

WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

Building a Workforce That Works for Everyone

A Guide for Construction Leaders



The business case for an inclusive workforce

Construction faces a labor crisis. Approximately 92% of contractors report difficulty filling positions,¹ and the industry needs to attract an estimated 349,000 new workers in 2026 and another 456,000 in 2027 to meet demand.² At the same time, women represent just 11.2% of the construction workforce³ and only 4% of trade positions.⁴ That is a massive untapped talent pool.

Construction firms that build [genuinely inclusive workplaces](#) gain a [measurable edge](#) as they are more likely to outperform their peers financially by delivering stronger revenue and profitability outcomes over time.

The business case goes beyond recruitment. Inclusive practices can reduce risk exposures by potentially lowering harassment and discrimination claims, reducing workers' compensation costs through properly fitted equipment and enabling stronger employment practices liability (EPL) underwriting outcomes.

This guide outlines priority actions construction leaders can take to strengthen their workforce, reduce exposures and position their firms for sustainable growth.

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¹Associated General Contractors of America, "Construction Workforce Shortages Are Leading Cause Of Project Delays As Immigration Enforcement Affects Nearly 1/3 Of Firms," August 28, 2025.

²Associated Builders & Contractors, "ABC: Construction Industry Must Attract 349,000 Workers in 2026 Despite Macroeconomic Headwinds," January 15, 2026.

³Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population," accessed December 2, 2025.

⁴National Association of Women in Construction, "Building a Million Women in Construction: A Pledge for Change," accessed December 10, 2025.

Improve organizational culture from the top

Nearly a quarter of female construction workers report frequent sexual harassment and almost half cite these behaviors as a primary reason they left or are considering leaving the industry.⁵ An inclusive culture is not just an HR initiative. It is a risk management strategy.

Harassment, discrimination and retaliation claims are among the most common and costly employment-related losses in construction. Clear behavioral expectations, supervisor training and consistent documentation reduce EPL exposure and strengthen your defense if a claim arises. Firms with these measures in place also see better EPL underwriting outcomes.

- **Review and update your employee handbook** – Work with employment counsel and your insurance broker to ensure policies reflect current laws and inclusive language.
- **Establish multiple reporting channels, including anonymous options** – Workers must feel safe to report concerns before situations escalate.
- **Implement mandatory anti-harassment and violence prevention training** – Provide training for all employees, with additional training for supervisors on early intervention.

Engage a third-party HR management firm if needed – If you do not have a dedicated HR function, outsourcing ensures consistent, compliant handling of complaints and documentation.



⁵Institute for Women's Policy Research, "A Future Worth Building: What Tradeswomen Say About the Change They Need in the Construction Industry," accessed December 2, 2025.

Invest in comprehensive benefits

The better your benefits package, the more talent you can attract and retain. While about 74% of construction companies offer medical benefits, only 29% offer short-term disability and just 17% offer long-term disability.⁶ Without these coverages, women may lack employer-provided paid maternity leave. About 63% of parents working in construction said a lack of pregnancy accommodations was a significant factor in their decision to leave their construction job.⁷

Gaps in benefits can unintentionally drive workers' compensation claims when employees return to work too early or work through conditions that should be accommodated. A benefits consultant who understands construction can design packages that compete with office-based employers in your region.

- ❑ **Offer health insurance with lower deductibles and higher employer-paid premiums** – This demonstrates investment in worker health and competes with non-construction employers for talent.
- ❑ **Add short-term and long-term disability coverage** – Policies should provide maternity leave coverage and support all workers through recovery from illness or injury.
- ❑ **Develop a written parental leave and light-duty policy** – A written policy protects pregnant workers and gives supervisors clear guidance, reducing ad hoc decisions that create legal exposure.
- ❑ **Explore flexible scheduling for eligible roles** – Adjusted start times can help workers balance childcare responsibilities without sacrificing productivity.

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⁶Employer, "Construction Industry- Employee Benefits Summary," accessed December 9, 2025.

⁷Institute for Women's Policy Research, "A Future Worth Building: What Tradeswomen Say about the Change They Need in the Construction Industry," accessed December 10, 2025.

Ensure safety equipment fits all workers

Only 31% of women in construction report that their PPE is specifically designed for women.⁸ Improperly fitted gloves, oversized hard hats and ill-fitting harnesses create genuine hazards. Women are more likely than men to suffer ergonomic injuries, including musculoskeletal disorders and repetitive motion strains, which cost employers approximately \$18 billion annually across industries.⁹

Preventable injuries from ill-fitting equipment lead to costly workers' compensation claims and lost productivity. Investing in properly sized PPE is one of the highest-return safety investments a firm can make.

- ❑ **Audit your PPE inventory for sizing gaps** – Identify where women on your crew lack properly fitted options for gloves, harnesses, hard hats and high-visibility vests.
- ❑ **Partner with vendors offering female-specific PPE** – More manufacturers now produce equipment based on female anthropometric data, so sourcing has become easier.
- ❑ **Provide tools with appropriate weight and handle sizes** – Reducing strain at the tool level prevents cumulative injuries that drive long-term claims.
- ❑ **Invest in adjustable and modern equipment** – Telescoping features and ergonomic design benefit all workers, not just women, and reduce overall injury rates.

