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BUILDING STRONG CAREERS AND LASTING INFRASTRUCTURE:

*Project Labor Agreements Now for a cleaner,
greener, and more equitable Massachusetts*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, Massachusetts faces historic challenges:

- We need to reinvest in aging infrastructure, and build new projects to mitigate and adapt to climate change, reduce pollution, and reverse historical environmental injustices.
- We must do so in a way that contributes toward addressing deep societal inequality along lines of race, gender, and income that limit our shared prosperity.

At the same time, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity:

- Historic federal funding from the Biden Administration will yield at least \$9 billion for Massachusetts to invest in needed infrastructure including climate mitigation, pollution reduction, transit, public buildings, water and sanitation, and other projects that will make Massachusetts cleaner, greener, and more equitable.

Massachusetts can build the infrastructure we need to advance environmental and climate justice while also creating great career pathways for marginalized communities. We can do so by ensuring our public infrastructure projects are built with Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) which contractually support the entry of women and people of color into careers in building trades unions and apprenticeship programs.

PLAs are a win-win for Massachusetts, because in addition to creating new pathways to union careers, they help ensure projects are completed efficiently and safely – with provisions that minimize the possibilities of potential disruptions and delays, and that ensure fair and safe conditions for all workers. By utilizing PLAs, the Commonwealth can reap multiple benefits:

- **PLAs increase pathways to strong careers for women, people of color, and low-income residents** through apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, targeted hiring goals on projects, and outreach to historically underrepresented groups in construction.
- **PLAs strengthen proven “earn while you learn” registered apprenticeship training programs** by setting apprenticeship utilization requirements on projects and funding pre-apprenticeship programs.
 - With a commitment to PLAs on Massachusetts infrastructure projects, registered apprenticeship programs can continue to scale up and accept larger, more diverse classes.
 - In 2023, union programs trained 74 percent of all registered apprentices in Massachusetts, including **88 percent of all women apprentices and 80 percent of all apprentices of color.**
- **PLAs protect all workers on a project** by setting safety standards and protecting workers from wage theft, misclassification, and discrimination. PLAs also ensure workers have a contractual guarantee of receiving equal pay for equal work, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, creed, or other categories of self-identification.

- **PLAs simplify and expedite projects** by covering all workers under one overall agreement drawing from proven high standards for specific crafts and disciplines.
- **PLAs eliminate the chance of any labor stoppages** by creating a legally-binding and contractually established resolution process.
- **PLAs ensure cost-effective completion of projects** by creating a reliable supply of skilled labor with no-strike, no-lockout clauses.
- **PLAs promote the use of minority business enterprises (MBEs) and women business enterprises (WBEs)**, codifying and often exceeding meaningful goals around contractor hiring practices on projects in order to uplift minority- and women-owned businesses who might otherwise be overlooked by developers or end users.

Nine other states and the federal government have already established statutes promoting the use of Project Labor Agreements on public infrastructure projects. Today, with billions of dollars in federal infrastructure funds coming down to the states, PLAs are more important than ever. Massachusetts can lead with a strong PLA policy that ensures this historic funding creates maximum benefits for the public by building strong careers and essential infrastructure.

To support the future of environmental justice communities and build the infrastructure we need for pollution reduction, climate resilience and more:

- Governor Healey can issue an Executive Order ensuring the next wave of critically-needed infrastructure in Massachusetts is built with experienced workers, contractually guaranteed pay equity for women and for people of color, and fair labor standards, while also promoting equity in state contracting for M/WBEs and expanding access to strong construction careers for low-income residents, women, and people of color.
- The Massachusetts legislature can pass H. 3012/S. 2027, *An Act authorizing project labor agreements*, which would further empower public agencies to utilize PLAs to better serve the public interest on new infrastructure projects.

INTRODUCTION

Today, Massachusetts is at a historic crossroads. Our public infrastructure is in well-documented and irrefutable disrepair. Our state is not yet prepared to meet the threats of climate change, and our Commonwealth is divided by deep inequalities along lines of race, gender, and income. Massive investments in physical infrastructure are necessary to ensure a safe, healthy, and prosperous state.

We have the resources to meet the challenges of the moment. Historic federal funding from the Biden Administration means at least \$9 billion for Massachusetts to invest in needed infrastructure, including climate mitigation, pollution reduction, transit, public buildings, water and sanitation, and other projects that will make Massachusetts cleaner, greener, and more equitable.

Funding on this scale can have profound impacts on the infrastructure — and the people — of Massachusetts. But we need the right policies in place to ensure taxpayer funds are being spent on skilled construction work with strict protections for workers, robust benefits for communities, and pathways to family-sustaining careers for people of color and women. Otherwise, these once-in-a-generation funds could simply flow upwards to wealthy developers and construction executives, leaving Massachusetts without the infrastructure renewal and good careers we need.

The best way to ensure federal funding has a deep and lasting positive impact on our Commonwealth is to ensure all projects it funds have Project Labor Agreements in place to ensure public infrastructure projects are built safely and efficiently while dismantling inequality by building pathways to good, family-sustaining careers for women and people of color.

The role of project labor agreements is to contractually memorialize and bind parties to these essential values and commitments toward equality, combating climate change, and rebuilding our infrastructure in ways that create opportunities for all, not just for wealthy private interests.

WHAT EXACTLY DO PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS DO?

