

# BUILD TOGETHER

WOMEN OF THE BUILDING TRADES



**Build Together is a national CBTU program that promotes, supports and mentors women in the skilled construction trades.**

## A skills gap is coming—and that's good news.

In Canada women represent only 4% of the construction trade workforce. In other skilled trades, that number is even smaller.

Studies and industry reports show that a large population of skilled trade workers are gearing up for retirement. An estimated 300,000 new workers will need to be recruited from outside of the construction industry over the next ten years to fill this gap.

This is an enormous opportunity for women seeking secure, well-paid, and fulfilling employment.

## Construction: The last frontier.

Construction is seen as the “last frontier” in terms of increasing numbers of female representation. Other industries & sectors, the military, law enforcement, etc. have surpassed 15% female representation. The numbers of women in construction has remained unchanged for years. The tradeswomen of Build Together, together with industry support—plan to change this.

For centuries, construction workers passed on the knowledge of their craft from father to son. This generational “passing of the torch” led to insular recruiting strategies in the past. Contemporary advertising strategies perpetuate the assumption by heavily gearing industry images and language towards men. The Build Together program has tailored strategies to actively recruit & retain women to the industry.

## Building Together for a new tomorrow.

Build Together is represented by tradeswomen of Canada's Building Trades Unions across the country. They are apprentices or journeypersons from the skilled trades under the Building Trades umbrella.

These representatives are responsible for:

**Exposing Women to the Trades** — Both women and men need equal exposure to the trades in order to consider it as a career. Women get less exposure because they have historically been steered away from the trades. The Build Together program operates a classroom speaking program to connect students with strong female role models that are active in the industry.

**Mentoring Women in the Trades** — Support for women in the trades should not stop at recruitment. Mentorship is a key pillar of apprenticeship and women need guidance from tradeswomen who are successful and thriving in the industry. Build Together is developing a structured mentorship program specifically geared towards the retention of women in the trades.

**Making space for Women in the Trades** — Women face a number of unique challenges in the trades ranging from washroom facilities to inadequately fitting safety gear. Something as natural as pregnancy can leave employers and co-workers uncertain about how to support a woman in the trades. Build Together is working with industry to give a voice to women's issues on the tools and identify ways to create workplace cultures that are inclusive of women.

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**Challenging policy makers & industry** — Government, training institutions, labour and employers all have a role to play in supporting women in the trades. Build Together is working to identify the barriers for women in construction as well as the conditions for success and replicate them across Canada.

## Where we are and where we're headed

To date, Build Together has:


- Gained the support of Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU) as a national initiative.
- Created online platforms where tradeswomen and industry network and support the cause.
- Attended many events across the country such as trade shows, career fairs, mentorship dinners, as well as networking functions.
- Spoken at conferences, schools and events across the country.
- Given back to the community by way of charity donations and volunteerism.
- Been featured in media outlets across the country.
- Mentored individuals who expressed interest in the trades and needed further support and encouragement.

## Moving forward, Build Together plans to:

- Build partnerships and create a sponsor recognition program of like-minded organizations who have goals to further the success of women in the trades.
- Continue providing mentorship and support to apprentices, journeypersons, and women considering the trades.
- Continue challenging and debunking the existing myths and stereotypes of women in the trades.
- Continue creating awareness and exposure to careers in the trades.
- Launch a structured mentorship program specifically geared towards retention of women in the industry.
- Support and assist in the creation and operations of provincial Build Together programs through the CBTU's provincial councils across the country.

**Please visit us online to view upcoming events we will be attending and contact us with your questions—we look forward to hearing from you!**

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