



The Impact of the Apprenticeship Opportunities Project:

**Helping People Enter and Succeed
in Apprenticeship**

2007 Update

Acknowledgements

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Port Jobs is a non-profit organization working to increase access to living wage jobs for residents of the Greater Seattle area. We develop practical programs that make good jobs easier to get and good employees easier to find. We foster a more vibrant and equitable economy throughout King County.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Apprenticeship Opportunities Project (AOP)** was created in 1994 as part of a community-wide effort to increase access to well-paying trades careers for those community residents who do not ordinarily have access to these opportunities, particularly women, people of color, and economically disadvantaged individuals.¹ AOP provides a wide range of services to help people prepare for apprenticeship and trades-related jobs. The program also provides retention services, including ongoing case management and financial assistance, to help individuals succeed in apprenticeship and on the job.

This report examines the impact of AOP on King County building and construction trades apprenticeship programs in 2007.² It asks two questions: First, what share of the women and people of color who entered apprenticeship in King County were recruited by AOP? Second, after starting their apprenticeship programs, how did AOP clients fare in comparison with other King County apprentices who entered the same trades?

In 2007, AOP helped 128 individuals enter apprenticeships in 12 trades³, referring 11% of the 1,193 King County apprentices who enrolled in

those trades that year. The findings show that:

- ◆ AOP had a strong impact on the number of women who entered apprenticeship in King County. More than 30% of the women and nearly 35% of the women of color who entered the 12 trades were referred by AOP.
- ◆ AOP recruited a sizeable portion of the people of color who entered apprenticeship, referring 14% of the people of color who entered those 12 trades in King County.
- ◆ AOP apprentices had a higher retention rate than the overall retention rate for King County apprentices in those same trades. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of apprentices referred by AOP were still in their programs as of mid-2008, compared to 82% overall.

AOP serves many purposes. It is a gateway for women and people of color who want to enter the trades. AOP is a resource for apprenticeship programs seeking to diversify their workforce and meet affirmative action goals. In addition, AOP helps apprenticeship programs retain their apprentices. The work of AOP and its apprenticeship program partners helps ensure that that all community members have access to the well-paying jobs and career ladders in the trades.

¹ AOP is operated by Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women (ANEW) and is funded through a contract with Port Jobs.

² This is the second report Port Jobs has done about AOP. The first, *The Impact of AOP Referrals on Entrants into King County Apprenticeship Programs 1998*, is available at www.portjobs.org.

³ These 12 trades enrolled 2/3 of the nearly 1,800 King County residents who entered building and construction trade apprenticeships in 2007. They include: carpenter, cement mason, construction electrician, gypsum drywall systems installer, HVAC service technician, ironworker, laborer, low energy/sound and communications technician, painter and decorator, residential wireman, roofer, and sheet metal worker.

INTRODUCTION

Getting into an apprenticeship program can be a job in itself...

An individual (let's call her Kim) must first decide which of more than 25 trades to apply for; each with its own working conditions, pay scale, and application process. Then she must find out when the apprenticeship program is accepting applications, which may be one day a week, one day a month, or just once a year. She must also see whether she meets the minimum entry requirements, such as having a driver's license or a high school diploma or GED.

If Kim is new to construction work, she will need to build her skills to be competitive in her application to apprenticeship. She can do this through apprenticeship preparation training, which is full-time, and unpaid, and can last from 11 weeks to five months.

After submitting an apprenticeship application, she must participate in a competitive selection process, which may include a one-day hands-on skills assessment, an interview with the apprenticeship training committee, and/or a math exam or other tests to evaluate her skills. If she makes it through this process, she may be required to complete a safety orientation, which can be up to a week long and unpaid, before she can go out on her first job.

Now Kim is on her way to a well-paying career. But as a new apprentice she will need to buy work clothes, boots, and tools. She may also need to pay union dues, an initiation fee, and/or tuition for school. These and other work-related expenses, such as gas, are necessary for her to stay in her trade.

Port Jobs and its partners created the **Apprenticeship Opportunities Project (AOP)** in 1994 to help low-income individuals, women, and people of color enter and succeed in apprenticeship and in trades-related jobs.⁴ AOP increases the supply of qualified, diverse workers for the construction industry while helping disadvantaged individuals gain access to good jobs.⁵

Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Employment for Women (ANEW), a 28 year-old non-profit organization, operates the AOP program under contract with Port Jobs. In addition to operating AOP, ANEW teaches an 11-week Construction

Readiness Training program in partnership with South Seattle Community College, and has trained more than 2,500 people for the trades.

