



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN



JULY 2020

**EQUITY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN:
*EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The San Francisco Department on the Status of Women conducted a landscape study of workforce development and economic empowerment programs for women in San Francisco. The objective of this analysis was to understand how well these programs serve women and other vulnerable populations. We asked the questions of whether women are being left out of these important economic opportunities and what drives or hinders the success of women within these programs. The data presented in this report was collected before the COVID-19 pandemic and well before the full impact of this global crisis could be understood on our economy and local workforce. This report represents a snapshot in time, but the findings remain relevant and the recommendations and best practices can be applied broadly as San Francisco looks to rebuild and recover post-COVID-19.

COVID-19 Impacts

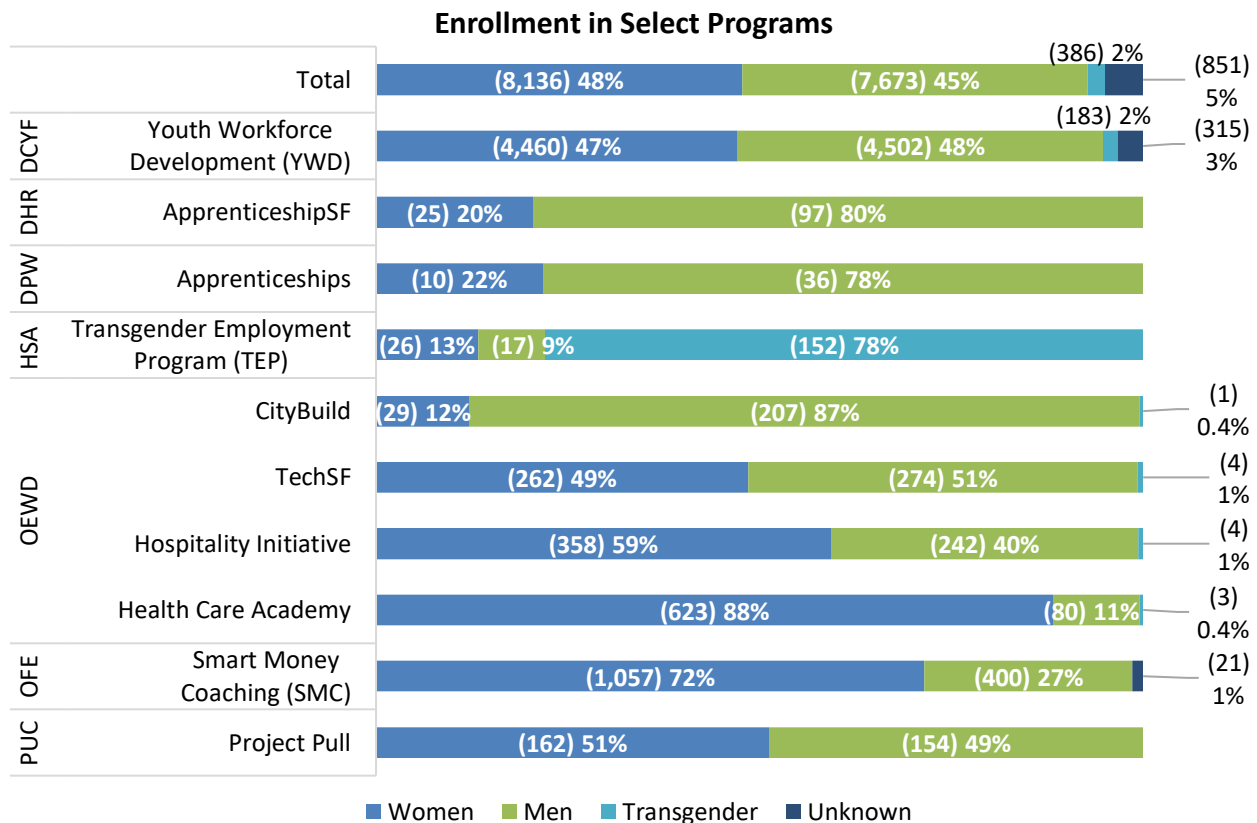
The novel Coronavirus has dramatically altered our entire workforce and economy, as certain industries face mass layoffs, working remotely becomes the norm, and essential workers establish new relationships to work. California's unemployment rate was at the record low of 3.9% in February 2020.ⁱ By April 2020, unemployment had reached 16% in California and 12.6% in San Francisco.ⁱⁱ Between February and April, 2.6 million jobs have been lost across the state and 64% of those jobs were in low-paying industries.ⁱⁱⁱ Unemployment and economic instability have affected women more severely than men.^{iv} In California, 23% Black women and 22% of Latinx women are unemployed.^v In comparison, 12% of both Black and Latinx men are unemployed and 10% of white women are unemployed.^{vi} Additionally, unemployment rates for single mothers have tripled since February, now at 15.9%.^{vii}



The groundwork for this study comes from existing data collection by the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), which has been conducting a Citywide Workforce Services Inventory since 2015. The 2017-18 OEWD Citywide Workforce Services Inventory Report identified 262 workforce development programs from 17 City departments that served a total of 34,057 clients. In Fiscal Year 2017-18, the City and County of San Francisco expended \$125 million in workforce development services. These services are programs administered within City departments as well as contracted out to external service providers. Services range considerably in scope, from drop-in centers for resume assistance to year-long paid apprenticeship programs.

