

# Survey Provides Recommendations for Recruiting, Retention in Construction Industry Using DEI Initiatives

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The “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Design and Construction” [report](#) from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and Dodge Construction Network (DCN) highlights the benefits for construction employers that engage in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts and provides recommendations for recruiting and retention using DEI initiatives.

The report states that construction companies with high or moderate engagement with DEI practices have, among other benefits:

- A more inclusive and positive workplace culture;
- Improved reputations for industry leadership;
- Increased access to skilled labor;
- Increased collaboration onsite, increased safety on projects;
- Increased productivity; and
- Better worker and staff retention.

## Construction Companies Engagement With DEI

According to the report, of the surveyed companies:

- 54% have embraced training programs that promote DEI
  - 28% consider DEI when selecting other team members and trade partners
  - 39% have a code of ethics that have a DEI focus
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- 24% have leadership training for all staff members
  - 14% have leadership that devoted resources to encourage diversity
  - 19% have recruitment programs that extend beyond policies with nondiscrimination language
  - 19% have a formal path for advancement that considers leadership diversity
  - 25% provide training on unconscious bias
  - 21% seek to engage underrepresented populations (including through training and mentorship)

## **GSA/DCN Recommendations for Recruiting**

The report recommends the following recruitment practices:

- Improve recruiting among women and people of color by using recognized pre-apprenticeships. These are 5-to-10-week programs that provide basic skills and information about how to find work, tips to succeed, and how to navigate the industry.
- Improve opportunities for minority-owned businesses. These are the businesses most likely to train minority workers.
- Improve opportunities for existing minority workers. The lack of mobility hurts retention of minority employees and deters potential new workers from joining.

## **GSA/DCN Recommendations for Retention**

The report recommends the following retention practices:

- Support women and minorities while changing the workplace culture to prevent harassment and ensure they have access to opportunities and to develop their skillset.
- Create programs to provide mentorship and facilitating connections for resources, including tools, protective equipment, clothing, childcare subsidies, and other support.
- Build a culture of inclusivity through mindful and specific policies; improve policies for reporting and disciplining harassment and discrimination; provide ongoing training; and adjust any initiatives as needed.

## **Takeaways**

Efforts beyond general DEI training are needed to increase diversity at all levels of the construction industry and to improve the work environment for women and minorities. Bolstering company culture to include diversity in all levels, including leadership, will help construction employers build the workforces they need to sustain future growth, while increasing retention and work satisfaction.

Construction employers should also consider providing training to their employees for the DEI initiatives that are implemented to prevent workplace harassment, microaggressions, unconscious bias, and other issues that impede DEI in the construction industry.

Finally, companies should create initiatives for both hiring and retaining employees from underrepresented groups, including minorities and women.

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