



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

ADDING A GENDER LENS TO NONTRADITIONAL JOBS TRAINING

CREATED BY WIDER OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

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TOOL 1.6 PLANNING A CAREER FAIR FOR IMPROVING WOMEN'S ACCESS TO NONTRADITIONAL JOBS

If your program is planning a career fair for women, review this checklist and include as many of these suggestions as possible as you prepare and hold your event.

This tool walks you through the stages of planning the event. It begins with ideas for recruiting attendees and engaging critical partners, including the workforce development system and employers, in developing or supporting the fair. Program recommendations for the event itself include an opening plenary and targeted workshops. The checklist also includes ideas for materials, booths, and other career fair elements, and it highlights key logistical concerns.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOL

Outreach and recruitment staff; job developers

This tool is part of Adding a Gender Lens to Nontraditional Jobs Training, created by Wider Opportunities for Women for the GreenWays initiative and revised by JFF as part of the Delivering the TDL Workforce initiative. All tools are available online at: <http://www.jff.org/newlensonjobs>.

Supported by the Walmart Foundation, Delivering the TDL Workforce expanded high-quality transportation, distribution, and logistics training programs in ten regions and promoted best practices in program design and delivery, employer engagement, and workforce partnership development. GreenWays was supported by grants from the U.S. Department of Labor through Pathways Out of Poverty and the Green Jobs Innovation Fund.

BEGIN RECRUITMENT EARLY. INCREASE ITS INTENSITY AS THE EVENT APPROACHES.

Successful recruitment techniques include:

- Radio and television public service announcements
- Advertisements in local newspapers and community newsletters
- Notices with public assistance checks and at social services facilities
- Flyers posted where women are likely to go (e.g., beauty salons, grocery stores, schools, afterschool programs, child care facilities, religious institutions)
- Engage a radio or TV sponsor or program host
- Seek and publicize endorsements from local politicians or other trusted public figures

ENGAGE KEY PLAYERS ACROSS THE COMMUNITY.

These individuals and organizations can be partners in planning, sponsoring, or participating in the fair. Consider including:

- Employers, unions, apprenticeship programs
- Service providers
- Tradeswomen organizations
- Workforce Development Boards and One-Stop Career Centers
- Single-parent and displaced-homemaker centers
- Social service agencies
- Community colleges
- Local public agencies (e.g., public works—sanitation, water, utilities, transportation)
- Local public officials and their staff
- Local green jobs-related stores and other stores people trust or use regularly

Invite the partners to a steering committee meeting. A pre-event meeting of all players will help you coordinate efforts and divide up responsibilities for the many tasks involved in preparing for and holding the fair. It also offers an opportunity to educate partners about issues related to nontraditional employment for women.

CONDUCT A PLENARY SESSION NEAR THE BEGINNING OF FAIR.

Begin the fair with a session that includes all participants. It sets up the day and can include:

- Inspiring stories from women in nontraditional occupations
- Information and encouragement from employers, apprenticeship programs, or union leaders
- Introductory information on nontraditional jobs and apprenticeships, why these are good jobs for women, challenges for women in entering these occupations, and strategies to overcome the challenges
- How to prepare to be a competitive candidate for nontraditional jobs
- Descriptions of your training program (e.g., what it offers; how it works; what the schedule is; what the entry requirements are)
- Next steps to begin applying for a training program
- Strategies for making the most of the fair
- Overview of the career fair information packets (see *box*)

PREPARE AN INFORMATION PACKET FOR CAREER FAIR PARTICIPANTS.

Include this information in a bag that participants can use to hold the materials they pick up as they visit different tables at the career fair.

- Information about your training program
- A self-assessment worksheet to help determine if your occupation is a strong career match for the participant. See Tool 1.7 for a sample self-assessment.
- A trinket with information on how to contact your training program
- A guide to using the fair effectively
- A guide to the booths or workshops at the career fair, along with contact information for employers and organizations at the career fair
- A checklist of next steps following the fair
- An evaluation sheet

THINK ABOUT INCLUDING WORKSHOPS.

These might address selected topics more in depth, such as:

- The target industry and jobs for women
- How to enter jobs training programs and apprenticeships
- First steps in preparing to enter a nontraditional occupation
- Physical fitness for the work context
- Guided self-assessment to determine career strengths and interests

OFFER INFORMATION ABOUT AND CONNECTIONS TO EMPLOYERS.

Each booth or table should offer:

- Descriptions of the company and the jobs it has available or foresees
- Other information on how to find out about jobs at the company and how to apply
- Application forms for available jobs or sign-up sheets to be notified about current and future openings
- Next steps for applicants

EXPOSE WOMEN TO A VARIETY OF NONTRADITIONAL TASKS.

- Offer opportunities to experience first hand various tasks, such as bricklaying, carpentry, wire cutting, or truck driving
- Offer opportunities to try on equipment, such as a 30-pound carpentry belt or a firefighter's protective gear

Community colleges, apprenticeship programs, and your own jobs training program are among the sources for the necessary materials and possible sponsors for such activities at the career fair.

FEATURE FEMALE ROLE MODELS.

These women can speak to prospective candidates about their own experiences in gaining and working in nontraditional jobs.

- Role models should reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of your community or target group
- Role models can coordinate workshops, speak in panel discussions, or demonstrate nontraditional skills in hands-on booths
- Invite tradeswomen to wear their work clothing, making them easily identifiable to participants

PLAN FOR A MYRIAD OF LOGISTICAL DETAILS.

- Be sure that the site is large enough and that it offers adequate access to rooms, electricity, water, and rest room facilities
- Draw up a floor plan of booths and other fair activities and distribute it to all organizers, as well as those who will set up booths
- If possible, obtain free bus or train passes for participants or consider renting vans to transport attendees
- Provide child care on site to make the fair accessible to participants with children

BUILD IN AN EVALUATION PROCESS.

- Use the evaluation when planning for next year's fair.
- Offer an incentive for participants to hand in their evaluation sheets (e.g., a raffle ticket for a "Rosie the Riveter" t-shirt).