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⁸NCCER, "Policy and Practice: Women's Experiences and Advancement in Construction Workforce Development Report," April 23, 2025.

⁹National Safety Council, "Address Workplace Inequities to Reduce Musculoskeletal Disorders," July 2, 2024.

Ensure pay equity and advancement opportunities

Construction has one of the narrowest gender pay gaps of any U.S. industry, with women earning approximately 95 cents on the dollar overall.¹⁰ Pay transparency has been a driving factor, with more states requiring salary range disclosures. Nonetheless, women still have not reached parity. Forward-thinking construction firms should work to close the remaining gap proactively.

Pay disparities based on gender create legal exposure under the federal Equal Pay Act and state equivalents. Regular audits and transparent criteria protect your firm and signal to current and prospective employees that advancement is based on performance.

- ❑ **Conduct regular pay equity audits** – Compare compensation for similar roles regardless of gender to identify and close gaps before they become claims.
- ❑ **Establish written, objective criteria for advancement** – Performance-based promotion standards reduce bias and protect against discrimination allegations.
- ❑ **Review promotion patterns for disparities** – Look at who is advancing and at what rate. If patterns emerge, investigate root causes.
- ❑ **Build mentorship programs pairing new and experienced workers** – Structured mentorship accelerates skill development and strengthens retention across your workforce.

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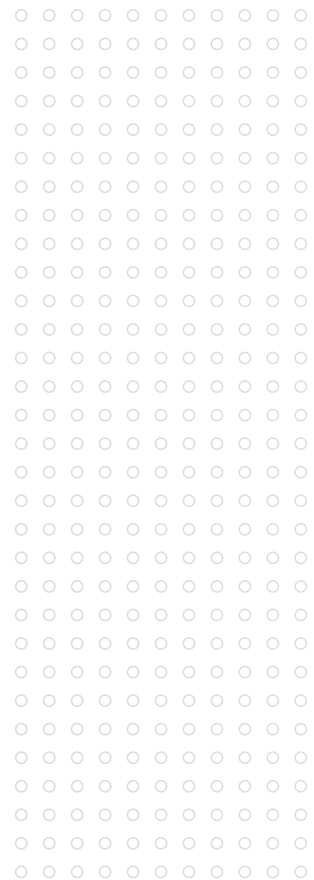


¹⁰The National Association of Women in Construction, “How Pay Transparency Helps Women Construction Workers,” accessed December 2, 2025.

Develop your talent pipeline early

Expanding the talent pool beyond traditional recruitment channels strengthens construction firms from the inside out. Organizations that prioritize diverse hiring bring in varied perspectives, problem-solving approaches and professional networks — advantages that show up in project performance, client relationships and long-term resilience. Firms that invest in inclusive pipeline development today position themselves to compete more effectively as the industry evolves.

- **Partner with local trade schools and vocational programs** - Create internship opportunities and build relationships with the next generation of construction professionals.
- **Host or participate in career fairs regularly** - Visible presence in recruitment channels signals that your firm welcomes diverse talent.
- **Develop apprenticeship programs** - Bringing in talent early and investing in their development builds loyalty and reduces turnover costs.
- **Connect with organizations that support women in construction** - These groups can provide direct access to women already in or interested in construction careers.



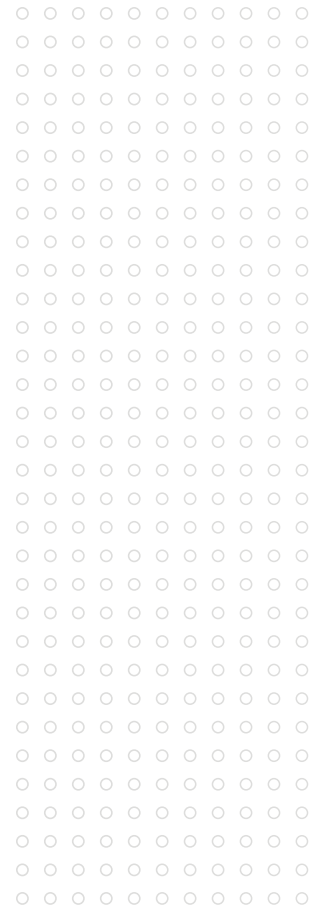
Working with the right insurance and risk advisor

Labor shortages, evolving jobsite expectations and increasingly complex projects are reshaping construction risk. A construction-specialist broker brings more than product knowledge. They bring context: How jobsite conditions, equipment fit, culture and leadership behaviors interact with safety outcomes and employment practices risk.

An experienced broker can identify the quiet gaps that create outsized problems later, from employee handbooks that have not been updated in decades to inconsistent complaint documentation to benefits packages that unintentionally drive claims. They can also help your firm tell its story to underwriters in a way that reflects the quality of your operations and culture, positioning you for stronger insurance outcomes and long-term growth.

HUB's construction practice works with contractors of all sizes and specialties to align insurance, safety, risk management and benefits strategy. We help firms build the culture and infrastructure that attracts top talent, reduces claims and drives sustainable growth.

Talk to a HUB construction specialist today.



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Strategic support that puts you in control.

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