This study assesses 28 economic and workforce programs from 12 City departments. In order to better understand women’s opportunities for economic empowerment, we focus on programs with long term strategies to improve participants’ future economic potential upon completion of the program. Entrance, completion, and outcome metrics by gender and race combine were requested for programs with large numbers of participants or considerable budgets, or those focused on vulnerable populations. However, not all programs track race and gender combined nor completion and outcome metrics. Still, the data provided, especially for vocational training programs, offers insight into successful programs and areas for improvement.

Women are the largest group of participants in the 22 programs,¹ comprising 48% of program participants. While this is nearly equal to San Francisco’s population of women (49%), there is significant variation in women’s participation from program to program. The average percent of women in all programs is only 39%, meaning that a couple programs are comprised predominantly of women and others lack their presence. The types of programs serving women is important to consider. Women remain more likely than men to work in lower-wage jobs and are underrepresented in higher-paying occupations.^{viii} Women also earn less than men in nearly all occupations, even in fields that are predominantly women, and occupations with higher proportions of women continue to have lower wages than male-dominated ones.^{ix} The gap in earnings between men and women is further intensified by racial and ethnic earnings

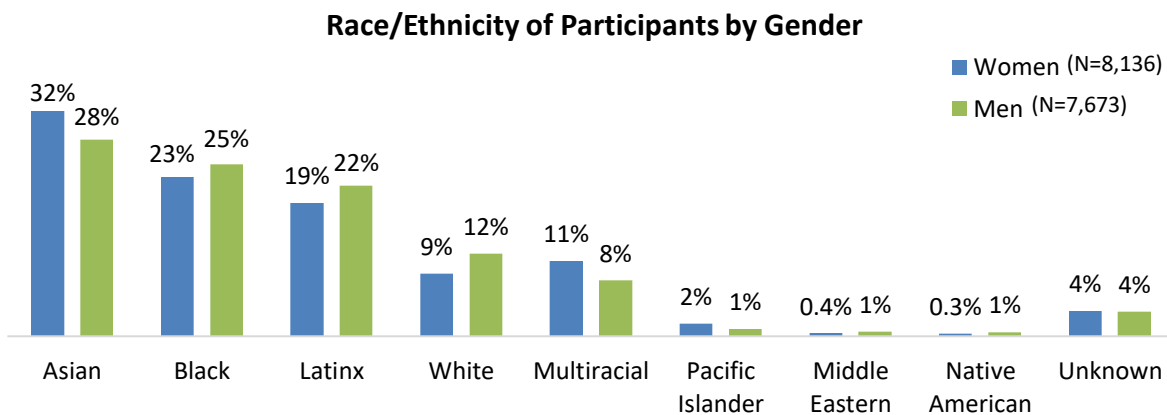


¹ This does not include six women’s specific programs (an additional 495 women).

inequalities.^x While occupational choice does account for one-third of the wage gap,^{xi} alternative options may never be presented to some women.

