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# Finishing the Job: A Partnership for Diversity in the Construction Workforce

Susan Moir

*University of Massachusetts Boston, susan.moir@umb.edu*

Liz Skidmore

*New England Regional Council of Carpenters*


Janet Jones

*Dorchester Roxbury Labor Committee*

Brian Doherty

*Boston Building Trades Council*

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# Finishing the Job: a partnership for diversity in the construction workforce



The Policy Group on Tradeswomen Issues (PGTI) co-convened by Susan Moir, UMass Boston Labor Resource Center; Liz Skidmore, New England Regional Council of Carpenters; Janet Jones, Dorchester Roxbury Labor Committee; Brian Doherty, Boston Building Trades Council's Building Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship Program

## Summary

The Policy Group on Tradeswomen's Issues (PGTI) is a regional collaboration of construction industry stakeholders working together since 2008 to tackle the persistent failure of policies enacted to open up good paying jobs in the construction trades to women. Our focus on women explicitly supports efforts to increase all forms of diversity in the construction industry. Following the publication of our 2011 founding document, *Unfinished Business: Building Equality for Women in the Construction Trades*, PGTI has focused on the development and implementation of best practices for a diverse construction workforce in public and non-profit construction.

## Goals and Objectives

**OUR GOAL:** To overcome decades of policy failure and open up access for women and people of color to good paying careers in the construction trades.

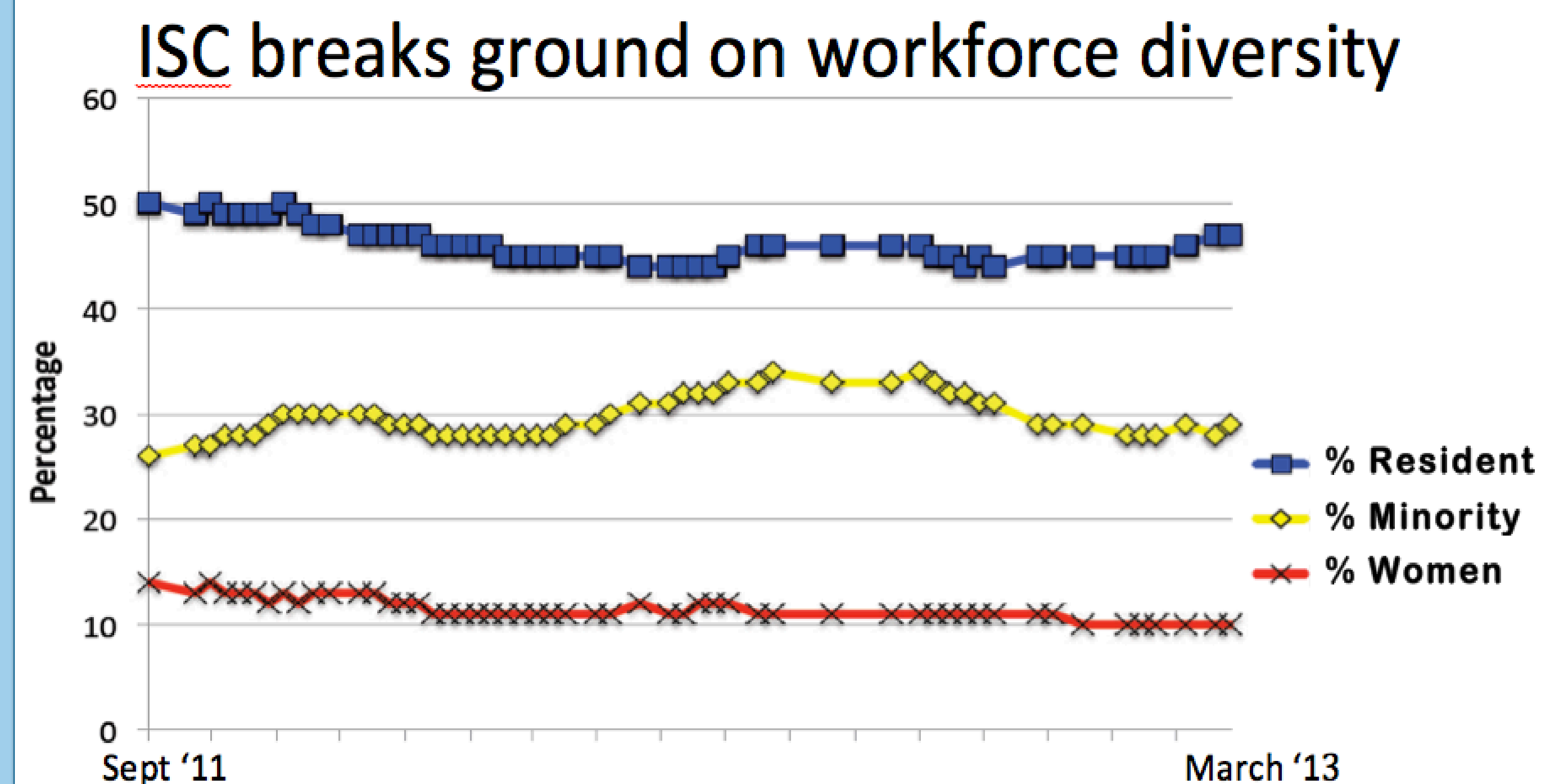
### OBJECTIVES:

- Implement workforce targets, including the Boston Resident Jobs Policy of 50% resident, 25% minority and 10% women hours, on construction sites across Greater Boston.
- Create pathways from apprenticeship through journey level for women and people of color to enter and succeed in the industry.
- Develop retention strategies to keep women and people of color in the industry.

[www.policygroupontradeswomen.org](http://www.policygroupontradeswomen.org)

PGTI is funded in part by the UMass President's Office's Future of Work Research Initiative.

## Results



Working with the Division of Capital Asset Management's Access and Opportunity Committee, PGTI has been instrumental in making UMass Boston's Integrated Sciences Complex (ISC), the most diverse public construction project in Massachusetts history.

## Research Methods

PGTI is a **Research Circle** where practitioners and researchers meet to study a persistent social problem. Using this action research method, circle members share knowledge and increase their collective competence and capacity to overcome intransient injustices and inequities. The research circle method was used previously by Moir et al in a study of the health and safety concerns of tradeswomen.

## References

Moir, Thompson and Kelleher (2011) *UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Building Equality for Women in the Construction Trades*, scholarworks.umb.edu/lrc\_pubs/5/

Moir and Azaroff (2007) "The Boston-Area Research Circle on Health and Safety for Women in Construction," *New Solutions* 17(1-2).

## Next Steps

Broad regional dissemination and evaluation through partner organizations of PGTI's recommendations for best practices.

### FINISHING THE JOB

*Best Practices for a Diverse Workforce in the Construction Industry: A How To Manual for Construction Owners, Developers, Managers, Contractors, Subcontractors, Building Trade Unions, and Community Based Organizations*

## Community Partners

Organizations represented in PGTI include:

- US DOL's Regional Offices of Apprenticeship and the Women's Bureau
- City of Boston Mayor's Office, Boston Residents Jobs Policy Office, Boston Housing Authority and City Councilors Ayanna Presley and Mike Ross
- State Division of Capital Asset Management, UMass Building Authority and the Mass State Apprenticeship Council
- Boston Workers' Alliance, Sisters@Work and the Mass Trades Women's Association
- The Construction Institute, regional building trades unions and construction contractors

Sheetmetal Worker and Building Pathways graduate Melissa Moran works on the ISC (photo by Harry Brett).

