
Making Collaboration Work

Best Practices for Community-Trades Partnerships

East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy
& Building and Construction Trades Council
of Alameda County

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About the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy

The East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE) advances economic, racial, and social justice by building a just economy in the East Bay based on good jobs and healthy communities. We address the root causes of economic injustice by developing strategic alliances among community, labor, and people of faith to build power and create change with low-income workers and communities of color.

About the Building & Construction Trades Council of Alameda County

The Building and Construction Trades Council of Alameda County is a coalition of 28 affiliated unions representing workers in various construction trades. The BTCA works with affiliated unions to:

- Increase the market share of construction work for union trades men and women in Alameda County.
- Negotiate Project Labor Agreements with local agencies to ensure local skilled workers are employed, labor standards are upheld, and the community benefits from these jobs. Endorse candidates for elected office who support the goals of the Building Trades Council and its affiliated unions, and campaign for labor-friendly candidates.
- Build unity among the different building trades unions; Work in alliance with other labor unions, labor councils and state and national labor federations to build solidarity.
- Promote Union Apprenticeship programs to train the next generation of skilled workers.

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Methodology

EBASE and the Alameda County Building Trades Council developed a semi-structured interview protocol that covered BTC and CBO organizational and partnership history, community perceptions of the trades, successes and challenges involved in collaboration, and the impacts of collaboration on local landscapes for good jobs. The authors conducted ten hour-long interviews with 5 BTC leaders and 5 CBO leaders in Alameda County, Los Angeles & Orange Counties, Santa Clara County, San Diego County, and San Mateo County. Leaders were chosen on the basis of geographical diversity as well as having established relationships with EBASE and/or the Alameda County BTC. For interview protocols see Appendix 2 and 3. In addition to in-depth interviews with leaders, EBASE and the Alameda County BTC convened eleven trades and CBO leaders for a conversation on best practices for collaboration as well as key components of CWAs that informed this report.

Experts Interviewed:

- *Building and Trades Councils of Alameda County, Los Angeles & Orange Counties, San Diego County, San Mateo County and Santa Clara County*
- *East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE), Alameda County*
- *Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), LA County*
- *Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI), San Diego County*
- *San Mateo County Union Community Alliance (SMCUCA), San Mateo County*
- *Working Partnerships USA (WPUSA), Santa Clara County*

Executive Summary

Community organizations and construction unions can amplify their power when they work together. This truth is evident in the successful good jobs agreements and programs that have been created across the state of California over the past several years and that are increasing the amount of construction work covered by union agreements and resulting in workers from low-income communities of color entering and sustaining union construction careers. In Oakland, the Revive Oakland community-labor coalition has won protections such as living wage and requirements like local hire, ensuring that local construction workers get access to high quality jobs on the former Oakland Army Base. In Los Angeles, unions and community groups have worked together to create programs that facilitate local low-income residents to enter stable careers in the largest municipally-owned utility in the country, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Revive Oakland’s “Ban-the-Box” win was part of a Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) between the Port of Oakland and the Revive Oakland coalition that set job standards high on new development on the Oakland Army Base. CWAs go beyond traditional Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) by incorporating community interests into policies covering new developments. CWAs include provisions such as targeted hire, to ensure that local residents are able to enter the trades and enjoy the benefits of a stable union career. They allow local communities to benefit from local development projects and public works investments that may be changing their neighborhoods, and protect good jobs in the construction industry. CWAs can also ensure that California’s increasing infrastructure investments to address climate change also help to expand opportunity in low-income communities of color that often disproportionately experience pollution and climate change impacts.

Collaboration between community organizations and trades unions makes comprehensive policy wins for working people and communities possible. But collaboration between community groups and unions can be challenging due to differing organizational structures, leadership styles, and cultures. This report draws on in-depth interviews as well as a statewide convening of building trades and community leaders based in five different regions of California to define best practices for collaboration between the trades and community groups to establish strong Community Workforce Agreements toward good jobs that improve equity in California.



Key findings regarding best practices for collaboration are presented below:

Start collaboration early.

Several leaders explained the importance of involving allies during the early stages of developing projects so that all parties can weigh in on issues including policy priorities, strategy, and tactics. Reaching out to potential partners early can be an important to building buy-in and accountability amongst all groups involved.

Choose partners with compatible long-term interests.

Choosing to partner with organizations that share long-term commitments makes collaborative work more likely to be sustainable. When partners understand that they are in the long-haul together, it is easier to navigate short-term challenges. Finding long-term commitments in common can also help partners strategize on campaigns and projects to take a comprehensive “lift all boats” approach that brings benefits to all involved.

Communicate proactively about potential points of tension.

Leaders interviewed for this project explained that there are several issues that often come up during collaboration that can cause tension and division: community historical experiences and perceptions of the trades, differences in organizational structure and values, roles in decision-making, non-negotiable needs, and realistic expectations of collaboration. Communicating about these issues at the front end of projects can help avoid misunderstanding and facilitate smooth collaboration.

Invest in conflict resolution.

For times when partners do experience conflict, leaders at CBOs and BTCs agreed that investing time in conflict resolution is necessary and worthwhile. Conflict resolution should involve taking time to hear all sides out, allowing space for disagreement, and making an effort to keep shared long-term interests in mind. Practicing conflict resolution can allow for collaborations to succeed despite roadblocks and challenges that often arise over the course of projects.

Key policy components of strong Community Workforce Agreements include:

Targeted Hire

Incorporating targeted hire provisions allow CWAs to create pathways into stable careers for low-income communities and communities of color. Targeted hire goes beyond local hire by requiring the hiring of local workers who are traditionally underrepresented in the construction industry. Populations that may be included in targeted hire provisions include formerly incarcerated individuals, workers with a history of homelessness, veterans and individuals residing in high poverty areas.

Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

Having robust pre-apprenticeship programs that prepare new workers to enter apprenticeships within the trades is essential to meeting targeted hire goals. Pre-apprenticeship programs provide learning opportunities for many individuals who would not otherwise meet minimum requirements of typical registered apprenticeship programs, and enable disadvantaged workers to enter the trades.

Supportive Services

Making sure that workers' needs beyond the job site are met is also crucial to allowing new workers to enter and be successful in the trades. Community-trades partners must work to address barriers to entry and to provide supportive services that promote retention when designing CWAs by working with pre-apprenticeship programs or other workforce development intermediaries that provide referrals to or directly provide supportive services.

Accountability Mechanisms

In order for targeted hire goals and other components of CWAs to actually be realized, all stakeholders involved (unions, developers, public agencies, and community organizations) must have clear commitments to the policies and be held accountable to those commitments through accountability mechanisms. These mechanisms may include clearly defined monitoring processes for contractors' targeted hire goals, the creation of oversight committees to track the success of CWA components, individuals or organizations tasked with overseeing implementation of certain provisions, and established penalties for non-compliance or failing to meet job standard requirements.

In addition to expanding upon the key findings listed here, this report presents benefits of CWAs for public agencies, contractors, and developers. The report also includes a list of steps for pursuing CWAs and several case studies of successful CWA policies that have been won through community-trades collaboration across the state. This report is intended to encourage community-trades collaboration and provide groups around the state with concrete best practices that can be used to develop strong partnerships and win CWAs.



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Introduction

Construction jobs are on the rise in California and are expected to grow more quickly than jobs in any other major industry sector in the state by 2024.¹ Construction jobs have the potential to offer family-sustaining wages with lower barriers to entry, making them an important gateway to the middle class for many. Unfortunately, the benefits of construction careers have historically been out of reach for many urban communities of color and low-income individuals. Labor and community groups can work together, however, to ensure that the new wave of construction jobs in California brings sustainable economic prosperity and inclusive social change to local communities.

As construction jobs grow, state investment in “green,” climate-conscious infrastructure is also on the rise.² Policymakers and funders are identifying climate-conscious infrastructure as a crucial area of future investment in order to keep communities safe and economically prosperous. These new funding streams offer California an opportunity to merge environmental, economic, and social equity goals. However, intentional policy mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that all of these goals are considered when implementing projects with new funding.

For many years, a range of community-based organizations (CBOs), including EBASE, have worked in collaboration with local construction and building trades leaders to campaign for policy mechanisms that ensure local development projects provide high quality construction jobs to local residents, with an emphasis on residents from targeted communities that have historically experienced exclusion from the benefits of economic development and careers in construction, such as communities of color and women.^{3, 4} These policies, often called Community Workforce Agreements (CWAs), are legally binding agreements negotiated among public or private construction end-users, local Building Trades Councils, prime contractors, and community organizations. CWAs bring unions, developers, public agencies, and community organizations together to collectively develop the terms of construction projects. Strong CWAs include provisions to ensure both job quality standards (regarding wages, benefits, and scheduling) as well as job access for local residents and targeted communities.

¹ The California Employment Development Department projects that employment in the construction industry will increase by 32.1 percent between 2014 and 2024 (California Employment Development Department 2016).

² California has dedicated substantial resources to cutting carbon emissions and promoting renewable energy through laws such as AB 32, SB 350, and SB 32 (Zabin et al. 2016).

³ See Goldberg and Griffey (2010) for a recent history of Black workers and the trades. See Hegewisch and O’Farell (2015) for information on women and the trades.

⁴ Targeted communities are defined locally and by project and may include individuals with present or historical barriers to employment including racial/ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, formerly incarcerated individuals, etc.

CWAs can be comprehensive tools for building more sustainable cities and communities by creating high quality jobs, promoting racial and gender equity, and merging “green jobs” and “good jobs” projects.⁵ Winning and implementing CWAs, however, can be challenging—collaboration and cooperation between CBOs and unions can be difficult for groups that have never worked together before. Yet collaboration is essential to achieving tangible community benefits from public and private local development projects.

This report synthesizes input from five key BTCs and their CBO partners across California and identifies best practice guidelines for community-trades collaboration in pursuing, winning, and implementing strong CWAs. These best practices are intended to provide construction trades unions and CBOs with tried and tested strategies to working most effectively with one another and to creating CWAs that have positive impacts on inclusion, equity, and economic prosperity. In addition to best practices, this report provides information on key policy components of strong CWAs and provides essential steps for groups interested in pursuing CWAs for the first time. The findings in this report are applicable to all areas of the state and to development projects large and small, but may be particularly helpful to organizations that are considering how to merge climate-conscious infrastructure with inclusive economic development.

“Sometimes the trades have leverage and sometimes they can’t get deals across the finish line without the community’s support. For each project you have to ask, who has the leverage? We all win when PLAs and entrances into career ladders are in place. The reality is that we need each other. We have to keep that long-term view in mind.” – CBO Leader

⁵ For examples of CWAs across the country that have merged “green construction” with job quality and job access programs, see Mulligan-Hansel et al. (2013).

Why Pursue CWAs?

Benefits for Trades

- Bringing CBOs into conversations with developers often increases pressure on developers and policymakers to seriously consider trades unions' policy proposals because developers are interested in fostering positive community relations.
- CBOs can also offer capacity to BTCs in specialized skills such as research, policy development, and community organizing. For example, CBOs can provide labor market research, surveys of workers, or analysis of best practices and policy impacts.
- Working with CBOs helps BTCs recruit new workers. Several CBOs interviewed facilitate community outreach programs to move individuals into the trades who otherwise would not pursue a construction career. CWAs also create mechanisms for funding the workforce pipeline that brings new workers into the trades, particularly workers of color and those who BTCs may not have the capacity to outreach to otherwise.

