Celebrating Solutions Award
Nomination Form

Legal name of organization  Women in Construction Training Program
Program nominated for award (if different) same
Address  114 N First Avenue West
City/State/ZIP code Duluth, MN 55802
Contact Person  Michelle LeReau
Title  Project Coordinator
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Description of organization

Women in Construction Training Program (WiCC) is a non-profit organization that provides training and employment to women who want to learn construction skills and enter jobs that pay living wages plus benefits. WiCC works primarily with women, who are low-income and coming from battered women's shelters, transitional housing programs and homeless programs. The goal of the project is to provide on-the-job training in construction skills, assist women with finding employment in construction and building affordable housing with and for low-income women. A subsidiary program of WiCC is a non-profit General Contracting Company (Women in Construction Co. LLC) who is licensed and insured and hires women from the training program, the company currently has 70% of its crews made up of women that came through the training program.

Geographical area served  Duluth MN and surrounding counties in Northern Minnesota
Is the organization tax-exempt under IRS 501 (c) (3) guidelines? X yes ___ no
If no, is your organization a public agency/unit of government? ___ yes ___ no
Signature of contact person  

Date  9-9-04
1. **Describe the mission of your organization in five sentences or less.**
   The primary mission is to provide training and employment opportunities in the construction trades to low-income women who want to become economically self-sufficient; to work on economic justice issues and create change in current policy and practice related to women in non-traditional careers; and to build affordable housing options with and for low-income women and their families.

2. **Describe the most innovative aspects of the program you are submitting for consideration.**
   The Women in Construction Training Program and subsidiary Women in Construction Company is a grass-roots economic development program that has opened the doors for low-income women to gain access to jobs in non-traditional careers, the program challenges the barriers that women find when trying to break into the construction industry, and it provides low-income women the opportunity to train on-the-job and receive living-wages during their training. The project not only provides training and jobs but also works with other non-profit housing developers to build affordable housing options with crews from the training project. Women with no construction skills or background work on construction sites that provide training opportunities in all aspects of construction and quickly gain marketable skills that lead to jobs that pay living wages with good benefits. Women learn from other women in a supportive work environment and part of the training includes learning how to deal with harassment, sexism, racism and other forms of barriers that exist in traditional construction apprenticeship programs and in the construction industry. Women are specifically recruited into the WICTP from shelters, transitional housing programs, workforce centers and other programs that work with low-income women, battered women, and women who are homeless. This program is the only one of its kind in the United States and the only other one that we know of that is similar is in South Africa. Nationally less than 3% of all construction jobs are held by women in, WiCC over 70% of our crews are women, over 90% of the crews are low-income at entry, and 50% of the crews are women of color. Over the past three years crews have renovated 48 units of affordable housing, including shelters and transitional housing programs, and built 3 units of affordable housing that was then sold to low-to-moderate income families. A high percentage of the women in the program are battered women, the program coordinator is a formerly battered woman who in 1976 was a founding member of the first battered women’s shelter in Duluth, in 1988 assisted in the development of Women’s Transitional Housing Coalition, Inc.

3. **Describe your program’s implementation. What barriers did your organization have to overcome? How did you marshal the necessary resources for implementation?**
   The WICTP was developed by Women’s Transitional Housing Coalition, Inc. (WTHC) a non-profit organization that since 1988 has developed 53 units of affordable housing and provides supportive services to families living in its transitional and supportive permanent housing programs. Most of the women coming into the transitional housing program come from battered women’s
shelters and homeless programs and a large percentage of the women do not have marketable skills. The only jobs that women could get were service-industry jobs that paid minimum wages with no benefits. As a women-run organization part of the mission was to develop affordable housing for and with low-income women and since there weren't any women construction companies or women working in existing companies, in 2000, WTHC decided to develop a program that would train women in construction skills and assist them in finding jobs in construction trades. The organization set up the training program and over 25 women applied to enter the program, as women developed skills and began looking for jobs in the community they came up against resistance from the male-dominated trades. Women were unable to obtain work or even enter apprenticeship programs, they were told that they needed more experience to enter apprenticeship positions and when they went to apply for construction jobs they were told that the companies “weren’t hiring secretaries” or “didn’t have jobs available” most women were not even given applications and those that were and turned them back in were not called for interviews. WTHC was in the process of renovating 35 units of its housing and decided to hire the women in the training program to do the work, after the successful completion of the renovation the training program decided to form a general contracting company that would hire women in the training program and work on renovation and new construction projects. The training program coordinator got her general contractors license and in 2002 the Women in Construction Company LLC (WiCC) was formed. This year the training program and construction company have become separate non-profits while continuing their partnership.

