



**PRIORITY HIRE  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

2019 Annual Report to  
Seattle Mayor and City Council



Seattle

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# SUMMARY OF 2019 RECOMMENDATIONS

1

## **Address language translation needs of the City's diversifying workforce.**

- ▶ Assist the construction worker pathway in forming strategies that reduce language as a barrier to employment.
- ▶ Form a sub-committee to work with the City in creating translated resources specific to the priority hire construction worker pathway.

Resource training programs with technical language assistance tools in different languages.

2

## **Explore ways to address and reduce persistent drug use and addiction in the construction industry.**

- ▶ Develop a set of strategies aimed at providing direct services through Priority Hire stakeholders.
- ▶ Provide educational materials on the options for drug use services and resources similar to safety messaging on construction work sites.
- ▶ Develop data showing the impact of drug use within the industry, track and evaluate successful strategies.
- ▶ Promote promising practices within the industry that address apprentice requiring second chance opportunities when possible.

3

## **City support national efforts to reduce Driver's License suspensions as a workforce barrier for low-income populations.**

- ▶ Identify promising practices to increase the driver's relicensing within the construction worker pathway.
- ▶ Advocate for a reduction of driver's license suspensions due to non-payment of court related fees and other similar charges.
- ▶ Support opportunities to programmatically encourage sharing relicensing strategies for Priority Hire stakeholders.
- ▶ Host workshop on driver relicensing programs and opportunities.

4

## **City provide outreach funds to formerly incarcerated populations.**

- ▶ Support the collaboration of community-based organizations that serve formerly incarcerated or within diversion programs.
- ▶ City collaborate and facilitate a network of community-based organizations targeting formerly incarcerated and diversion programs.
- ▶ Increase funding of social services (transportation, housing, counseling) to bridge support for the recently incarcerated and employment in the construction industry.
- ▶ Fund the technical capacity of community-based organizations to communicate the types of projects and work opportunities available for the formerly incarcerated.

5

## **Good Faith Efforts**

- ▶ Contractor submits copies of Craft Employee Request Forms (submitted by the Contractor and/or Subcontractor).
- ▶ Contractor submits copies of good faith letters from the applicable union halls.
- ▶ Contractor submits documentation showing that a worker resided in an economically distressed zip code.

6

## **Approaches for Acceptable Work Sites Training Pilot**

- ▶ PHAC recommends the training approach to Acceptable Work Sites pilot program be provided by a construction training organization and supported by a diversity, equity, and inclusion training consultant subject matter expert.

### **What is the Priority Hire Program?**

Priority Hire is a community-initiated program. Priority Hire launched in 2012 when the City ran a pilot project on the Elliott Bay Seawall. In 2015, the City formally established Priority Hire through Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 20.37.



# INTRODUCTION

The City of Seattle's Priority Hire program puts people living in economically distressed communities to work on the City's construction projects.

This annual report of recommendations for Priority Hire is the 2019 submission by the Priority Hire Advisory Committee (PHAC) to the City of Seattle. This section provides a brief look into the work of PHAC for 2019.

The formation of the PHAC was defined in the January 2015 Priority Hire ordinance passed by the City of Seattle to promote construction training and career opportunities for residents in economically distressed areas in Seattle and King County. The ordinance includes:

- ▶ Prioritizing construction workers living in economically distressed areas (ZIP codes or communities) on City public works projects over \$5 million, creating access to training and employment within the construction workforce;
- ▶ Supporting women and people of color to become part of the trained construction workforce, with opportunities for construction careers;
- ▶ Requiring a Community Workforce Agreement to supersede union hiring procedures and create better work environments with safety protections and dispute resolution and grievance processes.

The work of PHAC has continued to engage the challenges faced by Priority Hire stakeholders to develop a diverse worker pathway. The challenges experienced by the stakeholders that make up PHAC, are not new to Priority Hire. Prioritizing construction workers from economically distressed areas, supporting women and people of color, and creating better work site culture, continued to be at the forefront of PHAC engagement. What surfaced in PHAC 2019 was ongoing concerns for what might be described as industry related challenges. And the recommendations in part reflect the questions most impactful to the construction industry. Discussion points included regional affordability for workers,

THIS REPORT IS AN ANNUAL PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW IN RESPONSE TO THE PRIORITY HIRE ORDINANCE (SMC 20.37) AND MAYOR'S OFFICE, CITY COUNCIL AND OTHER STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS.

access to affordable housing within the Priority Hire zip codes, transportation issues, regionalizing diverse worker pathway efforts, and barriers facing recruitment and retention in a more competitive labor environment. These concerns and solutions informed the discussion sections of the PHAC agenda. Efforts were made to ensure each stakeholder group worked to identify and communicate their specific perspectives.

