A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark, curly hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored work shirt. She is focused on her work, using a tool to work on a piece of machinery. The background is blurred, showing other people in a factory or industrial setting.

# BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR WOMEN IN NEW ORLEANS POST COVID-19

OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
WOMEN IN SKILLED TRADE  
AND TECHNICAL JOBS



A JUST FUTURE BEGINS WITH BOLD IDEAS

# BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR WOMEN IN NEW ORLEANS POST COVID-19:

## Opportunities for Women in Skilled Trade and Technical Jobs



- Women in New Orleans are particularly severely affected by COVID-19 related job losses because they are more likely than men to work in leisure and hospitality and tourism.
- Women are much less likely than men to work in construction, manufacturing, transportation, and Port-related jobs, sectors which are projected to bounce back from the COVID-19 recession much faster. One in five of all jobs in New Orleans are in these sectors, but only one in twelve of women's jobs.
- Black and Hispanic women earn just half of what White men earn in New Orleans, and only four-fifths of what Black and Hispanic men make.
- Women's underrepresentation in construction, manufacturing, and transportation— in jobs that often pay family-sustaining wages without the need for a four-year college degree—is a major cause of the gender wage gap.
- The average hourly pay of a plumber is as high as that of a middle school teacher in New Orleans; while teaching requires at least a four-year college degree, earn-as-you-learn apprenticeships provide a cost-free route to becoming a skilled tradesperson. Women are just 6.3 percent of apprentices in the trades in the region.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the inequities that women in New Orleans experience. New Orleans' recovery from the pandemic offers an opportunity to rebuild in an equitable manner, ensuring that all workers, especially those hardest hit by the recession and those historically excluded from well-paying jobs, are able to benefit from the recovery.



## INTRODUCTION

A city that holds over 130 festivals every year—including Mardi Gras, the Essence Music Festival, and the French Quarter Festival—New Orleans is known for good food, good music, and celebrations. This reputation made New Orleans a key travel destination for individuals, businesses, and professional associations who held their conferences and conventions here. It has also made New Orleans' economy particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. Women, particularly Black women and Latinas, have borne the brunt of the COVID-19 recession. According to the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the New Orleans metropolitan area has lost close to 57,000 jobs in 2020 with over forty percent of job losses concentrated in Leisure and Hospitality (24,100 fewer jobs), including Food Services and Drinking Places (18,500 jobs lost) and Accommodations (4,000 jobs lost) where women are a majority of workers.<sup>1</sup> Many of these jobs are low-wage and do not provide workers with health insurance, retirement benefits, or paid leave benefits. Experts expect that the Leisure and Hospitality industry will take several years to recover fully from the COVID-19 related recession.<sup>2</sup>

But the pandemic is having different effects on other sectors of the New Orleans economy. Job losses in Advanced Manufacturing, the Port of NOLA, Transportation, and Construction have not been as severe as in Leisure and Hospitality;<sup>3</sup> these positions are expected to be restored much more quickly. The major employers in this sector include NASA's Michoud "rocket factory," which manufactures and assembles space structures and systems in New Orleans.<sup>4</sup> Boeing is also a prominent employer in NOLA, as is the Port of NOLA, the fourth largest port in the U.S.<sup>5</sup> These employers provide many good-paying jobs. For example, the Port of NOLA provides almost 19,050 jobs at an average salary of \$74,000.<sup>6</sup>

While the construction industry has suffered large job losses,<sup>7</sup> projects such as the Port expansion and the likelihood of a federal Infrastructure bill make overall recovery prospects positive. Compared with Leisure and Hospitality, however, these sectors employ very few women, particularly in better-paying skilled technical and trade jobs. While these three industries (manufacturing, construction, and transportation) collectively provide one in every five jobs (20.9%) in the NOLA metropolitan area, they employ just one in twelve women (8.1%).<sup>8</sup>

Many of these jobs pay family-sustaining wages, often come with benefits, and provide career pathways—all without requiring a four-year college degree.

The majority of women and men in New Orleans (and elsewhere) do not have four-year college degrees, particularly among communities of color (Appendix A). For men, however, unlike for women, college-level education is not the only route to decent earnings. Port of NOLA Community Engagement Manager Cathy Alfonso explained:

***“These are the kinds of jobs that might only require a certification, that might only require the willingness to start and get the training [on the job].” (Cathy Alfonso, Port of NOLA)***

The pandemic has highlighted deep gender and racial inequities. It also provides an opportunity to build an inclusive recovery that will benefit all New Orleans residents—ensuring that all workers, especially those hit hardest by the COVID-19 recession and those who have historically been excluded from well-paying jobs that do not require a college degree, are able to benefit when the economy recovers. Greater workforce diversity in technical and trade jobs will benefit communities by improving access to good jobs and it will benefit industry by reducing skill shortages and labor market imbalances through building a broader and more diverse pool of workers.

This brief draws on labor market data and on interviews with business owners, workforce development professionals, and others with expertise on the New Orleans workforce to highlight both the potential and the need for increasing women’s access to well-paying, middle-skill jobs in Construction, Manufacturing, and Transportation. It begins by showing why change is needed, how occupational and industry segregation are key factors in generating gender and racial wage gaps, and how industry is losing out because of the lack of workforce diversity. The brief then discusses the reasons behind women’s, particularly Black and Hispanic women’s, underrepresentation in these good jobs, and ends by highlighting policies that could improve women’s economic security by expanding access to male-dominated skilled trade and technical jobs that pay a living wage.



## WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED: THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS WORKFORCE PRE-COVID-19



The New Orleans metropolitan area consistently performs poorly on a range of indicators of well-being for women and families—low median earnings, high child poverty rates, lack of access to health insurance and reproductive healthcare, and overall poor health outcomes relative to the rest of the nation.<sup>9</sup>

Women's earnings are particularly important because women's earnings are essential for their families' economic security. Pre-COVID-19, women were breadwinners—either single parents or married and bringing in 40 percent or more of household income—in more than three of four (77.6 percent) of all households with dependent children in New Orleans. Among Black women, nearly nine in ten (88.5 percent) are breadwinners.<sup>10</sup>

Even in good times, many workers in New Orleans and the broader metropolitan area live with great economic insecurity. The Basic Economic Security Tables Index estimates that, in Louisiana, a working adult with one preschooler and one school-aged child whose job provides health insurance and a retirement plan would still need an annual household income of at least \$54,372 to achieve family economic security.<sup>11</sup> However, as Table 1 shows, the median earnings of most workers employed full-time, year-round cannot lift a family above this threshold.