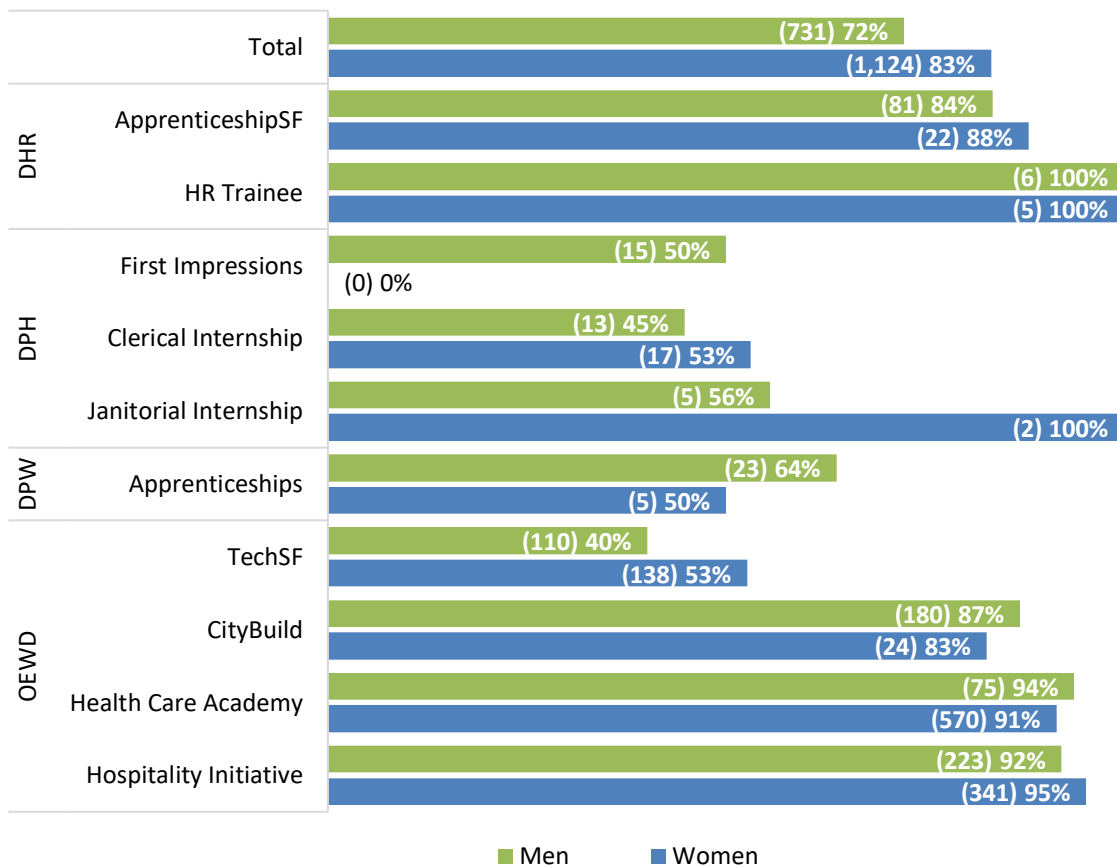
Programs with fewer women present are predominately in male-dominated industries or “non-traditional” fields, such as the Department of Human Resources (DHR) Apprenticeship^{SF}, Public Works (DPW) Apprenticeships, and OEWD CityBuild. In contrast, the OEWD Health Care Academy and Hospitality Initiative are both comprised significantly of women. This illustrates that training programs follow a similar pattern as the larger workforce, with women clustered in fields that are predominately comprised of women and often have lower wages. Programs which show an exception to this are OEWD Tech^{SF}, which has a much higher proportion of women (49%) than in San Francisco’s computer and mathematical occupations (23%),^{xii} and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Project Pull, where young women are 51% of participants in the paid summer internship program in architecture, business, engineering, and science jobs. Additionally, the Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) Smart Money Coaching, a financial literacy program, has 72% women participants although it is not a necessarily aimed at women.

These programs serve a diverse group of participants with 28% Asian, 22% Black, 19% Latinx, 10% white, and 9% multiracial individuals. However, Asian women make up the largest group of participants while Black, Latinx, and white women make up a smaller share of female participants than men of the same racial and ethnic category. The gap for Black and Latinx women is important to address as they experience the highest rates of poverty and greatest gender pay gaps, as well as facing the largest job losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic across all racial and ethnic groups.



Vocational programs provide paid training to participants that track directly into a field or job. While women make up 57% of participants in vocational programs in this study, it is primarily due to the large numbers of women in programs for industries where women are overrepresented, healthcare and hospitality. The completion rates by gender provide another view of women’s participation in vocational programs. Women in the CityBuild program have lower completion rates than men, 83% for women and 87% for men. However, unlike men in CityBuild, all women who completed the program were placed directly into employment whereas 92% of men were. The HealthCare Academy and Hospitality Initiative have higher completion rates than CityBuild; although just two out of three graduates are placed into jobs after completing the program. TechSF sees women completing the program and obtaining job placements at higher rates than men. However, TechSF does show much lower completion rates, 53% for women and 40% for men, than other vocational training programs. TechSF also shows lower placement rates than any other vocational program with 51% of women and 48% of men entering a job in the field immediately following the program.

Vocational Program Completion



Women's Entrepreneurship Programs

Six of the programs included in this study are women's specific entrepreneurship programs, which are all supported by OEWD. In total, these programs had 495 participants, primarily women of color, with 34% Asian, 18% Black, 16% Latinx and 17% white women. Each program has its own approach to aid women in different stages of launching and sustaining their own businesses in order to create opportunities and financial stability for them. Services range from providing training and business education to supporting women entrepreneurs with technical assistance or direct cash grants.

