to do their own jobs well, to be treated decently and equitably and to support their families.

To facilitate a change in working conditions, Chicago Women in Trades proposes WORKSITE 2000. The recommendations in WORKSITE 2000 will help contractors, unions, training programs and public agencies prepare for a workforce in which two-thirds of all new entrants will be women and minorities. When all workers are employed effectively and efficiently, the worksite will become competitive as well as just. We urge tradeswomen and tradeswomen's groups, contractors, unions and public agencies to work together to create this equitable worksite of the future.
WORKSITE 2000 Recommendations

WORKSITE 2000 describes Chicago Women in Trades’ vision of a construction industry that has increased numbers of women workers who are treated equitably on the job. It offers recommendations for all sectors of the construction industry: contractors, unions, training programs and public agencies. It also offers guidelines for a model construction worksite.

For The Model Construction Worksite

Project sponsors of projects with budgets over $75,000,000 should implement the following components at their worksites.

1) Goals for numbers of work hours for women laborers of 30%, apprentices of 25% and journey level of 10%.

2) WORKSITE 2000 teams consisting of the project sponsor, contractors, affirmative action specialists and tradeswomen’s support, advocacy or training organizations to promote successful integration of women workers on the site. Information about reaching team members should be posted at the worksite.

Team duties include evaluating the program through weekly review meetings and through on-site monitoring. Team members will consider:

   A. the number of women working (as compared to goals),

   B. complaints registered during the week,

   C. results of interviews with women leaving the worksite,

   D. strategies for remediying problems.

The team is also responsible for making linkages with unions, contractors’ associations, apprenticeship programs and public agencies, including the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs to gain their cooperation in implementing WORKSITE 2000.

3) On-going publicity about WORKSITE 2000 targeted to women, to community-based organizations, to government agencies, to schools and to the general public.

4) On-site orientation sessions for women interested in the trades.

5) Pre-apprenticeship training programs on the site to prepare women for trades with relatively small numbers of women. These programs will take into consideration existing entrance requirements, selection procedures, prior applicants and differences in apprenticeship programs. Strategies to give trainees on-site experience and follow-up placement on the site will be worked out in pre-bid and pre-construction meetings.

6) A database of available women, both skilled and unskilled, developed with the assistance of community-based agencies.

7) Clear policies on sexual harassment. These policies should detail what constitutes sexual harassment, indicate who will handle complaints, and detail procedures for investigating and resolving complaints. Policies will also require a worksite free of sexually degrading pictures and graffiti. These policies will be made clear in pre-bid meetings and construction meetings, as employees are hired, and throughout the project. They should be posted prominently on the jobsite.

* components that should be implemented at smaller worksites.
8) Pre-construction and on-going training to supervisory personnel and tradespeople in:
   A. creating an equitable workplace,
   B. establishing fair training assignments,
   C. preventing and resolving sexual harassment.*

9) Support services to women, including counseling, intervention and mediation, bulletin boards and information about support groups both on-site and off-site.

10) Separate, locked, clean toilets and changing areas for all employees.*

11) When possible, placement of more than one woman in a work crew.*

12) Women in supervisory positions.*

13) Integration of WORKSITE 2000 policies into contractors’ bid packages and agreements. In determining bid awards, selection of contractors with good affirmative action records or good plans for recruitment and placement of women within their crews. Inclusion in contractors’ performance standards acceptance of and adherence to WORKSITE 2000 policies.

14) Inclusion in personnel policies guidelines that promote equity for women. Examples in the following areas are included in the “Contract Language” section of this paper: pregnancy disability, family leave, child care, fringe benefits and affirmative action.*

* components that should be implemented at smaller worksites.
For Unions

Organized labor plays a key role in the highly unionized construction industry. Through collective bargaining with industry representatives, unions set standards for wages, safety, hiring and working conditions.

▶ Hiring

Each union has its own system for hiring; however, efforts must be made to make all hiring systems more equitable. Unions should adopt, distribute and publish written rules for their job referral systems. Unions should publicly post all relevant job referral information (the out of work list, available job openings, and the list of those referred to jobs). Hiring information should be readily available to all members through posting and through telephone “hot lines”.

▶ Sexual Harassment

1) The union should have clear policies on sexual harassment. These policies should acknowledge that sexual harassment is a problem and detail procedures for investigating and resolving complaints. Policies should designate one officer to investigate and follow through on all complaints of sexual harassment.

2) The union should provide training on sexual harassment to business agents, stewards, officers and membership. It should offer training in preventing and in dealing with sexual harassment to contractors and developers and should encourage them to follow through with this training in the bargaining process.