Median annual earnings for all women in the New Orleans Metro area are just \$38,717—\$15,655 less than needed to ensure economic security for a family with two children. The median earnings for Black, Hispanic, and Asian-Pacific Islander women working fulltime year-round are even lower (at \$30,346, \$30,000, and \$31,392, respectively). Those earnings amount to just over half the total required for economic self-sufficiency—if they included health insurance and retirement benefits, which many may not.

Before the pandemic, women in New Orleans earned just 77.4 cents for each dollar earned by a man (Table 1). Comparing women's earnings with those of White men, the wage gap is even larger. Hispanic women on average earned just 50.0 cents, Black women just 50.6 cents, and Asian and Pacific Islander women just 52.3 cents per dollar earned by a White man. White women earned 75 percent of White men's earnings (Table 1).

**Table 1. Black and Hispanic Women Earn Roughly \$30,000 less on average than White Men in New Orleans**

Median Earnings of Full-time, Year-round Workers Aged 16-64 and the Gender Earnings Ratio for Workers by Gender and Race/Ethnicity in the New Orleans MSA, 2016-2018.				
	Men	Women	Women's Earnings as a % of Men's Earnings of the Same Group	Women's Earnings as a % of White Men's Earnings
Total	\$50,000	\$38,717	77.4%	64.5%
White	\$60,000	\$45,000	75.0%	75.0%
Black	\$38,000	\$30,346	79.9%	50.6%
Hispanic	\$36,673	\$30,000	81.8%	50.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	\$51,219	\$31,392	61.3%	52.3%

Notes: Earnings are for full-time, year-round workers aged 16 through 64. Racial groups are non-Hispanic while Hispanics may be of any race. Sample sizes are too small to show data for Native American women and men. Source: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (2016-2018; IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org)).



While the wage gap is smaller when comparing average Hispanic women's earnings to Hispanic men's (81.8%) and Black women's earnings to Black men's (79.9%), it remains substantial. The smaller wage gap is a consequence of the low pay of Black and Hispanic men rather than higher pay for Black and Hispanic women. Asian and Pacific Islander workers had the biggest within-group wage gap and consequently the lowest gender earnings ratio (61.3%).

These ratios understate the full extent of the disparities because the data include only workers who work full-time year-round. Women are less likely to have the opportunity to work full time year-round than men (women are 46.6 percent of full-time year-round workers compared with 49.6 percent of all workers) both because they typically bear the burden of unpaid family care work, but also because female-dominated jobs in personal services and hotel and leisure are more likely to be part-time or part-year and have fluctuating schedules.<sup>12</sup>

### Women Need Higher Education Levels to Earn the Same as Men

Low educational attainment levels are commonly offered to explain low wages, particularly for Black and Hispanic women, because higher levels of educational attainment are associated with higher earnings. While Black women and Latinas are less likely to have a four-year college degree than White women, it is also true that, with the exception of Asian and Pacific Islanders, women across each racial and ethnic group shown in Table 1 are more likely to have

a bachelor's degree than their same-race male counterparts, but they continue to be paid less (see Appendix A for Educational Attainment of Women and Men in NOLA by Race and Ethnicity).

Women with greater educational attainment do earn higher wages than women with less education. But being a woman, especially a woman working in a female-dominated occupation compared to a man in a male-dominated occupation, is much more predictive of earnings than educational attainment. Women must spend more time and invest more money in their education to reap the same earnings as men; the average woman working full-time needs four years of college to earn more than the average man with a high school diploma.<sup>13</sup>

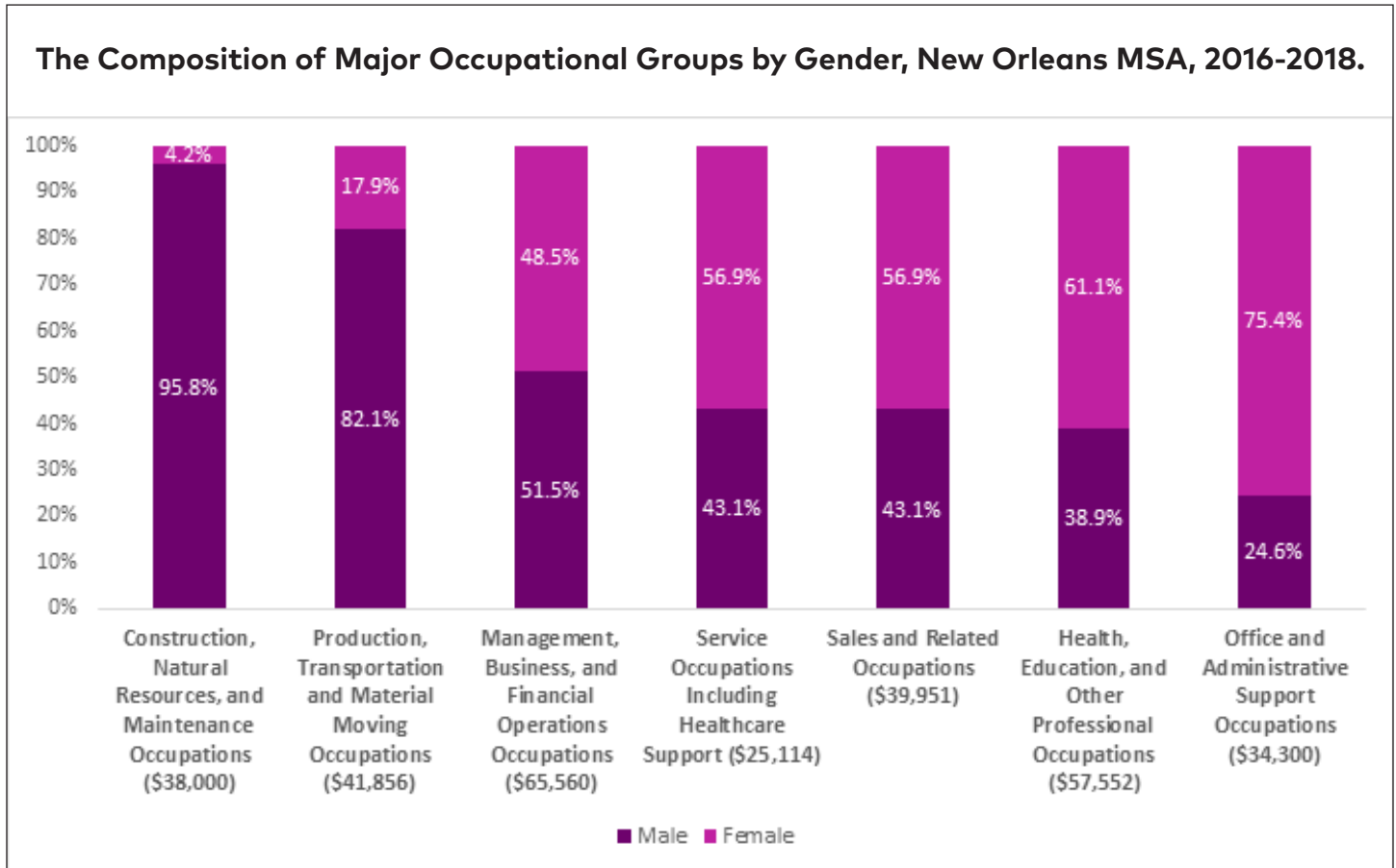
### **Women Earn Less than Men because Female-Dominated Jobs Pay Less than Male-Dominated Jobs**

