

Assessing the Effectiveness of Acceptable Work Sites Trainings: Evaluation Conducted for the City of Seattle

Executive Summary of Final Report
April 2022

Acceptable Work Sites trainings and evaluation

- Prior research has demonstrated that discrimination and harassment on construction jobsites is a pervasive problem that impacts safety, productivity, and retention of workers, with increased impacts on women and people of color (e.g. Kelly and Wilkinson 2020).
- In order to reduce jobsite discrimination and harassment and promote the retention of a diverse workforce, the City of Seattle developed an Acceptable Work Site (AWS) policy, adopted in 2017. The City contracted with Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Education for Women (ANEW) to implement trainings to support the policy, launched in 2018. The implementation included new worker orientations, manager trainings, job box talks, and signage and stickers on the job site. ANEW staff also provided technical assistance and site visits.
- The City contracted with Portland State University (PSU) researchers to evaluate the AWS trainings. PSU researchers conducted four waves of jobsites surveys between May 2019 and December 2021.

Findings

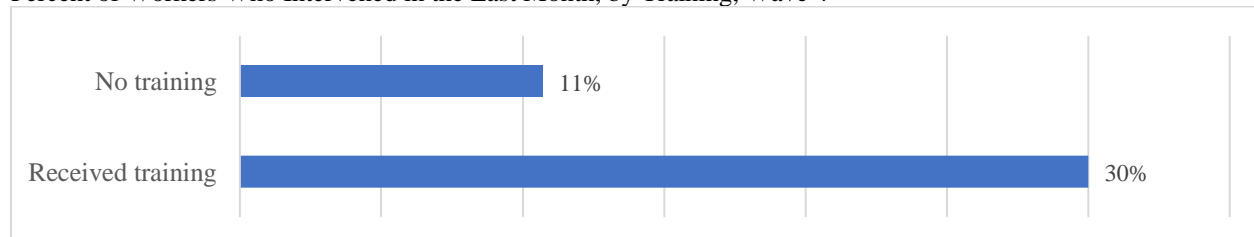
- Workers reported that harassment and discrimination occurred frequently on City of Seattle jobsites between 2019 and 2021. Similar trends have been documented across the industry.
- The implementation of AWS trainings has been more successful in providing information about AWS at orientation and conducting manager trainings but less successful with delivering ongoing training for all workers through job box talks.
- Workers indicated they rarely intervened or reported harassment; however, workers who received training were more likely to respond than those without training.

Conclusions

- Harassment remains a significant problem in the construction industry and on City of Seattle jobsites that will continue to negatively impact retention, productivity, and safety of the construction workforce.
- The AWS trainings have the potential to positively impact the culture of City jobsites; however, providing ongoing training for all workers is recommended to reduce the current levels of jobsite harassment and discrimination.

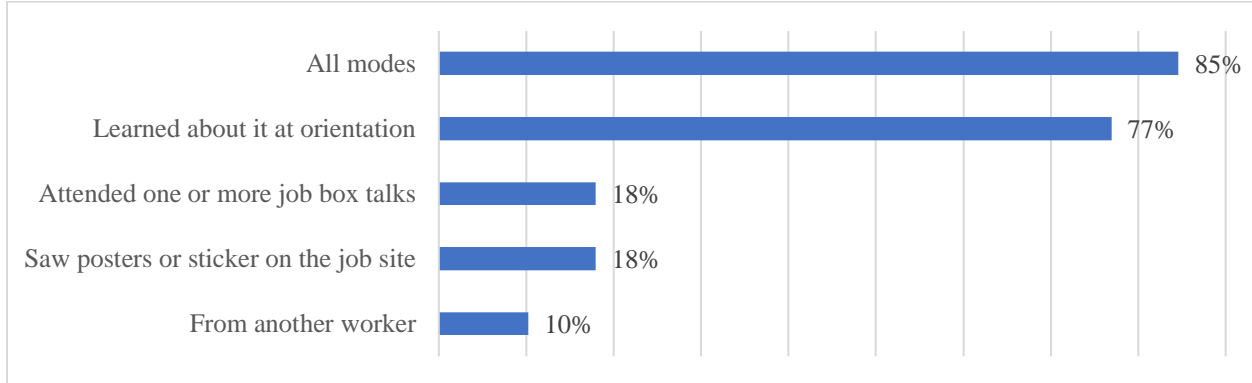
Workers who attended a manager training and/or job box talk were more likely to intervene in response to harassment than those without training.

Percent of Workers Who Intervened in the Last Month, by Training, Wave 4



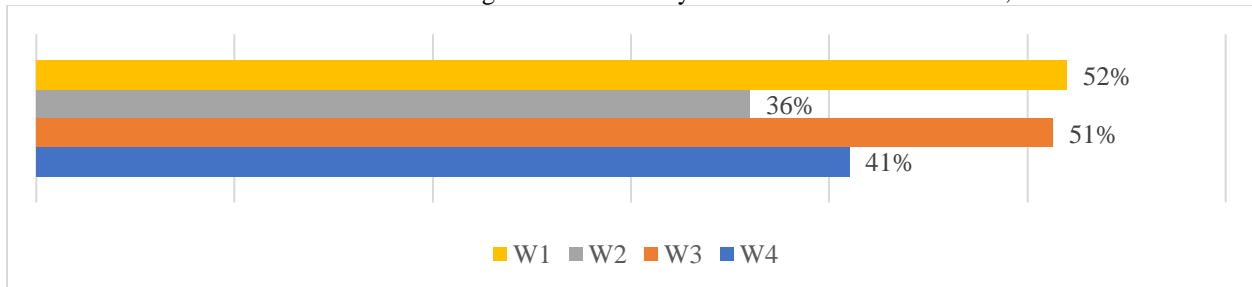
The ways that workers learned about AWS is shown below. Additionally, six of the workers surveyed attended a manager training. This includes three of the seven supervisors surveyed (42% of supervisors) plus two journeymen and one worker who described their role as “other.”

Modes Through Which Workers Learned about the Acceptable Work Sites Policy, Wave 4.



At wave four, 41% of workers observed harassing behaviors and workers observed an average of nearly six instances of harassment in the last month.

Percent of Workers Who Observed Harassing or Discriminatory Behaviors in the Last Month, Wave 4



Social context for AWS policy, trainings, and evaluation

- The implementation and evaluation of the AWS policy and trainings as well as the evaluation findings presented here must be considered in social context. The first wave of data collection occurred in May 2019. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began and new safety measures were put in place, which posed significant challenges for the construction industry broadly and the implementation of the AWS trainings in particular.
- Further, during this time, the U.S. confronted systemic racism in the context of increases in racist rhetoric in the public sphere (including from the sitting President), racist hate crimes, and police violence against people of color (Burch et al 2021). Consequently, the U.S. saw reinvigoration of the Black Lives Matter and other anti-racist movements and protests, followed by a backlash against those opposing systemic racism (Burch et al 2021).
- Within construction, there has also been an increase in racist incidences, such as hate symbols on jobsites (Bousquin 2020). These factors may have contributed to the dynamics of harassment and discrimination on City of Seattle construction jobsites in recent years in unknown ways.

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