3) Policies should be displayed prominently and distributed to all members.
Women's Committees

The union should establish a Women's Committee that will:

1) advance women's integration into the industry,
2) promote existing women's support networks, or, if none exists, set up women's support networks, and
3) promote women's leadership in the union through:
   • providing support and training for women running for elected offices in the union, and
   • advocating for appointing women to appointed union offices.

Isolation from Other Women

Whenever possible, place two or more women on a construction site. Monitor placements by stewards and business managers.

Outreach and Training

1) The union should have an outreach program specifically targeted to women.
2) The union should provide training to officers and membership in creating an equitable workplace and establishing fair training assignments.
3) All outreach and training materials should use gender-neutral language (i.e., "journey level" rather than "journeyman") and pictures of both men and women.
4) The union should use union communication materials (newsletters and meetings) to promote fair treatment of women, leadership of women and to support activities of women members.

Contract Language

In bargaining talks, the union should work for inclusion of language that fosters equity for women. Examples in the following areas are included in the "Contract Language" section of this paper: pregnancy disability, family leave, child care, fringe benefits and affirmative action.

Family Issues

Unions should support family issues by forming family issues committees, by raising these issues at union meetings and in union publications, by providing child care at meetings and by working with other groups in the community interested in these issues.
For Apprenticeship Programs

Apprenticeship training programs are, for the most part, sponsored jointly by union and industry and run by Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees. They are responsible for recruiting and selecting apprentices, for providing classroom training and for linking apprentices to on-the-job training.

bol Outreach and Orientation

All Apprenticeship programs should:

1) Do early outreach targeted to girls in elementary and high school. Parents, counselors and administrators should be included in this outreach.

2) Advertise all openings in the apprenticeship program through organizations working with women in non-traditional jobs, through schools, through publicly funded training programs (JTPA, Project JCBS) and through the media.

3) Sponsor orientation sessions for women who are interested in the trades. At these sessions working tradeswomen should provide prospective tradeswomen with realistic information about work in the trades.

4) Sponsor a pre-apprenticeship training class (including physical conditioning) to prepare women to enter the apprenticeship program.

5) Prepare outreach and training materials with gender-neutral language.

6) Assure that selection criteria does not have a disparate impact on women.

bol Apprenticeship Training

All apprenticeship training should:

1) Have written standards (with specific competencies) that are adhered to strictly.

2) Be monitored to ensure that all apprentices have the full range of work experiences.

3) Have regular measures of success.

4) Develop support systems for apprentices through mentoring programs and through training in dealing with sexism, racism and homophobia.

5) Provide equitable job placement assistance.

6) Eliminate entrance requirements that have a disparate impact on women, including biased tests and upper age limits.

7) Provide training to training coordinators, teachers and apprentices in:
   A. creating an equitable workplace,
   B. establishing fair training assignments, and
   C. preventing and resolving sexual harassment.

For Pre-Employment Training

Pre-employment training programs preparing adults for work in the trades include Jobs Corps, Project JOBS and programs run by community-based organizations and by educational institutions. They are funded by a variety of sources, including the federal Jobs Partnership Training Act and by state vocational education funds.

Recommendations for Training Programs

All pre-employment programs to prepare women for the skilled trades should have the following components:

1) Specific goals for numbers of women,
2) Recruitment targeted to women,
3) Orientations for women to occupations in the trades that include discussions with tradeswomen,
4) Individualized assessment of needs (child care, confidence building, etc.) and services to meet those needs,
5) High training goals and adequate time to meet these goals,
6) High placement goals, and an aggressive job development component with staff training on advocating for placement of women,
7) Placement linkages with publicly funded construction projects,
8) Follow-up and support for graduates for up to two years after completion of program, including mediation on the job site,
9) Referral to existing tradeswomen’s support groups, or, if none exist, assistance to trainees in setting up a support group,
10) Training in physical conditioning,
11) Training in coping skills needed by women entering a non-traditional environment.
12) Training for coordinators and teachers in:
   A. creating an equitable workplace,
   B. establishing fair training assignments, and
   C. preventing and resolving sexual harassment.

Recommendations for Public Agencies Dealing with Pre-employment Training

1) In budgeting for public works projects, public agencies should include funding for pre-employment training programs for women interested in entering the trades.
2) Pre-employment programs for the construction industry should be a component of community and city colleges and vocational education programs.
For The Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training and State Apprenticeship Councils

The federal Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training registers and monitors apprenticeship programs in twenty-six states to assure standardized, high-quality training programs. In the remaining twenty-six states individual State Apprenticeship Councils register and monitor programs.

