

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Office of the Director

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Via Tele/Videoconference

In Attendance:**DIR Staff**

Mark Chekal, Policy Advisor, Director's Office

Adele Burnes, Chief, Division of Apprenticeship

Standards (DAS)

Jamie Mather, Assistant Chief, DAS

Cruz, DAS

Raul Galvan, DAS

Richard Robles, DAS

Romae Aquino, DAS

Luong Chau, Labor Commissioner's Office (LCO)

Theresa Bichsel, LCO

Lisa Harris, Office of External Affairs (OEA)

Derek Moore, OEA

Erica Chovva Ruiz, OEA

Frank Polizzi, OEA

Nicole Wehling, OEA

Vanessa Soto, Office of Legislative and

Regulatory Affairs (OLRA)

UC Berkeley Labor Center

Enrique Lopezlira

Laura Watson

Nari Rhee

Pamela Egan

Committee Members

Carlos Torres, Women in Non-Traditional

Employment Roles (WINTER)

Erin Glenn, CA Civil Rights Department

Julia Hatton, Rising Sun Center for Opportunity

Mary Teicher, Teichert Construction

Meg Anne Pryor, Northern California Operating

Engineers Local 3

Meg Vasey, National Taskforce on Tradeswomen's

Issues

Sheri Learmonth, Marina Mechanical

Non-members

Alexandra Torres Galancid, Workforce Equity Lab

Juanita Douglas, Tradeswomen, Inc.

Kris Georgeson, Associated Builders and

Contractors of Southern California

Margaret Hanlon-Gradie, Legislative Women's Caucus

Marlin Jeffreys, Rising Sun Center for Opportunity

Yuhi Aizawa Combatti, Associated General

Contractors of California

- I. Welcome & Introductions/roll call**
 - A. Introductory remarks and roll call from Mark Chekal
 - B. Quorum reached
- II. Edit and readoption of Committee workplan**
 - A. Proposed workplan adopted w/ one revision to clarify one action plan item w/ no due date as ongoing.
- III. Adoption of Meeting Minutes**
 - A. Meeting minutes adopted
- IV. UCB Evaluation Update**

Enrique Lopezlira and Nari Rhee from the UC Berkeley (UCB) Labor Center present updates on their evaluation of ERiCA Round 2 and provide recommendations on data collection for future rounds.

 - A. UCB is currently interviewing grantees, anticipates completion by end of September w/ plans for follow-up interviews in the spring. UCB is currently in the planning stage for focus groups and adding in-depth interviews (when participant pools are not large enough for focus groups) and hope to launch these focus groups and interviews by the end of the year.
 - Goal is to identify recruitment pools e.g. childcare by working closely w/ grantees and whether apprentices and pre-apprentices experienced interventions e.g. childcare stipends, leadership training, mentorship programs and/or enrolled after recruitment activities.
 - Julia Hatton and Carlos Torres mention that their organizations can connect UCB w/ potential participants but have not been made aware of such opportunities.
 - Meg Vasey suggests UCB should work more closely w/ DAS to identify sources of potential participants; Mark clarifies that UCB already meets w/ DAS monthly and has brought up that DAS cannot directly appeal to grantees because participation in interviews or focus groups is not a condition of the ERiCA Grant.
 - B. UCB recommends moving towards standardized reporting and structured responses
 - e. g. dropdowns where it makes sense while keeping narrative/text responses where context is important; reducing collection of duplicate demographic data that DAS already has; and building a consistent linkage strategy that links a person's ERiCA interventions w/ their apprenticeship records and follows their outcomes over time. Another recommendation is collecting information needed to evaluate impact.
 - f. Meg Vasey asks if the California Cradle-to-Career Data System can address these recommendations; Adele provides a brief explanation of this data system that links public education and workforce/employment data but is unsure if the data system addresses items raised by UCB.
- V. ERiCA Budget update; Committee to give feedback on ERiCA Round 3**
 - A. Budget update by Adele Burns, DAS Chief
 - This fiscal year, the DAS Women in Construction Priority Unit will receive \$14.9 million from the general fund and a mental health-related fund, which may impact

the ERiCA grant's structure in the future. The ERiCA Round 3 solicitation will come out in fiscal year 2026-27.

- The State will provide \$20 million for California Apprenticeship Council (CAC) training funds, the same amount as last year. DAS will have two new positions focusing on evaluation and registration of building trades pre-apprenticeships.

B. Facilitation of feedback for ERiCA Round 3

- Adele notes that the ERiCA grant's goal is to increase the number of women, non-binary, and underrepresented populations in construction. DAS has a survey available through August to gather feedback on ERiCA Round 2 to inform the design of Round 3. Staff have sent the survey link out to WIC committee members.
- Mary Teichert says ERiCA outcomes from are showing childcare grant funding going to men, who are already well-represented in construction. She asks if there are ways to make the grantee organizations work harder to reach women with these funds. She suggests holding a grant recipient focus group to get their suggestions.
 - Adele notes Prop 209 does not allow funding to be set aside for specific groups, such as women. In a past round of ERiCA, DAS required the childcare grantees to also work on proactive recruitment and outreach. She recognizes that many types of supports are needed to get a well-represented construction industry, but the inability to target resources remains a barrier.
- Meg Vasey says she'd like to see preliminary grantee results and quantitative data from ERiCA Round 2 before DAS publishes another solicitation. She has not seen data on the influence of childcare funding on women's retention and thinks this info is necessary to gauge ERiCA's impact. She had hoped the orgs receiving childcare funding would focus on recruitment pools with many women apprentices and pre-apprentices.
 - Adele notes Round 2 data is not available yet as the work is still mid-cycle. DAS plans to share midpoint data at the next WIC meeting. DAS has gotten feedback from the UC Berkeley researchers and is gathering insights via the survey to shape the solicitation. The evaluation on the ERiCA Grant's impact on worksite culture will not be completed until at least a year later. For now, the DAS Tableau dashboard has info showing retention rates by gender.
- Participants noted additional challenges for women and non-binary individuals going into construction:
 - Less interest by women in having children so the childcare funding may not be appealing
 - Age limitations on childcare grants - Some women may be interested in pursuing an apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship, but their children are age 13+
 - Lack of affordable ways to get to work
 - Limited outreach which means women who would succeed in the construction field do not know about potential opportunities
- For ERiCA Round 3, Meg suggested wording that requests potential grantee organizations recruit and prioritize (but not restrict to) low-wage parents, heads of households, and previous TANF recipients. These could potentially overlap with

the underserved populations.