Project Labor Agreements are “pre-hire” collective bargaining agreements that apply to all contractors and subcontractors on complex construction projects.

PLAs set standards for all workers on a project, including for wages, fringe benefits, health and safety requirements, and coordinated schedules. PLAs eliminate the risk of work stoppages through “no-strike, no-lockout” clauses, and they establish a process for supplying highly trained and skilled workers for projects.

PLAs can support pipelines for entry into good careers by including apprenticeship utilization requirements and funding for pre-apprenticeship training programs. PLAs are a proven alternative to the dominant “train and pray” model of workforce development

programs — where workers are given limited training but no clear path to employment, leaving them praying to find a good job. In contrast, the “earn while you learn” apprenticeship opportunities already offered in the building trades pay workers as they are trained and lead to lasting careers with middle class incomes and fair benefits.

Other states, as well as the federal government and some municipalities, already require consideration of PLAs on public infrastructure projects. By following suit, Governor Healey can ensure that Massachusetts fully seizes this historic opportunity to address climate change, bring our infrastructure into the 21st century, guarantee workers on State projects are receiving good wages, benefits, and training, and improve equity in Massachusetts by building new pathways to careers for women and people of color.

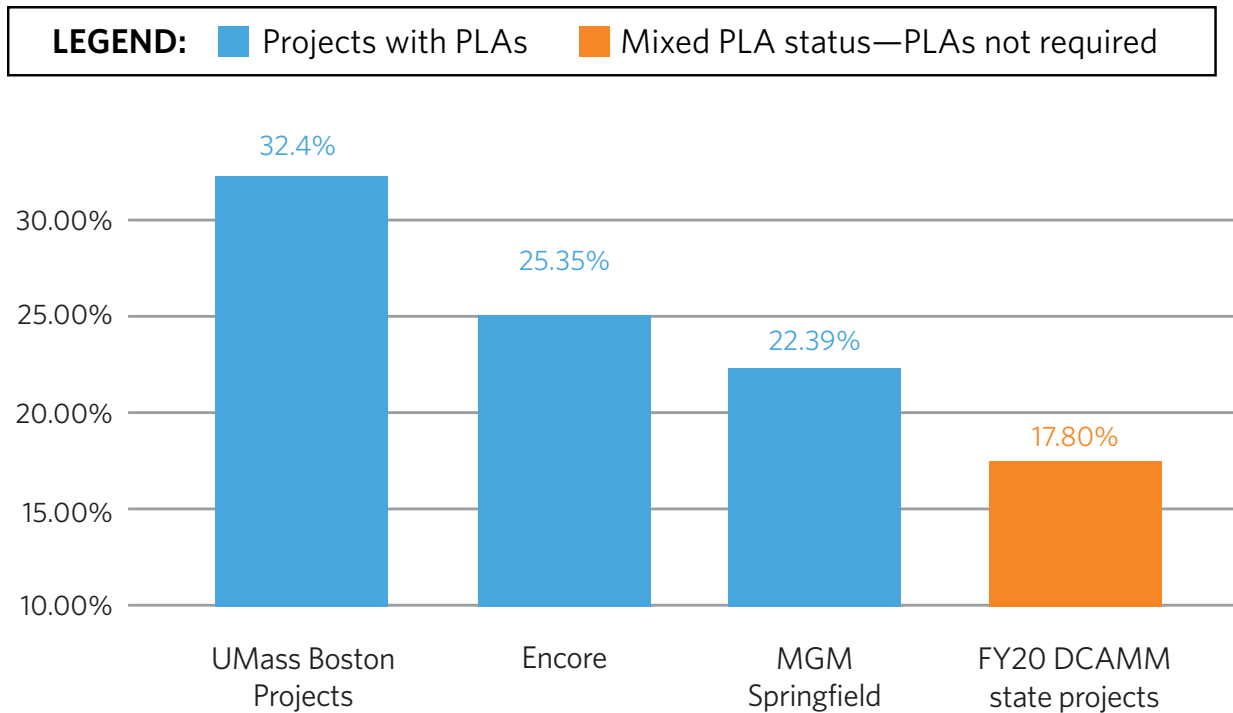
PLAs INCREASE PATHWAYS TO STRONG CAREERS FOR WOMEN, PEOPLE OF COLOR, AND LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS

PLAs offer pathways to good careers for women and people of color by:

