



# Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio

## SUMMARY

In 2022, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the [Women's Bureau](#) and funded contractor Urban Institute to conduct the *Descriptive Study of the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) Grants*. The descriptive study aimed to understand how WANTO grantees provided technical assistance, supportive services, and training opportunities to help women access nontraditional jobs. The descriptive study is included under the broader DOL Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio, a research initiative conducted by the Urban Institute and its partners to better understand several federal apprenticeship expansion efforts.

This research report provides background on women's labor market experiences and opportunities in apprenticeships and nontraditional occupations in the United States to provide context for the forthcoming descriptive study of the 2020 and 2021 WANTO grants. The report also summarizes the planned activities of the grantees, the key features of their programs, and the main topic areas to be included in the descriptive study. Future briefs produced under this evaluation will include findings from analysis of interviews focused on the perspectives of WANTO grant directors, grant staff, partners, and pre-apprentices.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the annual learning agenda process to determine the DOL's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [employment and training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following key takeaways emerged from the analysis and can inform future efforts:

- Women remain underrepresented in apprenticeships, despite their numbers increasing over time. Childcare and harassment are among the top barriers to retention of women in registered apprenticeship programs.
- The share of women apprentices was lower than men for the age group 16 to 34 but was higher than men's share for the age groups older than 35 years old, including 5 percent of women apprentices ages 55 and older.
- Pre-apprenticeship programs include a larger share of women than in apprenticeship programs. This suggests that pre-apprenticeships may provide a more open and representative pathway for women to access apprenticeship and employment in non-traditional occupations.



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Continued areas of focus in the descriptive study include the following:

- **The different training models used by grantees to deliver pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and non-traditional occupational training programs to women**, including women-only cohorts.
- **The strategies used to recruit and retain women from historically underrepresented communities**, including but not limited to women of color, women with disabilities, women at or below the federal poverty line, formerly incarcerated women, immigrant women, transgender women, and women who live in rural geographic areas. The study will also document supportive services and whether grantees provide employers and other partners with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) technical assistance.
- **The engagement of grant partners**, who support efforts to increase the number of women in apprenticeships and nontraditional occupations.
- **Promising practices that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic**, and are expected to continue post-pandemic.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

**TIMEFRAME:** 2022-2024  
**SUBMITTED BY:** Urban Institute  
**DATE PREPARED:** August 2023

**PARTNER AGENCY:** Women's Bureau  
**SPONSOR:** Chief Evaluation Office  
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