



Annual Report

Priority Hire Advisory Committee

Attn: Bruce Harrell, Mayor of Seattle & Seattle City Council



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2024

Committee Membership

Claude Burfect	Coalition of Black Trade Unionist (Community)
Antonio (Tony) Butler	IBEW (Labor)
Thom Butler	Johansen Contracting Company (Contractor)
Gregory Davis	Rainier Beach Action Coalition (Community)
Karen Dove	ANew (Training Provider)
Tamara Harris	YWCF Corporation (Contractors)
Abdirahman Omar	Global Reach Consultants (Community)
Marianna Hyke	Northwest Carpenter's Institute (Labor)
Jerry Jordan	PACT (Training Provider)
Marilyn Kennedy	OPCMIA Local 528 (Labor)
Andrea Ornelas	Laborers Local 242 (Labor)
Virginia Owens	Seattle Public Schools (Community)
Vicki Puckett	Cornerstone General Contractors, Inc (Contractor)
Steven Petermann	Washington State Department of Corrections (Training Provider)
Eric Sanchez	Ironworkers Local 86 JATC (Training Provider)
Jamie Stuart	Valley Electric (Contractor)
Jim Wilde	Gary Merlino Construction (Contractor)

SUBMITTED BY:
W. TALI HAIRSTON PHD, PRINCIPAL
EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT LLC

Goals

Priority Hire creates construction career opportunities in communities with social and economic disadvantages.



On the Job Compliance

Goal: Workers have an equitable opportunity to gain meaningful experience on job sites. Workers retained by contractor after project completion.



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 and support services.



Reaching Target Populations of Priority Hire

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



Job Assignment

Goal: Culture change on the job site resulting in equitable treatment.



Regional Collaboration for Priority Hire

Goal: Collaborate regionally to diversify the construction workforce.

Executive Summary

Expansion and Regionalization of Priority Hire

With the expansion of Priority Zip Codes and the regionalization of similar Priority Hire programs, PHAC recommends that the City pursue a regional public partner meeting with PHAC. The purpose is to create an opportunity for PHAC to dialogue with regional partners on the difference between Priority Hire programs and explore improving the alignment of Priority Hire programs.

PHAC recommends that the City pursue all opportunities to arrange a regular discussion.

The Underrepresentation of Women in Priority Hire

PHAC discussed the decline in the number of women participating in Priority Hire. The committee consensus was to identify the root causes so PHAC could advise the City on addressing this issue. There are differences of opinion, but PHAC agrees more data is needed.

PHAC recommends the City resource further research on the root causes respective to the disparities in the data for women in Priority Hire. PHAC will review the research and advise the City on promising practices for successful outreach, recruitment, and retention of women.



Introduction

The 2024 report is the 8th PHAC Annual Recommendations Report since its inception in 2015.¹

Guided by the Priority Hire Ordinance, the City promotes access to construction careers for those living within economically distressed zip codes, people of color, and women working on City public works jobs. PHAC discusses relevant issues impacting outreach, recruitment, and retention of historically underrepresented workers in the construction industry. Consisting of mayoral-appointed representatives from the community, training providers, contractors, and labor, PHAC develops consensus strategies, policies, and practices through annual recommendations to advance Priority Hire.

PHAC's 2024 regular meetings occurred in January, March, May, July, September, and November at the Tabor 100 building. The committee agreed to meet from 9 am to 11:30 am and conduct in-person meetings with a virtual link for those unable to attend in person due to travel or need to attend virtually. Each meeting begins with the adopted land and legacy acknowledgments. Supported by the Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS), the committee co-designed its 2024 work plan in accordance with the Priority Hire ordinance.

A summary of PHAC's 2024 topics: a regular review of program dashboard data, determined changes to the PHAC charter, discussed program updates from Finance and Administrative Services, and processed various workforce pipeline issues.

PHAC Legacy Acknowledgement

We uplift the original organizers and activists who initiated and led a community-driven effort leading to the establishment of Priority Hire on the City of Seattle capital projects.

During the demolition and construction of the Rainier Beach Community Center in 2010, residents and experienced construction workers from Seattle's most racially diverse zip code 98118 uncovered the lack of contractor requirements to employ Seattle job seekers on city projects. These organizers and supporters formed a coalition of organizations, labor, and religious groups to remedy this industry-wide practice resulting in Seattle's historic Priority Hire Ordinance designed to expand economic opportunity and employment to racially diverse and economically disadvantaged Seattle area residents.

2024 Recommendations

Expansion and Regionalization of Priority Hire

In response to the expansion of Priority Hire Zip Codes and the growth and implementation of similar Priority Hire programs in the region, PHAC formed a recommendation that seeks to encourage the alignment of Priority Hire goals, practices, and policies for regional public partners. PHAC recommends reducing differences and ensuring shared approaches so that all constituents can engage efficiently and effectively across our region.

Recommendation: PHAC recommends the City pursue a regional public partner meeting with PHAC at their choosing. The purpose of the meeting is to create an opportunity for PHAC to dialogue with regional partners on the alignment of Priority Hire programs and to address programmatic differences. PHAC recommends that the City pursue all opportunities to continue this discussion without prescribing how that should happen.

The following questions highlight several focus areas for further discussion:

- Does the regional expansion of Priority Hire require aligning the CWA language?
- Do regional partners have similar Priority Hire goals?
- What are the differences in implementation and administration?
- Are individual program differences accounted for, and how do those differences affect regional outcomes?

The Underrepresentation of Women in Priority Hire

PHAC spent significant time discussing the decline in the participation of women in Priority Hire and generally within the construction industry. Relevant data suggest there may be multiple causes and related issues for PHAC to consider. PHAC discussed various approaches and strategies over several meetings. It determined that PHAC can assist the City in requesting data and messaging industry constituents regarding the need to understand the current challenges and root causes better.

Recommendation: PHAC recommends the City resource further research on the root causes respective to the disparities in the data for women in Priority Hire. It is unclear whether there is a shortage of women in the pipeline. Is this a recruiting, retention, or hiring practice issue? Identifying the root causes should help PHAC advise the City on collecting data, how to comprehensively track that data and the ways to improve data reporting.

1. Previous PHAC reports can be found here: <https://www.seattle.gov/purchasing-and-contracting/priority-hire>

Photos courtesy of Seattle Department of Transportation FLICKR.