Increasing Access to High Road Jobs Through Contractor Supports

Bay Area Residential Decarb
Rising Sun - Building career pathways for economic equity
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Jordan Ackerman - Senior Policy & Public Affairs Manager CTWI (Construction Trades Workforce Initiative)
Shannon Hickman - Program Director for the National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMR)
Len D. Turner - Program Executive/Co-founder of Construction Resource Center

- This partnership developed the Job Quality Labor Standards Toolkit
    - Wages and benefits
    - Training and certification
    - Targeted and regional hire
    - Uplifting disadvantaged contractors
    - Compliance and accountability
- Contractor Support Resource Guide/Plan
    - Strengthen the contractor support ecosystem, ensure adequate funding
        - Better uplift contractors, etc.
- BIPOC women make up 11.3-14% of all construction payroll jobs but even less work directly with “the tools”
- High Roads standards are frequently modified to include solutions to complaints that arise
- Barriers for BIPOC women and disadvantaged contractors
    - Union pathways, limited access to capital, lack of access to project information and partnership opportunities,
    - Barriers reflect lack of access, not lack of capability
- It is important to support BIPOC women because they are typically head of household
- Access to competitive employment/ economic justice
- Talent sharing/ value add
- Economic justice/ benefits
- Community investment/ impact
- Support Structures
    - Comprehensive training program
    - Cost-effective training
    - Networking & business development component
    - Inclusive leadership
    - Accessible training programs with flexible delivery methods
    - Job placement/ Construct the acquisition process/ after training
    - Soft-skills training

    - Inclusive work environment
- What equitable access looks like
    - True collaborative approach
    - Policy language requiring support
    - Intentional support
    - Easy, transparent access to contracting pipelines
    - Systems that adapt to contractors pipelines
    - Accountability for inclusive outcomes
    - Targeted technical assistance , capital pathways, and partnership development
- Contractor plan and resource guide
    - Provides clear and practical tool, contracyor and BIPOC populations to grow, compete, and access opportunities
    - Organizes the core services of the collaborating partners into an actionable framework
    - Advances the work group's commitment to advocacy, education, access, and economic empowerment
    - Reduces confusion, supports administrative efficiency, and improves access to high-road work
- Case Study: City of Berkeley, Just Transition Pilot Program
    - Challenge
        - Balancing multiple goals
            - Climate goals
            - Equity goals
            - Workforce goals
            - Contractor capacity building goals
    - High-road contractors participated when labor standards created a fair and competitive environment
    - Demonstrated
        - Higher productivity
        - Greater workforce scalability
        - Capacity to deliver more work in
    - Key takeaways
        - Labor standards create better outcomes
        - High road contractors deliver better value
        - Contractor support is core implementation
        - Market certainty drives contractor engagement
- Key recommendations for policymakers
    - Ensuring long term accountability
    - Integrate equity and contractor support outcomes
    - Prerequisite to program finalization

- Access to cash flow financing
    - Reduce immediate financial burdens on contractors
    - Rebate payment can be delayed long after work is completed
- Business management support
    - Facilitate business connections and peer networks
- Continued technical support education
    - Fund and facilitate access to continued technical education
- Access benefits and insurance
    - Support access to health insurance

Increasing Access to High Road Jobs Through Contractor Supports Notes #2 - Justin Skootsky

Panel Introductions

Jordan Ackerman - Construction Trades Workforce Initiative (CTWI)
Shannon Hickman - National Association of Minority Contractors - Northern California Chapter
Len Turner - Construction Resource Center (CRC)
Sneha Ayyagari - Rising Sun Center for Opportunity

All panelists are members of High Road Training Partnership (HRTP). It has been 5 years since they started this effort.

They have developed 2 resources:

1. Published a Contractor Supports Plan & Resource Guide for what is needed to support contractors in the long-term
    - A collaborative effort involving more than 20 organizations across the 9 San Francisco Bay Area counties
    - It was put together intentionally across barriers with the long-term vision as a key pillar of the guide.
    - Another core aim is diversity in the union trades to bring women, veteran, former-incarcerated, and other underrepresented groups into the trades
2. Airtable catalogue of existing support orgs + Flyers to share and streamline the dissemination of high road information

They encourage the adoption of their "high road standards" as their experience shows that adopting these standards lead to better outcomes (e.g., economic, equity, contractor development, etc.)

Their standards help existing union signatory and non-union contractors.

Their guide also provides solutions to address known barriers and sources of disparity, especially with BIPOC and women, when accessing High Road decarbonization jobs (e.g., early access to project info, apprenticeship entry, access to benefits & insurance, continued education, etc.).

The barriers don't reflect on talent and ability, they reflect support and access issues in allowing BIPOC and women-led contractors to perform the capabilities that are asked of them.

Fair wage jobs feed 3-5 people in a family, so looking at unlocking wage growth in the industry also unlocks support for 3-5x people and family-sustaining careers. This is based on relationship building and trust in the construction industry, which leads to follow-on work and opportunities.

So what are the support structures?
Affordable and relevant training (e.g., cultural competency training to help orgs better engage with diverse contractors)

And what does equitable access require?
Policy development is required in parallel with performance measures to track efficacy of supports. So equitable access does not happen by accident. It is a concerted effort that is monitored through measurable key performance indicators.

City of Berkeley Case Study - Rebuilding Together East Bay Network was the lead for this study

- Launched a pilot electrification program to put the high road standards to practice in a residential retrofit construction.
- Lead time was given, through a pre-RFP process, to provide contractors the technical assistance to come up the curve to meet high road standards for this program (e.g. connections to a certified payroll provider to handle medical

contributions, connections to existing contractors who have done high road work before, etc.)

Priorities

1. Contractor participation
2. Job Quality

Key Takeaways:

1. Barriers were not related to labor standards, but rather limited experience of contractors to prevailing wage and public sector projects.
2. Representation of contractors was across both union signatory and non-union contractors. Both paid prevailing wages and benefits, but union signatory had an advantage through their familiarity of public sector projects, capacity to handle back-office administrative loads, and access to workers to scale up and scale down quickly.

Concluding thought:

Long term transition of contractors to high road also depends on long-term consistent access to programs that will incentivize them that it's worth the effort.

Small Group Breakout

Residential Decarbonization Project - Based on fictitious Ccecio City

4 groups:

1. Access to Cashflow Financing
    - In the short term: Use new policy to pay contractors mobilization money
    - For the long term: Use staff time to build partnerships with community development financial institutions (CDFIs)
2. Business Management Support
    - Use a shared-cost pool of construction business center services and in-person information desk
3. Continued tech education
4. Access to benefits and insurance