



DATE: September 20, 2021

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

FROM: Jeremy Barksdale
Councilmember

SUBJECT: Interest in Apprenticeship Utilization Policy and Program

Ask of Staff

I intend to ask staff, within my eight hours per Council's eight-hour rule, to research the value of requiring apprenticeship utilization in City projects and contracts. Before I do that, I am interested to learn what questions other Councilmembers may have on this topic they would like me to consider as part of the research. Therefore, I will ask for input from Councilmembers during the meeting under "Council Business".

Introduction

As the largest city on the Eastside, and one of the fastest growing cities in Washington, there is an increasing need for projects that require skilled labor to build and maintain structures and infrastructure in the City. This creates opportunities for members of our community to learn the skilled trades and gain the necessary experience via apprenticeships that can help them earn a family wage, achieve economic mobility, and thrive. Furthermore, it creates workforce development opportunities in our community – aligning with Council's priority of achieving human potential.

Background

Apprenticeships are required for people entering the skilled trades learning how to do the work required to make infrastructure in our community a reality (e.g., carpentry, plumbing, electrical, masonry, painting, and more). There is a strong demand for skilled labor as well as a growing challenge with finding skilled workers and retaining skilled workers who are aging out of the trades.

Organizations, such as the Construction Industry Training Council of Washington (located in Bellevue) and Unions (e.g., LiUNA), are working with local school districts to create more opportunities for students interested in the skilled trades and increase the pipeline into the skilled trades via pre-apprenticeship programs.

State representatives and other local elected officials have recognized the value that apprenticeships have in building up the skills of our region's future workforce (e.g., House Bill 1849, King County, Shoreline). With discussions happening around increased funding at the state and federal level for infrastructure projects, the need for a skilled trained workforce is of growing importance to ensure timely completion of future projects. Regional funding authorities, such as PSRC, are also considering requiring apprenticeship utilization as part of their project submittal process.

Current Situation

Currently, Bellevue does not have an apprenticeship utilization policy, but there are contracts that could have utilized apprentices. In 2020, there were 17 projects bid and awarded. Six of the 17 were larger than \$1M--a threshold commonly used to determine which projects require apprenticeships. One of the 6 was the Mountains to Sound project, which was the only project that had apprenticeship workforce hours attached to it.

Costs and Benefits

An apprenticeship utilization program, as with most things, has a cost. It:

- Requires additional language in Request for Proposals (RFPs) regarding Apprenticeship Utilization Requirement (AUR);
- Requires tracking to ensure contractor compliance; and
- Requires developing an accountability structure for contractors who don't comply.

However, it also has its benefits. It:

- Helps community members earn income earlier in their career and provide opportunities they might not otherwise receive;
- Enables Bellevue residents (esp. youth) interested in the skilled trades an opportunity to work close to where they live and stay in Bellevue;
- Helps ensure a dedicated portion of covered projects are training the next generation of skilled workers;
- Helps meet the anticipated need for apprenticeships in response to a growing pipeline from pre-apprenticeships;
- Puts more people to work in the construction trades to maintain a skilled workforce available to construct public works.

Thanks for your consideration.