Benefits for Community

- CWAs create stable and well-paid jobs for local workers, providing them with economic opportunities and allowing them to care for their families.
- CWAs govern hiring practices so that job seekers who have historically been excluded from the construction industry—especially those that are low-income, people of color and women—have institutionalized pathways into the trades. According to one report on Los Angeles for example, after about a decade of CWA implementation by three major city agencies, an average of 30 percent of worker hours went to residents of low-income neighborhoods adjoining major construction project—a significant improvement from previous standards (Mulligan-Hansel, Owens-Wilson, and Beach 2013).
- CBOs offering workforce development services also stand to benefit from CWAs. CWAs often dedicate resources to workforce development programming, in order to help contractors meet targeted and new hire requirements. CBOs offering workforce development services can benefit from increased investment in training services for disadvantaged communities and can strengthen their programming, especially if they are identified as a first source partner within hiring agreements.⁶
- CWAs with public agencies like school boards and cities ensure that public tax dollars invested in development benefit the public by providing career opportunities and training to new workers.

⁶ CWAs can include requirements or give priority for hiring graduates of a certain CBO's programs, making the CBO a "first source" of new hires. These first source provisions are usually based on a history of trust and cooperation between union and community partners (Lujan, Balistreri, and Soggs 2013).

Benefits for Public Agencies

- CWAs are policy tools that public agencies can use to promote workforce development for their constituents, who may include residents, students in a school district, or graduates of a community college.
- CWAs offer public agencies a way of promoting equity and inclusion while also supporting local development and growth. This can be a win-win for public agencies in areas undergoing gentrification by ensuring development opportunities go to existing residents and vulnerable neighborhoods.
- CWAs include commitments from unions to limit labor disruptions, which can make public projects more cost effective and timely.
- CWAs allow public agencies to enforce prevailing wages at low cost and with accuracy because all workers on job sites are organized.
- When public agencies support campaigns for CWAs led by labor and community they can increase political support for projects.

Benefits for Contractors & Developers

- Like other PLAs, CWAs establish standards for wages and working conditions, which level the playing field for all contractors. CWA projects attract responsible contractors to bid because they know that they will not be undercut by competitors that violate prevailing wage.
- CWAs can ensure that construction projects meet deadlines and quality standards because they include commitments from local unions to provide skilled labor to projects in a timely manner and provisions to ban work disruptions (Belman and Bodah 2010).
- CWAs allow small contractors to bid on projects that they otherwise would not be able to because under CWAs small contractors have access to a large pool of skilled workers from the local union hiring hall.
- On projects with multiple contractors, CWA's can help sub-contractors sync up worksite operations, which can increase efficiencies and avoid delays in a project (Mulligan-Hansel, Owens-Wilson, and Beach 2013).
- Supporting CWAs can allow contractors to boost community relations and meet social responsibility goals.

Best Practices for Community/Trades Collaboration

Close communication and collaboration between CBOs and trades unions are essential to ensuring that both community and labor interests are fully represented in CWAs. Collaboration between organizations that vary widely in terms of organizational structure, goals, political stance, and constituents, however, can be challenging. During interviews with BTCs and CBOs across California, leaders identified several key strategies for developing robust community/trades partnerships and coalitions (Appendix 1).

Start collaboration early.

Reaching out to potential partners early can be an important way of building buy-in amongst those involved. Several leaders explained the importance of involving allies during the early stages of developing projects so that all parties can weigh in on issues including policy priorities, strategy, and tactics. Investing into a project in its early stages improves the likelihood of substantive collaboration and can prevent misunderstanding or lack of commitment that can be generated by last-minute requests to support projects.

“We worked with them because we shared a vision for transforming the way that people see the building trades.” – CBO Leader

Choose partners with compatible long-term interests.

Finding and choosing partners that have shared long-term commitments and interests can be a key strategy for organizations that are searching for collaborators. Several BTC leaders agreed that finding CBOs that had clear commitments to the labor movement made collaboration a smoother process because labor-friendly CBOs approached collaborative projects with an accurate understanding of the structure, interests, and communication styles of unions. For CBOs approaching potential union partners, leaders expressed that it is also useful to find partners—whether they be affiliate unions or BTC leaders—that have long-term commitments in common with the CBO’s mission. When partners understand that they are in the long-haul together, it is easier to navigate short-term challenges. For example, finding union locals that hold strong racial justice values was a key strategy for several CBOs interviewed. Finding long-term commitments in common can help also partners strategize on campaigns and projects to take a “lift all boats” approach that brings benefits to all involved.

➤ **Remind partners of long-term goals.**

Taking time to remind members of a group’s long-term goals can be an effective way of finding consensus among different stakeholders. Leaders from several CBOs explained

that in coalition spaces it can sometimes be challenging to overcome differences in coalition members' short-term interests or strategies. Consistently making long-term interests explicit in day-to-day work can help organizations continue working collaboratively towards a common vision.

Communicate about potential tension points on the front end.

In addition to understanding partners' long-term interests and commitments, several leaders stressed that clear communication about potential points of tension on the front end of projects can increase likelihood of successful collaboration.

