

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Office of the Director

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WIC Email Address: wic@dir.ca.govDirector's Office Website: https://www.dir.ca.gov/directors_office.html**Women in Construction Advisory Committee****MINUTES OF MEETING****Thursday, May 21, 2026**

Via Tele/Videoconference

In Attendance:**DIR Staff**

Mark Chekal, Director's Office (OD)
Vanessa Soto, Office of Legislative and
Regulatory Affairs (OLRA)
Jamie Mather, Division of Apprenticeship
Standards (DAS)
Richard Robles, DAS
Cruz, DAS
Jeanne-Mairie Duval, DAS
Romae Aquino, DAS
Michele Grubbs, Division of Occupational
Safety and Health (DOSH)
Lisa Harris, Office of External Affairs (OEA)
Alisa Xiong, OEA
Frank Polizzi, OEA
Michelle Yoon, OEA
Nicole Wehling, OEA
Erica Chovva Ruiz, OEA
Sonja Sonnenburg, Division of Labor Standards
Enforcement (DLSE)

Committee Members

Ashley Matthews, ValleyBuild - Fresno Regional
Workforce Development Board
Carlos Torres, Women in Non-Traditional
Employment Roles (WINTER)
Kasie Bowden, Hensel Phelps Contractors
Maria Coronado, Southwest Regional Council of
Carpenters
Meg Vasey, National Taskforce on
Tradewomen's Issues
Rashida Harmon, CA Civil Rights Department
Sheri Learmonth, Marina Mechanical

Non-members

Juanita Douglas, Tradeswomen, Inc.
Margaret Hanlon-Gradie, Legislative Women's
Caucus
Enrique Lopezlira, UC Berkeley Labor Center
Kris Georgeson
Alexandra Torres Galancid

I. Welcome and Introductions

- A. Introductory remarks and roll call by the Director's Office. Quorum is reached.
- B. Mark Chekal reminds members attending remotely that they must visibly appear on camera during the meeting.
- C. Remote members are asked individually to disclose if any other adults are in the room with them and the general nature of their relationship.
- D. Mark introduces Jamie Mather, the new Assistant Chief of DAS, Apprenticeship Operations. Jamie will supervise DAS' work related to the building and fire trades, in addition to funding, human resources, and grants such as ERiCA.
- E. Committee member Ashley Matthews notes this will be her last WIC meeting. Mark and WIC committee members thank her for her dedicated service on the committee.

II. Approval of November 2025 WIC, January 2026 Resources Subcommittee, and January 2026 Workplan Subcommittee meeting minutes

- A. Motion passed approving the minutes from the November committee meeting and the two January subcommittee meetings.

III. WIC Workplan

- A. Report from Workplan Subcommittee
 - Ashley Matthews provides an overview of the revised workplan, which summarizes the points raised at the January Workplan Subcommittee meeting and contains deliverables with measurable outcomes for WIC.
 - The first objective is: Increase opportunities for women, non-binary, and underserved populations to train for construction careers with greater access to DAS pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships.
 - Role of WIC: Continue to evaluate successful vs. unsuccessful apprenticeship and -pre-apprenticeship programs. Continue to develop program recommendations.
 - Action plan: Have DAS present results from ERiCA Round 1 and 2 (which funded work on worksite culture) such as numbers served, demographics, and lessons learned. Ask an ERiCA grantee to present current programs and projects.
 - Outcomes: WIC would evaluate and provide continuous feedback on best practices for the programs, which would ultimately improve the quality of women and non-binary participants' experiences.
 - a. Committee members note WIC's obligation to elicit answers to the committee's questions as much as possible at the meetings. They asked if the August WIC meeting could include an update by DAS and suggested a visual or template for the committee to respond to. Ashley says she can share an example of a visual.
 - b. Romae notes that DAS can plan to provide further analysis by the fall. The grantees' performance period does not end until June 30th.
 - c. Jamie shares that, as of Dec 2025, ERiCA childcare grantees have a completion rate of 67% for apprenticeship programs. The rate is 77% for pre-apprentices which is higher than the typical completion rate.
 - d. Mark proposes changing February deadlines on the plan to May since the February WIC meeting was cancelled.
 - e. Jamie says that DAS can provide a fuller update at the August meeting and answer any additional questions from the committee may have. Mark tells the committee members to send any questions to him or the WIC inbox.
 - f. Meg requests support from staff in navigating the DAS completions dashboard.