Segregation in the labor market accounts more than any other factor for gender and racial wage gaps. Not only do women and men tend to work in different occupations and industries, but female-dominated occupations and industries pay less than those dominated by men.<sup>14</sup> Occupational and industry segregation themselves reflect the discrimination women face in the labor market including individual bias as well as structural barriers that limit women's access to well-paid skilled jobs.

Figure 1 shows women's share of major occupational groups in NOLA. Women are one in two of all workers, but they are fewer than one in 20 (4.2%) of workers in Construction, Maintenance, and Natural Resources occupations, and fewer than one in five of workers in Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations. These jobs, which typically do not require a bachelor's degree, include electricians, carpenters, and operating engineers; crane operators, truck drivers, and longshore workers at the Port; and rocket- and airplane-builders and machinists at companies such as Boeing or NASA. In contrast, women make up almost 57 percent of workers in Service occupations—those that have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 recession and often have the lowest pay—and 75.4 percent of all workers in Office and Administrative Support occupations.



**Figure 1. Women are Vastly Underrepresented in Construction, Manufacturing, and Transportation Occupations in New Orleans**



Notes: \*Sample sizes are too small to report women's share of construction, natural resources, and maintenance occupations separately by race and ethnicity but after men's share—96.4%--women make up less than 4%. BIPOC refers to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color of which Black workers are the vast majority in New Orleans. Included in People of Color are Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, Multiracial, and other races not shown separately; sample sizes are too small to analyze data separately for members of individual racial/ethnic groups.

Workers are aged 16 through 64.

Source: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (2016-2018; IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org)).

The median annual earnings of someone working in a construction occupation in 2018 were \$38,000, while the median annual earnings for full-time work in a Service occupation were \$25,114 (Figure 1). Average earnings for Waiters and Waitresses, Bartenders, or Fast Food Workers in the New Orleans area were less than \$10 per hour in 2018; the average earnings of a Construction Helper (including Carpenter, Painter, or Other Helper) exceeded \$15 per hour—50 percent higher even though none of these occupations requires a high school degree.<sup>15</sup>

Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters had roughly the same average hourly earnings as Middle School Teachers (\$24.87 and \$24.10 respectively in 2018). Both are skilled occupations that require four to five years of training and education. The pathway to becoming a skilled plumber is a five-year apprenticeship, earning while learning from Day 1. The pathway to becoming a teacher is a four-year college education, often with a Master's degree added, and



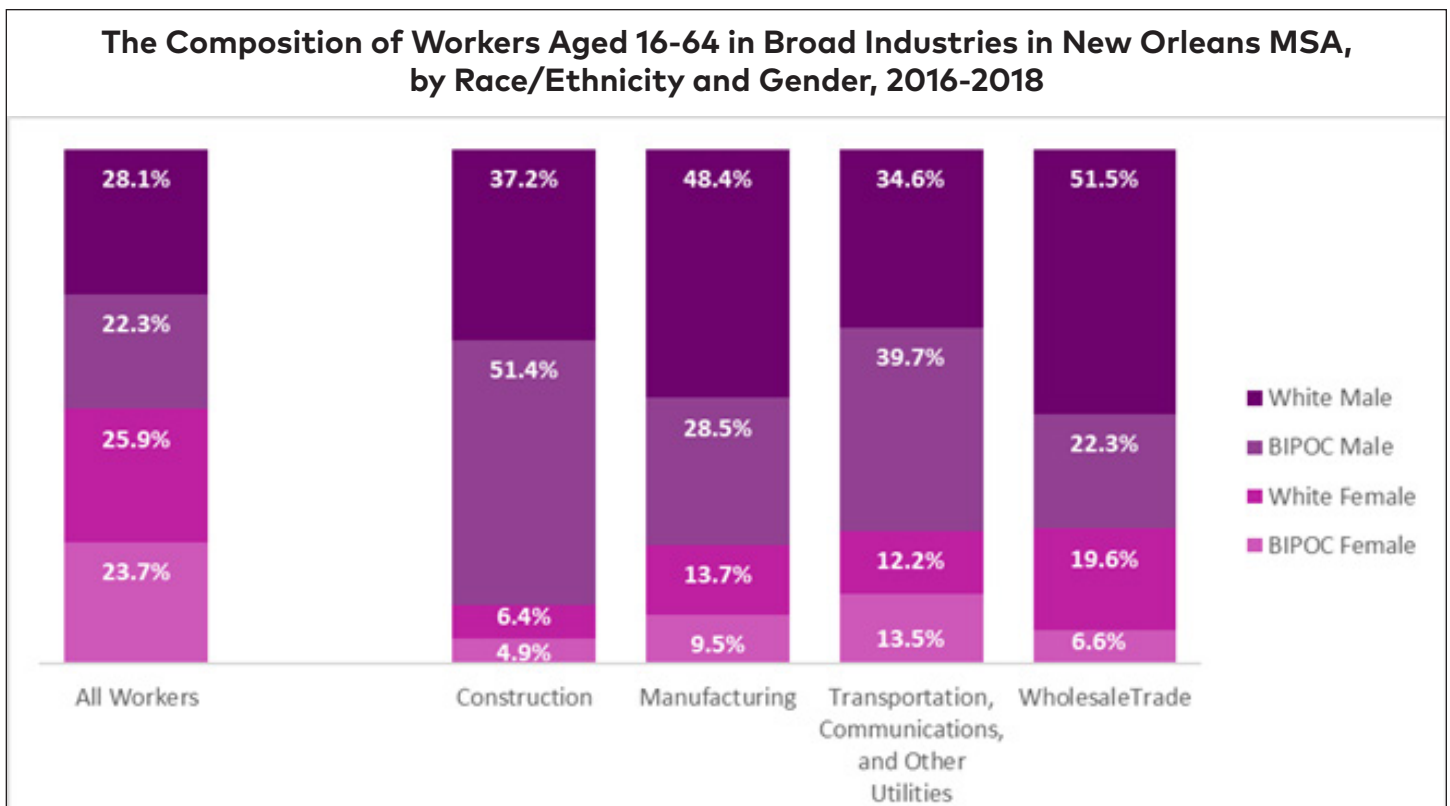
typically requiring major financial outlays to pay for college, as well as additional jobs to keep afloat while pursuing a degree.<sup>16</sup>

### Industries Need to Attract and Retain New Generations of Workers

Figure 2 shows women’s and men’s distribution across industries, including all workers in the sector across occupation, by sex, race, and ethnicity. Even using this wider definition, women are only 11.4 percent of workers in the Construction sector, fewer than a quarter of workers in Manufacturing (23.2 percent), and just over a quarter in Transportation, Communications, and Other Utilities (25.7 percent) and Wholesale (26.2 percent). The median annual earnings for all workers in Construction were \$40,975, and for the other three sectors were above \$50,000 (See Appendix D).