➤ **Discuss community historical experiences and perceptions of the trades.**

CBOs and trades partners must communicate about historical and current community experiences and perceptions of the trades—especially those that are racialized—in order to work together effectively. The construction trades have a history of excluding people of color and it is critical that CBOs and trades acknowledge these dynamics and work towards inclusive practices. There is evidence from across the state that preexisting community perceptions of the trades have often acted as a barrier to community-trades collaboration and in turn, as a barrier to low-income communities of color having access to high quality construction career pathways. Leaders from CBOs and BTCs around the state agreed that trades leaders should communicate with CBOs and other community groups explicitly about race and inclusion in order to ensure that community historical experiences and perceptions of the trades do not prevent the many positive benefits of CWAs from being realized.

Centering Black Voices

According to leaders in Alameda County, for example, the trades were perceived as exclusionary among communities of color and received criticism from local Black community leaders, until fairly recently. Personal, institutional, and systemic racism acted as a barrier to Black workers' success in the trades. In order to overcome this history and rebuild relationships with the Black community, the Alameda County BTC communicates intentionally with community leaders about race and inclusion. The BTC has centered Black leaders' voices in PLA campaigns and has worked with racial justice-driven CBOs to make sure that construction training and career opportunities are accessible and inviting to Black residents. EBASE, the Alameda County's primary CBO partner, has done Building Trades 101 sessions for community partners in order to improve understanding and perceptions of the trades. Other CBO leaders explained that they have invested in education and outreach to trades members to help members understand intersectional issues like immigrant rights and racial justice, which has helped trades partners support more inclusive CWA language.

➤ **Understand partners’ organizational structure and values.**

Communication that allows partners to develop a nuanced understanding of one another’s organizational structure and values is also helpful to avoiding misunderstanding and conflict throughout collaborative projects. CBOs and trades unions have very different organizational structures in terms of leadership positions, chains of command, and constituents that they are held accountable to. For example, trade union leaders are responsible first and foremost to their members who elected them, while a CBO may be responsible to particular communities, members, or funders. Similarly, trades partners and CBO partners may have different organizational values that impact the way they relate to constituents as well as external stakeholders or targets in campaigns. For example, a BTC may value maintaining positive working relationships with elected officials, while a CBO may be more inclined to push an elected official to adopt a position through confrontation. These differences can make it difficult for CBOs, unions, and their constituents to find common ground when it comes to project strategy. Leaders therefore, emphasized that clear, upfront communication about these differences can mitigate confusion in high-pressure situations in the midst of projects.

Leaders say that investing time and effort in communication can pay off. For example, the San Diego BTC has several CBOs with which they work collaboratively. In order to maintain consistent lines of communication between the trades and community organizations the BTC has hired a Director of Community Engagement. This staff person’s time is dedicated to making and maintaining connections with CBOs and other local groups. Leaders from the region say that dedicating staff capacity to communication with the community has resulted in significant tangible benefits.

“Sometimes community groups don’t understand that we have to be accountable to all the different affiliates and that sometimes we are not all always on the same page.”
– Trades Leader

➤ **Clarify roles regarding decision-making.**

Tensions between trades and community leaders often arise when decision-making roles are not clear. Discussing who will be a part of different decisions and how decisions will get made are important best practices to working collaboratively and creating the best CWA possible. Many decision-making processes occur during a campaign, some of which make sense for the trades to take the lead on, such as negotiations between the trades and contractors regarding technical aspects of the construction process, and some of which should be significantly shaped by community interests, such as the scope of targeted hire

requirements. Decision-making roles should be named explicitly at the start of collaboration so that all parties understand where their leadership is most needed.

➤ **Respect non-negotiable needs.**

Communicating about one another's non-negotiable needs is an essential step for organizations that are as different from one another as unions and community groups. As mentioned, trades and community partners tend to differ in terms of structure, short-term goals, strategies, and values. In partnerships or coalition spaces, therefore, compromise is often necessary in order to find common ground and work together efficiently. However, all organizations have limitations on the extent to which they can or are willing to compromise, beyond which collaboration is not possible. In order to avoid misunderstandings that break apart partnerships, discussing partners' limitations on compromise, or "non-negotiables", is a best practice.

"If the relationship is worth it, invest time in facing conflict and addressing it. Allow each other to have an open disagreement, but keep long-term goals in mind." – CBO leader

➤ **Set realistic expectations.**

Discussing clear and realistic expectations for collaboration, particularly in regards to organizational capacity, is an important step at the start of collaborative work. Due to high turnover at some CBOs, funding limitations, and the cyclical nature of construction, organizations' capacity for investing time in collaborative work can vary. It can also be helpful to discuss realistic goals in terms of policy provisions, to avoid disappointment and ensure that all groups are working towards the same goals. Discussing expectations at the start of collaboration can help all parties get onto the same page and develop winnable goals and strategies together.

Invest in conflict resolution.

For times when partners do experience conflict, leaders at CBOs and BTCs agreed that investing time in conflict resolution is necessary and worthwhile. Several leaders suggested the following practices for conflict resolution:

➤ **Take time to hear all sides.**

During fast-paced campaigns, it can be difficult to pause and work out differences. However, leaders among the trades and in the community who have worked through multiple successful campaigns say that taking the time to hear one another out in order to truly understand where the other side is coming from, is crucial in order to work together effectively.

➤ **Allow space for disagreement.**

As has been mentioned, community and trades organizations often have different values, and may differ in communication styles, culture, and more. During collaborative projects it is very common for organizations to disagree on strategies due to these differences, and it may be tempting to give up on collaboration because of those disagreements. Leaders say that it is important for parties to accept differences in opinion and understand that consensus may not be possible on every issue. Disagreements should be considered and taken seriously, but should not prevent parties from using creative strategies to work together around differences. For example, organizations may disagree on how to approach an elected official about a campaign and decide to take separate paths in that area, but can still work together on developing a training program curriculum.

