

Celebrating women in construction

This year, [Women in Construction Week](#) — a campaign by the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) — is recognized on March 7–13, 2021, and highlights women as a visible and vital component of the construction industry. The week of recognition is also a time for the industry as a whole to raise awareness of the opportunities available for women in the construction industry and emphasize the growing role of women in the industry.

According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, by the end of 2016 there were approximately 939,000 women employed in the construction industry, and while that seems impressive it's actually only nine percent of the U.S. construction industry; a relatively small percentage when compared to other industries. The majority of these

women (76 percent) held roles in sales/office and professional/management — of the more than 800,000 women employed in construction in 2010, only 200,000 of them were employed in physical labor occupations such as laborers, electricians, plumbers, etc.

Following the Great Recession from 2007 to 2010, the number of women in construction declined sharply; more than 300,000 women left the construction industry by 2010. However, with the massive construction labor shortage currently facing the industry, the labor and skill needed to relieve that shortage are readily available. Despite making up a fraction of the current construction workforce, women are poised to move toward the forefront of the industry with a slow, but steady influx of female engineers, architects, project leaders, tradeswomen, contractors and more.

While young women — and perhaps even the general population — don't associate the construction industry and women in the way that they should, Women in Construction Week provides a chance to promote opportunities in construction for women within their communities, while also generating a conversation around diversity in the trades. Below are a few suggestions for promoting Women in Construction Week:

Constructing a welcoming environment for women

- Display the Women in Construction Week poster at your office, job site, local high schools and colleges.
- Volunteer in your local middle and high schools to encourage young women to seek opportunities in the construction field.
- Promote a STEM (science, technology, engineering and

mathematics) event for girls/women.

- Host a Women in Construction career day.
- Connect with women's organizations and share job and training opportunities to their members.
- Facilitate mentor opportunities for women joining the construction industry.
- Post about Women in Construction Week on social media.
- Make it a priority to hire and work with other subcontractors or vendors that are women.
- Develop and enforce a zero-tolerance sexual harassment policy – not only for employers but for everyone on a job site.
- Ensure female crew members have properly fitting personal protective equipment.
- Ensure that adequate gender-neutral restroom facilities are available on every job site.