
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1980
Author: Caloza (D)
Amended: 6/8/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE LABOR, PUB. EMP. & RET. COMMITTEE: 5-0, 6/17/26
AYES: Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Cortese, Durazo, Laird

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26
AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 5/26/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Labor: apprenticeship: Equal Representation in Construction
Apprenticeships Grant Program

SOURCE: California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls
Women in Non Traditional Employment Roles

DIGEST: This bill directs the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), upon appropriation by the Legislature, to establish the Equal Representation in Construction Apprenticeships Grant Program (ERiCA Grant Program) to, among other things, provide women, nonbinary individuals, and underrepresented populations with opportunities to train for a construction career.

Senate Floor Amendments of 8/17/26 1) strike provisions of this bill that prescribe exact ERiCA Grant Program criteria and instead authorize DIR to issue regulations necessary to implement the measure; and 2) specify the goals of the ERiCA Grant Program.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the DIR within the Labor and Workforce Development Agency to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners of California, to improve their working conditions, and to advance their opportunities for profitable employment. (Labor Code §50.5)
- 2) Establishes the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) within DIR to oversee apprenticeship programs and requires the Chief of the Division (Chief) to perform various functions to promote the welfare of apprentices. (Labor Code §3070 et seq.)
- 3) Provides for preapprenticeship and apprenticeship programs within DAS, sponsored by specific entities and employers, and requires the Chief to perform various functions with respect to apprenticeship programs and the welfare of apprentices. (Labor Code §3070 et seq.)
- 4) Requires DIR, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to establish a Women in Construction Priority Unit to coordinate and help ensure collaboration across DIR's divisions, and maximize state and federal funding to support women and nonbinary individuals in the construction workforce. (Labor Code §107.7.1)
- 5) Requires the Women in Construction Priority Unit to do all of the following:
 - a) Assist and provide resources to women and nonbinary individuals, including, but not limited to, apprentices and journeypersons in the construction industry, including developing materials for employers and unions to promote the recruitment and retention of women and nonbinary individuals in construction, maintaining an internet website listing workers' rights, developing training materials specific to women and nonbinary individuals to navigate health and safety and wage and hour laws, and leadership training to increase the upward mobility of women and nonbinary individuals in construction careers.
 - b) Provide resources for employers and project owners, including public agencies, to improve construction worksite culture, address barriers to employment, develop training and materials for workforce pipeline professionals specific to women and nonbinary individuals in construction, and interagency training.
 - c) Upon request by a state agency and approval by the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, establish interagency agreements, as specified to

promote the recruitment and retention of women and nonbinary individuals in construction. (Labor Code §107.7.2(a-c))

- 6) Provides that preapprenticeship programs shall be eligible for resources provided under 4) and 5). (Labor Code §107.7.2(d))

This bill:

- 1) Requires, upon appropriation by the Legislature, DIR, through DAS, to establish and administer the ERiCA Grant Program.
- 2) Provides that the goals of the ERiCA Grant Program shall include all of the following:
 - a) Provide women, nonbinary individuals, and underrepresented populations with opportunities to train for a construction career with greater access to registered preapprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs.
 - b) Increase awareness among women, nonbinary individuals, and underrepresented populations of preapprenticeship and apprenticeship programs that create an on-ramp into a career in the building and construction industry.
 - c) Increase the number of women, nonbinary individuals, and underrepresented populations registered in, and completing, construction preapprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.
 - d) Increase the number of women, nonbinary individuals, and underrepresented populations employed in the construction trades.
 - e) Increase retention of women, nonbinary individuals, and underrepresented populations in the construction trades.
- 3) Authorizes DIR to issue rules, regulations, guidelines, policies, or procedures necessary to implement these provisions.
- 4) Defines “registered” as registered with DAS.

Background

Women and Other Underrepresented Populations in the Trades. Careers in the building and construction trades offer a reliable pathway into the middle class. Journeypersons and apprentices enjoy high wages, as well as health and pension benefits. In California, an increasing demand for housing, infrastructure, and

climate-resilient development has led to sustained investments in apprenticeship programs. In April 2026, for example, the State announced \$18.6 million in grants to support apprenticeship in the building and construction trades. The construction industry's urgent need for skilled workers creates opportunities to diversify its workforce. Nationally, women represent just 11% of the construction industry. Women make up an even smaller percentage (4.3% in 2025) of the hands-on trades jobs such as electricians, carpenters, laborers, and plumbers. Other populations underrepresented in the building and construction trades include non-binary individuals, justice involved, at-risk youth and certain ethnic minorities.