Leaders pointed out that disagreements can actually be positive and allow for more efficient collaboration. Disagreements in which partners are truly honest allow those involved to better understand one another and potentially to work together more smoothly in the future.

➤ **Keep the long-game in mind.**

Finally, as explained previously, keeping long-term common interests in mind can help partners overcome conflict. CBO and BTC leaders emphasized again and again that the best strategy for collaborative success is for both parties to stay aware of their long-term visions and use these as a roadmap to build consensus.

Key Components of Strong CWAs

In addition to providing best practices for collaboration between partners and coalition members, BTC and CBO leaders discussed key components of strong CWAs. Strong CWAs are distinguished by the extent to which the potential benefits of CWAs are realized, including improved accessibility of construction careers to people of color and other individuals with barriers to employment. While CWAs vary greatly in scope and may include mandatory or simply good faith requirements on contractors, there are several components that leaders across the board agree are important to address. In order for CWA's to substantially turn the dial on inclusion, equity, and sustainable development, leaders agreed that community/labor partners and coalitions must prioritize targeted hire, pre-apprenticeship programs, support service access, and accountability mechanisms. These components, when robust, allow new workers, including women and people of color who may not otherwise have had access to construction careers, to enter the industry and embark on a successful, family-sustaining career.

Targeted Hire

There is consensus, especially among community leaders, that targeted hire provisions that go beyond local hire are essential to meeting CWA inclusion and equity goals. While local hire requires direct hiring of residents of specific local areas, which can include established workers who are already in the industry, targeted hire requires the hiring of workers who are traditionally underrepresented in the construction industry and otherwise unlikely to get into a construction career pathway (Herrera et al. 2014). Populations that may be included in targeted hire provisions include formerly incarcerated individuals, workers with a history of homelessness, veterans and individuals residing in high poverty areas. In California, Proposition 209 bans state governmental institutions from considering race/ethnicity or sex, which prevents CWAs from including race or gender-based targeted hire provisions. However, people of color and women tend to be prominently represented in economic criteria that are common to targeted hire requirements. Some targeted hire provisions also explicitly require new hires and/or apprentices to ensure that new workers are entering the construction industry. For example, the Oakland Maritime and Aviation Project Labor Agreement set a goal that 20 percent of work hours be performed by apprentices and that all of the apprentices should

“We need to move away from just thinking about local hire and move towards targeted hire. A local person may have more privilege than someone who normally wouldn't get an apprenticeship so we need to really focus on entry-level positions and hiring new folks from disadvantaged populations.” – Trades leader

come from a designated local impact area. Implementing targeted hire requirements can be challenging because contractors, community organizations, workforce development providers and apprenticeship coordinators must work together in synchronization (Mulligan-Hansel, Owens-Wilson, and Beach 2013). Evidence suggests, however, that targeted hire programs that are responsive to community interests, have buy-in from public agencies, contractors, and other stakeholders, and that are supported by pre-apprenticeship programs can create robust pathways into the trades for disadvantaged communities (Herrera et al. 2014).

Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

Pre-apprenticeship programs provide preparation and skills-training to individuals who may experience barriers to trades' apprenticeship programs. Pre-apprenticeship programs are essential learning opportunities for many individuals who would not otherwise meet minimum requirements of typical registered apprenticeship programs. In order for targeted hire programs to be successful, there must be robust local pre-apprenticeship programs serving the groups of workers identified in targeted hire policies. BTCs in several regions of California have formed formal partnerships with pre-apprenticeship programs in order to create a reliable pipeline of workers who can benefit from CWAs. For example, in 2014 the San Mateo BTC partnered with the San Mateo Union Community Alliance to create a pre-apprenticeship program called the Trades Introduction Program (TIP) that trains individuals from disadvantaged communities and places them in apprenticeship programs. The TIP is written into CWA language in order to ensure investment in the program and workforce pipeline. Alternatively, some trades host their own pre-apprenticeship programs in-house.

“We’re not just trying to be transactional with one project. We’re working on the overall politics of the city together. And that’s something that develops over time.” – CBO leader

Supportive Services

Low-income individuals often face barriers to job training success and retention due to unmet childcare, transportation, and health care needs (Hess et al. 2016). These support service barriers are important for community-trades collaborators to address. When trainees or new workers do not have reliable access to transportation, child care, housing, or health care, they are likely to be unsuccessful in construction careers. Trades leaders in San Diego, for example, cited low-income workers' lack of reliable transportation as one of the greatest barriers to sustaining employment of disadvantaged communities in the region. In Santa Clara County, the lack of affordable housing often prevents apprentices and workers early in their careers from being able to live in the area. Community-trades partners must work to address support service barriers when designing CWAs. This can be done by working with pre-apprenticeship programs

or other workforce development intermediaries that provide referrals to or directly provide support services. For example, the West Oakland Jobs Resource Center (WOJRC) provides assessment, referral and placement services to individuals who are often hired through CWAs on public construction projects in Oakland. The WOJRC offers financial money management classes, fatherhood support, and other retention services to help new workers' long-term success in the trades.

Accountability Mechanisms

In order for targeted hire goals and other components of CWAs to actually be realized, all stakeholders involved (unions, developers, public agencies, and community organizations) must have clear commitments to the policies and be held accountable to those commitments through accountability mechanisms. Strong CWAs involve moving parts that work together smoothly – including training services, recruitment, and retention services. These moving pieces require all stakeholders to contribute to the success of new workers and construction career pipelines. Strong accountability mechanisms to coordinate stakeholders vary in design, but may include clearly defined monitoring processes for contractors' targeted hire goals, the creation of oversight committees to track the success of CWA components, individuals or organizations tasked with overseeing implementation of certain provisions, and established penalties for non-compliance or failing to meet job standard requirements. For example, the Oakland Army Base 2012 Good Jobs Policy established a Community Jobs Oversight Commission composed of representatives from community organizations, labor, employers, and the City of Oakland and meets monthly to review contractors' targeted hire numbers and troubleshoot issues that arise in the implementation process. CWA accountability mechanisms can also include community organizations signing directly onto cooperation agreements or helping to establish public commissions or enforcement committees. Overall, accountability mechanisms should be crafted in relation to local conditions and in cooperation with all stakeholders involved to be most effective.

