

Pay Equity for Women Filling Labor Shortage in Construction Industry

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While the country's construction industry is booming, with around \$1 trillion in new projects, 79 percent of construction companies nationwide reported the need to hire more employees to meet the demand.

With high demand and low supply, it is a prime time for women to fill that labor gap. CNBC reported that women make up only 9.1 percent of America's construction workers. Noticing the opportunity, local governments have launched programs to encourage women to join the construction industry. For example, city officials in Boston approved an ordinance earlier this year aimed at increasing the hiring of local women on construction jobs. Billboards featuring women working on local casino sites went up along the interstate. Casino companies and the state's Gaming Commission are among the sponsors behind the campaign.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women in the construction industry earn 97 cents (the U.S. average is 80 cents) for every dollar a man earns. While the difference is relatively slight, the federal Equal Pay Act prohibits businesses from paying employees of one gender less than the other for equal work. The law allows exceptions for wages determined by a merit or seniority system, a system that bases pay on the quantity or quality of work, or "a differential based on any other factor than sex."

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