Women in Construction Priority Unit. As part of the 2022/2023 Budget Act, Governor Newsom signed into law legislation to create the Women in Construction Unit at DIR. The goal of the Unit is to support women and nonbinary individuals in entering the construction workforce. Among other things, the Unit was tasked with:

- Assisting and providing resources to women and nonbinary individuals including apprentices and journeypersons in the construction industry.
- Providing resources to employers and project owners to improve worksite culture and address barriers to employment.
- Developing materials and training for employers and unions to promote recruitment and retention.
- Leadership training to increase the upward mobility of women and nonbinary individuals in construction careers.

In addition to the Unit, a Women in Construction Advisory Committee was created to develop recommendations to diversify the construction workforce. The Advisory Committee is composed of representatives from certified collective bargaining agents who represent construction workers, construction industry employers, labor-management groups in the industry, and representatives from the Labor Commissioner's Office, Cal/OSHA, and the Department of Fair Employment and Housing.

Equal Representation in Construction Apprenticeship Grant (ERiCA Grant Program). Using money appropriated in each of the Budget Acts from 2022 to 2025, the Unit established the ERiCA Grant Program. ERiCA grants seek to

improve access to training and employment opportunities for underrepresented populations in construction trades throughout the state. Grantees can apply for 3 categories of funding:

- 1) Recruitment: Expanding recruitment efforts to be more inclusive of women and non-binary individuals to better facilitate their entry into construction careers,
- 2) Childcare: supportive resources for childcare and,
- 3) Worksite culture: mentoring and mental health support for apprentices and pre-apprentices and training for all on the worksite to better navigate the worksite interactions.

DAS awarded \$25 million in funds during the first round of the ERiCA grant program (2023-2025). The second round of grants is underway, with an expected performance period of June/July 2025- June 30, 2027. DAS awarded \$26,169,217 for this round.

Grant Eligibility: Eligible Grant applicants must have a demonstrated history of operating at least two pre-apprentice or apprentice cohorts focusing on equity and inclusion of underrepresented populations in the construction industry over the past four years *or* marketed, recruited or advocated for women or non-binary individuals in DAS-registered construction pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. All applicants must be a DAS-registered pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship program or be in collaboration with one, validated with letters of support. The following are eligible entity types:

- Non-profits
- Community-based Organizations
- Local Education Agencies
- Workforce Development Boards
- Unions
- State Registered construction apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship program sponsors

Applicants are scored according to five criteria: 1) fulfills eligibility requirements; 2) demonstrated history of serving under-represented populations in construction; 3) effective use of funding; 4) strength of projected outcomes; and 5) feasibility of proposed plan.

*Please see the Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement policy analysis for more information on the three categories of funding, eligible activities, and grantee reporting requirements.

This bill Neither the Women in Construction Priority Unit nor the ERiCA Grant Program have remaining funding unless more is appropriated in this or future years' budget acts. AB 1980 codifies the ERiCA Grant Program and specifies the program's goals.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

“This bill would result in an annual cost pressure of an unknown amount, likely in the tens of millions of dollars annually, to appropriate funds to DIR to continue administering the ERiCA Grant Program (General Fund). DIR's Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) awarded \$25 million during the first round of grants for 2023-25 and \$26 million during the second round of grants for 2025-27. DIR indicates that its annual costs to administer the Program would total \$1.4 million on an ongoing basis (General Fund).”

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/17/26)

California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (co-source)

Women in Non Traditional Employment Roles (co-source)

California Edge Coalition

Career Launch Path

Contractors State License Board

Equal Rights Advocates

Grid Alternatives

Rising Sun Center for Opportunity

Strategy Workplace Communications

Tradeswomen INC.

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/17/26)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: Women in Non Traditional Roles, a co-source of the measure, argues:

“AB 1980 will institutionalize the Equal Representation in Construction Apprenticeships (ERiCA) Grant Program within the Department of Industrial Relations, ensuring sustained, statewide support for pre-apprenticeship training and workforce entry for women. This action is essential: while pre-apprenticeship programs have proven effective pathways into registered apprenticeship, too many women are unable to complete them due to financial and structural barriers.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 5/26/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Muratsuchi, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Emma Bruce / L., P.E. & R. / (916) 651-1556
8/18/26 16:11:58

**** **END** ****