

Can a Girl Be a Carpenter?

Or an Electrician, a Tile Setter, a Construction Laborer, an Architect or an Engineer?

Why Should We Encourage Girls to Enter Construction Careers?

“Studies indicate that the most important variable affecting earnings is not educational level, but occupational choice. Many women remain clustered in low-wage, female dominated occupations. Narrowing the gender gap in earnings and enabling more women to achieve economic self-sufficiency requires...opening doors to high-skill, high-wage...occupations”.¹ The skilled trades offer women opportunities that are unrivaled for jobs that do not require a college education. Careers in the trades offer wages of \$20 to \$30 per hour, on-the-job training, pensions, and health care benefits through union membership.²

New York City Construction: Labor Shortage Predictions

The New York State Department of Labor projects that 13 construction-related trades will be among the top 25 fastest-growing occupations for the New York City region in the coming years. Rising construction spending and the aging of the current construction labor force mean that locally, demand could outstrip supply by more than 30,000 workers.³ With billions in federal dollars coming into the city for the rebuilding of downtown over the next several years, the leaders of New York City and its construction industry owe it to all our young people to open the doors of opportunity for these jobs.

What is the High School for Construction Trades, Engineering and Architecture?

This new school is an initiative of the Mayor’s Commission on Construction Opportunity. It is a Career and Technical Educational (CTE) School that will have an academic and vocational curriculum to prepare students for the trades and for college. Occupations in the construction industry include work requiring high school degrees as well as work that requires a higher degree. An advisory board of members of the Commission, which includes members of the building trades, will work closely with the City’s Department of Education in devising the curriculum and supporting the work of the school.

School Code Q83A

Legal Momentum's mission is to advance the rights of women and girls by using the power of the law and creating innovative public policy. Our work focuses on three broad initiatives: economic justice, freedom from gender-based violence, and equality under the law.

Equality Works

Equality Works is the Legal Momentum project created to advocate for the expansion of women's participation in high-paying non-traditional employment. The goal of the project is to transform the current non-traditional environment into one that is woman friendly and woman safe. The project works to help create a "critical mass" of women, a point at which enough women are in these fields to transform the industry's standard operating procedures.

Equality Works' staff works with public and private builders, contractors, unions, governmental representatives, and community organizations in order to ensure equal opportunity in the construction agency. We help:

- identify and recruit experienced tradeswomen;
- identify and support training sources;
- develop equal opportunity contractual clauses and policies; and
- support and implement equal opportunity policies and procedures.

¹ "Tradeswomen of Tomorrow: An Educator's Guide to Nontraditional Career Awareness for Girls," Chicago Women in the Trades, 1999, p.10. http://www.chicagowomenintradef.org/programs_services/publications.html

² <http://www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/Qf-nontra.htm> and http://www.chicagowomenintradef.org/artman/publish/article_158.shtml

³ "New York City Construction Looks Resilient," New York Building Congress Newsletter (Winter 2001); "Women in the Industry" Annual Report 2004 New York Building Congress. <http://www.buildingcongress.com/code/annual/2004/2004-02-women-industry.htm>