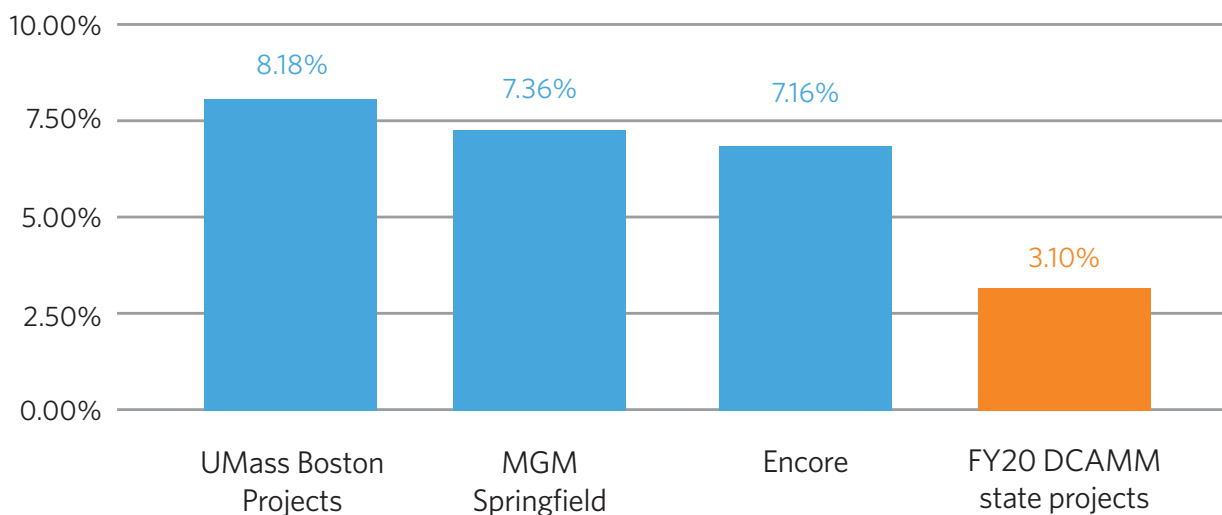
- Investing in training the next generation of skilled trades workers with apprenticeship utilization requirements on projects, creating jobs and training opportunities for new workers.¹
- Including equity provisions and hiring goals for people of color and women.²
- Funding and supporting pre-apprenticeship programs designed to train and help underrepresented workers enter well-paying construction jobs.³
- Addressing barriers to workforce entry, like child care.⁴
- Including hiring goals and other measures to promote equitable opportunity:
 - In Los Angeles, a citywide PLA covers all contracted public works projects. The City PLA memorializes provisions to ensure opportunities are bolstered for all – including through mechanisms aimed at bolstering equitable hiring and expanding opportunities for low-income households and neighborhoods.⁵
 - Seattle’s citywide PLA covers all public works projects and establishes a Preferred Entry program into apprenticeship programs for women, people of color, and low-income residents.⁶
- The Encore Boston Harbor PLA included intentionally mandated recruitment initiatives to increase gender equity in the construction industry. These PLA-mandated initiatives led to the project employing the most women construction workers of any project in the history of the United States of America.⁷

OUR FINDINGS

PORTION OF PROJECT HOURS WORKED BY PEOPLE OF COLOR, PLA PROJECTS VS. ALL FY20 DIVISION OF CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE (DCAMM) STATE PROJECTS⁸



PORTION OF PROJECT HOURS WORKED BY WOMEN, PLA PROJECTS VS. ALL FY20 DCAMM STATE PROJECTS⁸



UMASS BOSTON: GOOD CAREERS FOR WOMEN AND PEOPLE OF COLOR

Project Labor Agreements at UMass Boston show the positive impact PLAs can make when it comes to hiring women and people of color. Construction and renovation projects carried out since 2011 have made the university an important training site for women and people of color joining the trades as apprentices. More than 32% of hours on these projects were worked by people of color, and more than 8 percent were worked by women, far exceeding state goals.⁹

The UMass projects, which were completed with a PLA and carried out by Massachusetts' Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) and the UMass Building Authority, markedly outperformed DCAMM's overall performance in meeting state workforce participation goals. To date, with very few exceptions, DCAMM projects have not required PLAs, representing a significant missed opportunity for the state to advance equity.

A 2022 state audit¹⁰ of DCAMM found that in 2019 and 2020:

- 95 percent of contracts failed to meet the Commonwealth's 6.9 percent goal for women's construction hours.
- 61 percent of contracts failed to have any hours worked by women.
- 64 percent of contracts failed to meet their 15.3 percent minority work goal.
- 28 percent of contracts failed to have any hours worked by minorities.

These failures could have been prevented with Project Labor Agreements on this work.

PLAs STRENGTHEN PROVEN "EARN WHILE YOU LEARN" APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROGRAMS

With the right approach, public infrastructure investment can improve equity in our state by building good, family-sustaining careers. Public investments at the scale of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act require expanding workforce development efforts to make sure we have the skilled workforce to build the bridges, buildings, transit, electrical grids, and other big projects we need. We must ensure workers are able to access good career pathways, rather than dead-end jobs.

The dominant workforce development model is not in sync with our current workforce demands. Working people are not able to find lasting careers that allow them to support their families and communities. Instead, the dominant workforce development model uses what Obama Administration Labor Secretary Thomas Perez has called a "train and pray" approach: limited, low-quality training that does not connect trainees with reliable employment – leaving them still praying for a job.¹¹ The training marketplace includes many low-quality, for-profit programs with low completion and low retention rates, compounding the difficulty

for workers seeking new skills and employment.¹² Luckily, there is a proven alternative to the “train and pray” model that can assure Massachusetts has the workforce we need to repair and expand public infrastructure.

The trades union apprenticeship training model is a proven “earn while you learn” model. Union apprentices spend two to five years completing both classroom and on-the-job training, with many receiving college credit. People enter as apprentices, learning the skills of their new trade while contributing to a project. New workers earn good pay and have access to robust benefits. As they gain skills, tradespeople advance up the ladder, to journeyperson and ultimately master. Union training programs are the gateway not to a single job, but to a career with fair pay and benefits, stability, and opportunity.

