

# WRTP | BIG STEP

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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## **WRTP | BIG STEP & PARTNERS FUNDED BY DEPT OF LABOR TO CREATE NATIONAL FEMALE-CENTERED APPRENTICESHIP EXPANSION CONSORTIUM, disruptHER**

**MILWAUKEE, WI** (October 11, 2021)—Wisconsin’s workforce intermediary WRTP | BIG STEP has partnered with other organizations nationwide to form the disruptHER Consortium, which will be funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Women’s Bureau. The Women in Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Occupations (WANTO) grant supports efforts to diversify traditionally perceived “male-centered” occupations so that more women benefit from the higher wages and benefit packages often associated with careers in industries like manufacturing, transportation logistics, or construction. WRTP’s project partners include Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee, West Oakland Jobs Resource Center, California - Workforce & Economic Development Program (WED), Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building & Construction Trades Council AFL-CIO, Equus Workforce Solutions, and the Machinist Training Institute 751. Joining in their innovation sessions will be the Greater Milwaukee Committee’s The Commons staff.

Collectively, the Consortium aims to create a more robust and innovative network of non-profits, employers, unions, public workforce development stakeholders and influencers, and training providers to address the need to have more women engaged and succeeding in apprenticeable and nontraditional occupations (NTO). The network will work intentionally around local workforce needs in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, information technology, energy, commercial food production, and transportation, with an emphasis on urban centers where women experience higher rates of female-headed households and lower hourly wages than the national average for women.

As a network of intermediaries, workforce development practitioners, and training providers that stretch across eight states, WRTP | BIG STEP is committed to delivering on the program goals of the disruptHER Consortium to:

- Raise women’s success in apprenticeships through mentorship, coaching, and guidance that can support a woman on to Journey person status;

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- Provide technical assistance (TA) to employers and labor unions on recruitment strategies, training opportunities, and employment and retention services that will grow the number of women in apprenticeable and nontraditional occupations;
- Enhance training programs designed to prepare women for apprenticeship;
- Convene for professionally facilitated focus groups within the public and private workforce system to discuss and identify issues, real or perceived, that challenge women from entering certain career pathways and occupations;
- Work with the Human-Centered Design & Innovation team to create deconstruction/reconstruction workshops aimed at digging deeper into the myths and realities surrounding occupations within the highlighted sectors, informing where TA needs lay, and creating localized solutions to address and remediate these challenges;
- Create a best practices and innovation library comprised of the various workshop sessions and developed tool kits that can be shared amongst the disruptHER network;
- Set up and/or continue support to groups and facilitating networks for women in apprenticeships to improve their retention.

“We are grateful to the Department of Labor for their investment in this key workforce demographic and issue,” said Lindsay Blumer, WRTP | BIG STEP’s President & CEO, in an official statement. “No career should be seen as primarily male or female, and we have a lot of work to do to change perceptions and cultures so that our daughters know they can enter any occupation and excel, working alongside colleagues from every sex and gender. This kind of diversity will only make industries better and more competitive.”

This \$750,000 grant will last for two years, concluding in August 2023. WRTP | BIG STEP is excited to have yet another opportunity to serve women across the country in this capacity.

## **About WRTP | BIG STEP**

WRTP | BIG STEP works across the private and public sector to develop resources, services, processes, and programs so that highroad employers have access to skilled talent pipelines. Our sector-based approach means we expand employment and advancement opportunities by upgrading the skills of incumbent workers and recruiting, training, and placing community residents in family-supporting jobs that contribute to the strengthening of the regional economy for everyone.