“Transportation is the number one barrier for new people staying on a job. We need to think more creatively about how to address this issue.” – Trades leader

Steps to Winning CWAs

While the path to securing CWAs varies based on the particularities of different regions in the state, the following process can be used as a basic roadmap to guide CBOs or trades unions in approaching CWAs.

Identify development projects that are at stake in the community and choose a winnable target.

- Is development planned on public land? There is a strong argument for ensuring that public land is put to use in a way that truly benefits the public as much as possible. CWA campaigns on public projects, therefore, can have strong community support and political leverage.
- Similarly, consider local, regional, state, and federal investment dollars. If public money is being invested into development projects, those projects should feature good, accessible jobs to the public.
- Are there clean energy or other “green infrastructure” projects in the pipeline? Winning CWAs on green infrastructure projects connects the dots between environmental sustainability and good jobs. To build cities and regions that are truly sustainable in terms of environment, economy, and social welfare, connections between these efforts must be made. Public investments into green infrastructure are a key location for winning high-profile CWAs that make progress on building better in all respects.

Use Collaboration Best Practices to secure partners.

- Identify key partner organizations that have long-term interests in common and help lead the project; usually these long-term interests involve commitments to creating good jobs for local residents. Use these common interests to build a shared transformational vision for your community.
- Communicate clearly about potential points of tension before projects get underway. These can include community perceptions of the trades, differences in organizational structure and values, roles in decision-making, non-negotiable needs, and limitations in organizational capacity. One useful strategy to deepen understanding is to host trainings for community members on how the trades work, including what it takes to get into the construction trades and how trades unions operate. Similarly, it can be helpful to host trainings for the trades on issues that are of particular interest to the community, such as immigrant rights.
- Invest in conflict resolution as needed. If conflicts arise be sure to take time to hear all sides out. Accept that disagreements are part of all collaborations and that they can be navigated around, and keep long-term vision of success in mind.

Create a formal partnership and coalition.

- Explicitly agree upon a shared vision and collective long and short-term goals between the primary trades and CBO leaders involved in the project. These goals can include policy language to be included in a CWA, numbers of jobs created, or other indicators of inclusive economic development.
- Reach out to ally organizations that have a clear shared self-interest in the project. Emphasize how participation in the coalition can help them achieve their goals and how participation aligns with their organizational mission and values. Coalitions to win CWAs typically include representatives from the local BTC, leaders of specific building trades union affiliates, community-based organizations and job training providers, civil rights groups, faith leaders, and environmental organizations (Mulligan-Hansel, Owens-Wilson, and Beach 2013).
- Form a set of coalition agreements that clearly state each organization's responsibilities and commitments to the project. Organizations should contribute based on their strengths in order to reach an efficient division of labor.

Strategize together about how to achieve the shared long-term vision.

- Consider adopting a comprehensive campaign approach that uses research, policy advocacy, grassroots organizing, and media, to win the ideal CWA.
- Make sure that all parties have a say in determining strategy. Engage community members and union members to help develop policy priorities and a final CWA agenda. If there are differences in priorities, try to compromise and decide upon some common ground that all groups feel comfortable with.
- Identify allies who will support your campaign and educate them about your policy and plan. These allies can include "political champions," politicians who share your values and interests, as well as other community groups and individuals who may be willing to turn out to actions or sign petitions in support of your policy. Having these allies on your side will be important as your campaign begins and starts to attract attention.

Execute your plan to win.

- Publicly announce your policy proposal and build public support through a media strategy, public actions, and leveraging the support of your allies. For example, ask the political champions you've identified to speak out in strong support of your proposal.
- Meet with partners and communicate regularly while your plan to win is executed. Hold one another accountable to previously agreed upon commitments and responsibilities. If conflicts arise, invest time in working things out.
- As you negotiate with policymakers on final policy components and language, ensure that your coalition or partnerships' long-term vision and values are reflected and protected.

While compromising on some provisions may be necessary, keep the long-game in mind and stay strong on your “non-negotiables.”

- Have both trades and CBO voices represented in policy negotiations to ensure that CWAs fully reflect worker and community interests.

Implement & enforce your policy.

- Once your policy has passed, it is important to lay the groundwork for it to succeed by ensuring that strong accountability mechanisms in place and functional. This may require training community leaders to sit on enforcement bodies and/or partnering with public agencies long-term to ensure compliance, monitoring, and enforcement.

Case Studies

The unique policy contexts, worker demographics, and economic features of different localities affect the way that trades and community groups choose to work together. The following case studies offer three distinct examples of successful projects involving collaboration between trades and community organizations resulting in opportunities for local disadvantaged communities to enter into the construction trades.