Apprentices in joint labor-management programs have a substantially higher completion and certification rate, including for women and minorities, than non-union programs.¹³ Nationally, 92 percent of people completing registered apprenticeships retain employment after completion, compared to 63 percent of participants in all federally certified job training.¹⁴

Union building trades pay wages that are competitive with jobs for college degree holders, without the education debt.¹⁵ With over half of Massachusetts residents facing student debt, and with new graduates in 2019-2020 owing an average of \$33,457, union apprenticeships are a reliable option for “earn while you learn” training and a good career pathway.¹⁶

In our state, Massachusetts building trades unions already invest over \$60 million annually in training and operate more than 40 joint apprenticeship training centers.¹⁷ Union programs train the majority of construction apprentices – and the vast majority of women and people of color, including:¹⁸

- 74 percent of all registered apprentices.
- 88 percent of all women apprentices.
- 80 percent of BIPOC apprentices.

As one example, in IBEW 103’s 2023 apprenticeship class, 51% of apprentices were women and/or people of color.¹⁹ The building trades unions also offer pre-apprenticeship programs like Building Pathways and Community Works, which advance the recruitment and retention of women and people of color.

Unions set the standard for creating stable, well-paying careers with fair wages and benefits. Utilizing union labor with workers receiving quality training and fair wages has also been demonstrated to result in projects being completed on schedule and efficiently.

Unions also decrease racial and gender income inequality. Black workers who are covered by a union contract make 13 percent more than their non-union counterparts. Latinx workers with a union contract make 18 percent more.²⁰ Overall, unionized women who work full-time make 24 percent more than their non-union counterparts. That difference is even larger for Latinas, who make 40 percent more.²¹

Across all industries, including in construction, the union difference in compensation is most beneficial for women and people of color, closing racial and gender wealth gaps and increasing intergenerational mobility.²²

Unionized workers are more likely to receive health benefits from their employers and are more likely to have lower deductibles and lower premiums for family coverage.²³ In Massachusetts, the building trades unions cover over 260,000 workers, children, and spouses under union health plans and offer retirement benefits to 40,000 seniors.²⁴ Unions also have many positive residual effects on our communities and economy, raising wages for nonunion workers and increasing civic engagement.²⁵

Massachusetts can be a leader in this proven earn while you learn model. One of the most powerful tools to do so is by ensuring large public projects have project labor agreements with strong workforce development elements. With PLA-based apprenticeship utilization requirements, registered apprenticeship programs can better understand future demand for apprenticeships on the worksite. That allows programs to continue to scale up and accept larger, more diverse classes, training enough new tradespeople to meet the needs of the Commonwealth.

BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY: PLAs SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND THE CLIMATE

In 2014, Boston finished the largest public housing energy efficiency project in U.S. history, which was carried out with a PLA. The \$66.7 million project renovated 13 housing developments and more than 4,300 units. It reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 13,000 tons each year, saving the Boston Housing Authority over \$4.8 million on energy and water costs. The project created about 600 jobs for local union workers, including 103 Boston Housing Authority residents and minority-owned businesses, while also starting a pre-apprenticeship program for low-income and public housing residents.²⁶

MASSACHUSETTS HAS URGENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE NEEDS

Public infrastructure investment in Massachusetts and across the nation has fallen short for decades as corporate interests and the right wing have sought to “downsize” government and shrink revenues by cutting taxes for the wealthy and big business.²⁷ Wealthy corporations not paying their fair share results in less revenue to invest in state infrastructure, schools, transportation, and social programs Massachusetts residents rely on every day.²⁸ Today, we see the toll from Cape Cod to North Adams and from Boston to Springfield.

- Massachusetts public schools are aging and outdated, needing \$1.39 billion more funding for repairs.²⁹

- Water and sewage systems date back to the 1800s and require over \$21.4 billion in additional funding over twenty years.³⁰
- Our public transportation infrastructure is in urgent need of repair and expansion.
 - Nearly 90 percent of the MBTA transit tracks and over half of train cars are “out of a state of good repair.” Systemwide, the MBTA has been plagued by numerous safety incidents and requires \$24.5 billion to bring the system back to a “state of good repair.”³¹
 - The long-awaited East-West rail project has been stalled for years, leaving few low-emission alternatives for travel across the Commonwealth.³²

The unfolding impacts of climate change add more urgency to our infrastructure crisis. To slow climate change and respond to already-increasing rising sea levels, flooding, heat waves, and intense storms, we must renovate, replace, and modernize our state infrastructure.

- Landmark legislation passed in 2021 requires Massachusetts to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.³³
- Greenhouse gas emissions must be at least 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 and 50 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.³⁴
- The transportation sector must reduce emissions to 86 percent or less of 1990 levels.³⁵
- Commercial and residential heating and cooling will have to reduce emissions to 92% and 95% below 1990 levels, respectively.³⁶

Achieving these goals requires widespread adoption of new technologies, including heat pumps, electric vehicles, solar, wind, energy storage, and electrified bus facilities.

INEQUALITY IS STARK AND INCREASING ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

Infrastructure decline is not the only crisis in Massachusetts. Our Commonwealth also faces a crisis of inequality. Over the last several decades, the gains of the Civil Rights movement have been threatened as the right wing has rolled back safeguards against systemic racial discrimination, dismantled social safety nets, targeted unions, and given giant corporations new freedoms and benefits while weakening public programs meant to create an even playing field for all.

