

WORKING PARTNERSHIPS USA

June 2, 2020

Re: Item #15 – Agenda Items Requested by City Councilmembers – Community Workforce Agreement

Dear Mayor Tran and City Councilmembers,

On behalf of Working Partnerships USA, I am writing to offer our strong support for the Council's consideration of a Community Workforce Agreement policy to ensure safe and healthy worksites on public works projects and expand the pipeline to local construction careers for public works projects.

Community Workforce Agreements are a critical step towards tackling one of the biggest challenges facing our communities: access to good, middle-wage jobs that provide a pathway out of poverty to a lifelong career where you can provide for yourself and your family.

Construction apprenticeship jobs offer that pathway. State-registered apprenticeship is an amazing opportunity to earn while you learn, to get a living wage, benefits, and regular pay increases, all while learning a skill as part of a State-recognized post-secondary education.

But first you have to get a foot in the door. For on-the-job training to work, there need to be jobs -- and employers willing to train.

That's where Community Workforce Agreements (CWAs) are needed. Through apprentice ratios and targeted hiring provisions, CWAs can create a direct pipeline for disadvantaged or under-represented community members – such as veterans, former foster youth, low-income parents and others -- to get onto that first rung.

The County of Santa Clara and the City of San Jose have already adopted CWA policies. VTA and the Water District are in the process of doing the same. Milpitas Unified and many other school and community college districts in the region have similar policies in place for their projects.

CWAs do more than just improve your project delivery – with this new generation of policies, we have the opportunity to create a regional network of aligned pathways from high school, community college, or adult education into a construction career pathway so more of our young people can enter a lifelong, family-supporting, skilled construction career.

Expanding these pipelines brings the added long-term benefit of growing our local skilled construction workforce, which will be necessary if we are to avoid future labor shortages in construction.

I urge the City Council to move forward with this policy.

Sincerely,



Louise Auerhahn
Director of Economic and Workforce Policy
Working Partnerships USA