The main barriers our organization has had to deal with are sexist, racist and homophobic attitudes and beliefs held by the men in construction industry, trying to be competitive for jobs when most companies have highly skilled workers with many years experience; and trying to advocate for the women on the crews who are still facing issues of violence, poverty, lack of affordable childcare, transportation and housing which can make working consistently more difficult.

The women responsible for developing this project have 25 years of experience in non-profit development, backgrounds in social change and grass roots organizing, and experience in housing development and construction. These experiences and connections within the women’s community and the larger community were instrumental in the development of this project. A study done in 1996 by a local women’s group about women in local trades gave us the information we needed to show a need for a project like this; a development grant came from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation who had funded the study previously and was anxious to see the study utilized in economic development; the non-profit housing development community provided various projects for crews to work on in order to gain experience; local shelters, transitional housing programs, and workforce development centers, all provided referrals and worked with women entering the program to ensure their success. Funding came from local, state and some federal sources and eventually when the business began generating income, this was put
back in to support the project. Construction trainers came from a variety of
sources including a local community college construction program, women-
friendly construction companies that had worked with the organization over the
years, recruiting women carpenters from networking in other cities around the
state. The training project was a grass roots effort by women who believed that
battered women, homeless and low-income women’s lives will change only when
they have concrete options that include affordable housing and living-wage jobs
with benefits.

4. How do you know your program works? Please site two examples.
The program works because it gives women real options for learning skills that
are empowering as well as providing a means to be economically independent.
Two examples of how this program works are:
Anna is a 22 year old woman whose mother died as a result of domestic violence;
Anna had dropped out of high school and was unemployed and living in
transitional housing. She started with the WICTP at age 18 and wasn’t sure what
she wanted to do with her life but had seen her male friends get good-paying
summer jobs in construction and wanted that same opportunity. The first year was
a struggle but it soon became clear that this was something Anna wanted to do
and was good at, she learned to install ceramic tile and that became her specialty.
In the second year on the job, Anna and several other younger crew members
decided to start a project that was geared specifically towards girls and young
women, this project is called “Home Girls” and it reaches out in the community to
teach girls about construction as a possible career choice. Anna wrote grants to
get the project funded and is now the full-time Home Girls Coordinator. Anna’s
experience with the project gave her the opportunity to see herself as a leader and
to define for herself who she would be and what she would do with her life.
Deb is a 24 year old mother with 3 young children who left an abusive
relationship in 2002 and entered a battered women’s shelter and later lived in
transitional housing. She started the WICTP because she wanted to learn a skill
that would pay wages that would support her family, during her first year she
worked on building a duplex learning all aspects of new construction, ½ into the
year she left due to pregnancy, however during the time she was gone she decided
that after the baby was born she would come back and stay until she was fully
trained and could work in construction full-time. She stated that the project made
her aware that she wanted something more for her life and that she loved learning
skills and wanted to earn enough money to get off “the system”. Deb is currently
working on restoring a triplex which will provide three affordable permanent unit
of housing for women leaving transitional housing. Both women had traumatic
experiences from the violence in their lives and through this project have gained
confidence in their abilities, become leaders in the organization, and have
dramatically increased their annual income.

5. Who are your key partners? What are their roles?
Women’s Transitional Housing Coalition, Inc. is our primary partner – they raise
funds and develop affordable housing options and hire the Women in
Construction Company & Training Program to do all the construction work
WTHC has renovated 40 units of housing and built 2 units of housing in the past
two years with Women in Construction. It is through the support of WTHC that
this project exists today.
The Duluth Workforce Center is another key partner who provides wages to low-
income women during their on-the-job training with WICTP. This partnership
has given women who are mandated to fulfill MFIP work requirements the
opportunity to work where they can earn a decent wage while learning a
marketable skill.