AOP recruits applicants from across King County by working with community-based organizations, apprenticeship preparation programs, and WorkSource centers. After an orientation session, AOP staff complete an in-depth assessment to determine whether an individual is ready for the trades. AOP then provides a range of services that include:

- ◆ Assistance in choosing a trade, including information about the application process,

⁴ Trades-related jobs are jobs in trades for which there may be no apprenticeship, such as residential construction or manufacturing.

⁵ At the same time, **apprentice utilization policies** increase the demand for apprentices, women, and people of color on construction projects. These policies specify that apprentices work a certain percentage of labor hours on qualifying projects – typically 15% of total labor hours. They may also include goals for the share of hours to be worked by women and people of color. For more information, see Port Jobs' *Apprentice Utilization Report* series at www.portjobs.org.

minimum requirements, the wage scale, and the length of the apprenticeship program;

- ◆ Preparation for the apprenticeship or job interview;
- ◆ Help addressing personal and employment barriers, such as a suspended driver's license;
- ◆ Case management and support; and
- ◆ Referrals to apprenticeship preparation training or other skill-building programs for those who are not ready to enter apprenticeship.

Once accepted into an apprenticeship program or upon getting a trades-related job⁵, an individual may need to buy tools or work clothes, pay union dues, or repair a car. AOP provides financial assistance to qualified individuals so that they can go to work right away. AOP also provides retention services, including ongoing case management and flexible support services, to help people succeed on the job and complete their apprenticeships. See Figure 1 for the path of a client through AOP.

About This Report

In 2000, Port Jobs published a report assessing the impact of AOP on King County building and construction trades apprenticeship programs.⁶ The study focused on individuals who entered

apprenticeship during 1998 and answered two questions: What share of the women and people of color who entered apprenticeship in King County were recruited by AOP? How did AOP clients fare once they started their apprenticeships? Now, nearly ten years later, Port Jobs seeks to answer these same questions; this time, looking at apprentices who entered apprenticeship in 2007.

Methods

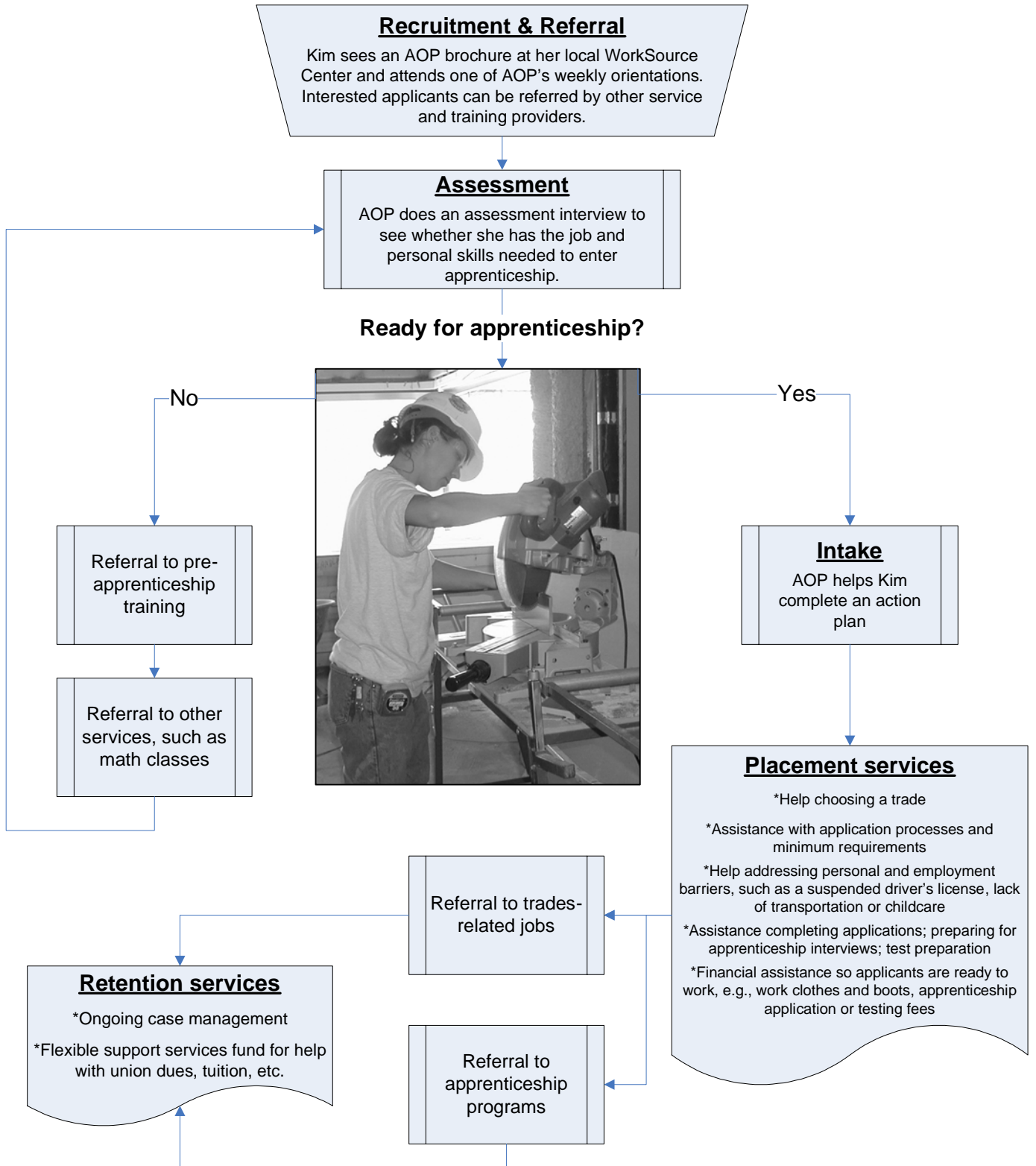
Port Jobs used data from two different databases for this study:

1) **AOP's program database** provided a list of AOP clients who entered apprenticeship in 2007, including their gender, race and the apprenticeship programs and trades they entered. *Note: this study includes only those AOP clients who entered apprenticeship, not those who were hired into trades-related jobs.*

2) **The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) Apprenticeship Registration and Tracking System (ARTS)** provided a list of apprentices who entered apprenticeship in 2007 in the same apprenticeship programs that AOP clients entered. Many apprenticeship programs include multiple trades. The data included race, gender, city/county of residence, registration date, and program status for each apprentice.

⁶ *The Impact of AOP Referrals on Entrants into King County Apprenticeship Programs, 1998* is available at www.portjobs.org.

Figure 1: Path of an AOP Client



From the L&I data set, Port Jobs extracted a list of apprentices who lived in King County and who also entered the same trades as AOP clients. Then, the AOP clients were matched to those apprentice names. Because of differences in how AOP and L&I keep paperwork, there were some discrepancies. For example, AOP records showed that some of its clients entered apprenticeship in 2007, but L&I records showed that they were registered in early 2008. Additionally, L&I showed that some AOP clients lived outside of King County by the time they registered in apprenticeship.

suspended, which means she is not actively participating in the program but intends to return (e.g., military deployment). Additionally, apprentices may *transfer* out of one program into another. To determine retention rates for King County apprentices and AOP clients who entered apprenticeship during 2007, Port Jobs analyzed their L&I status as of July 8, 2008, which was the date that L&I provided the data to Port Jobs.⁷

To make consistent comparisons, the L&I data set was used as the standard for all apprentices. Therefore, the L&I registration date was used as the entry date for all apprentices in both data sets. Similarly, only those apprentices listed by L&I as living in King County were included in the study. In all, AOP records showed 138 clients entering apprenticeship in 2007, but due to the kinds of differences noted above, 128 were included in this study.

Retention

The L&I database includes a status for each apprentice that indicates whether she is *active* in her program, has *cancelled* or left her apprenticeship program, has *completed* the program, or was

⁷For individuals who were listed as “transferred” in the L&I database, the status in their new programs was used to determine whether they were actually active, cancelled, completed, or suspended.

FINDINGS

AOP Referrals

Since opening its doors, AOP has helped approximately 1,250 individuals enter apprenticeships and another 400 enter trades-related jobs. In 2007, AOP helped 128 individuals enter apprenticeship in 12 trades⁸, referring nearly

11% of the 1,193 King County apprentices who enrolled in those trades that year. Tables 1 and 2 show a breakdown by race and gender of AOP clients compared to King County apprentices overall.⁹

Table 1: AOP Clients Who Entered Apprenticeship (2007)

	White	People of Color	Other*	Total
Female	12	9	0	21 16.4%
Male	35	70	2	107 83.6%
Total	47	79	2	128
%	36.7%	61.7%	1.6%	

Table 2: All Entering King County Apprentices (2007)