While women of all backgrounds are severely underrepresented in these industries, with the exception of Transportation, Communications, and Other Utilities, the underrepresentation of BIPOC women is even more pronounced than that of White women (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation, and Wholesale Industries are Losing Out on Women’s Talent**



Notes: BIPOC refers to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color of which Black workers are the vast majority in New Orleans. Included in People of Color are Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, Multiracial, and other races not shown separately; sample sizes are too small to analyze data separately for members of individual racial/ethnic groups.<sup>17</sup> See Appendix D for a breakdown for all major industries.

Source: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (2016-2018); IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org)).

This segregation of women and men into different jobs with different levels of pay and benefits is the largest contributor to the gender wage gap.<sup>18</sup> It also sets the stage for economic downturns, such as the COVID-19 recession, to harm women and their families disproportionately because lower earnings mean fewer resources for getting through crises. If women were paid as much per hour as men with the same level of educational attainment, the rate of poverty for working women in Louisiana would fall by 43 percent, and for single mothers by 62 percent; the resulting increase in women's earnings would be equivalent to 3.1 percent of Louisiana's GDP.<sup>19</sup>



Increasing women's access to the better-paid jobs currently held mainly by men would directly target one of the root causes of women's poverty. Reducing labor market segregation, moreover, would broaden employers' access to talent. It would provide them with a skilled and motivated workforce that draws on the whole population, not just the limited segment of workers who now work in these jobs.

Construction business owner Simone Bruni notes the difficulties of finding workers, particularly women, to fill good jobs in her company:

***"Just to find a female excavator operator is nearly impossible. There's only one woman I've come across. That job is a \$25-30 per hour job, full time, benefits, 401k, and I cannot find a woman."***

***(Simone Bruni, Demolition Divas)***

### **Opportunities beyond COVID-19**

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Louisiana Workforce Commission estimated that construction, manufacturing, and transportation and warehousing jobs in New Orleans would increase substantially by 2026.<sup>20</sup> The 2019 Greater New Orleans Jobs Report highlighted the need for the development of a pipeline of workers for skilled trade and technical jobs in construction, transportation, and production, as such jobs had grown more than four times as fast as overall employment in the region, leading to skill shortages for many employers.<sup>21</sup>

Evie Poitevent Sanders, human capital manager with Greater New Orleans Inc., the regional economic development organization, notes:

***I know so many of our regional employers are always needing the craft skills labor, particularly welding and pipefitting, and electrical and HVAC.***

***(Evie Poitevent Sanders, Greater New Orleans Inc.)***



While the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to dampen employment prospects somewhat in the near future,<sup>22</sup> according to the Executive Secretary of the Building Trades Council in New Orleans, as of December 2020 there were no signs of retrenchment of major commercial construction projects.<sup>23</sup> Another big project, the planned Port expansion, will also provide new employment opportunities for construction workers to build and maintain the new terminal, as well as workers to service the expanded Port operations.<sup>24</sup> The Executive Director of the New Orleans Career Center further explains:

***"There are 35,000 job openings expected over the next decade in skilled crafts in the Greater New Orleans area, and there are not enough white men from surrounding parishes to fill all of these jobs - employers will have to reach out to others. This presents an opportunity for employers to diversify their training pipelines and recruiting pools beyond existing training partners and populations to increase BIPOC women's access to these jobs."***

***(Claire Jecklin, New Orleans Career Center)***

Job opportunities are created both by new work but also by the need to replace those who leave, including workers retiring from the industry. In 2016-18, a quarter of construction workers and close to three in ten workers in Production, Transportation, and Moving occupations in New Orleans were aged fifty or older.<sup>25</sup> Impending retirements seem likely to exacerbate potential skill shortages.<sup>26</sup>

Replacing these retiring workers, with their many years of experience and high skill levels, will require recruiting new workers and providing them with several years of training and education. One route for maintaining and building the skilled worker pipeline is through apprenticeships—earn-while-you-learn pathways to industry-recognized credentials. Unfortunately, very few women are currently enrolled in NOLA-area apprenticeship programs: of the estimated 495 apprentices in the construction trades in the region, just six percent are women.<sup>27</sup>

## Why Do So Few Women Pursue these High-Paying Careers?

The underrepresentation of women, particularly women of color, in these well-paid jobs reflects a number of issues, including a dearth of awareness, role models, and mentorship. Discrimination and working environments that do not welcome women also affect women's pursuit of these occupations.<sup>28</sup>

The underrepresentation of BIPOC women also reflects a general lack of communication to communities of color about the potential of these jobs. Cathy Alfonso, the community engagement manager for Port NOLA, describes this barrier with reference to the Port:

***"People don't take into consideration the maritime industry, and part of that reason is because, from an optics perspective, the Port is very siloed. The Port is behind a floodwall, you truly don't see. You can see the cranes coming up from behind the floodwall but the work of the Port is really kind of blocked from physical view. So mentally for a lot of the stakeholders I've talked to, it's kind of out of sight out of mind..."***

***(Cathy Alfonso, Port NOLA)***

Just as job opportunities in the Port may be literally out of sight for many residents, opportunities and pathways to good jobs that do not require a four-year degree may be metaphorically out of sight for many young people. Melissa Ehlinger, the Executive Vice President of YouthForce NOLA, believes one of the reasons is a simple lack of information:

***"[Young women] don't know how much workers in the trades earn..."***

***(Melissa Ehlinger, YouthForce NOLA)***

The absence of a career and technical education (CTE) stream within NOLA's public school system contributes to young people's lack of awareness of these opportunities. After Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans adopted a charter school model to rebuild the public school system and eliminated CTE pathways in favor of an emphasis on college preparation.