5. Could/should your program be replicated in other areas of the country?
   Why?
Yes, this program can be replicated in other areas of the country and should be,
because it provides real solutions to the economic hardship that many battered
women face when looking at leaving a violent relationship, especially if they are
financially dependent on the abuser and if they cannot support themselves and
their children on their own. We know that many battered women return to
abusive relationships because they cannot afford to live on their own, they do not
have marketable skills, and often they cannot afford to go to school and learn a
new skill. Since the construction industry in many areas is growing and statistics
show that the current workforce is aging and male dominated, and since there are
federal and state requirements to increase the number of women in the
construction trades and since construction jobs pay good wages with benefits, this
is a good career for many women to pursue. Since this project started we have
received hundreds of requests across the country from individuals and agencies
who would like to have a project like this in their area. It is our belief that it is
one very concrete way that battered women can be assisted in making changes
that will lead to economic self-determination.
March 1, 2005

Marcia Roth
The Mary Bryon Foundation
10401 Linn Station Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40223

Dear Ms. Roth,

We are very excited to be chosen to advance to the next round of judging, it is an honor to be considered for such an inspiring award. The following are answers to the questions I received along with the attachments that were also requested.

1) Submit three letters of support which illustrate why the applicant or nominee is deserving of the award. Three letters of support are attached: City of Duluth – Workforce Development (partnering organization), Women’s Transitional Housing Coalition, Inc. (victim organization), and Duluth Local Initiative Support Corporation (funding source).

2) Submit proof of 501 (c) 3 status. Currently the Women in Construction Training Program is incorporated as a non-profit with the state of Minnesota, we have submitted our 501 c 3 application to the IRS and we should have our 501 (c) 3 status in the next few weeks. In the meantime, Women’s Transitional Housing Coalition, Inc. is acting as our fiscal agent and I have attached a copy of their 501 (c) 3.

3) Submit last years budget for the program to be served by the award. Last years training program budget is attached.

4) Respond to the following questions:
   a) What is the approximate number of individuals served annually by the applicant? We serve approximately 14 new participants each year through the intensive on-the-job training program. In addition, we have 6-8 participants from previous years, who are now employed in our construction company but are still “in training”.

   b) Are there past awards, accolades, and grants furnished upon the applicant that would further exemplify its success in combating domestic violence? The Women in Construction Training Program has received two awards in conjunction with our partnering agency: Women’s Transitional Housing Coalition, Inc. The awards are from: the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty Star Award, and the Metlife Foundation Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing. Also attached is an article about the Women in Construction Training Program featured in Shelterforce, a national journal focusing on affordable housing and community building. The article is entitled: “Women at Work, An Economic Justice Story”.


c) How will the agency use the Celebrating Solutions Award funding? The Celebrating Solutions Award funding would be used to set up a revolving loan fund specifically for battered women who enter the training program. The fund would assist women with purchasing the necessary tools and work clothes that are needed to work on construction sites. Funds would also be available to help with transportation expenses (driver’s license, car insurance & maintenance) and an emergency fund that could help with financial crisis situations that may prevent a woman from being able to participate in the program. The loan would be at 0% interest with no payments while in training, once they have a job they would pay back into the loan fund (weekly or monthly payments), which would provide an ongoing source of funds for new women coming into the program.

5) Additional questions:

1. How long has your program been in existence? The Women in Construction Training Program was formed in 2000 and its subsidiary construction company was formed in 2002.

2. Are participants guaranteed employment upon completion of the program? If not, what percentages of the participants have been hired into construction jobs? Have you experienced difficulty in securing sufficient number of jobs for the numbers of your participants? Participants are guaranteed jobs in construction if they successfully complete the six-month training program; the majority of women are placed in paid positions within the subsidiary Women in Construction Company where additional more intensive on-the-job training continues. In the six-months prior to being hired into the company, women are assessed for skills and abilities within the entire construction industry so that they may be placed in jobs that most suit their potential and personal career goals. Some women end up working in general carpentry, while others specialize in tile-setting, cabinet-shop, drywall, painting, design or other construction-related jobs. If women choose to find jobs outside of our company, the training program staff assists women in finding and applying for these positions. The WICTP also works with other companies and trade unions so that women can be placed in jobs outside of our company. Recently a local plumber called to notify us that he would soon be looking for an apprentice and wanted to know if any of the training participants were interested in that position; MN Power, a local utility company called asking if women wanted to be trained in performing energy audits for the company (four women are now trained auditors and perform all audits for the company). We provide technical assistance to participants in starting their own businesses and in this last year two women got their Contractor’s Licenses; one woman started her own store; and two women are in the process of starting a furniture refinishing business. We also work with local secondary educational programs so that if women want to move into a trade that requires a specific education (electrical, drafling/design, plumbing, welding, etc.) we
will assist them in securing financial aid, filling out and applying to the schools and helping them in any way possible to get into the trade program. We collaborated with a local funder, who agreed to provide scholarships to help low-income women get into these programs. As more and more women apply to the WICTP (in the last six months we have had 35 applications from women and men who want to enter our program) we will have to work harder to secure jobs outside of our company. Through partnerships and working with other companies we are developing a network of contacts to assist people with finding the jobs they want. Of course, there are a number of women who do not make it through the training program, or complete the training program but then don’t last long-term in the company. The main reasons for people not being successful are due to alcohol/drug problems, health issues, and family crisis that make them miss work. Our program is designed to assist people in dealing with personal issues that might interfere with being able to get and keep a job long-term: we offer women emotional and financial support, information and referral, and time to work on any crisis that might arise without losing their place in the training program. Over the last two years, for example, three women who had completed the training program became pregnant and had to leave and have their babies; since they couldn’t work in construction after a certain point in their pregnancy, they took a leave from the training program with a promise that they could return when they were ready. All three women returned after a six month leave from the program and two of the women are now employed in the company.