1) Enforce regulations already in existence. Budget for adequate resources to monitor compliance with these regulations.

2) Maintain up-to-date records on registered apprenticeships throughout the U.S./state, including information on attrition.

3) Allocate adequate resources to monitor apprenticeship programs and to investigate and resolve complaints.

4) Report to the public at regular intervals on numbers of women apprentices by trade and numbers of women progressing to journey level.

5) Standardize the definition of “good faith efforts”; include a series of activities to be used to recruit women. A single activity with no results should not constitute “good faith efforts.”

6) Develop a national/state outreach program for women apprentices.

7) Develop guidelines for programs to orient women to the trades.

8) Develop methods to ensure that selection criteria do not have a disparate impact on women.

9) Provide technical assistance to sponsors of apprenticeship programs to assist in recruitment and retention of women.

10) Develop and promote training of supervisors and co-workers to ensure equitable treatment for women.

11) Develop written standards of apprenticeship training to ensure equitable training for all apprentices.

12) Promote linkages between apprenticeship programs, local agencies and WORKSITE 2000 initiatives.

For the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) was set up to monitor compliance with Executive Order 11246, which establishes guidelines for federally funded contractors in construction and in service and supply. The following recommendations apply to construction contractors.

1) Enforce regulations already in existence. Budget for adequate resources to review contractors prior to bid approval, after bid award and throughout course of project.

2) Coordinate with other government agencies in their efforts to provide equitable workplaces for women.

3) On projects with budgets of $75,000,000 or more, require guidelines of WORKSITE 2000.

4) On projects with budgets of less than $75,000,000, provide technical assistance in recruiting activities, setting up an equitable worksite and supporting retention and promotion of women workers.

5) Prior to bid awards for megaprojects, review contractors’ compliance history.

6) Report to the public at regular intervals on numbers of women working on megaprojects as well as the number of hours they have worked.

7) Standardize the definition of “good faith efforts”; include a series of activities to be used to recruit women. A single activity with no results should not constitute “good faith efforts.”

8) Develop and maintain updated resources files on community-based women’s employment programs and link contractors to these resources. Ensure that contractors use resources when they have specific hiring needs.

9) Conduct semi-annual meeting with women’s organizations to exchange ideas and experiences with contractors.

10) Review all WORKSITE 2000 recommendations for inclusion in Executive Order 11246.
For Contract Language

Following are points to consider in developing contract language that meets women’s needs as well as examples of contract language.

- **Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action**

  Contracts should contain a clause that affirms an employer’s commitment to fair hiring and employment practices.

  “The employer and the Union shall not discriminate against any employee because of such employee’s race, color, religion, sex, marital or parental status, age, national origin or political beliefs.”

  All gender references (journeyman, fireman, policeman, etc.) should be replaced with gender-neutral terms (journey level, firefighter, police officer, etc.).

  Contracts should also contain language about affirmative action, including a policy statement, an affirmative action plan and the establishment of a joint union/employer affirmative action committee.

- **Pregnancy Disability**

  Under federal law, discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions is prohibited. Pregnancy-related disabilities must be treated the same as other physical disabilities.

  “Disability due to pregnancy is considered the same as illness and qualifies for sick- or disability-leave pay. An employee may take maternity leave at any time after a confirmed diagnosis of pregnancy is made by the treating physician.”

- **Maternity Leave**

  A maternity policy should include the following points:

  - A woman cannot be fired because of becoming pregnant.
  - Health care benefits should be maintained, regardless of the type of leave the pregnant worker takes (including unpaid leave).
  - A pregnant employee should not be required to use sick leave or vacation time before being able to use maternity leave.
  - A pregnant employee should not lose seniority, or eligibility for promotion due to any paid leaves or transfers to non-hazardous assignments.
  - An employee should have the option of taking unpaid leave.

- **Alternative Duty Policy**

  The most important points in designing an alternative duty policy are:

  - Alternative duty should be voluntary, not required.
  - An employee’s rate of pay should not change, although loss of holiday pay and overtime may in fact mean that an employee earns less.
  - ‘Non-hazardous duty’ should be, in fact, non-hazardous, not simply different from regular duties.
  - A pregnant woman is responsible for educating her doctor about the demands of her work.