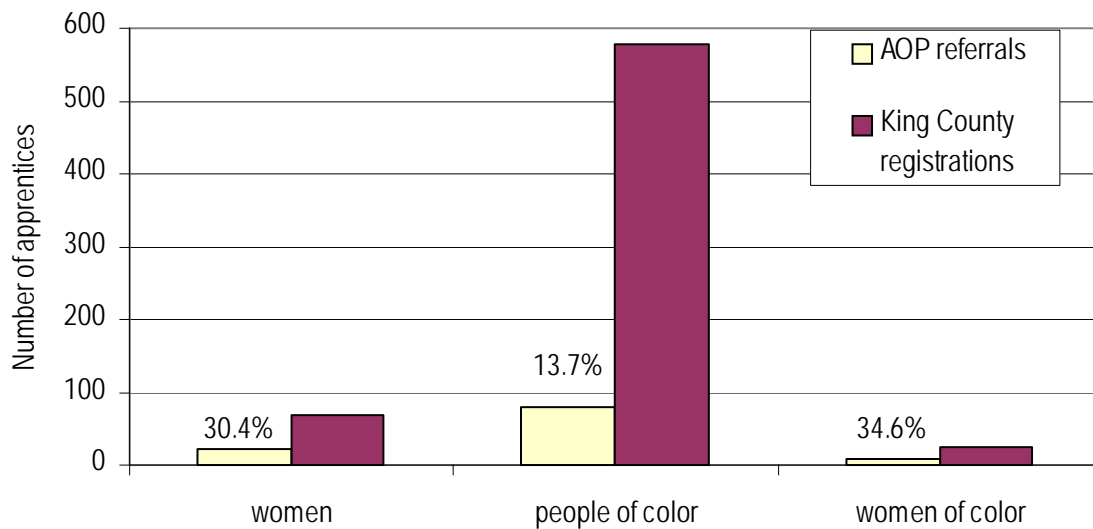
	White	People of Color	Other*	Total
Female	43	26	0	69 5.8%
Male	563	551	10	1,124 94.2%
Total	606	577	10	1,193
%	50.8%	48.4%	0.8%	

*"Other" includes apprentices who did not specify their race or listed it as "not elsewhere classified".

⁸ These 12 trades enrolled 2/3 of the nearly 1,800 King County residents who entered building and construction trade apprenticeships in 2007. They include: carpenter, cement mason, construction electrician, gypsum drywall systems installer, HVAC service technician, ironworker, laborer, low energy/sound and communications technician, painter and decorator, residential wireman, roofer, and sheet metal worker.

⁹ In this study, the terms "all King County apprentices" or "King County apprentices overall" refers to those apprentices who entered apprenticeship in 2007, were enrolled in one of the 12 trades where AOP placed clients, and who lived in King County.

Figure 2: AOP Referrals as a Number and Percent of King County Registrations in 12 Trades (2007)



Women and People of Color

In 2007, AOP recruited a diverse client base made up of 16% women and 62% people of color. Comparatively, 6% of the King County apprentices overall who enrolled in 2007 were women and 48% were people of color.¹⁰ Furthermore, AOP clients made up a sizeable portion of the women and people of color who entered apprenticeship in King County (see Figure 2).

