

WomenBuild Graduation Spotlights Need for Women in Construction Trades

NEWARK, NJ- July 19, 2011. New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (NJISJ) held a graduation ceremony for the WomenBuild Program on July 19, 2011 in the PSE&G Building in downtown Newark. During the ceremony, ten extraordinary women received certificates confirming their completion of this pre-apprenticeship program. Cornell William Brooks, Esq., the Executive Director of NJISJ, remarked that “Programs such as this one which provides hard-working people with an opportunity to overcome their past setbacks are far too rare in our society. However, this a great occasion to applaud a tenacious group of women who grasped on to this opportunity and would not be deterred from reaching their goals.”

The New Jersey Department of Labor awarded NJISJ and the Hispanic Family Center each with a \$300,000 grant to develop and run a pilot program to serve women in Newark and Camden, respectively. The initiative serves low-income and low-skilled women, including those returning home from incarceration, by preparing them for entry into construction trades and nontraditional occupations. The graduation marked the end of the first cohort of WomenBuild, but NJISJ expects to train another cohort of women in the coming months.

The WomenBuild Program is a skilled-trades work opportunity initiative, specifically designed for women and those returning home from incarceration in Essex and Camden counties. Opportunities such as this are critically important because women entering non-traditional occupations, like construction, can earn 20-30% more than women in many typical "women's trades."

Albert Williams, who serves as NJISJ Director of Workforce Development said “Over the last 8 weeks, I have watched this group of women develop new academic skills, complete a rigorous life skills and job readiness course, and most importantly, transform their personal perceptions as it relates to their employment opportunities. I congratulate each graduate for a job well done.”

Several prominent officials were in attendance at the WomenBuild graduation, including Commissioner Harold J. Wirths from New Jersey Department of Labor; Marty Schwartz, President of Essex County Building Trades Council and Peter Coccoziello, President and CEO of Advance Realty.

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