



## *In Her Own Words: Improving Project Outcomes*

### *Executive Summary*

March 2023

Workforce shortages in the construction industry are only growing as individuals retire faster than the industry can recruit and hire new entrants. In fact, statistics show that **for every four people leaving the construction industry, only one enters**. Simultaneously, government and industry are investing in infrastructure to rebuild roads and bridges, expand public transport, and upgrade the power grid which only heightens the issue.

With predictions as high as 1.9 million craft professionals needed by 2025, it is time for our industry to actively and effectively make the changes necessary to **recruit and retain the largest demographic percentage of our population—women**.

#### **Summary of Process and Findings**

To go beyond the numbers and statistics that are typically presented in research about women in construction, **NCCER met with 176 tradeswomen and analyzed survey responses from 770 women in construction**. Our goal was to highlight the unique benefits women bring to the construction craft workforce, the obstacles they encounter getting in and staying in the industry, and their advice on what contractors can do to recruit and retain more women in the craft workforce.

Both the women themselves and the management teams that were involved in separate focus groups agreed on the unique qualities women bring to jobsites that improve project outcomes. One of these qualities is their focus on following the prescribed work process as designed instead of relying on physical strength and experience.

*“Women are role model workers. They want to work safely. They follow process and procedure. Generally, I find that [women adhere] better to compliance and HSE process and procedures.”*

The focus groups provided various recommendations on how to better recruit and retain women for craft professional positions that ranged from addressing harassment and discrimination to accommodations for working mothers.

A survey of 770 women in construction found that 25% of tradeswomen reported facing disciplinary action for missing work to tend to family emergencies. Whereas only four percent of women in managerial, administrative, and technical positions reported being disciplined for missing work for similar reasons.

If we want construction careers to be a viable option for all people, **we have to change the culture and perception of our industry, starting with our own projects**. We must recognize that we are not effectively appealing to the largest percentage of the population, and this is negatively impacting our project outcomes.

To read the complete white paper, visit [nccer.org/research](http://nccer.org/research).