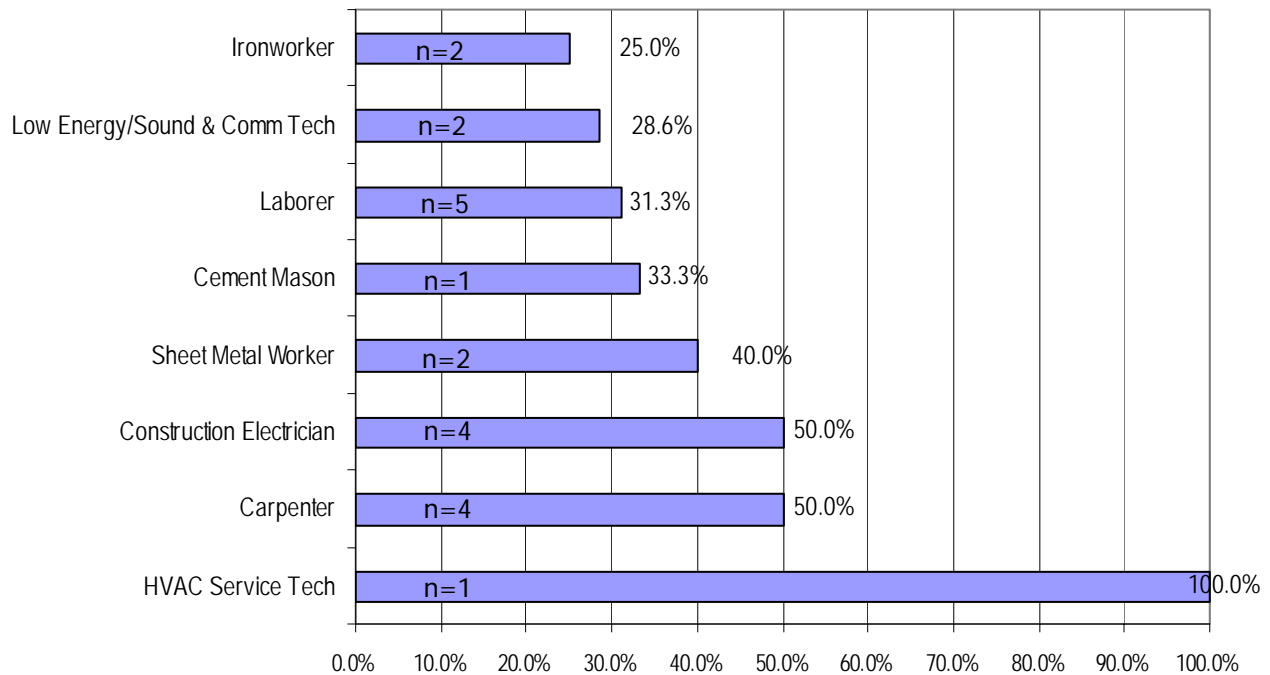
AOP recruited and referred nearly 14% of the people of color who entered the 12 trades in 2007. AOP had a stronger impact in four trades, referring one-quarter or more of the people of color who entered. These include HVAC service technician (50% of the apprentices of color were AOP clients), ironworker (35% AOP), cement mason (26% AOP) and residential wireman (25% AOP).

For women, AOP had an even greater impact. More than 30% of the female apprentices and nearly 35% of the women of color who entered apprenticeship in King County were referred by AOP. In four trades, AOP referred 40% or more of the women who enrolled (see Figure 3). Additionally, AOP referred all of the women of color who entered three trades in 2007 (sheet metal worker, HVAC service technician and construction electrician).

It must be noted that in most of the cases where AOP clients made up a large share of the women and people of color who enrolled in apprenticeships in King County, there were small numbers of women or people of color in those trades. For example, only one woman registered

¹⁰ The overall King County population is 50% female and 27% people of color.

Figure 3: Percent of Female King County Apprentices Who Were Placed by AOP, by Trade¹¹



as an HVAC service technician in 2007, and she was an AOP client. Of the four people of color who enrolled as residential wiremen, one was an AOP client. There are also exceptions, however. AOP referred 27 of the 76 people of color who entered the ironworkers program, and five of the 16 women who became laborers. See Appendix 2 for details on enrollments by trade.

Retention

In addition to helping people get into the building and construction trades, AOP provides retention services to help new apprentices succeed. Through ongoing case management, AOP has regular