3. What percentage of participants are considered victims of domestic violence? 72% of the participants since 2000 have been victims of domestic violence. Besides adult women who have been battered by their partners we also have many young women who were victims of childhood violence and who also witnessed their mothers being battered. The majority of referral to our program comes from shelters and transitional housing programs and most of the women who come into the program have issues related to violence such as poverty and homelessness.

4. Does the program provide housing, child care, or any other assistance to participants while they are in the program? The WICTP works closely with other providers in the community to assist women with issues like housing, child care, transportation, money management, and emergency assistance. WICTP partners with area transitional housing programs, nonprofit permanent housing providers, workforce centers, clothing exchange, and social services. When women enter the program they meet with the training coordinator to go over what assistance is needed on a personal level to help stabilize their lives so that they can fully participate in the program and are ready for full-time employment. If a new crisis arises, staff assists women with identifying resources in the community that can meet their needs. One great aspect of this program is the partnerships we have formed with local housing providers and developers. It is not
unusual to have a program participant who works on a housing project either renovating an affordable housing unit (apartment) or building a new home, later have the opportunity to live in the housing. Over the last three years we have renovated over 40 units of affordable housing for Women’s Transitional Housing and American Indian Community Housing Organization, and built four new units of affordable housing with Northern Communities Land Trust. Recently we were able to obtain a grant to build four units of employer assisted housing, these condominiums will be built by women who will later purchase them, next year we intend to build 3 homes that will be purchased by women in our company.

5. You mention program barriers such as sexist, racist, and homophobic attitudes held by men in the construction industry. How does your program address this issue? We address these issues on a multi-level approach: first, included in the training that participants go through in the first six months is information and workshops on “issues of oppression” and “barriers found within non-traditional trades” we bring in speakers and women attend workshops where we explore as a group the institutional barriers presented when women, people of color and gay/lesbians enter the world of construction which is predominantly white and male. We not only provide extensive historical information but we also talk about what we can do to change these attitudes and behaviors. We talk about being a team and addressing sexist, racist and homophobic comments and behaviors together rather than expecting individuals to have to face it alone. We take real day to day examples and role play positive ways to deal with comments and attitudes. Everyone in our training program and company are expected to attend trainings so that we all confront our own attitudes and beliefs and work together to create and maintain a work environment that is open and respectful. The second thing we do is outreach: through workshops, an annual Expo, speaking engagements, working in the schools, and the information we produce (website, brochures, fact sheets, etc.) we are always educating others about the barriers that exist in the construction industry. The fact that in the trades, less than 3% of the jobs are held by women is indicative of a system that does not create equal opportunities for women. Locally, less than 1% of construction jobs are held by women and it is even worse for people of color. We collect data from women who have worked in the trades locally and most women who leave these jobs have done so because of harassment, sometimes including threats of violence. We work with local construction companies and trades to provide education about these issues, we offer support to women who work in other companies and we network with other agencies that assist women in entering "non-traditional" careers. As part of our local and regional work to try to address and change attitudes about women working in construction, we have panels where WICTP participants will talk about their experiences; we have presented at state-wide conferences and also have done
workshops in Chicago and Colorado on creating economic opportunities for battered women.