- Carlos Torres says that his organization tried to recruit a formerly incarcerated individual who is a co-parent. The individual did not qualify for ERiCA funding as a non-primary caregiver. Adele says her team will take another look as she doesn't recall this being a requirement on the ERiCA application.

VI. New marketing contract update

- A. Nikki Wehling, Creative Services Manager shares that while there are no current updates on the WIC marketing campaign, the DIR Office of External Affairs (OEA) has on-boarded a new paid media vendor called Civilian Inc. They will focus on WIC after DIR's heat illness prevention and wildfire safety outreach efforts end this summer. OEA will present campaign updates at a later WIC meeting. OEA is updating the WIC website with separate pages aimed at employers and workers.
- B. Discussion
 - Mary asks: In terms of getting more women into construction, could there be a working group/roundtable of employers sharing about practices that have worked or not worked? She recently attended an eye-opening gathering of 40 women craft workers who talked about their experiences in the industry.
 - Mark notes that some ERiCA grantees are creating toolkits and guidance aimed at employers. He suggests including those efforts in a future presentation at the midpoint review of ERiCA Round 2. Mary says she would appreciate it if state staff can connect her with these organizations if they think it would be appropriate.
 - Meg comments that she found the recent CAC meeting disconcerting as she thought some grantees seemed to be taking a long time to get started. She suggests better sharing of best practices, innovative processes, and what has been tried in the past in California, as well as other locales. This may be helpful for those involved in ERiCA in addition to employers who care about the goals of ERiCA but aren't currently connected to the grant. She says it's important for these kinds of practices to be uplifted publicly.
 - Mary adds that it's crucial to listen to women down in the craft ranks talk about the real worksite culture-related issues they face. For example, she recently heard that while a construction site may have specific restrooms for women, it's hard for women workers to get transportation there without singling themselves out. She hopes that there can be new tangible solutions to worksite culture issues without necessarily waiting for new legislation to catch up.
 - Adele says that she appreciates that WIC members are advising about and providing ideas on achieving the broader goals of WIC.
 - Jamie Mather, DAS Assistant Chief, says he thinks focus groups are a great idea. He asks if the WIC Workplan encapsulates this as it can to inform both DAS' planning for the ERiCA Round 3 RFP and the general approach used by the Women in Construction unit.
 - Mark says that on the topic of having timely reporting-back of best practices (in order to be adapted), he likes the idea of webinars, opportunities to learn from grantees, and learning from efforts in other states.
 - Erin Glenn from the CA Civil Rights Department says in her experience, industry

adapting best practices is a good way to later get those practices written into law. She encourages efforts that are fair, non-discriminatory, and uplifting for people who currently face barriers to health and safety in their workplaces.

- Mary says she would appreciate further brainstorming about improving worksite culture and normalizing employer practices that would help all workers feel they belong on the job site.
- Sheri Learmonth mentions having industry/employer contacts who may be interested in this type of discussion.

VII. Committee organization

- A. Staff will review the legislation authorizing the creation of WIC. The legislation stipulates certain categories of representation on the committee. There will be a presentation at the next meeting.
- B. Mark notes that WIC membership is under the DIR Director's authority and he has heard there is a need for more representation of employers. He raised the possibility of an attendance requirement for WIC members.
- C. Committee members can reach out to him to suggest potential members.
- D. Meg Vasey says the committee should consider including journeyworkers. Due to contractors' unwillingness to pay for journeyworkers' meeting time, their buy-in would be necessary.

VIII. Agenda items for next meeting

- A. The next WIC meeting will include the agenda items specified in the WIC workplan. Mark encourages committee members to email him suggested agenda items.

IX. Public Comment (limited to three minutes per person)

- A. Alexandra Torres Galancid: Workforce Equity Lab is proud to be an ERiCA grantee. Access is insufficient without systems, supports, and a cultural shift. We are launching the Trace Women and Infrastructure Support Network to provide mentorship, job opportunities, referrals, skills development, wellness resources, and support for women to advance in construction, not just stay. We must invest in retention, worksite culture, and long-term support. Training opens the door. Retention turns opportunities into lasting careers.
- B. Kris Georgeson: My organization is an ERiCA grantee and we are excited for Round 3. We took some months to research on what works. It was hard to get a hold of other grantees. Different women need different things. Dealing with worksite culture is critically important for recruitment. I appreciate DAS staff's work to ensure grantees succeed and understand the grant.
- C. Yuhi Aizawa Combatti: Associated General Contractors of California is an ERiCA grantee. We've maintained a 51-52% percentage of women served by the childcare grant and can chat with those who would like to know more about our approach to serving women. Is it possible for the RFP language to encourage more of a focus on women by incentivizing a higher percentage of women served?

X. Adjourn Wrap-up & Meeting Adjourn

- A. Mark encourages participation in the ERiCA Round 2 feedback survey. If anyone has feedback after the end of the survey in August, they are welcome to contact DAS to share.
- B. Meeting is adjourned.

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