## **Common Good Framework for PHAC Guidance on Priority Hire Implementation**

In 2019, PHAC implemented a framework to guide PHAC's facilitation process. The common good approach was designed to ensure PHAC centered its work on 1) developing the diverse worker pathway, and 2) that outcomes were the result of overlapping concerns of the PHAC stakeholder groups. PHAC practiced the common good framework primarily at the beginning of each meeting. As City Purchasing and Contracting (PC) engaged the use of a racial toolkit, findings progressively informed the implementation of the common good framework. In this way, the framework was developed corporately through consensus building of PHAC, and the racial tool kit findings.

Due to unforeseen delays in membership appointment, loss of PHAC participants, and the process for approval of the 2018 Priority Hire Annual Report; PHAC in 2019 experienced challenges with consistent participation and attendance. PHAC addressed participation and attendance concerns, provided opportunities for discussion and changes in participation requirements, and reiterated the need for the four stakeholder groups to fully participate.

The Community stakeholder participants addressed challenges with participation in preparing recommendations for this report. Additional ideas were brought forward and a strategy developed for 2020.

### **What is the Priority Hire Action Committee's role?**

PHAC advises the City to support and enhance the successful implementation of Priority Hire so that people living in distressed zip codes, people of color and women are working on City public works jobs. Collaborate across sectors to identify issues and recommendations for equity and the common good.

It is expected that the Community stakeholder group will pursue the development of a community-based caucus and organizing approach for 2020.

### **PHAC Year-In-Review**

Since PHAC delivered its first report to the City of Seattle in 2016, with recommendations to the City for furthering Priority Hire goals and ensuring systemic change in 2017 and 2018; efforts in 2019 similarly included systems level analysis by PHAC. PHAC discussed the following subjects within their stakeholder groups and provided feedback. The following are significant conversations important to the development of the 2019 recommendations report.

1. PHAC discussed Priority Hire's annual goal setting and methodology for Priority Hire projects. PC asked the committee to provide feedback on whether the City should increase the Priority Hire requirement for 2019 by 4%, using Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) project's past performance. PHAC developed the recommendation that the city should increase the requirements for 2019 by 4% using CWA project's past performance.
2. PHAC discussed two potential training approaches being considered for Acceptable Work Sites (AWS) and provided feedback on the AWS program; a program that ensures contractors are trained to meet the City's expectation on harassment, bullying, racism, and discrimination. PHAC developed the recommendation that a training consultant should support the development of the curriculum and training and support the training to the contractor when needed.
3. PHAC reviewed the construction workforce diversity performance on CWA projects. PHAC discussed WMBE utilization on CWA projects versus non-CWA projects and the increase of utilization on non-CWA projects versus CWA projects. PHAC discussed how PC is using the racial equity toolkit process to better understand how PC can increase WMBE utilization in public works and CWA projects with stakeholder input, including PHAC. PHAC provided feedback aimed to address WMBE involvement on Priority Hire projects. PHAC suggested the City conduct an analysis amongst an array of contractors to identify WMBE contractors working on multiple CWA projects. After facilitating further feedback in small group discussions, information for consideration was discussed with no recommendation developed.
4. PHAC discussed Good Faith Effort and the Priority Hire requirements for journeyman, apprentice hours, and preferred entry. Opportunities that impact the Good Faith Effort on the contractor's ability to meet or exceed Priority Hire requirements were identified. PHAC met in stakeholder groups and developed feedback for the city. Stakeholder groups were then able to review each other's feedback, develop questions, and share with the full committee. Significant information was collected and provided back to the city, with no recommendation developed.
5. The diverse construction worker pathway development was introduced as a way of thinking about workforce development from a racial equity perspective. PHAC regularly separated into stakeholder groups to reflect and respond to questions, as well as form new questions for the committee's consideration. Based upon PHAC feedback a shared understanding of the overlapping concerns and interests were adopted. This process continued to center the most vulnerable workers within the worker pathway with possible recommendations developed based on a shared understanding of the problems, barriers, and challenges facing those most impacted. PHAC meetings in September, November, and December were used to form a set of recommendation ideas, from which agreed upon recommendations were carried forward to this report.

### **PHAC has achieved meaningful, lasting results**

Since 2013, workers from economically distressed neighborhoods brought home \$21 million in wages, which is \$10 million more than they would have earned without Priority Hire. African Americans, other workers of color and women increased their share of hours. Investments in preparatory training and career navigation programs have launched construction careers for 416 residents of economically distressed areas, women and people of color.

# 2019 PHAC RECOMMENDATIONS

## Reaching Target Populations of Priority Hire

**Goal: Adequate/effective outreach and recruitment from Priority Hire ZIP codes**

### Recommendation

PHAC recommends that city address the language translation needs of the city's diversifying work force.