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9 “Effective Contract Language for Union Women,” Coalition of Labor Union Women
10 Ibid.
"When a member of the department (a firefighter) is diagnosed as pregnant by her physician, it is advisable the member inform her supervisor. The Chief of the Department will then find a light duty position for the member. It is not mandatory that the member inform the supervisor or take a light duty position. It is the opinion of the department that there is a risk of causing damage to a developing fetus if it is exposed to the noxious chemicals encountered at a fire or a hazardous materials scene. At this time, it is unclear whether or not a birth defect caused by such exposure would be covered under Worker's Compensation; the department urges caution in this area.

"When a member and her treating physician decide that she can no longer work, the member will be allowed up to six weeks of administrative time with pay. If additional time is needed, the member may use her vacation and accumulated sick leave. She may apply to the Civil Service Commission for leave without pay if need be... of up to one year..."11

- **Insurance**

Insurance policies should cover all aspects of pregnancy, including abortion, and provide for extended medical coverage if an employee quits work due to pregnancy.

"The board and the bargaining agent agree to delete every exclusion or limitation on account of pregnancy or childbirth which appears in any agreement of insurance policy, applicable to all employees covered by this agreement. Employees absent on account of childbirth, or other pregnancy-related disability, shall be entitled to receive the same insurance benefits as to amount and length of time, payable as any other disability. All hospital and medical expenses, including laboratory tests, x-rays and examinations related to childbirth or pregnancy, shall be payable on the same basis as for other conditions, without exclusion or reduction because the condition is pregnancy related."12

- **Reproductive Health**

No employee should be excluded from any job because of potential damage to a fetus. Cleaning up the workplace, not excluding women, is the solution to unhealthy surroundings.

- **Family and Medical Leave**

Desirable contract language includes:

- parental leave (for both mothers and fathers), ranging from short-term leaves following the birth or adoption of a child to leaves of absence of up to two years for child rearing,
- provision of benefits (including both health and life insurance) during leave,
- accrual of seniority and pension benefits during leave,
- reinstatement to the same or an equivalent job when a leave is over,
- expansion of sick leave to cover caring for sick family members and for elders.

"... the Company will allow unpaid Family Care Leave for a total period of up to 12 months within a two-year period. The employee shall be guaranteed reinstatement at the end of each segment of the leave. The purpose of the leave shall be to care for a seriously ill family member...While on leave, benefit coverage shall continue, with benefits paid by the employer for the first six months and by the employee after that ...."13

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11 From Women in the Fire Service, Madison, Wisconsin, Pregnancy and Maternity packet
12 "Effective Contract Language for Union Women", Coalition of Labor Union Women
13 Communication Workers of America, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and American Telephone and Telegraph, from "Bargaining for Family Benefits", Coalition of Labor Union Women
Child Care

Desirable provisions include:

- a resource and referral services for child care and eldercare,
- dependent care reimbursement accounts—untaxed dollars (up to $5,000) set aside to pay for child care,
- establishment of a development fund for projects that increase community options for child and elder care needs, and
- adoption assistance ($2,000).

"... for regular full-time and regular part-time employees, a national community-based Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRS) will be engaged by the company to help employees locate, evaluate and manage quality child care for children under the age of 13." 14

Fringe Benefits

"All women employees shall be entitled to receive the same sickness and accidents benefits, as to amount and length of time payable, as women dependents who are covered under a family policy. In the insurance policies presently covering members of the bargaining unit, benefits available to women dependents covered under a family policy shall be available to women employees covered under a single policy." 15

Isolation from Other Women

"Where possible, two or more women shall be assigned to a project." 16

Sexual Harassment

Desirable provisions include:

- employer policies that detail what constitutes sexual harassment,
- clear procedures for investigating and resolving complaints,
- training for supervisory personnel in policies and procedures,
- provisions for a worksite free of sexually degrading pictures, posters, calendars and graffiti, and
- remedies for sexual harassment, including, when possible, transfer.

"The University recognizes that no employee shall be subject to sexual harassment. In this spirit it agrees to post in all work areas a statement of its commitment to this principle. Reference to sexual harassment includes any sexual attention that is unwanted. In the case of such harassment, an employee may pursue the grievance procedure for redress... If, after the grievance is settled, the employee feels unable to return to his/her job, the employee shall be entitled to transfer to an equivalent position at the same salary and grade if a vacancy then exists for which he/she is qualified." 17

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14 Communication Workers of America contract
15 “Effective Contract Language for Women”, Coalition of Labor Union Women
16 Power Contracting and Engineering Corporation, Chicago, Illinois
17 Boston University and District 65, United Auto Workers, from “Bargaining for Equality” by the Women’s Labor Project, San Francisco, CA