- The second objective is: Create marketing strategies to invite more women, non-binary, and underserved populations interested in a career in the building/construction industry.
 - Action plan: Have OEA and DAS present updates and best practices from their strategic marketing efforts, including creating materials and sharing events.
 - WIC's role is to review the materials and evaluate strategies. The desired outcomes are to keep a continuous feedback loop between WIC and DIR, ensuring the messages reach the desired populations.
- The third objective is: Target outreach and networking with contractors and employers to address any concerns around hiring women, non-binary, or underserved apprentices.
 - This objective focuses specifically on the ERiCA grant's worksite culture component. WIC's role is to provide DAS and OEA with recommendations on contractor engagement. The Resources Subcommittee meets more specifically on this topic.
 - Action plan: Have DAS present each quarter on current contractor outreach and engagement efforts, as well as future engagement opportunities.
 - The hope is to have a contractor committed to the goals of ERiCA present at a WIC meeting. The goal is to increase the use of best practices for hiring of women and non-binary populations, with WIC providing feedback to make the programs better.
 - Mark notes that ideally, WIC members can help identify potential speakers. The committee needs to discuss opening up nominations for the next Women in Construction Advisory Committee, including factors such as Ashley's departure and a desire to have more employer representation on WIC.
 - a. Committee members discuss the need to involve both contractors and unions in addressing worksite culture. One member notes that unions are a major driver of culture. Another member says that the contractors ultimately hold control over worksites.
 - b. Members suggest speakers such as one of DAS' future Employer Ambassadors. Another idea is to invite contractors that hire a lot of women, as well as JATCs.
 - c. A committee member notes their mixed experience with JATCs on retention and support for women in construction. He suggests ways to highlight model employers, including spotlighting them on the DAS website.
 - d. Another committee member mentions the need for more women and non-binary individuals in the field before retention can be a focus. She believes that contractors need to be engaged in the conversation on worksite culture.
- The fourth and overall objective is: Increase the number of women, non-binary, and underserved populations in construction apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships.
 - Action plan: DAS to present an overall picture of enrollment and completion rates compared to past data. WIC would evaluate whether the work has been effective and make recommendations for future grant cycles.
 - A committee member says it's important for the workplan to specifically address the challenges of pre-apprentices going into apprenticeships. Ashley agrees to add an additional bullet point to the action plan for DAS to present on the numbers of pre-apprentices to apprentices.

B. Adoption of WIC Workplan

- Motion passed to adopt the WIC workplan as amended with the changed February dates and additional bullet point. Mark notes the revisions will be posted for review at the August WIC meeting.

IV. WIC evaluation update

- A. Enrique Lopezlira provides updates on goals presented November 2025 on three fronts: quantitative and qualitative aspects of the evaluation of ERiCA grantees, as well as engagement w/ grantees.
- Quantitative:
 - Goal is to determine whether data shows increased participation and completion by women and non-binary individuals in construction apprenticeships from ERiCA intervention. UCB Labor Center team has become familiar with DAS registration data. The team has built a codebook, basic descriptive analysis to look at demographics, and completion and retention rates.
 - The team worked w/ DAS to link Round 1 and Round 2 data to see impact of childcare on recruitment and retention.
 - Focus on retention first, completion rate second because of how long it takes to complete an apprenticeship.
 - Not able to do full causal study because ERiCA program is a policy w/ dynamic heterogenous treatment effects meaning participants not receiving same treatment, difficult to draw conclusions.
 - Qualitative:
 - Goal is to understand beyond the numbers how ERiCA grant has impacted women and non-binary individuals in construction apprenticeship.
 - Identifying strategies that are working, persistent barriers, effective conditions
 - Team is pending approval from the UC Berkeley's Institutional Review Board to begin reaching out to and scheduling interviews w/ grantees and currently developing protocols for focus groups to submit for review.
 - Engagement w/ grantees:
 - The UC Berkeley Labor Center team launched monthly ERiCA office hours.
 - a. In March, two orientation sessions were held.
 - b. In April, the first two office hour sessions were held; a recurring theme from both sessions was a strong interest in practical tools for data collection so that grantees could assess their own program for effectiveness.
 - c. May's two office hours were designed based on previous feedback to focus on survey design and practical evaluation tools.
 - d. There will be two office sessions monthly through the end of the contract.
 - Meg Vasey asks if the committee could have access to the quantitative data updates during these committee meetings. Enrique clarifies that the updates are regarding preparation and that they have not done quantitative analysis.