6. *Can you provide any examples of a program participant who has achieved long-term employment and financial independence.* There are quite a few women who have achieved long-term employment and financial independence through the support of this program. The following women have all been victims of domestic violence prior to entering the program: “Anna” started with the program at age 18; she was living in a transitional housing program and had only a high school education. She started working in construction, soon became an expert tile-setter and then began taking on more and more leadership within the construction company. She developed a program geared to educating girls about careers in construction; she developed a speaker’s bureau and a construction summer-day camp for girls. When she entered the program she did not have any income or any marketable skills, she now makes $13 per hour with full benefits. She worked with three other women to secure financing to build condominiums (funded through MN Housing Finance Agency) and this summer the Women in Construction Company will build four condominiums, one unit Anna will buy and move into in February of 2006. “Molly” (35 years old), entered the training program in 2000 and was hired into the company in 2001, after working for two years with WiCC, she now has a full-time job with benefits working with a local “deconstruction & salvage” company. Molly entered our program while living in a transitional housing program; she was in recovery for drug addiction, a single mother of three, whose children, had been placed in foster care due to the violence. Her family is now reunited and she has permanent long-term housing. “Elsie” (50 years old), entered the training program in 2003 through the Duluth Workforce Center, she was homeless and had two teen-age daughters living with her and besides having a long history of chronic alcoholism she did not have any marketable skills. After completing the training program she was hired in WiCC and works full-time earning $12 per hour and is in the process of buying a house. During this time she also has maintained sobriety, got her driver’s license restored and bought a car, and has been the mainstay of her large extended family.

7. *Has your program collaborated with any organized labor groups?* We do meet with organized labor groups to discuss ways to get women into the trades; we also sponsor an annual Woman in Construction Expo which the trades have participated in. This year through a grant from the Knight Foundation, we will be working more specifically on: collecting data from construction companies on how to increase the number of women in the trades; developing media materials to promote women in construction and we will be working with organized labor on getting unskilled women into pre-apprentice and apprentice program. Duluth recently received a Hope VI grant from HUD to develop 500 new units of housing over the next five years, we have been working with organized labor and the Duluth
HRA (the developer/owner) to ensure opportunities for women in this large scale development.

I look forward to hearing from you; please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Michelle LeBeau, Executive Director
February 7, 2005

Dear Mary Byron Foundation Celebrating Solutions Award Committee:

I write at the request of one of my most valued partners, Women in Construction, in hopes of helping them to secure funding to continue their vital work. Giving women the skills, confidence and hope of competing successfully for living wage jobs is the single most important key in reducing poverty, eliminating violence against women and children, and changing the culture of poverty and dependence that has plagued this nation for far too long.

Teaching women the skills to work in a traditionally male dominated field such as construction seems to have a very desirable side effect on the participants that goes even beyond my program’s main goal of making these women economically self-sufficient. Women learn to develop working relationships rather than dependency relationships with men. They learn not only the skills of the trades but also how to earn the respect of other workers even as they learn to give respect where it is due to others. These are significant defenses against abusers and skills which are not so readily taught in class rooms or the break rooms of telemarketing companies or nursing homes. I don’t mean to disparage any form of honest work, but the sort of work Women in Construction prepares its trainees for makes a huge difference in the lives and life styles of successful participants. It may be hard to track, but there are beneficial outcomes generated by this program that go way beyond the placement, retention, and hourly wage gain rates upon which programs such as I operate live and die.

Women in Construction has developed into a vital part of what I do to better the community and the lives of individuals living in the community. Women in Construction as an organization continues to be willing to work within the rules and goals of our programs. Their efforts towards continuous improvement and their willingness to work with the barriers and baggage that women bring with them into the program are commendable and vital to our mission.

It is without reservation that I support Women in Construction in their efforts to secure funding to continue their work in our community.

Sincerely,

Peter Schwartz, Job Developer
February 21, 2005

Mary Bryon Foundation
10401 Linn Station Road
Louisville, KY 40223

Dear Celebrating Solutions Award Committee:

We are writing in support of the Women in Construction Training Program’s application for a Celebrating Solutions Award for their work in creating living-wage jobs for battered women.