***"School facilities in New Orleans were not re-built for these [CTE] programs so we have career pipeline issues. When New Orleans Public School students don't have access to technical training, it definitely impacts who goes into these opportunities and who gets these jobs."***

***(Claire Jecklin, Executive Director of New Orleans Career Center).***

As a result, progress in diversifying jobs that do not require a four-year-college degree, including in construction and manufacturing, trails progress in other sectors, such as information technology, that typically require a college education. Contrasting progress in IT with construction, the human capital manager with Greater New Orleans Inc. notes:

***"The [IT] sector that we've been working hard to build in Greater New Orleans – it is more progressive. I think the tech sector has done a really good job with racial and gender diversity (while also acknowledging that there is more work to be done). We have received rankings about the New Orleans tech sector being number 3 for women in tech and number 5 for African Americans in tech, per capita. It is a positive sign for us that other sectors [like construction] can learn from".***  
***(Evie Poitevent Sanders, Greater New Orleans Inc.)***

unCommon Construction is a high-school apprenticeship program targeted at improving access to careers in construction for young women and men, particularly from communities of color. unCommon, the only such program in the city, has created 'Girls with Grit' to encourage more young women to pursue the internship/pre-apprenticeship program; it typically attracts nearly the same number of young women as young men to its work experience program. Few young women from the program make their way into a construction job. Taylor Holloway, Alumni & Partner Engagement Manager at unCommon, points to the lack of a more systematic high school infrastructure to introduce young women and men to the potential of non-college careers in male-dominated fields. Further, Holloway notes the need for certificate-granting courses to afford young people an important credential for potential employers.

***"What we're looking [for] in high school is [young] men and women being able to gain these skills right now, before they graduate, so that when they're 18 and they go to apply to entry level jobs with a subcontractor or general contractor, we want them to have the skills and network to find an industry job out of high school and that they don't have to worry about getting additional upskilling. ... One of the toughest barriers is that employers don't want to train new people who they don't know through their network."***

***(Taylor Holloway, UnCommon Construction)***

Young men may still find their way to such jobs without dedicated programs in high school. By contrast, young women are much less likely to do so because they have fewer role models suggesting that these are promising, well-paid career paths for women. For example, to date a new apprenticeship program in mechatronics, developed by Greater New Orleans Inc. with employers and community colleges<sup>29</sup>, reports good racial/ethnic diversity, but very limited gender diversity.<sup>30</sup>

A recent review of its student base by Nunez Community College found very few female students, particularly women of color, pursuing technical and building trades careers: just 4.5 percent of electrical students, 6 percent of HVAC students, 15 percent of Processing Technology Technicians (PTEC), and 15 percent of Industrial maintenance students were women. Nunez Community College Chancellor Dr. Tina Tinney notes:

***"So many young women attending the high school 5 minutes away from our campus don't understand the opportunities available from the community college."***

***(Dr. Tina Tinney, Nunez Community College)***

A new partnership between Boeing and Nunez is leading in the right direction; this program is preparing women and men for well-paying jobs that Boeing will need in the future. The program has not reached equity but at least one in four participants—26 percent—are women according to Dr. Tinney. Dr. Tinney relayed a story about a young woman who had been a bartender, and was hired by Boeing as the result of the program, who texted her to say:

***"I'm so excited. I just want you to know this is my first full time day at Boeing with benefits and salary.... I just want you to know, this changes my life."***



## OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE GENDER AND RACIAL EQUITY POST-COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the many inequities confronting women in New Orleans. Recovering from COVID-19 offers the region an opportunity, not just to rebuild the economy, but to re-build it in a way that is more equitable and more resistant to economic downturns. For example, the recovery could include measures to reduce or eliminate the barriers that impede women's equal access to well-paid, traditionally male-dominated jobs. These barriers include a lack of exposure to pathways into such careers, an absence of skills training to prepare women for these jobs, a scarcity of trusted mentors, and a shortage of communication to inform women about earnings and opportunities in these jobs compared to more typical careers for women. Additional barriers include cultural biases identifying many of these jobs as men's jobs, and work environments that are not welcoming to women. Addressing these barriers will require initiatives to attract, train, and retain a diverse group of women in these occupations. These initiatives could include:

**Increasing training, mentorship, and outreach programs for the trades in high schools.** Career fairs, internship programs, and proactive outreach targeted at young women can expose students to information about the opportunities in construction, manufacturing, and transportation while they are thinking about their future.<sup>31</sup> This would expand options for students, so that four-year college degrees are not seen as the only alternative to low-wage work. Designated outreach staff/mentors who look like the desired female students can help ensure young women consider these opportunities.

**Building and strengthening women-focused pre-apprenticeship programs.** Pre-apprenticeship programs can help women counteract stereotypes about working in male-dominated fields, provide women the skills and knowledge required to succeed in their chosen trade, and expand women's access to and retention in apprenticeships.<sup>32</sup> Pre-apprenticeship programs can also play an important role in outreach and advice to women seeking to change jobs as well as unemployed women and women just entering the labor market.

**Set gender diversity goals for publicly-funded construction projects, the Port, manufacturing, and transportation, and ensure that goals are tracked and enforced.** While expanding women's access to nontraditional occupations is important, employers and contractors must help ensure that, like their male counterparts, women can thrive in these jobs. Improving gender and racial diversity in trade and technical jobs requires setting diversity targets and holding contractors and subcontractors accountable for meeting those targets on publicly-funded and large private projects.<sup>33</sup>

**Ensure women have the supports needed to be successful.** Working in the trades can involve substantial start-up costs such as access to reliable transportation to get to work sites on time, subsidizing or purchasing tools and work clothes, and helping those with young children locate and pay for childcare. Helping women access these resources may increase their likelihood of success in male-dominated fields.<sup>34</sup> Supports also include ensuring that worksites and workplaces are welcoming to all workers, and that work sites and training programs are inclusive, equitable, and free from bullying, hazing or harassment, with clear policies, training and oversight. Support groups, young women's clubs, and industry-based women's committees can also provide crucial assistance.

