

Oregon Tradeswomen's Mission

Building women's economic independence since 1989, Oregon Tradeswomen is dedicated to promoting success for women in the trades through education, leadership, and mentorship.

Oregon Tradeswomen's Impact

Since 2004, Oregon Tradeswomen has helped approximately 100 women per year learn the skills they need to compete in the construction trades through our seven week, state-certified pre-apprenticeship training program. The program is offered at no charge. On average, more than 80 percent of our graduates enter apprenticeships that lead to high wage, family supporting careers in the "blue collar" trades: construction, mechanical, highway, and utility trades.

Our annual Career Fair, entering its 26th year, educates thousands of girls and women about trades career opportunities. Oregon Tradeswomen's state and local advocacy has helped to introduce workforce equity policies that support the success of diverse women and men of color in construction. Today, Oregon boasts more than twice the national average rate of female trades apprentices because of Oregon Tradeswomen's consistent work within the industry.

History of Women in the Trades

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| 1942 | During WWII, images of Rosie the Riveter and other government-led initiatives encouraged women to work in war industries. |
| 1945 | WWII ends and women were pushed out of the industrial trades through discrimination and social pressure. |
| 1972 | Title IX allows for women to enter into shop and mechanical classes in public education. |
| 1978 | President Carter signs an Executive Order forcing apprenticeship programs to open their doors to women. |
| 1981 | A small support group led by four tradeswomen—an elevator constructor, two carpenters and an operating engineer – is formed in Portland, OR. |
| 1989 | Oregon Tradeswomen Network is founded on the principles that women deserve and can attain economic self-sufficiency through pursuing careers in the building, mechanical, electrical, and utility trades while helping, and encouraging the trades to build a diverse workforce. |
| 1999 | Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit |
| 2004 | OTI's Trades Apprenticeship and Career (TAC) Class becomes a state-certified pre-apprenticeship program. |
| Today | OTI works to recruit, train, place and retain women in trades careers; encourages middle and high school age girls to learn about options for trades careers; and addresses broader issues of economic opportunity and labor policy at the city, state and national level. |