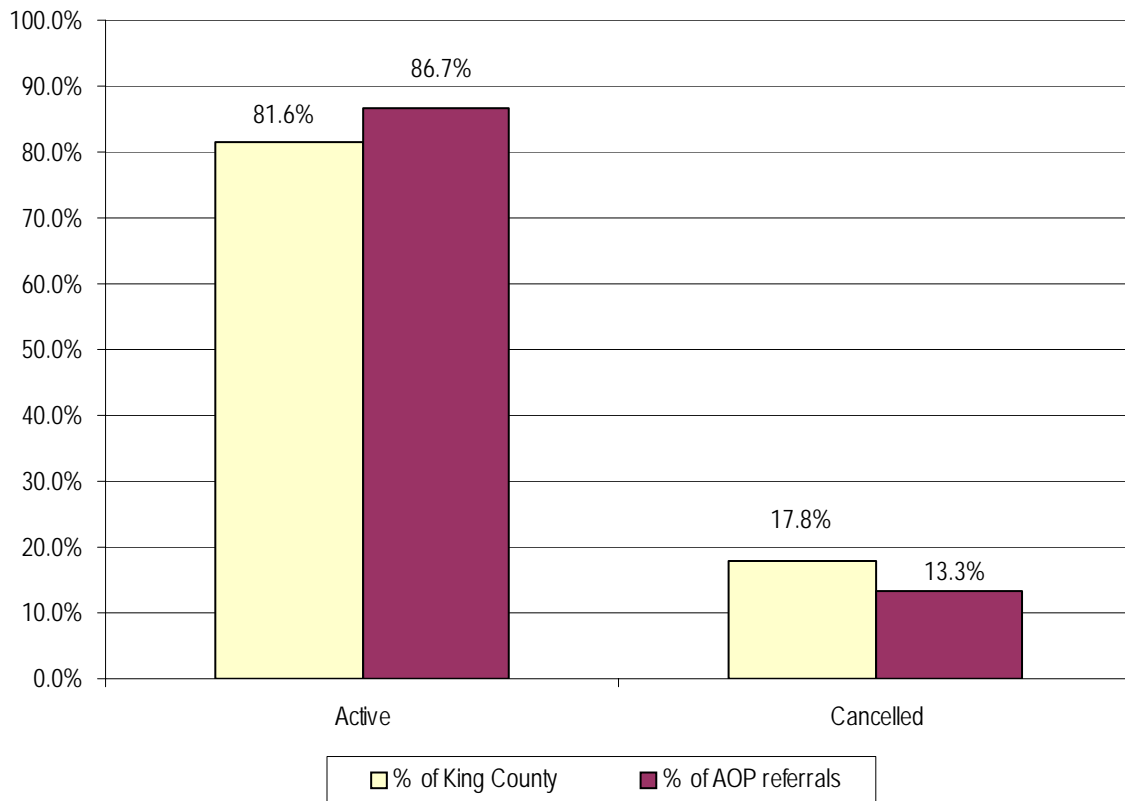
contact with apprentices and can address any personal or work issues as they arise. AOP also provides financial assistance to help apprentices pay for work-related or emergency expenses.¹² Work clothing, food assistance, union dues, gas, tools, and tuition are the most common requests.

Most apprentices who enrolled in 2007 were still active in their apprenticeship programs as of mid-2008. However, AOP clients had a higher retention rate than other King County apprentices in the same trades. Nearly 87% of the apprentices who were referred by AOP were still active in their programs, compared to 82% of King County

¹¹AOP placed no female apprentices in the other four trades: gypsum drywall systems installer, painter and decorator, residential wireman, and roofer.

¹² Financial assistance is available only to low-income apprentices.

Figure 4: Retention Rates of AOP Referrals and King County Apprentices
(2007 entrants, as of July 8, 2008)



apprentices overall. Just over 13% of AOP clients had dropped out of their programs, compared to 18% overall (see Figure 4).¹³

The first year of apprenticeship is most critical for predicting future completion; apprentices who drop out are most likely to do so during their first year.¹⁴ The findings suggest that AOP's retention services, which are targeted to new apprentices, can help apprentices stay in their programs through the critical first year and contribute to higher retention rates.

People of color who were referred by AOP had a slightly higher retention rate than King County apprentices overall. Eighty-five percent (85%) of AOP apprentices of color were still active as of July 2008, compared to 79% of apprentices of color overall. While the percentage of women in these apprenticeship programs is small, the retention rate for women was high – better than 90%.

¹³ Additionally, five King County apprentices had completed their programs (.4%) and three were temporarily suspended (.3%). None were AOP clients.

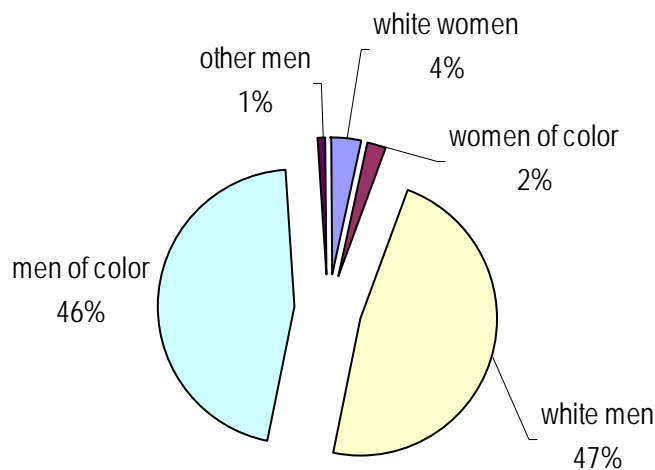
¹⁴ Port Jobs. *Building the Foundation: Opportunities and Challenges Facing Women in Construction in Washington*. 2006. A review of apprentices who entered apprenticeship in Washington state between 1992 and 2000 found that 60% of the women and 70% of the men who dropped out of apprenticeship did so within the first year. This report is available at www.portjobs.org.

CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENT IN 2007

It is important to put enrollments and retention rates in the context of the overall construction industry in 2007. Despite the beginning of the mortgage crisis, a downturn in the housing market, and rumblings of a broader economic recession, commercial construction continued to boom in the Puget Sound region. The Washington state apprenticeship system grew rapidly, enrolling more than 5,700 building and construction trades apprentices statewide – a record number of apprentices and 88% more apprentices than were enrolled in 1998, when the first AOP Report was written.¹⁵

Statewide, people of color have made up an increasing share of apprenticeship enrollments over the past 15 years. In 1992, for example, 18% of new apprentices were people of color. Ten years later, people of color made up 23% of new apprentices, increasing to 28% in 2007. The apprentices in the 12 trades included in this study were more diverse than apprentices statewide. Nearly 50% of the King County apprentices who entered these trades in 2007 were people of color, much higher than the statewide average. Figure 5 shows a breakdown of people of color and women enrolled in King County in 2007.

Figure 5: King County Apprentices Who Entered 12 Trades in 2007, by Race and Gender



¹⁵ Washington State Dept. of Labor and Industries, Apprenticeship Section. Figures include 72 building and construction apprenticeship programs in Washington State. Individual plant, reciprocal, and public programs are not included.

But as the number of apprentices has grown statewide, female enrollments have not kept pace. Between 1993 and 1995, women made up 10% to 11% of new apprentices statewide. In 2007, women made up just 6% of the apprentices enrolled. Overall, the 12 trades included in this study enrolled women at the same rate as programs statewide (6% of new apprentices), although some trades had higher rates of female apprentices. For example, 11% of the sheet metal apprentices enrolled in 2007 were women, and 29% of low energy/sound and communications technicians were women (both trades are fairly small compared to the others in the study).

Finally, retention rates were higher for AOP clients and King County apprentices who entered apprenticeship in 2007 than they were for those entering in 1998.¹⁶ An L&I study of apprentices who entered and dropped out of apprenticeship training in 2004 found that the primary reasons that apprentices leave are lay-offs and lack of ongoing work. Because construction was booming in 2007, there was a lot of work, which may have contributed to the high retention rates for AOP clients and King County apprentices overall.

¹⁶In the original AOP report, 78% of AOP clients who entered apprenticeship in 1998 were still active in their programs as of mid-1999 compared to 58% of King County apprentices overall.

CONCLUSIONS

As the demand for apprentices has grown over the past several years, AOP has continued to play an important role in recruiting and supporting women and people of color for apprenticeships. AOP referred a significant share of the women who entered apprenticeship in King County, and a sizeable portion of the people of color.

While the construction industry in Washington has done a good job at increasing the representation of people of color over the past fifteen years, it has struggled to find effective ways to increase the number of women in the trades. One possible way to increase the number of women enrolling in apprenticeship in the King County area is to build AOP's outreach capacity to reach women. AOP provides an entry point and ongoing support for women who want to enter the trades.¹⁷

Some individuals need additional preparation to enter the trades. Apprenticeship preparation training programs help fill this gap. Apprenticeship preparation training has unstable funding, however. By dedicating more public funding to apprenticeship preparation programs, Washington can systematically build a pipeline of women and people of color who are ready for trades work.

While some federal funding has been available to support apprenticeship preparation, such as the Department of Labor's *Women in Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Occupations (WANTO)* grants, this funding is competitive and limited. In 2007, for example, ANEW and its partners were awarded one of three such grants nationwide. WANTO

funding allowed ANEW to train 36 women in 2007. These funds expire in 2008. State and local funding for these kinds of services is diminishing as well. In the absence of additional funding, these preparation and support services will decline in the near future. More investment needs to be made in order for programs like AOP and ANEW to increase the numbers of women and people of color who enter and succeed in the trades.

The findings also suggest that the retention services offered through AOP – ongoing case management and financial assistance – help apprentices stay in their apprenticeship programs. AOP has a small staff and a small support services fund that can help limited numbers of apprentices. Additional investments in AOP's retention services would allow the program to serve more apprentices and help increase retention rates.



AOP serves many purposes. It is a gateway for women and people of color who want to enter the trades. AOP is a resource for apprenticeship programs seeking to diversify their workforce and meet affirmative action goals. In addition, AOP helps apprenticeship programs retain their apprentices. The work of AOP and its apprenticeship program partners helps ensure that that all community members have access to the well-paying jobs and career ladders in the trades.

¹⁷ See Port Jobs report *Building the Foundation: Opportunities and Challenges Facing Women in Construction in Washington* for specific strategies to increase the number of women in the trades. This report is available at www.portjobs.org.