Women’s Transitional Housing Coalition, Inc. (WTHC) is a 501c (3) non-profit located in Duluth Minnesota. Started in 1986, WTHC was developed by a group of women who worked at the battered women’s shelter in Duluth. These women realized that in order to truly assist women in safely leaving battering partners there must be affordable housing options for women and their children. After conducting an extensive needs assessment with battered women, WTHC purchased and rehabbed 21 units of housing, creating the first transitional housing program in the area. WTHC provides women and children with safe, affordable housing and offers a variety of support services. In 2000, WTHC staff worked closely with the WICTP to develop this new innovative construction training program. The purpose of the project was provide training to women living in shelters and transitional housing programs in a wide range of construction skills that would lead to high-paying jobs in the construction industry, thereby creating ways for battered women to become financially independent and free from violent relationships.

WTHC believes that economic independence is an integral part of successfully serving battered women. In an assessment done the State of Minnesota in 2002, more than 90% of the women living in WTHC programs had been victims of domestic violence. In 2004 over 50% of the women coming into WTHC came directly from a battered women’s shelter. A majority of women we serve have only a high school education or GED and very few have marketable job skills. Many suffer from post traumatic stress disorder and often have a “spotty” work history due to the violence they have suffered. In order to overcome these barriers and give women a real chance at gaining economic independence they need to have an opportunity to learn a livable wage job skill in an environment which is flexible and supportive.

In Duluth, the Women in Construction Training Program offers one of the only real solutions to these problems. While other employment training programs exist they are focused on jobs in the food service industry and nursing assistance programs, neither of which pay livable wages. The WICTP provides a unique environment where women can...
learn a marketable trade, undergo leadership training, and work with women who have had some of the same life experiences. In addition, the program was developed by a formerly battered woman, who understands the need for a supportive, empowering training environment that addresses the real barriers battered women face on a day-to-day basis. The program is based on the belief that affordable housing, good paying jobs and assistance with transportation and childcare are critical components in creating real solutions to ending domestic violence.

WTHC staff has witnessed first hand, the unique impact that WITCP has on battered women who participate in the training program. Watching the evolution of women who are in our programs when they enter the WITCP has been truly inspiring. One of the first projects the WITCP did was removing and putting a new roof on one of our Transitional Housing buildings. At that time there were 5 women who had recently come out of violent relationships in the WITCP. These were women that the system had truly failed, most had large families they were raising alone and none had ever attempted any construction before entering the program. These women strapped on tool belts, spent 90-degree, 8- hour days on a hot tar roof and went home at the end of the day exhausted but proud of the work they were accomplishing. Each day we saw their confidence grow as they gained new skills and learned to work together as a team, by the end of the job, all the women were committed to the training project. Every one of these women (even though not all remain in construction) is still free from their violent relationships. For many of them it’s the first time in their lives they have been treated with respect and given the opportunity to take on roles of leadership.

As an agency that not only works with, houses and advocates for battered women we truly believe in the WITCP. We often refer women to the WITCP even if construction is not their long term career goal. The confidence and sense of self-sufficiency that they gain from this program is more powerful than anything more traditional services can provide. We strongly support this program and hope that they are honored with this award and that other programs around the country will be given the opportunity to learn about and perhaps replicate this program.

Sincerely,

Deyona Kirk
Co-director
Women’s Transitional Housing Coalition, Inc.
March 3, 2005

To the Mary Bryan Foundation,

This letter is to convey my strong support for the Women in Construction Training Program (WICTP) and its application for the Creative Solutions Award. Duluth Local Initiatives Support Corporation (Duluth LISC) has worked closely with this program since its inception, providing both financial and technical support since 2000. We have witnessed first-hand the role WICTP has filled in our community in the areas of job training, career development, and building affordable housing, specifically by creating opportunities for low-income women, people of color, and victims of domestic violence.

In 1998-2000, I participated as an Advisory Committee member for the Women in Non-Traditional Trades Advisory Committee, facilitated by Project Soar. The Committee’s study and research began in 1998, and was completed in November 1999, culminating in a report entitled Women in Non-Traditional Trades Final Report. According to the Report, in Minnesota in 1990, women accounted for only 2.68% of all construction trade workers. This should be a concern since the Department of Labor predicts a 240,000-person labor shortage in the building industry. Statistics for Minnesota bear this out and indicate women represent a valuable, yet underutilized source of labor.

