

By way of context, I have been a state employee for almost 24 years and manage a small program to improve retention and increase diversity of apprentices in certain construction trades that work in highway construction. I am not authorized to speak on behalf of my agency, so my testimony is my opinion only.

My best idea, which I will suggest to you, is to create a program and fund called something like Construction Apprentice Diversity and Retention (CADRE). The fund could get moneys from various places, but I think either a small percent of public improvement contracts or allow public owners to require payments into the fund as part of contracting large jobs.

The program would consist of these services:

Recruit economically disadvantaged and underrepresented individuals to participate in preapprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs;

Provide preapprenticeship training through programs approved by the Council;

Provide financial assistance for registered apprentices whose family income is less than a living wage, including:

(A) Job readiness supplies and equipment;

(B) Transportation assistance;

(D) Child care subsidies for registered apprentices as a supplement to Employment Related Day Care in amounts sufficient that any co-pays shall be no more than seven percent (7%) of the apprentice family's household income; and

(E) Hardship assistance in the event of a personal crisis event or a state of emergency declared under Oregon's statute for states of emergency;

Provide housing stabilization services for registered apprentices who have a documented need;

Provide guidance services for registered apprentices, including:

Formal or informal personal coaching;

Information and referral services specific to the needs of apprentices; and

Provide apprentices with resources and best practices for successfully completing the apprenticeship program and achieving the credential of journey worker;

Provide training agents with respectful workplace training that is effective in reducing harassment and discrimination experienced and witnessed by registered apprentice

Establish a Construction Worker Ombudsman to address concerns that arise in construction work and typically do not get reported through formal channels.