Today, Massachusetts is starkly unequal along lines of income, race, and gender.

We have the sixth highest income inequality level of the 50 states.³⁷ Income inequality goes hand-in-hand with unequal educational and health outcomes:

- Between 2015 and 2021, only 77 percent of low-income students graduated from public high school, compared with 88 percent of overall students. 55 percent of low-income students attended college, compared with 70 percent of overall students.³⁸

- The ten Massachusetts census tracts with the lowest life expectancies each had a median income of less than \$31,000.³⁹
 - Eight of the ten tracts with the highest life expectancies have median incomes over \$100,000.⁴⁰

Income inequalities intersect with structural racism due to the historic exploitation and exclusion of people of color. As a result, people of color are nearly twice as likely as white Massachusetts residents to live in poverty.⁴¹

Racial inequality is stark.

- Seventeen percent of black residents, 20 percent of Hispanic residents, and 12 percent of Asian residents live in poverty, compared to only 8 percent of white Massachusetts residents.⁴²
- The state has one of the worst racial homeownership gaps, with white households having a 69 percent homeownership rate compared to 37 percent for households of color.⁴³
- A 2015 study of economic inequality in Boston revealed a startling wealth gap: the average net worth of a non-immigrant Black family is \$8, more than *30 thousand times* less than the average white family's net worth of \$247,500.⁴⁴
- Communities of color face elevated environmental hazards:
 - Communities where people of color comprise over 25 percent of the population have 27.2 hazardous waste sites per square mile, compared to 2.9 per square mile in communities with less than 25 percent people of color.⁴⁵
 - 33% of Latinx, 32% of Asian, and 28% of Black public high school students in Boston reported having asthma, compared to 20% of white students.⁴⁶

COVID-19 entrenched many of these inequalities, with communities like Chelsea, Brockton, Everett, Lawrence, and Lynn having suffered the highest infection rates.⁴⁷

Racial and income inequalities harm millions of people in our Commonwealth. According to 2022 data, in Massachusetts, almost 3.5 million people lived in environmental justice (EJ) communities.⁴⁸ In Massachusetts, EJ communities are defined in law⁴⁹ as neighborhoods in which:

- The annual median household income is 65 percent or less of the statewide annual median household income;
- People of color make up 40 percent or more of the population;
- 25 percent or more of households say they speak English less than “very well,” or
- People of color make up 25 percent or more of the population, and the annual median household income of the municipality does not exceed 150 percent of the statewide annual median household income.

Massachusetts also faces marked gender inequality.

- In 2023, women were typically paid 73 cents for every dollar paid to a man.⁵⁰
- Women make up nearly two-thirds of the state's low-wage workforce and are nearly twice as likely as men to work in low-wage jobs.⁵¹
- During COVID-19, women's employment levels dropped farther and at a faster rate than men's.⁵²
- Pay inequalities are exacerbated by high child care costs, especially for single mothers.
 - Infant child care costs average \$20,913 annually in Massachusetts — the second highest in the nation.⁵³

OUR OPPORTUNITY

Historic levels of public funding are already available. In a reversal of shrinking infrastructure investments since the 1970s, the Biden administration has dedicated historic federal funding to modernize our infrastructure and fight climate change.⁵⁴ The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) include major infrastructure investments and billions of dollars in grants allocated for underserved environmental justice communities.⁵⁵ These include:⁵⁶

- \$27 billion for greenhouse gas reduction projects in communities, especially those that are low-income and disadvantaged.
- \$3 billion for Environmental and Climate Justice grants to support community efforts to address persistent pollution where we live.
- \$3 billion to reduce pollution from ports.
- \$5 billion to decarbonize the nation's school bus fleet.
- \$50 billion for clean water and drinking water projects.

These laws contain provisions meant to create good career opportunities for workers, including prevailing wage requirements and apprenticeship guidelines, which help to ensure this funding does not merely enrich big corporations at the expense of workers. The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recently updated its Uniform Guidance, which specifies how states, cities, and other entities may use federal funds they receive. The new version greenlights the use of PLAs and community benefits agreements on all federally funded projects.⁵⁷

Massachusetts can make those provisions even stronger.

The Commonwealth will receive an estimated \$9.3 billion in infrastructure formula funding over five years from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.⁵⁸ The state also has the chance to compete for an additional \$17.5 billion in federal funding through the BIL and IRA, as well as the CHIPS and Science Act.⁵⁹

Governor Healey has aggressively pursued these new federal funding opportunities and has committed to ensuring the money is spent on job creation, workforce development, climate resilience, economic competitiveness, and equity.⁶⁰ The Governor signed an executive order creating an agency to track federal opportunities and filed legislation to leverage interest on the state's rainy day fund for \$800 million to compete for federal funds and provide state matching funds.⁶¹

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is already leading on environmental justice, establishing an Office of Environmental Justice and Equity within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and adopting the Commonwealth's first-ever Environmental Justice Strategy, which committed to integrating EJ principles, including impact analysis, meaningful engagement, and language access, across all EEA agencies.⁶²

The Healey-Driscoll Administration's FY25 budget proposal includes millions of dollars in investment in the MBTA, regional transit authorities, climate initiatives, and maintaining local roads and bridges. The budget enables a transfer of \$1.3 billion to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for school construction.⁶³ Many of these investments in Massachusetts are funded by the Fair Share Amendment, which was approved by voters in 2022.⁶⁴