APPENDIX 1:

AOP Referrals as a Percentage of King County Enrollments in 12 Trades, 2007

Trade	King County		AOP		AOP as a % of King County Apprentices
	Count	%	Count	%	
Carpenter	212	17.8%	15	11.7%	7.1%
Cement Mason	47	3.9%	10	7.8%	21.3%
Construction Electrician	143	12.0%	20	15.6%	14.0%
Gypsum Drywall Systems Installer	102	8.5%	2	1.6%	2.0%
HVAC Service Tech	11	0.9%	1	0.8%	9.1%
Ironworker	152	12.7%	43	33.6%	28.3%
Laborer	233	19.5%	26	20.3%	11.2%
Low Energy/Sound & Comm Tech	24	2.0%	2	1.6%	8.3%
Painter and Decorator	125	10.5%	3	2.3%	2.4%
Residential Wireman	9	0.8%	1	0.8%	11.1%
Roofer	89	7.5%	3	2.3%	3.4%
Sheet Metal Worker	46	3.9%	2	1.6%	4.3%
TOTALS	1,193	100%	128	100%	

Appendix 2:
**AOP Referrals of Women, People of Color and Women of Color as a Percentage of
 King County Enrollments in 12 Trades, 2007**

Trade	Total KC Women	Total AOP Women	AOP % of King County		Total KC People of Color	Total AOP People of Color	AOP % of King County		Total KC Women of Color	Total AOP Women of Color	AOP % of King County
Carpenter	8	4	50.0%		104	11	10.6%		6	3	50.0%
Cement Mason	3	1	33.3%		23	6	26.1%		1	0	0.0%
Construction Electrician	8	4	50.0%		34	6	17.6%		1	1	100.0%
Gypsum Drywall Systems Installer	1	0	0.0%		72	1	1.4%		1	0	0.0%
HVAC Service Tech	1	1	100.0%		2	1	50.0%		1	1	100.0%
Ironworker	8	2	25.0%		76	27	35.5%		3	1	33.3%
Laborer	16	5	31.3%		128	20	15.6%		6	2	33.3%
Low Energy/Sound & Comm Tech	7	2	28.6%		5	0	0.0%		1	0	0.0%
Painter and Decorator	6	0	0.0%		77	2	2.6%		3	0	0.0%
Residential Wireman	0	0	0.0%		4	1	25.0%		0	0	0.0%
Roofer	6	0	0.0%		47	3	6.4%		2	0	0.0%
Sheet Metal Worker	5	2	40.0%		5	1	20.0%		1	1	100.0%
TOTALS	69	21	30.4%		577	79	13.7%		26	9	34.6%

PORT JOBS REPORTS

Other construction-related reports produced by Port Jobs include:

Building the Foundation: Opportunities and Challenges Facing Women in Construction in Washington State

This report identifies opportunities to increase women's participation in the building and construction trades. It provides perspectives on factors that help and hinder women and profiles their entry into/completion of apprenticeship programs over a twelve-year period. (2007)

Apprenticeship Utilization Goals and Requirements: A Countywide Impact Study

This annual report studies the use of apprentices on major construction projects throughout King County. Reports are available for: 1994-96, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001-2002, 2003, 2004, 2005-2006, and 2007.

Model Curriculum Guide for Apprenticeship Preparation Programs

This guide identifies the core competencies that applicants need to be competitive for building and construction trades apprenticeship programs. It provides a common framework for apprenticeship preparation programs to align their curriculum to the skills needed to enter apprenticeship. (2005)

The Impact of AOP Referrals on Entrants into King County Apprenticeship Programs, 1998

This report examines the share of new apprentices who were recruited and referred by the Apprenticeship Opportunities Project (AOP) and compares AOP clients' retention rate to apprentices who were recruited through other pathways. (2000)

Entry and Retention of Women and Minorities in Six King County Apprenticeship Programs

Designed to learn how women and minorities fare in the apprenticeship system, this study examines who enters apprenticeship programs and compares retention rates by race and sex. (2000)

Room to Grow: A Study of the Space Needs of King County Building and Construction Trades Apprenticeship Programs

This study is a joint project of the Western Washington Coordinators Association, the Port of Seattle, the Port Jobs, and Business Government Community Connections. It explores possible solutions to the lack of apprenticeship training space in the region. (2000)

For copies of these reports, visit www.portjobs.org, email portjobs@portjobs.org or call 206-728-3882.