



MAYORAL DIRECTIVE

Date: October 15, 2025
To: Chief Operating Officer Marco Lowe, Finance and Administration Services Director
Kiersten Grove
CC: All Cabinet Members, Mayor's E-Team
From: Mayor Bruce Harrell
Subject: Renewing the Priority Hire Program and Advancing Public-Private Partnership to Support Equity and Construction Workforce Goals

Ordinance 124690 ("Priority Hire Ordinance"), codified under Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 20.37, created a program to provide training and meaningful access to high-wage construction jobs for women, people of color, veterans, and individuals who most need access to full employment work ("Priority Hire").

Executive Order 2017-01 ("Expanding Training and Career Opportunities in the Construction Trades") built on the ordinance by establishing guidelines for including Priority Hire requirements in agreements with private parties carrying out private projects on City property or utilizing City funding.

The Priority Hire program aligns with One Seattle commitments to workforce equity, the Race and Social Justice Initiative, and climate justice. Under the program, workers from economically distressed communities have earned \$120 million in wages, which is double what they would have earned without the program. Priority Hire workers are performing 40% of project hours on City projects in 2025, meeting the targeted goal from SMC 20.37.040(C), and aspirational goals have increased the share of hours for Black, Indigenous, and people of color on City projects.

Due to the success of the Priority Hire program, I believe it necessary to expand its scope and reach. This includes expanding Priority Hire to public-private construction projects, including those that support affordable housing and related infrastructure, to meet critical community needs. The City has invested record levels of funding into the construction of affordable housing and infrastructure through the 2020 Seattle Transportation Measure, 2023 Housing Levy, the 2024 Seattle Transportation Levy. The City seeks to implement a more consistent and proactive approach in identifying and influencing public-private projects to leverage the City's investments to avoid labor disruptions, to provide for a qualified construction workforce, and to benefit underserved communities. The City further seeks to continue collaborating with labor unions, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, community-based programs, and contractors as essential partners to delivering equitable outcomes in the construction workforce.

To recognize the importance of the Priority Hire program and to build on its success, I issue the following directives:

Section 1. Commitment to Priority Hire

In recognition of the impact and community need for Priority Hire, the City of Seattle reaffirms its full support for the ongoing implementation, advancement, and sustainability of the Priority Hire program in projects utilizing City funding, City property, or both.

The City of Seattle will deepen its commitment to a regional Priority Hire system by fostering shared investment, accountability, and collaboration with partners, ensuring that workers enter and succeed in construction.

The Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) shall continue to manage and deliver an annual report to the Mayor and City Council that evaluates program outcomes, including workforce investments, project performance, and community impact. The report shall also include recommendations and strategies to sustain the program's effectiveness over time.

The City of Seattle will examine the rates at which projects successfully meet apprenticeship utilization thresholds and develop recommendations to improve the program.

Section 2. Establishment of interdepartmental team to identify public-private partnership opportunities

This clarifies and modifies Sections 1 and 3 regarding the identification of public-private partnership projects in Executive Order 2017-01.

FAS shall convene an interdepartmental team composed of representatives from all City departments that participate in or support private projects with significant City investment.

Significant City investment is defined as:

- Contributing City funding of \$5 million or more to private capital projects; OR
- Funding a substantial share of the overall cost; OR
- Donates land or provide land for project at substantially reduced rate; OR
- Having an ongoing operational or infrastructural interest in the project.

The interdepartmental team shall develop a process for early identification of public-private partnership projects. The process shall be designed to:

- Build structure and consistency for FAS and other City departments to identify potential private-public partnership projects and implementation of Priority Hire and CWA; AND
- Ensure timely review by FAS to determine whether City funding contract provisions should be applied to promote the City's social equity policies; AND
- Advance the City's goals related to a well-trained, inclusive, and diverse construction workforce; AND
- Strengthen the broader public interest in transparency, accountability, and community benefit in City-funded projects; AND
- Extend to new sectors and project types (e.g., clean construction) that utilize City grants or funding.

FAS shall submit the proposed process, along with a list of applicable projects, to the Mayor's Office for review and consideration by December 31, 2026.

Following approval of the identification process by the Mayor's Office, FAS shall continue to lead the interdepartmental team in its ongoing work. By December 31 of each calendar year, FAS shall submit a list of potential projects to the Mayor's Office for consideration.

Section 3. Community and Labor Engagement

1. The City shall continue to convene a standing Priority Hire Advisory Committee (PHAC) of community organizations, labor representatives, contractors, and pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training providers to guide program improvements and monitor equity outcomes.
2. FAS shall evaluate annual recommendations and a representative from the Mayor's Office will join PHAC meetings at least two times annually.

Contact for Further Information

If you have any questions, please contact FAS Purchasing and Contracting Director Presley Palmer and Labor Equity Manager Jeanne Fulcher.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce A. Harrell". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Bruce A. Harrell
Mayor, City of Seattle

Signed on October 15, 2025