Massachusetts already has official goals for state construction projects to include 15.3% people of color and 6.9% women in their workforce.⁶⁵ However, state agencies often do not meet these goals because of the failures of the non-union construction sector to recruit intentionally, and because of absent PLA agreements, the non-union corporate actors have little to no accountability to the public.⁶⁶

A strong PLA policy will help Massachusetts ensure the federal dollars we already have will fund successful projects and transformative career opportunities. It will also help us obtain additional, competitive funding, as the BIL, IRA, and CHIPS acts strongly encourage applicants to use strong labor standards and Project Labor Agreements, with the IRA including bonus tax credits for applicants who meet prevailing wage and registered apprenticeship requirements. Applicants can guarantee satisfaction of these requirements with a PLA.⁶⁷

By setting fair and responsible standards for state infrastructure jobs, the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Legislature can ensure public projects have the maximum possible benefit for the Commonwealth, building not only the infrastructure, but also the family-sustaining careers that will improve prosperity and equity statewide.

We have a very short timeline to spend our federal infrastructure funds, so we must move quickly to make the most difference. To ensure Massachusetts benefits from these features and other positive aspects of Project Labor Agreements:

- The Healey-Driscoll administration can sign an Executive Order ensuring the next wave of critically needed infrastructure in Massachusetts is built with well-trained workers, with contractually guaranteed pay equity for women and for people of color, and with fair labor standards, while also promoting equity in state contracting for M/WBEs

and while expanding access to strong construction careers for low-income residents, women, and people of color.

- The Massachusetts legislature can pass H. 3012/S. 2027, *An Act authorizing project labor agreements*, which would empower public agencies to utilize PLAs to better serve the public interest on new infrastructure projects.

EXISTING PLA MODELS

There are multiple models Massachusetts can draw on. In 2022, President Biden signed Executive Order 14063, requiring PLAs on most large-scale federal construction projects over \$35 million.⁶⁸

At least 9 states and the District of Columbia already have statutes encouraging the use of Project Labor Agreements on publicly funded construction projects, with New Jersey offering the strongest model (see Table). In addition to statewide policies, a number of major cities and counties have utilized PLAs or entered directly into Project Labor Agreements for new projects, including Los Angeles County, New York City, Los Angeles City, Santa Clara County, Alameda County, San Jose, and Seattle.⁶⁹ Many of these agreements also include local and targeted hire workforce and apprenticeship provisions.

STATE LAWS REQUIRING OR ALLOWING CONSIDERATION OF PLAs

STATE	YEAR ADOPTED	MECHANISM	PROJECTS COVERED
Maryland	2023	Executive Order	Projects with state commitment over \$20 million ⁷⁰
New Jersey	2021	Legislation	State projects over \$5 million ⁷¹
Illinois	2021	Legislation	Requires PLAs on utility-scale wind and solar projects ⁷²
Illinois	2021	Legislation	Requires PLA on all casino projects ⁷³
Virginia	2020	Legislation	Allows public bodies to require PLAs on projects ⁷⁴
Maine	2019	Legislation	Any public works projects ⁷⁵
Washington D.C.	2016	Legislation	Projects with costs over \$75 million ⁷⁶
Hawaii	2012	Executive Order	Projects with state commitment over \$25 million ⁷⁷
Connecticut	2012	Legislation	Any public works project ⁷⁸
Illinois	2011	Legislation	State public works projects ⁷⁹

STATE	YEAR ADOPTED	MECHANISM	PROJECTS COVERED
New Jersey	2002	Executive Order	Any public works project ⁸⁰
New York	1997	Executive Order	Any state public construction projects ⁸¹
Washington	1996	Executive Order	Any state public works project ⁸²

Today, with billions of dollars in federal infrastructure funds coming down to the states, PLAs are more important than ever. Massachusetts can lead with a strong PLA policy that ensures this historic funding creates maximum benefits for the public by building strong careers and essential infrastructure.

HOW PLAs CAN SUPPORT CHILD CARE FOR WORKERS

In some circumstances, PLAs can include funding for programs that will increase the diversification of the workforce. For example, a lack of accessible, early-morning child care can prevent women from entering the construction industry due to the prevalence of non-traditional work-hour schedules set by employers. To address this barrier, the PLA for the state-of-the-art downtown Boston Winthrop Center funded a child care pilot project to connect single mothers with non-standard-hour child care options to support their entry into strong trades careers.⁸³

PLAs PROTECT ALL WORKERS ON A PROJECT

PLAs combat discrimination and wage theft:

- PLAs ensure all workers are paid according to the agreed standards, regardless of race or gender.
- PLAs set standards that can help prevent workplace abuses, including employee misclassification and wage theft.
- In Prince George's County, Maryland, phase one of a major school project without a PLA resulted in a dozen wage theft claims and multiple lawsuits against the lead developer and several subcontractors claiming employee misclassification.⁸⁴ Following these incidents, the County Board of Education voted to include a PLA on phase two of the project, creating protections for workers and job opportunities for local residents.⁸⁵

PLAs help keep workers safe by mandating health and safety training for all workers and improving awareness of OSHA inspections.⁸⁶

- Collective bargaining helps set high standards for job safety on projects. Union job sites are nearly 20 percent less likely to have health and safety violations than non-union sites. OSHA issued 34 percent fewer health and safety violations per inspection on union sites.⁸⁷

PLAs SIMPLIFY AND EXPEDITE PROJECTS

By ensuring large projects have a single agreement that covers all work:

- This prevents the complexity and inefficiency seen on projects where different contractors and workers have different agreements, with the potential for conflicting work hours, break times, holidays, disparate overtime rules, and dispute resolution procedures.