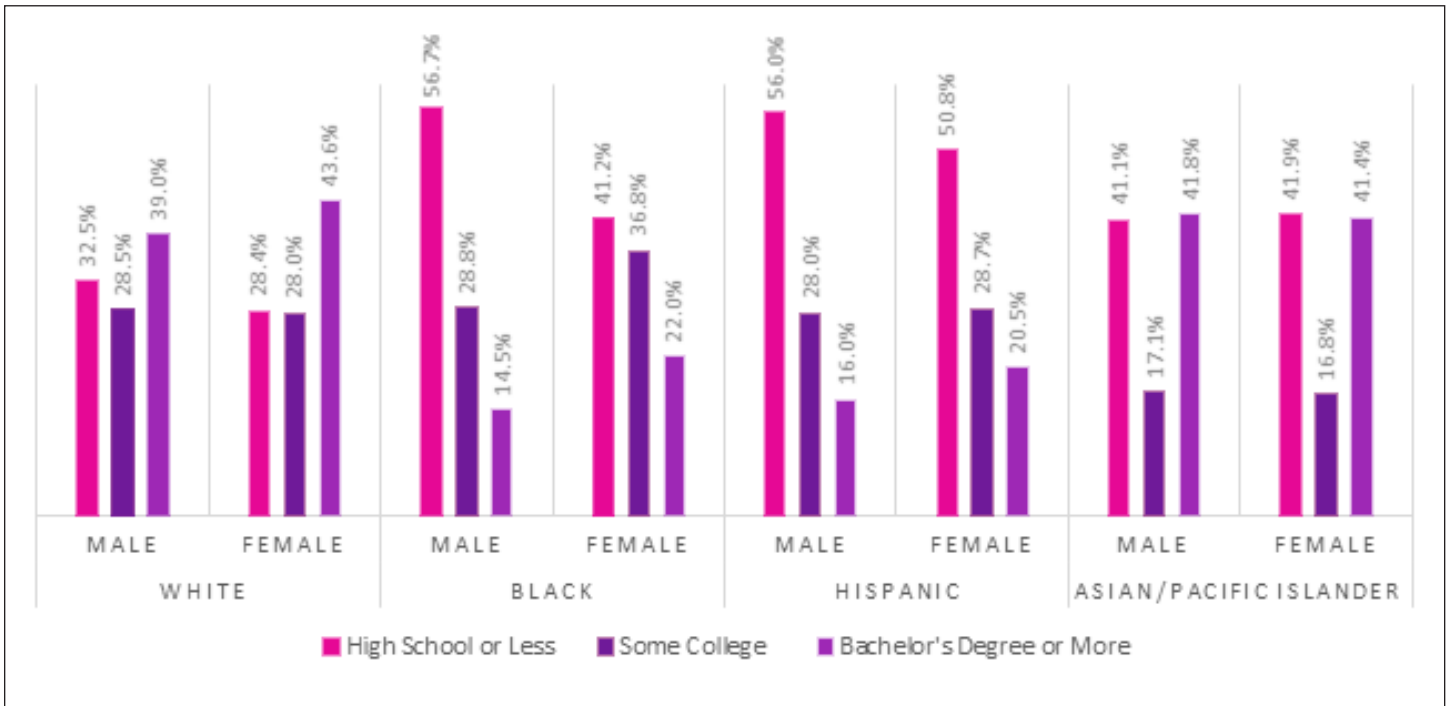
The benefits of such initiatives go beyond individual women and their families; improving women's access to well-paid jobs expands the skills pipeline, increases women's economic security, reduces reliance on public dollars, increases tax revenues, and reduces overall inequality for both current and future generations. Nunez Community College Chancellor Dr. Tina Tinney reflects:

***When women make smart choices to pursue high demand, high wage jobs, it's transformational. It not only changes the quality of her life, it changes the quality of her family's life, and it changes generations behind her. I see our college transform lives each and every day.***

***(Dr. Tina Tinney, Nunez Community College)***

These steps can help ensure that recovering from the COVID-19 recession benefits all New Orleanians and that women have access to jobs that allow them to be economically secure and provide for their families.

**APPENDIX A: Educational Attainment for all Women and Men aged 25-64 by Race and Ethnicity in New Orleans MSA, 2016-2018**



Note: Data are for the population of the New Orleans Metropolitan Area aged 16 through 64. Racial groups are non-Hispanic; Hispanics may be of any race.

Source: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (2016-2018; IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org)).



**APPENDIX B. Median Earnings for Workers in New Orleans MSA Employed Full-time, Year-round, aged 16 through 64, by Broad Occupational Group, 2016-2018**

	All Workers	Male	Female	Gender Earnings Ratio
Management, Business, and Financial Operations Occupations	\$65,560	\$76,828	\$54,413	70.8%
Health, Education, and Other Professional Occupations	\$57,552	\$72,202	\$50,228	69.6%
Service Occupations (Including Healthcare Support Occupations)	\$25,114	\$30,137	\$22,536	74.8%
Sales and Related Occupations	\$39,951	\$52,320	\$28,683	54.8%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	\$34,300	\$39,973	\$32,780	82.0%
Construction, Natural Resources, and Maintenance Occupations	\$38,000	\$38,000	n/a	n/a
Production, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$41,856	\$42,900	\$32,000	74.6%

Note: n/a=sample size too small to calculate median earnings. See Appendix C for earnings by sex, race, and ethnicity.

Source: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (2016-2018; IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org).

**APPENDIX C. Median Earnings for Workers in New Orleans MSA Employed Full-time, Year-round aged 16 through 64, by Broad Occupation, Sex and Race/Ethnicity, 2016-2018**

	White		BIPOC	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Management, Business, and Financial Operations Occupations	\$83,713	\$58,000	\$63,511	\$51,000
Professional and Related Occupations (including teachers at all levels)	\$73,248	\$52,320	\$66,584	\$46,097
Service Occupations (Including Healthcare Support)	\$37,000	\$25,871	\$26,160	\$20,928
Sales and Related Occupations	\$61,463	\$35,853	\$36,624	\$24,585
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	\$43,024	\$35,853	\$34,829	\$30,000
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations	\$46,000	n/a	\$33,485	n/a
Production, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$48,135	n/a	\$38,717	n/a

Notes: BIPOC refers to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color of which Black workers are the vast majority in New Orleans. Included in People of Color are Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, Multiracial, and other races not shown separately. Sample sizes too small to analyze data separately for members of individual racial/ethnic groups.

Source: IWPR analysis, as Appendix B.

## APPENDIX D. Median Earnings for Workers in New Orleans MSA Employed Full-time, Year-round, aged 16 through 64, by Broad Industry, 2016-2018

	All Workers	Male	Female	Gender earnings ratio
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries	\$45,000	\$46,097	n/a	n/a
Construction	\$40,975	\$40,975	n/a	n/a
Manufacturing	\$57,552	\$61,463	\$47,088	76.6%
Transportation, Communications, and Other Utilities	\$50,018	\$52,320	\$43,000	82.2%
Wholesale Trade	\$52,000	\$58,389	n/a	n/a
Retail Trade	\$28,683	\$32,439	\$25,609	78.9%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	\$52,243	\$66,584	\$44,048	66.2%
Business and Repair Services	\$40,000	\$41,856	\$34,531	82.5%
Personal Services	\$26,000	\$31,392	\$25,000	79.6%
Entertainment and Recreation Services	\$32,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
Professional and Related Services including healthcare and education	\$47,121	\$62,784	\$41,856	66.7%
Public Administration	\$51,219	\$60,000	\$42,000	70.0%

Note: n/a=sample size too small to calculate median earnings. Data not included by race and ethnicity due to small sample sizes.