As the city and region continue to diversify, there are opportunities to do outreach and recruitment for English language learners. PHAC recommends the city address language translation needs of the city's diversifying workforce. Within the economically distressed zip codes are immigrant communities seeking opportunities to join the workforce. In targeting these communities for outreach and recruitment the construction worker pathway must actively pursue addressing language translation needs within the system.

Job site safety material must be available in diverse languages to ensure safety. PHAC believes safety concerns are real and will need to be addressed. Furthermore, PHAC discussed the lack of data available on the impact outreach and recruitment can have, and the lack of awareness on current programs that address English language learning in the construction industry

Therefore, PHAC recommends the city assist in forming strategies that ensure language is not a barrier to employment opportunities on city projects. By providing multilingual posters for job sites and translating basic safety documents and postings, both safety issues and barriers for all workers to perform well are addressed. One way the city can accomplish this is by networking current language service programs with stakeholders.

Formation of a PHAC sub-committee work group to

1. Form a list of current resources,
2. Assess if the current resources meet the need,
3. Propose new resources to fill the gap in services.

PHAC identified the need for a technical language assistance tool. This tool would provide important construction specific language in a variety of languages and be available to the construction industry. According to PHAC, a type of open source technical language tool may be useful for the industry at large.

### Recommendation

PHAC recommends the city explore ways to address and reduce persistent drug use and alcohol addiction.

PHAC discussed the use of drugs and the prevalence of alcohol addiction in the construction industry. A shared understanding formed of the overall negative impact and the different ways the industry manages drug and alcohol issues. Without one way of managing the use of drugs and alcohol PHAC discussed a variety of problems and solutions. For example, there are those who provide second chance opportunities and there are those with a no tolerance policy. Therefore, PHAC recommends the city explore ways to address and reduce persistent drug use and alcohol addiction.

PHAC recommends developing strategies that provide direct services to Priority Hire stakeholders. These strategies will need to inform contractors and community-based organizations on the options for services and resources.

PHAC advises the city collect data on the impact of drug use in the construction industry to inform PHAC's continued work on this issue. PHAC will be able to better advise the city on the issues and challenges facing the recruitment and retention of those with drug and alcohol addictions.

### Recommendation

PHAC recommends the city support regional and national efforts to reduce Driver's License suspensions as a work force barrier for low income populations.

PHAC discussed the ramifications of workers unable to drive due to suspended licenses. Discussions included how insurance companies make it difficult for contractors to hire employees unable to drive due to a suspended license. Other licensing challenges included local, regional, and national movements working to ensure employment is not hindered by the loss of licensure due to non-violent offenses, the inability to pay court fees, tickets, or other related issues. For many low income workers, the inability to retain their driver's license may hinder their ability to gain or retain employment. A goal for Priority Hire is retention of workers into different jobs for a construction company. The inability to drive makes retention more unlikely. Additionally, traffic congestion and public transportation challenge many workers who carry tools from job to job. PHAC realizes many of the licensing issues are larger in-scope than is within the purview of PHAC, and the city. But, retaining those who lose their driver's license is something the community is concerned about.

The PHAC recommendation is for the city to support regional and national efforts to reduce driver's license suspensions for non-violent offenses and the inability to pay court related fees, tickets, and similar restrictions. The Community stakeholder group is concerned the use of driver's license suspensions is being used to exclude low-income communities of color. Therefore, identifying promising practices to 1) reduce the use of driver's license suspensions, and 2) improve opportunities for relicensing for those with construction jobs or otherwise gainful employment.

PHAC agreed the city can serve as a collaborator and provide cross-sector advocacy for the reduction of driver's license suspension issues. Largely informed by the community stakeholder group, advocacy is an important practice for those who lose their license due to lack of an ability to pay court related fees. Supporting opportunities to programmatically collaborate and network community stakeholders is important to removing barriers to employment. Networking organizations through PHAC may serve as a model for furthering regional partnerships, as well. PHAC discussed using networking sessions to help identify the "how to's" of relicensing efforts as a work force issue.

### How does PHAC intersect with City operations?

The Department of Finance and Administrative Services, through City Purchasing and Contracting (PC), implements, oversees and enforces the Priority Hire program. PC approaches this work in alignment with the principles of the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative to address racial disparities and achieve equity in Seattle.

## Sufficient Training and Support Services

**Goal: Sufficient pre-apprenticeship graduates to meet projected demand; Increased pre-apprentice/apprentice trainee retention; Service providers adequately connect people to training, jobs & support services.**

### Recommendation

PHAC recommends the city provide targeted outreach supports to formerly incarcerated populations.

PHAC discussed whether the Priority Hire pipeline was engaging the formerly incarcerated community of our region, if there was available data on employment in the construction industry of this population, and how might PHAC advise the city on a recommendation that address gaps in service to that population for the construction industry. Gainful employment of the formerly incarcerated is important to reducing recidivism. PHAC agreed it is important for service providers to sufficiently connect the formerly incarcerated to construction training and jobs. There were discussions related to the types of jobs available to those with felony records on City projects. Yet, there are opportunities to recruit, train, and connect formerly incarcerated individuals on City projects. The recommendation is for the city to lead efforts to increase the support services for those providers who target formerly incarcerated individuals for construction jobs.