By reducing delays caused by labor shortages:

- PLAs establish a reliable supply of trained, highly-skilled workers.
 - Unions can attract and retain workers in large part due to their strong, jointly sponsored registered apprenticeship training programs.
 - Union contractors are 21 percent less likely to experience project delays caused by a shortage of workers and 14 percent less likely to have difficulty in filling craft worker positions than nonunion contractors. In the high-turnover construction industry, unions are also 13 percent less likely to lose workers to other industries.⁸⁸

PLAs ENSURE COST-EFFECTIVE COMPLETION OF PROJECTS

Contrary to myths promoted by some special business interest lobbying groups, PLAs do not increase project costs.

- Having a well-trained workforce with PLA provisions in place has been demonstrated to deliver projects on time and on budget.
- Peer-reviewed research of schools built with and without PLAs in Massachusetts found no statistically significant relationship between the use of PLAs and construction costs.⁸⁹
- According to one study of 1550 large projects, union construction labor is 14 percent more productive, reduces project costs by 4 percent, uses higher skilled labor than nonunion construction labor, and reduces the risk of project delays and cost overruns.⁹⁰

PLAs can save needless costs by standardizing work rules, including start times, breaks, holidays, scheduling flexibility, hours, and overtime rules, across all contractors and unions on a project.

- The New York City School Construction Authority's use of PLAs to rehabilitate and renovate schools saved over \$220 million over five years by standardizing shifts across all trades.⁹¹
- PLAs include no-strike and no-lockout clauses, which can eliminate costly delays.

Notable PLAs in Massachusetts

- | | |
|--|--|
| ▪ UMass Boston Master Plan renovations | ▪ Encore casino project |
| ▪ Longfellow bridge Rehabilitation Project | ▪ MGM Springfield casino project |
| ▪ Whittier Bridge/I-95 Improvement Project | ▪ Harvard University for construction, renovation, and rehabilitation projects |
| ▪ Springfield I-91 Viaduct Repair Project | |

PLAs PROMOTE THE USE OF MBES, WBES, AND MWBES

PLAs and the building trades unions not only establish and train a diverse construction workforce, they also support and promote Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) and Women Business Enterprises (WBEs).

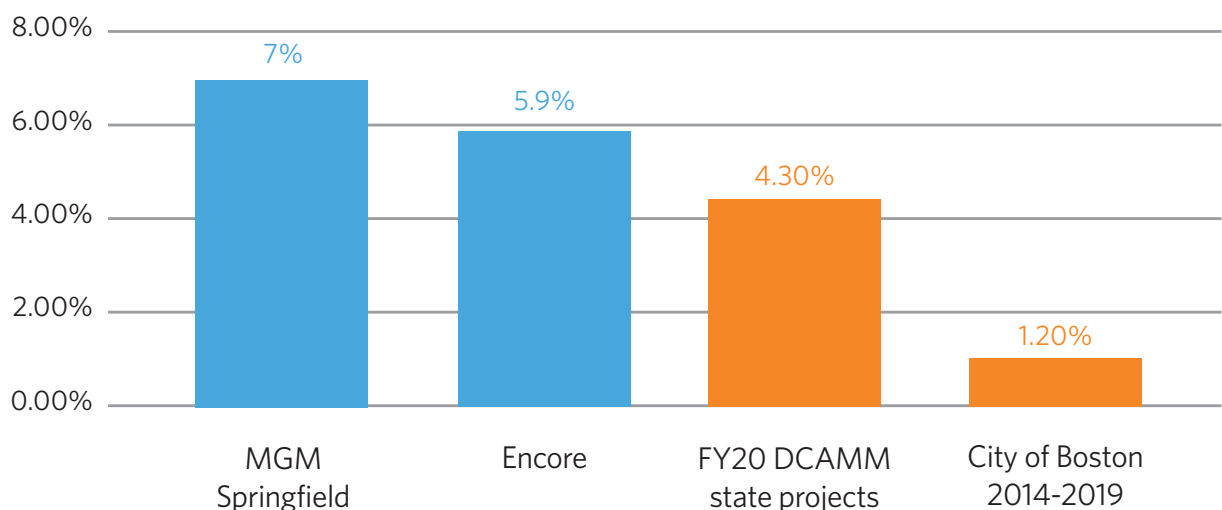
The construction of two Massachusetts casinos (Encore Boston and MGM Springfield) highlight the possibilities for MBEs and WBEs on PLA projects. Both projects were built with union labor and greatly exceeded their workforce and contractor diversity goals in nearly every category.

We compared the goals and results of these PLA projects with MBE and WBE utilization for city contracts and procurements in Boston, where no PLA has been in place but the City is working to increase MBE and WBE utilization. In nearly every category, PLA projects were stronger than Boston's results.