Case Study 1: 2012 Oakland Army Base Good Jobs Agreement

In 2012 the Revive Oakland coalition convened by EBASE won a groundbreaking Good Jobs Agreement covering construction and warehousing jobs on a new logistics complex on the former Oakland Army Base adjacent to the Port of Oakland. The policy includes targeted hire requirements of 50% local hire, 20% apprenticeship hire and 25% disadvantaged hire⁷ and requires contractors that fail to meet requirements to pay the City of Oakland liquated damages. The agreement also established the West Oakland Jobs Resource Center as a first source for contractors, which helps them reach their targeted hire requirements. The Good Jobs Agreement led to the establishment of a Community Jobs Oversight Commission to review compliance reports and implement the jobs agreement, made up of representatives from community organizations, labor, employers, and the City of Oakland. Since the beginning of implementation of the Good Jobs Agreement in 2012, contractors have largely been successful in meeting targeted hire requirements. As of November 2017, the most recent reportable month for the first “horizontal” phase of the project, 46.13% of construction hours had been completed by Oakland residents, 21.52% were apprentice hours (totaling 91,425 work hours throughout the project so far), and 69.87% of apprentice hours were disadvantaged worker hours (out of requirements of 50%, 20%, and 25%, respectively. There have been 715 new hires, 259 of which were new hires of Oakland residents. Oakland workers have earned \$11.35 million, which represents 66% of all wages earned. The impressive results of the Good Jobs Agreement have been a result of dedication and synergy between the West Oakland Jobs Resource Center, the trades, the developer and community partners invested in the project.

Final Construction Policies:

http://juliangross.net/docs/CBA/Jobs_Policies.Vertical_Construction.Final.pdf

http://juliangrossconsulting.com/docs/suffolk/Oakland_Army_Base_Construction_Careers_Policy.pdf

Final Operations Policy:

http://juliangross.net/docs/CBA/Jobs_Policies.West_Operations.Final.pdf

⁷ Under the agreement, disadvantaged workers include workers living in three specified zip codes, workers living in the Oakland Enterprise Zone Targeted Employment Area, and Oakland residents, ordered by priority.

Case Study 2: Santa Clara County Trades Orientation Program

Once the construction industry began to recover following the Great Recession, the Santa Clara County BTC and WPUSA identified a need to find new apprenticeship candidates to meet a growing demand for workers. Working together, the trades and WPUSA designed and created a program to find and prepare workers for apprenticeships. WPUSA secured funding, handled administration, and led the creation of the Trades Orientation Program (TOP) with representatives from the trades offering guidance throughout the process through a steering committee. The program piloted in 2014 and has had three classes per year ever since. To reach students, the TOP program works with local community groups and public agencies such as the county office on homelessness to give priority for placement in the program to individuals with barriers to employment. Working together on this program has allowed WPUSA and local apprenticeship programs to create the infrastructure of a robust pipeline for the community into construction careers.

TOP Website:

<http://www.wpusa.org/top/>

Case Study 3: RePower L.A. Coalition Advocacy

RePower L.A. is a community-labor coalition led by the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), IBEW Local 18, and Strategic Concepts for Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE). The coalition formed in 2011 to merge member organization's shared goals of job creation, job access to underserved residents, increasing "green", environmentally sustainable infrastructure in the region, and improving community accountability in the largest municipally-owned utility in the country, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). One outcome of the coalition's advocacy work has been the creation of the Utility Pre-Craft Trainee (UPCT) program—a joint labor-management collaboration between LADWP and IBEW Local 18 that has trained over 200 workers for careers in the LADWP thus far. Over 90 percent of the program's participants have come from zip codes with high unemployment rates and eighty-five percent have been people of color (RePower LA 2017). The coalition's Equity Metrics initiative also tracks and publically releases semi-annual data on how well the Department of Water and Power serves consumers in low-income or underserved communities. The coalition's work has also resulted in increased investment in the department's energy efficiency program, which is projected to reduce Los Angeles' energy consumption by 15 percent while also creating large numbers of "green" jobs. One example of the coalition's work is the Solar Rooftops program which provides customers with fixed payments in exchange for leading their roofs to install solar available to all customers plugged into the grid.

RePower L.A. Website:

<http://www.repowerla.org/>

Looking to the Future

Community Workforce Agreements can have a multitude of positive benefits by leveraging development projects to create accessible and inclusive pathways into family-sustaining careers. CWAs also provide opportunities to merge environmental, economic, and community interests. In order for CWAs to achieve the full potential of positive impacts they offer and truly address locals' needs, community groups and trades unions must be able to shape the policies together. CWA development and the process of actually winning CWAs require equitable and intentional collaboration between CBOs and labor.

That being said, community-trades collaborations often face roadblocks due to differing organizational needs, structures, and constituents. Maintaining positive relationships while doing the work needed to win comprehensive policies can be challenging on both sides. The impressive evidence of the positive impacts of community-trades collaborative projects that exist across California, however, suggests that collaboration is worthwhile and can be done despite the odds.

This report provides best practices for collaboration as well as key policy components of CWAs. It is intended to encourage community/trades collaboration and provide groups around the state by providing concrete best practices that can be used to develop strong partnerships and coalitions and win strong CWAs.

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Appendix 1: Best Practices for Collaboration Flow Chart

Is your organization committed to making jobs better? Do you want to amplify your impact through collaboration?

Start Collaboration Early

Start connecting with partners in the early stages of your project to ensure buy-in. In this phase union leaders should reach out to any CBO leaders they know have relationships with labor or interests in common, such as green energy, economic justice, etc. CBOs should reach out to trades councils and individual affiliates to get to know each entity's interests.

Choose Partners with Compatible Long-Term Interests

Trades and CBO leaders should pick partners with long-term commitments in common so that groups can build a shared transformational vision to work towards. For the trades, choosing CBO partners with long-term connection to the labor movement can help facilitate this process. For CBOs, choosing trades partners that have long-term social impact goals can be helpful. Once projects get underway, be sure to remind one another of long-term goals and vision regularly.