Source: IWPR analysis, as Appendix B.

## APPENDIX E. Racial, Ethnic, and Sex Composition of Broad Industries, Workers Employed Full-time Year-round, aged 16-64, in New Orleans MSA.

	White		BIPOC	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries	37.9%	18.4%	40.3%	3.3%
Construction	37.2%	6.4%	51.4%	4.9%
Wholesale Trade	51.5%	19.6%	22.3%	6.6%
Manufacturing	48.4%	13.7%	28.5%	9.5%
Transportation, Communications, and Other Utilities	34.6%	12.2%	39.7%	13.5%
Business and Repair Services	37.3%	20.1%	23.4%	19.2%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	29.4%	40.2%	10.5%	19.8%
Public Administration	38.5%	16.6%	18.2%	26.7%
Entertainment and Recreation Services	30.7%	23.1%	19.2%	27.1%
Retail Trade	25.5%	24.3%	21.7%	28.6%
Professional and Related Services	18.0%	40.1%	11.1%	30.8%
Personal Services	13.1%	25.5%	16.4%	45.0%
All Workers	28.1%	25.9%	22.3%	23.7%

Notes: BIPOC refers to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color of whom Black workers are the vast majority in New Orleans. Included in People of Color are Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, Multiracial, and other races not shown separately; sample sizes too small to analyze data separately for members of individual racial/ethnic groups.

Source: IWPR analysis, as Appendix B

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Change in number of jobs between October 2019 and October 2020. Louisiana Workforce Commission. 2020. "Louisiana Workforce at a Glance- Data for October 2020." Released December 1, 2020. <[http://www2.laworks.net/Downloads/LMI/Bulletin\\_October\\_2020.pdf](http://www2.laworks.net/Downloads/LMI/Bulletin_October_2020.pdf)> (accessed December 19, 2020).
- <sup>2</sup> Collins, Judy. 2020. "2021-2022 Louisiana Economic Outlook Released." <<https://www.lsu.edu/business/newsevents/2020/11-september/2021-2022-louisiana-economic-outlook-released-2020.php>> (accessed December 19, 2020).
- <sup>3</sup> In October 2020 total employment in New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner was 26.4% lower than in October 2019 in Leisure and Hospitality; 15.8% lower in Construction; 5.7% lower in Manufacturing; 5.5% lower in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities. Total wage and salary employment was 9.7% lower. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), "Economy at a Glance: New Orleans -Metairie-Kenner, LA." <[https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.la\\_neworleans\\_msa.htm](https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.la_neworleans_msa.htm)> (accessed December 1, 2020).
- <sup>4</sup> NASA. 2019. Michoud Overview. <https://www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/michoud/overview.html>. (2019 date refers to last update of the webpage which is shown as November 26, 2019); NASA. 2018. Building the Future of Human Space Flight at Michoud Assembly Facility: Michoud Economic Impact. <[https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/michoud\\_economic\\_impact\\_2018.pdf](https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/michoud_economic_impact_2018.pdf)>.
- <sup>5</sup> The Port of New Orleans Website. <<https://www.portnola.com/info/port-101>>, New Orleans.com <<https://www.neworleans.com/business/>> (accessed DATE).
- <sup>6</sup> The Port of New Orleans Website. <<https://www.portnola.com/info/port-101>> accessed November 24, 2020.
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), "Economy at a Glance: New Orleans -Metairie-Kenner, LA."
- <sup>8</sup> IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (2016-2018; Integrated Public Use Microdata Series).
- <sup>9</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research. 2018. "The Economic Status of Women in Louisiana." <<https://statusofwomensdata.org/wp-content/themes/witsfull/factsheets/economics/factsheet-louisiana.pdf>> (accessed 01.11.2021). Institute for Women's Policy Research. 2015. Best and Worst States, <https://statusofwomensdata.org/national-trends/best-worst-states/>. Williams, Erica, Olga Sorokina, Avis Jones-DeWeever, and Heidi Hartmann. 2006. The Women of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast: Multiple Disadvantages and Key Assets for Recovery Part II. Gender, Race, and Class in the Labor Market. (<<https://referenceiwpr.wpengine.com/publications/the-women-of-new-orleans-and-the-gulf-coast-multiple-disadvantages-and-key-assets-for-recovery-part-ii-gender-race-and-class-in-the-labor-market/>> (accessed November 1, 2020). Henrici, Jane, Chandra Childers, and Elyse Shaw. Get to the Bricks: The Experiences of Black Women from New Orleans Public Housing after Hurricane Katrina. <<https://referenceiwpr.wpengine.com/publications/get-to-the-bricks-the-experiences-of-black-women-from-new-orleans-public-housing-after-hurricane-katrina/>> (accessed December 19, 2020).
- <sup>10</sup> The share of mothers who are breadwinners by race are White (70.7%), Black (88.5%), Hispanic (73.3%), Asian-Pacific Islanders (79.4%); racial groups are non-Hispanic., Hispanic breadwinners may be of any race. IWPR analysis of 2016-2018 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series).
- <sup>11</sup> Suh, Joo Yeoun, Cynthia Hess, and Jeff Hayes. 2018. "Basic Economic Security in Louisiana: How Much Income do Working Adults Need?" Washington DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research. <[https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/R557\\_Louisiana.pdf](https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/R557_Louisiana.pdf)> (accessed 12.10.2020) Expenses for families include housing and utilities, food, childcare while both parents work, reliable transportation for both parents to be able to travel to work and back, as well as taxes, personal and household items, and an emergency savings fund, among other expenses.
- <sup>12</sup> IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (2016-2018; IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org)); Hegewisch, Ariane and Valerie Lacarte. 2019. "Gender Inequality, Work Hours, and the Future of Work." Washington DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research. <<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-issues/employment-and-earnings/gender-inequality-work-hours-and-the-future-of-work/>>. (accessed 01.11.2021).

<sup>13</sup> In Q1 2020, nationally the median full-time weekly earnings for women with a bachelor's degree were \$1101 and for women with some college or an Associate's Degree \$754. The median weekly earnings for men who completed high school were \$858, and for men with some college or an Associate's degree were \$1014 (IWPR analysis based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey <https://www.bls.gov/cps/data.htm> (accessed 12.20.2020)); see also Hegewisch, Ariane, Marc Bendick, Barbara Gault, and Heidi Hartmann. 2016. Pathways to Equity: Narrowing the Wage Gap by Improving Women's Access to Good Middle Skill Jobs. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research [INSERT hyperlink](#) (accessed October 26, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> Blau, Francine D., and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2017. "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 55 (3): 789-865.

