

# ILR study finds workforce agreements effective

Cornell University

Community workforce agreements (CWAs) -- increasingly common provisions of project labor agreements that often require developers and municipalities meet social investment and local hiring standards -- have expanded job opportunities for returning veterans, women and minorities, according to ILR research.

The agreements are one key to preserving and expanding a healthy middle class, according to the report.

ILR researchers examined 185 project-labor agreements administered by 70 building trade councils nationwide during the past 15 years. The study also features three detailed case studies, including New York City's community workforce provisions.

"Community workforce provisions in project labor agreements (PLAs) represent an innovative idea that has been used to create new construction career opportunities for underrepresented populations in a number of U.S. cities," said study co-author Jeff Grabelsky, report researcher and Construction Industry Program director at ILR. "We wanted to know if CWAs represent a new and promising trend, and our research indicates they do."

The report, supported by a grant from American Rights at Work, found that 139 PLAs examined included community workforce agreements that promoted the hiring of veterans, 103 required hiring women and underrepresented minorities, 100 featured apprenticeship programs, and 70 set goals for hiring local workers. While there were significant variations based on region, the study found that CWAs are on the rise, are becoming increasingly comprehensive, and are playing key roles in expanding economic opportunities and overall community vitality.

Maria Figueroa, researcher and Labor and Industry Research director at ILR, said, "We are confident that if we can influence the public discourse on how construction can be an engine for shared economic prosperity, CWAs will be even more widely used as an effective instrument of public policy."

The study was co-authored by ILR Research Associate Ryan Lamare.

*Mary Catt is assistant director of communications at the ILR School.*

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