Communicate

Communicating about potential points of tension at the start of collaboration can help avoid misunderstandings later on. The trades should learn about **community perceptions** of the trades from CBOs and build trust with CBOs' constituents. Both groups should also be clear with partners about their **values and organizational structure** to foster understanding within the partnership. For example, CBOs may benefit from learning about unions' leadership and decision-making structure. It is also important to **clarify roles for decision-making** about different aspects of the project. Discussing **non-negotiable** needs is also useful for getting to know one another and laying the groundwork for collaboration. Finally, organizations should communicate about staff capacity in order to set **realistic expectations** for collaboration.

Invest in Conflict Resolution

Take time to hear all sides out. In order for conflicts to be resolved, all parties must feel heard and respected. Allow space for disagreement. CBOs and the trades often have many differences in terms of tactics, values, and constituents. Accept that some disagreements will exist. Finally, keep the long-game in mind. Remind one another of common long-term interests, and it is often possible to reach common ground.

Appendix 2: BTC Interview Questions

Background on BTC

1. What type of projects do you currently have PLAs on? and/or What types of projects have you historically won PLAs on? Are there any PLAs on climate or clean energy infrastructure projects?
2. Do any of the PLAs have targeted hire in them (i.e local hire, DAW hire, apprentice utilization)?

How Relationship Got Started

3. We have identified _____ as a Community Based Organization that you partner with frequently. How did the partnership begin? What was the driving force?
4. Does most of the collaboration happen between the CBO and the Council, or also directly with affiliates? If only with Council, are the affiliates aware of the BTC's partnership with CBOs? Are they supportive, resistant, or something else?

Community Perceptions

5. How do you think CBOs in your community perceive the Building Trades? How about low income communities of color?
6. Are there any ways that your collaboration with CBOs has changed or improved the Trades' relationships with the community, with elected officials, or others?

Types of Collaborations/Partnerships

7. On which campaigns/projects do you have the deepest partnership with _____ (the CBO)?
8. Do you engage with CBOs to provide access to union apprenticeship programs? Do apprenticeship programs have any presence in the community? If so, what does it look like?

Successes and Challenges of Relationship

9. Please share an example of a campaign where you partnered with _____ (the CBO): What was the campaign? Who else was involved? What were you fighting to win? Who were the targets? How did you partner? What was your role? What was the CBO's role? What were the ways you were successful in your partnership? What were the challenges? How did you overcome the challenges?
10. In what ways are the CBO/BTC partnerships successful? What is this success built upon?
11. Specifically, what are the some challenges that come up when working with CBO's?
 - a. What was the main cause of the problem?
 - b. How was it resolved?
 - c. What role did the BTC play in the resolution?
 - d. How was the partnership after the resolution?
 - e. How have you re/built trust in the partnership?

12. How would you like to improve your collaboration with _____ (the CBO)?
13. How does your partnership bounce back from challenges, tensions or divisions? Who are the key players in bridging that divide or healing the wounds? What are the strategies for resilience and continued partnership moving forward?

Value Add to the Movement/Political Landscape

14. How would the PLA and construction trades landscape look different in you didn't partner with _____ (the CBO)?
15. What is one thing you are struggling with or still trying to understand about your partnership with the Trades?
16. What advice would you give a CBO that was starting a partnership with a BTC? What advice would you give other BTCs who are starting to create community partnerships?

National Landscape

17. What is your BTC's response to the new Trump Administration?
18. Does your BTC work to address issues like immigrant rights, misogyny, and racial justice? If so, how?

Appendix 3: CBO Interview Questions

Background on CBO

1. What the mission of your organization? What types of campaigns do you engage in (are they worker Justice/economic justice focused?)
2. What industries/worker populations do you concentrate on? Do you focus on construction careers?
3. What is your organization's history with labor and with the Building Trades specifically?

How Relationship Got Started

4. How did you begin your partnership with the Trades Council? How frequently do you partner with the Trades and/or how deep is your partnership?
5. What types of projects are the PLAs you partner on? Are any of the PLAs on climate and/or clean energy infrastructure?
6. Do you have a relationship directly with the affiliates?

Community Perceptions

7. How are the building trades perceived among low income communities and communities of color that your organization has worked with?

Types of Collaborations/Partnerships

8. On which campaigns do you have the deepest partnership? The most tenuous partnership?

Successes and Challenges of Relationship

9. Please share an example or case study of a campaign where you partnered with the Trades Council: What was the campaign? Who else was involved? What were you fighting to win? Who were the targets? How did you partner? What was your role? What was the BTC's role? What were the ways you were successful in your partnership? What were the challenges? How did you overcome the challenges?
10. Where is it useful to partner with the Trades Council? How has the Council been a constructive and collaborative partner for your work?
11. How do you determine when and how to engage the Trades?
12. How would your organization like to improve its collaboration with the Trades and/or how could the Trades further support your work?
13. How have you built, maintained and rebuilt your trust over the course of your partnership?
14. How does your partnership bounce back from challenges, tensions or divisions? Who are the key players in bridging that divide or healing the wounds? What are the strategies for resilience and continued partnership moving forward?

Value Add to the Movement/Political Landscape

15. How has working together served the work or the movement? In what ways have you been more successful in working together than you would've been otherwise?
16. What is one thing you are struggling with or still trying to understand about your partnership with the Trades?
17. What advice would you give a CBO that was starting a partnership with a BTC? What best practices do you use or suggest?

National Landscape

18. What is your local BTCs response to the new Trump Administration? Do you have a sense about how your BTC is planning to relate to the Administration? What is your local BTC's relationship with the National Building Trades?
19. Does your local BTC work to address issues like immigrant rights, misogyny, and racial justice? If so, how?