



2020 WANTO Grants Abstracts

Chicago Women in Trades Equity and Inclusion Matters: Expanding Opportunities for Women in Manufacturing and Construction

Women in Nontraditional Occupations WANTO Program – 2021-22

Chicago Women in Trades (CWIT) is pleased to submit the attached proposal requesting \$750,000 to support projects in four states and broaden the reach of its technical assistance work to include manufacturing as well as the construction industry. Founded by tradeswomen in 1981, CWIT exists to improve women's economic equity by increasing their participation in high-skill, blue-collar occupations traditionally held by men. Throughout its history, CWIT has pursued its mission through two complementary strategies, preparing and supporting women to become competitive applicants and successful apprentices through its direct service training programs and improving industry receptivity through technical assistance, training, and collaboration. Based on this work, CWIT established the National Center for Women's Equity in Apprenticeship and Employment as a national resource, providing a range of technical assistance, training and toolkits to apprenticeship programs and other stakeholders. The program plan reflects CWIT's dual strategy, investing in direct service programs in Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, while building local and national infrastructure, capacity, and investment in advancing women's participation in nontraditional occupations, specifically the manufacturing and construction industries.

COVID-19 presents a range of challenges and opportunities for the manufacturing and construction sectors. Although these sectors will be vital to economic recovery across the U.S., whatever benefit is derived will not address the employment needs of women, who are both grossly under-represented in these fields and disproportionately impacted by job loss in the hospitality and service industries. CWIT understands the profound impact its gender equity programming and technical assistance on closing this gender gap between need and opportunity and creating effective pathways for women to enter and succeed in nontraditional occupations. Under this initiative, CWIT will advance its work in five important ways: 1) Increase women's entrance into advanced manufacturing apprenticeships and employment; 2) Develop and expand pre-apprenticeship programs that build on previous technical assistance and industry stakeholder engagement work in Ohio, Michigan and Philadelphia; 3) Provide direct technical assistance to Industry stakeholders in the Manufacturing Sector - AFL-CIO Council of Industrial Unions, (CIO), PAMA (national), Chicago Federation of Labor, Rhodes College (OH); 4) Research and implement support service models; and 5) Promote retention efforts in local and national work, to ensure that women not only enter construction and advanced manufacturing careers but build lasting careers that lead to economic security.



As a result of these activities, CWIT expects to provide technical assistance to more than 200 unions, apprenticeship programs, contractors and manufacturing companies, introduce 4,400 women to apprenticeship and careers in nontraditional occupations, enroll 359 women in at least seven pre-apprenticeship or other preparatory training programs, place 239 in apprenticeship programs or other nontraditional employment, provide support services to more than 100 aspiring tradeswomen, and engage a consortium of tradeswomen, industry stakeholders and workforce development organizations in developing and implementing five new pre- apprenticeship programs, preparing four briefing papers and hosting both an institute for employers and a conference for women in advanced manufacturing. Based on CWIT's strong record of meeting or exceeding its projections for the WANTO grant program, the agency is confident that these goals are achievable, and, because each organization is leveraging additional resources, service can be provided at the reasonable cost of \$2,199 per enrollment or \$3,138 per placement, even with a portion of the investment supporting technical assistance aimed at building partner capacity to sustain gains achieved over the program period.