WOMEN AND PEOPLE OF COLOR BUSINESSES INVOLVEMENT ON CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS ⁹²

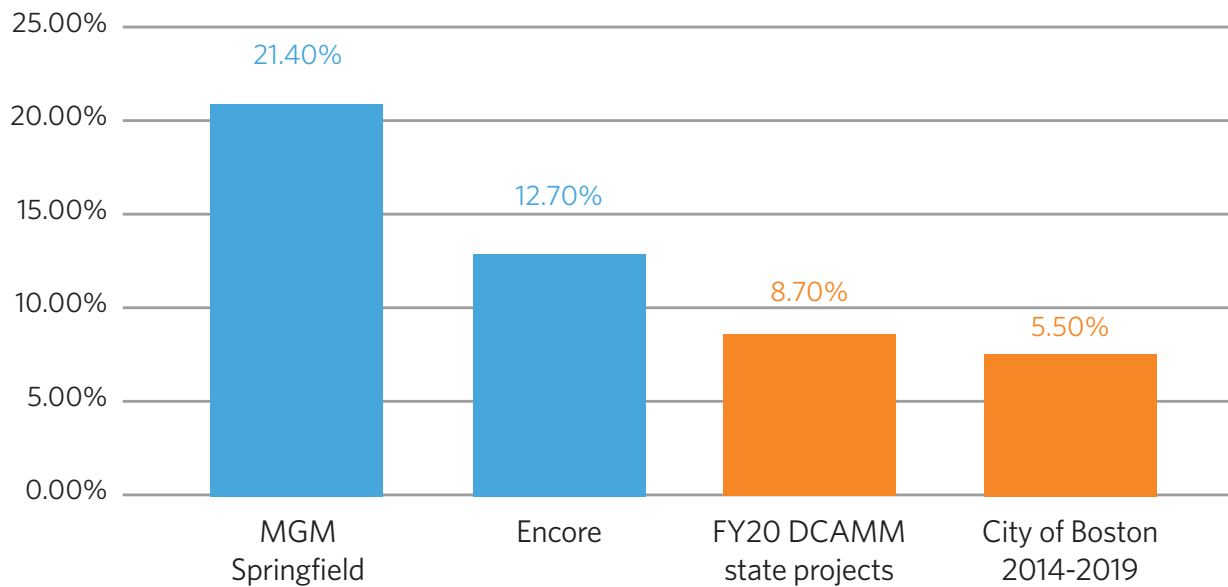
LEGEND: ■ Projects with PLAs ■ Mixed PLA status—PLAs not required

MBE SHARE OF CONSTRUCTION DOLLARS (%)



LEGEND: ■ Projects with PLAs ■ Mixed PLA status—PLAs not required

WBE SHARE OF CONSTRUCTION DOLLARS (%)



Since 2021, IBEW 103 and the National Electrical Contractors Association have run the Empower DEI program, serving current and aspiring MBEs and WBEs. The program has increased the number of MBE and WBE electrical contractors in Greater Boston and has supported existing contractors through mentorship, training, business growth opportunities, operational support, and the creation of strategic marketing plans.⁹³

PLAs set the standard for MBE and WBE inclusion in other states as well. The PLA for the \$9.5 billion new JFK terminal project in New York sets a 30 percent M/WBE goal (20 percent MBE and 10 percent WBE).⁹⁴ Across the border in Connecticut, the \$291 million Jackson Laboratory project awarded 18.5 percent of the contract value to MBE firms with a PLA.⁹⁵ A study of 317 capital development board projects completed with PLAs in Illinois found M/WBEs accounted for 11.9 percent of eligible businesses but completed 12.9 percent of project work.⁹⁶

While it is important to maintain a broad focus on the full workforce staffing a project — not just the business owners who employ those workers — it is notable that PLAs help ensure that more minority and women-owned businesses take on work while also ensuring workers receive quality training and good pay and benefits to support their family and community.

In fact, by ensuring more construction workers who are women and/or people of color have opportunities to access public projects, PLAs also make it more likely that those workers may be able to someday go on to start their own MBE, WBE, and M/WBE contractor businesses.

PLAs offer Massachusetts the opportunity to set a new gold standard for M/WBE utilization, expanding opportunities to work on state projects to all business owners and aspiring M/WBEs.

ACTION IS NEEDED NOW FOR PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Unprecedented federal funding means that Massachusetts has the ability to make critical progress toward our goals of increased equality, environmental justice, and climate resilience. PLAs are a powerful tool to ensure these goals advance together. To support the future of environmental justice communities and to build the infrastructure we need for pollution reduction, climate resilience, and more:

- Governor Healey can issue an Executive Order ensuring all state infrastructure projects will be carried out with PLAs that include:
 - Training and career opportunities for women and people of color who have been historically underrepresented in the construction workforce.
 - Registered apprenticeship utilization goals on all projects.
 - Targeted outreach and recruitment programs for women, people of color, and residents in disadvantaged communities.
 - Child care options for employees, including nonstandard hours of care that match employees' schedules.
 - Workforce participation goals for women and people of color.
 - Provisions to promote the use of MBEs and WBEs on projects.
- The state legislature should pass H. 3012/S. 2027, *An Act authorizing project labor agreements*, which would further empower public agencies to utilize PLAs on projects to advance the public good. This would allow our cities and towns, as well as state agencies, to use the strongest tools possible to build and repair infrastructure while creating much-needed family-sustaining careers.

By doing so, our elected officials have the chance to counter environmental injustice, bolster equity, and make Massachusetts a leader on the road to a more equitable and greener future.

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