<sup>15</sup> Louisiana Workforce Commission. n.d. "New Orleans Region-Regional Labor Market Area 1, Long-term Employment Projections by Industry." <[http://www2.laworks.net/LaborMarketInfo/LMI\\_OccAllProj.asp?years=20162026](http://www2.laworks.net/LaborMarketInfo/LMI_OccAllProj.asp?years=20162026)> (accessed December 19, 2020).

<sup>16</sup> Louisiana Workforce Commission. n.d. "New Orleans Region-Regional Labor Market Area 1, Long-term Employment Projections by Industry." <[http://www2.laworks.net/LaborMarketInfo/LMI\\_OccAllProj.asp?years=20162026](http://www2.laworks.net/LaborMarketInfo/LMI_OccAllProj.asp?years=20162026)> (accessed December 19, 2020).

<sup>17</sup> Sample sizes are too small in Wholesale Trade to report BIPOC women's share of these industries; however, once the share of all workers who are white male, white female, and BIPOC male is calculated, the remaining workers are assumed to be BIPOC females.

<sup>18</sup> Mason, C. Nicole, Andrea Flynn and Shengwei Sun. 2020. Building the Future: Bold Policies for a Gender Equitable Future. Institute for Women's Policy Research <<https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Policies-for-a-Gender-Equitable-Recovery-Finals2.pdf>> (accessed December 19, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Working women's poverty rates would fall from 12.1 to 5.3%, and poverty rates of single mothers from 43.5 to 16.8%; calculations for 2014; Milli, Jessica, et al. 2017. "The Economic Impact of Equal Pay by State" Institute for Women's Policy Research < <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/R468.pdf>> (accessed January 11, 2020).

<sup>20</sup> Louisiana Workforce Commission, as above.

<sup>21</sup> Greater New Orleans Inc. 2019. 2019 Greater New Orleans Job Report <<https://gnoinc.org/research/GNO-future-jobs-2019-full-report.pdf>>. Greater New Orleans Inc. (accessed 12.20.2020).

<sup>22</sup> Nationally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic will reduce Construction job growth by between 1.4 and 2.8 percent compared to earlier estimates, and Transportation and Warehousing by between 0.8 and 1.9 percent, but will have a slightly positive impact on Manufacturing employment compared to pre-COVID-19 10-year estimates; see Wolf, Michael, (2020) "BLS Employment Projections and the Pandemic." Webinar presentation, December 2; Employment Projections Program; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics <<https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2020/11/19/16/47/Discussing-BLS-Employment-Projections-and-COVID-19>>, amending U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) "Employment Projections - 2019 to 2029" September 11 <<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecopro.pdf>> (accessed December 5, 2020).

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Andy O'Brien, Executive Secretary, SE Louisiana Building & Construction Trades Council, December 3, 2020

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Port NOLA Community Outreach Manager Cathy Ruiz Alfonzo in October 2020; see also Port NOLA (2020) "Port NOLA Sets New Container Record in 2019." January 16, 2019; <<https://portnola.com/info/news-media/press-releases/port-nola-sets-new-container-record-in-2019>> (accessed November 30 2020).

<sup>25</sup> IWPR analysis of 2016-2018 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series). IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org).

<sup>26</sup> Greater New Orleans, Inc., and Merrill Lynch. 2019. Greater New Orleans Jobs Report. <<https://gnoinc.org/research/GNO-future-jobs-2019-full-report.pdf>> (accessed December DATE 2020

<sup>27</sup> Data for registered apprentices in the trades in South East Louisiana, provided by Michael Knapps, Apprenticeship Training Representative of the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Childers, Chandra, Ariane Hegewisch, and Lark Jackson (2021 Forthcoming) "Here to Stay: Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Women in the Construction Trades." Briefing paper. Chicago Women in the Trades. For a comprehensive literature review on barriers for women in male-dominated occupations see Nanda, Neha et al. 2018. Feasibility Study and Evaluation of Nontraditional Occupations Demonstrations: Literature Review. Report submitted by IMPAQ International to U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration <<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/NT0-Study-Literature-Review-508.pdf>> (accessed December 20, 2020).

<sup>29</sup> See "Mechatronics Apprenticeship Program" <<https://gnoinc.org/initiatives/product-development/workforce-development/mechatronics-apprenticeship-program/>> (accessed December 15, 2020).

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Josh Tatum, Program Manager for Greater New Orleans, Inc. and manager of its signature workforce development program, GNOu, December 3, 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Oregon's Career Fair for Young Women in the Trades attracts around 1700 female middle and high school students annually. See Oregon Tradeswomen <https://www.rebuildingcenter.org/news/2018/6/26/the-oregon-tradeswoman-career-fair-promoting-construction-trades-to-young-women-across-portland> (accessed November 20, 2020); see also Nanda et al. at note 25 above for examples of successful initiatives for engaging young women in high schools.

<sup>32</sup> See U.S. Department of Labor. n.d. "Pre-apprenticeship: Pathways for Women into High-Wage Careers." U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration <[https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/apprenticeship/pdfs/Pre\\_Apprenticeship\\_GuideforWomen.p](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/apprenticeship/pdfs/Pre_Apprenticeship_GuideforWomen.p)> (accessed December 15, 2020); see also resources at the National Center for Women's Equity in Apprenticeships and Employment at Chicago Women in the Trades, <<http://womensequitycenter.org/best-practices/>> (accessed December 11 2021).

<sup>33</sup> In Massachusetts women's share of apprenticeships in the trades is almost three times as high as the national average (9.8 percent), not least due to proactive development and enforcement of employment goals for major construction projects; see Policy Group on Tradeswomen's Issues (PGTI) at [www.pgti.org](http://www.pgti.org) (accessed January 11 2021).

<sup>34</sup> Since 2010/11, the state of Oregon has used funding available for diversity in the Highway construction workforce to support the retention and advancement of women in apprenticeships, with particularly strong effects on women of color; see Oregon Department of Transportation (2020) Report on the Use of Federal Funds to Increase Diversity and Prepare those Entering the Highway Construction Workforce (ORS 184.866) <<https://www.oregon.gov/odot/About/GR/Highway%20Construction%20Workforce%20Development%20Report.pdf>> (accessed December 20 2020); on the critical role of child care supports as part of Oregon's initiative see Hegewisch, Ariane (2020) Child Care Supports For The Construction Trades: Building and Sustaining Diversity in Oregon. Institute for Women's Policy Research <<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/briefing-paper/child-care-supports-for-the-construction-trades-building-and-sustaining-diversity-in-oregon/>> (accessed December 15, 2020).

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