A major recommendation from the Report was to develop a training program for women in coordination with unions, contractors, housing organizations, educational programs and nonprofits. One idea was collaboration with local non-profits to assist low-income women seeking higher wage employment and training through the creation of a construction program. It also included the opportunity for women to start their own businesses. A lesson learned from the Advisory Committee study was that women entering this field face many challenges on both personal and technical levels. The combination of construction training and the ongoing support that WICTP is providing directly to women in the program help address this concern.

Duluth LISC is proud to be an original funder of the Women in Construction Training Program through development and receipt of a HUD CHDO Technical Assistance grant in 2001 from the Minnesota Housing Partnership. Through this funding, we provided an $18,000 grant to Women’s Transitional Housing Coalition (WTHC) to create an all women construction training program. The Women in Construction Training Program has made tremendous strides in the past three years. Their accomplishments include:

- Over 47 units of new and renovated affordable housing;
- Development of skilled craftswomen through WTHC and Northern Communities Land Trust (NCLT) construction and renovation projects;
- Establishment of the energy auditing component through Minnesota Power;
- Young women learning that the trades are a viable career choice through the Home Girls program;
- Established partnerships with the City of Duluth, nonprofit developers, job service agencies and local builders; and as a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; and
- The development of a strong women-owned and operated construction company including a cabinet shop/training center in downtown Duluth.

LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION
203 West Superior Street, Suite 401 • Duluth, MN 55802-1956 • Phone 218-727-7761 • Fax 218-727-7769
WWW.LISC.ORG
WICTP's success is even more inspiring when looking at the make-up of the participants in the project: low-income women, victims of domestic violence, homeless people, people of color, gay/lesbian, very young and single-headed households are the majority in this program. The WICTP focuses on people who are excluded from and face discrimination within the larger construction industry. Participants are faced with the complexity of learning soft and technical job skills, creating a new business and training model, forming partnerships and delivering on job contracts all in a very short period of time. Again, it is exciting that many of the initiatives that were called for in the Women in Non-Traditional Trades report are now being implemented through WICTP and it's subsidiary Women in Construction Company LLC. The Minnesota Women's Fund, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and others around the state are looking at this program as a model for others to learn from and emulate.

The development of a new all women construction program is a very risky and difficult process that requires time and assistance from many partners. Through WICTP’s leadership, community partners have emerged to assist in developing and promoting jobs opportunities for women, these groups include: Duluth LISC, Women's Transitional Housing Coalition, American Indian Community Housing Coalition, the Duluth HRA, Lake Superior College, City of Duluth Job Training, Minnesota Power, Northern Communities Land Trust, and local builders/developers. The management and training assistance that has been provided through the Women in Construction Training Program, has helped to build the skills of the women involved, as well as the track record of this new company.

Again, I am extremely proud of the work of the Women in Construction Training Program, and WTHC in developing a new model of engaging low-income women in self-development, as well as career training and affordable housing development. We look forward to continuing our partnership with these programs as they grow and develop. If you have any questions, please contact me. I would be happy to expand on our relationship and support for this vital program.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Pam Kramer
Program Director
# Women in Construction Training Program

**July 1, 2003 - June 30, 2004**  
Program Budget

## Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northland Foundation</td>
<td>$20,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Foundation of Minnesota</td>
<td>$20,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duluth United Way</td>
<td>$14,800.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDBG Economic Development</td>
<td>$54,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knight Foundation</td>
<td>$12,748.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jr. League</td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duluth LISC</td>
<td>$8,370.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$7,983.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$139,901.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Expenses

| Category                                                       | Amount   |
|                                                               |----------|
| Project Coordinator @ 50% FTE                                 | $31,200.00 |
| Home Girls Program Coordinators @ 80% FTE                     | $24,995.00 |
| **Subtotal Payroll Expense**                                  | **$56,195.00** |
| Payroll Taxes & Benefits                                      | $24,510.00 |
| **Total Payroll Expenses**                                    | **$80,705.00** |
| Contracted Services/Training                                 | $15,635.00 |
| Classroom Training                                            | $4,692.00  |
| Travel                                                        | $3,235.00  |
| Supplies & Materials                                          | $10,840.00 |
| Rent/Ins/Utilities for shop & training center                | $14,257.00 |
| Postage, printing, phone                                      | $1,991.00  |
| Training Publications                                         | $1,827.00  |
| Food                                                          | $1,345.00  |
| Construction Expo, job fairs, trade events                    | $5,374.00  |
| **Subtotal of other program expense**                         | **$59,196.00** |
| **Total All Expenses**                                       | **$139,901.00** |