By supporting the collaboration of community-based organizations that serve current and formerly incarcerated individuals or those within diversion programs; the City can put more individuals into good paying jobs. PHAC believes the city can serve as a collaborator to facilitate a network of community-based organizations that target outreach supports to formerly incarcerated individuals and diverted young adults. An increase in funding social services to address the lack of transportation, housing, and counseling/therapy were mentioned as a needed tool for community-based organizations and training partners. PHAC agreed it is important for community-

based organizations and training partners to be able to communicate accurate information on the types of projects/job sites those with criminal records can work. Discussions revealed stakeholders are unclear what is possible for how each stakeholder plays a role. If the city can provide accurate information at the leading edge i.e. community-based organizations and training partners, workers can be equipped with correct information early in the process.



## On the Job Compliance

**Goal: Priority Hire workers have an equitable opportunity to gain meaningful experience on job site; Priority Hire workers retained by contractor after project completion; Increased compliance by non-compliant contractors.**

### Recommendation

PHAC recommends contractors receive credit for good faith efforts.

PHAC recommends the city consider good faith efforts when Priority Hire workers are not available. PHAC discussed the issues, developed the wording and brought forward a set of considerations for further consideration. The language and process were developed and clarified over several sessions. PHAC provided advice and guidance on what should be considered as good faith efforts for workforce hiring requirements. The following is in part the outcome of their work.

- ▶ **Contractor submits copies of Craft Employee Request Forms submitted by the Contractor and/or Subcontractors** to the applicable union halls requesting new dispatches for Priority Workers and/or preferred entry apprentices AND written documentation showing that the requests were not filled with Priority Workers and/or preferred entry apprentices. Copies of emails between the Contractor or Subcontractors and applicable union halls showing that new dispatches for Priority Workers and/or preferred entry apprentices were requested may be considered in lieu of the Craft Employee Request Form.
- ▶ **Contractor submits copies of good faith letters from the applicable union halls** acknowledging that the Contractor or Subcontractors requested new dispatches for Priority Workers and/or preferred entry apprentices, but the requested workers were unavailable at that time.
- ▶ **Contractor submits documentation showing that a worker resided in an Economically Distressed ZIP Code** identified in CWA Attachment B at the date of dispatch, but later moved to a ZIP code not in CWA Attachment B. The Contractor or Subcontractor must notify PC of the employee name and date their address changed.
- ▶ **Written documentation notifying PC of discharge or layoff of a Priority Worker and/or preferred entry apprentice.** Contractor or Subcontractors must also provide a copy of the Craft Employee Request Form showing the Contractor or Subcontractor tried to replace the discharged worker with another Priority Worker and/or preferred entry apprentice, but the applicable union hall did not have Priority Workers and/or preferred entry apprentices available at the date of the request.
- ▶ **Copies of emails between the Contractor or Subcontractors and applicable Pre-Apprentice Training Program staff or Job & Training Advisor showing efforts to hire preferred entry apprentices** (see CWA Article XV, Section 3), but such workers were not available at the date of the request.
- ▶ **Other documented substantive efforts to hire and retain Priority Workers and preferred entry apprentices** as approved by the Director or their designee.

## Job Assignment

**Goal: Culture change on the job site resulting in equitable treatment; Contractors meet/exceed Priority Hire goals and requirements; Contractor's "core" employees reflective of Priority Hire target population; Increased number of Priority Hire workers with prior construction experience in family-sustaining construction careers.**

### Recommendation

PHAC recommends that the Acceptable Work Sites Training pilot be conducted by a construction training organization and supported by a subject matter expert for the development and implementation of the Acceptable Work Sites program.

PHAC developed a consensus on the training plan for the Acceptable Work Site (AWS) Program. The training approach allows the training to be delivered by those in the industry and for the training to focus on job site culture change. It was agreed by PHAC that the messaging would be better received by a construction training organization, with training curriculum and workshop facilitation technical assistance provided by a subject matter expert. Additionally, PHAC discussed the value of both the construction training organization and the technical assistance, and requested status updates and further evaluation of the AWS program.

## Regional Collaboration for Priority Hire

**Goal: Collaborate regionally to diversify the construction workforce for public projects**

### Recommendation

PHAC did not develop a recommendation for this Priority Hire goal.

# APPENDIX A: CONSTRUCTION PIPELINE

While the construction pipeline from entry to career advancement works for many, people of color (POC) and women historically and currently are underrepresented

**Not enough POC/women gain entry into the construction pipeline.**