454 Successful
Completions


246 Microenterprises
Launched


236 Leases Drafted,
Negotiated, or Renewed


Workforce development programs can be used as a tool for economic advancement and, when used effectively, can target broader social inequities. These services can provide pathways to family sustaining wages and will be important for re-employment and rebuilding post-COVID. However, the experiences of program participants can vary based on individuals' identities, including gender, race, ethnicity, language, and sexual orientation. Women often face unique barriers when applying to and participating in workforce development programs. The leading causes of women's lower success rates and higher drop-outs are lack of access to child care, gender-based discrimination, harassment, and domestic violence.^{xiii} Women of color and transgender individuals continue to face greater discrimination and challenges in the workplace, thus necessitating a focus on increased supports aimed at these populations, as with the Human Services Agency (HSA) Transgender Employment Program (TEP) which provides targeted supports including assistance for job seekers and employers. In order to combat gender-based discrimination and harassment, training programs should increase the presence of women, provide mentorship to women in male-dominated fields, and educate staff on gender stereotypes and bias.^{xiv} Additionally, offering flexible schedules and helping participants find affordable child care can expand opportunities for participants with family care responsibilities.


Models for workforce development programs show that strong long-term partnerships, with government agencies, non-profit organizations, and labor unions, help create a network of support for program participants without immense costs to each program. This leads to financial stability for the program, support for participants' needs, and the assurance that there are jobs available for clients upon completion.^{xv} This is especially important in developing a network of support for women within workforce development programs that eliminate barriers that stand in the way of women's successful completion and future economic opportunities. Developing transferable credits or certificates that are valuable across an industry or sector allow participants to secure long-term benefits in a rapidly changing and uncertain economy. Further, improving data collection and tracking outcomes by race and gender combined can illuminate gaps and ensure that programs are meeting the needs of women, especially women of color.


RECOMMENDATIONS to ensure that women and other vulnerable populations receive the support needed to be successful in workforce development programs.


 **Establish Strong Partnerships** with other City departments, community-based organizations, other programs, and labor unions. Partnerships are important in creating a network of supports for program leadership, funding, participants, and future job positions.


Integrate Case Management to better communication between participants and program staff. Cross-training of staff to support individuals experiencing domestic violence, homelessness, or immigration issues can help identify participants’ needs and connect them to resources. 

 **Provide Wrap-around Program Supports**, such as child care, transportation, mental health counseling, and domestic violence services which make sure that participants’ barriers do not keep them from participating in and successfully completing programs.

Strategic Recruiting and Outreach can help diversify the demographics of workforce development programs. Programs should allocate funding and dedicate staff to improve diversity in training programs. 

 **Create Transferable Credits** that are recognized across an industry or sector, to make skills and learnings adaptable to other career paths. This can support participants beyond the immediate program and provide longer-term impacts. As the effects of COVID-19 shift job responsibilities, programs should create adaptable training and services, that are able to prepare program participants for uncertain structural changes within job fields.

Improve Data Collection to hold programs and larger systems accountable. As investments in workforce development programs increase in recovery efforts, understanding how different populations are being served and replicating successful models will support a broader strategy across City departments to serve the needs of San Franciscans. 

 **Ensure Longevity** by identifying and advocating for stable funding sources, throughout and even after COVID-19 recovery efforts

End Notes

- ⁱ State of California Employment Development Department
<https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/data/unemployment-and-labor-force.html>
- ⁱⁱ Ibid.
- ⁱⁱⁱ California Budget and Policy Center, “Women and People of Color Take Biggest Hits in California’s Job Losses,” (2020).
- ^{iv} Institute for Women’s Policy Research, “Dramatic Decline in Employment Hits Women Even More Severely than Men,” (2020).
- ^v California Budget and Policy Center, “Women and People of Color Take Biggest Hits in California’s Job Losses,” (2020).
- ^{vi} Ibid.
- ^{vii} Institute for Women’s Policy Research, “Dramatic Decline in Employment Hits Women Even More Severely than Men,” (2020).
- ^{viii} Mathematica Policy Research, Inanc, Needels, and Berk, “Gender Segregation in Training Programs and the Wage Gap,” (2017).
- ^{ix} Institute for Women’s Policy Research, Hegewisch and Tesfaselassie, “The Gender Wage Gap by Occupation 2018,” (2019).
- ^x Ibid.
- ^{xi} Mathematica Policy Research, “Gender Segregation in Training Programs and the Wage Gap.”
- ^{xii} United States Census, *American Community Survey*, (2017).
- ^{xiii} Institute for Women’s Policy Research, Anderson and Hess, “Programs to Support Job Training Success: Innovations to Address Unmet Needs,” (2017)., Mathematica Policy Research, “Gender Segregation in Training Programs and the Wage Gap.” and National Women’s Law Center, “Women in Construction: Still Breaking Ground,” (2014).
- ^{xiv} Mathematica Policy Research, “Gender Segregation in Training Programs and the Wage Gap.”
- ^{xvi} Columbia School of International and Public Affairs, “Expanding Opportunity For Middle Class Jobs in New York City: Minority Youth Employment in the Building and Construction Trades,” (2014).

*The full report is available on the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women website:
sfgov.org/dosw/gender-analysis-reports*

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