V. DAS Employer Ambassador Program

- A. Jeanne-Mairie Duval presents information regarding newly launched DAS Employer Ambassador Program to recognize employers that are advocates of apprenticeship, w/ two tracks:
- Traditional Champions: must pay prevailing wages on public works projects, have employed at least 20 apprentices, and are in good standing w/ all DIR divisions and CSLB. Weigh heavier employers who attract and retain women in construction.
 - Emerging Leaders: employ apprentices in an emerging industry apprenticeship program outside of the building and construction trades, employ minimum of 3 active apprentices, at least 10 total apprentices trained, have wages at or above ETP level, in good standing w/ DIR divisions.
 - Nominations are open from March to July 1, 2026. If selected, ambassadors will serve 2-year terms, receive statewide recognition and media exposure, experience networking

and mentorship opportunities, and will be allowed to use a digital DAS ambassador badge. DIR webpage on the ambassador program to nominate employers has full requirements.

- B. Meg Vasey mentions the Rosie the Riveter Trust Certification Award which is a rigorous program w/ different levels of certifications for contractors that highlight women in trades.

VI. Creative material presentation

- A. Frank Polizzi presents materials from the ad campaign that ran from March 27 to May 15, 2026, including an electronic billboard shown during the NCAA Women's March Madness Tournament, Google search results, and digital and social media ads that received over 28,000 clicks. Data is preliminary as the campaign recently ended.
 - Because the contract w/ the current vendor is ending, OEA is currently reviewing proposals for a new vendor and contract that will start in June and relaunch the WIC campaign for 3 years.
 - OEA is also working w/ vendor Dun & Bradstreet on targeted digital ads towards employers.
 - Meg asks about the dollar value of the new contract for oversight and budget tracking purposes. Frank states that the WIC portion is \$250k per year, estimates 10-15% towards company staff time, w/ the remainder towards purchasing ads. Meg would like the full report on the recently ended campaign at the August 2026 WIC meeting.
 - Kasey Bowden asks if "how did you hear about us" questions when signing up for apprenticeships can include these ads as a possible response; Frank says this is something that can be considered but would require coordination w/ different orgs.

VII. Women in Construction upcoming events

- A. Review posted calendar (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/WomenInConstruction/Women-in-Construction.html>)
 - Michelle Yoon and Nicole Wehling share the Women in Construction webpage; Nicole says that OEA maintains the page and continually update sections on current/upcoming events, archived events, and campaign materials and toolkit. Frank shares that grantees have provided positive feedback regarding the archived events page.
 - Ashley Matthews inquires how to submit events. Nicole says to email OEA or DAS w/ information on the event, and they will post the event within a few days.
 - Meg Vasey points out that events require scrolling further down the page. Frank mentions that the DIR website is currently being redesigned.
- B. Committee members share upcoming events
 - No upcoming events were shared.

VIII. Public comment (limited to three minutes per person)

- A. Alexandra Torres Galancid, Executive Director of the Workforce Equity Lab, states that pre-apprenticeship training is essential but not a sufficient measure of success. Retention must be treated as a primary investment not a secondary outcome. Women leave due to inconsistent support systems. Retention strategies must be intentionally designed into the work plan including a structured, union-based mentorship, peer support and early interventions. A strong workplan should measure success by how many women reach journey-level status which requires transparent pathways, equitable access to training, and diverse, inclusive workplace practices. Recruitment, retention, and advancement are most effective when integrated.
 - Meg Vasey brings up Assembly Bill 2550 which, if passed, would require the Employment Development Department to collect data on women in the construction industry which

will better track retention.

- B. Kris Georgeson suggests leaning on apprenticeship programs which should have connections w/ contractors. They are interested in becoming more involved with this committee.

IX. Wrap-up & Adjourn

- A. Mark mentions that the committee is seeking new members. Next meeting set for Thursday, August 20, 2026.

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