SCWA

Connecting Community to Construction Careers and Contracting Opportunities on SPS Capital Projects

2025 Annual Report to Seattle Public Schools



Presented by City of Seattle

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Executive Summary

The Student and Community Workforce Agreement (SCWA) is a Seattle Public Schools (SPS) workforce and equity strategy embedded within the district's capital levy program for construction projects greater than $5 million. While certain compliance and reporting functions are administered through an intergovernmental partnership, overall program direction, workforce strategy, and long-term policy refinement are led by SPS.

SCWA at Year Five: What the Data Shows

Program performance has stabilized, with workforce and Women and Minority Business Enterprises (WMBE) outcomes remaining consistent across multiple fiscal years.

Workforce participation goals continue to be achieved, including sustained participation by SPS Former Students, SPS ZIP Code Apprentices, and BIPOC workers.

Workforce impact is strongest when contractors hire new apprentices who meet SCWA criteria. The highest-performing projects recruit pre-apprentices and community workers early and sustain that engagement throughout the project lifecycle.

Preferred Entry hiring integrates multiple program objectives, allowing a single hiring decision to advance multiple priority and diversity goals.

WMBE participation follows a similar pattern. Projects with the strongest results engage WMBE firms early in preconstruction and structure subcontract opportunities that support their participation.

The strongest projects see better results because key steps happen early, outreach is intentional, and hiring and subcontracting decisions are made with access in mind.

Former SPS Student Access

Graduates of the SPS Pre-Apprenticeship Program continue to access SPS projects primarily through direct apprentice hiring by general contractors. Carpentry hiring has historically been well supported through this participation, but organizational changes have created some uncertainty in relying on a single trade. This fiscal year also marks the first instances of two Former SPS Students completing their apprenticeships and journeying out.

Subcontractors Represent the Next Opportunity for Workforce Expansion

The clearest path to increasing Former SPS Student hiring is through expanding partnerships with subcontractors across additional crafts that have fewer natural entry points. Engaging these firms to hire SPS pre-apprentice graduates and Preferred Entry apprentices represents the most practical next step for expanding the workforce pipeline.

WMBE Early Outreach Drives Outcomes

WMBE participation reflects the continued impact of intentional general contractor outreach and procurement practices, while also highlighting persistent challenges in achieving MBE utilization. Through engagement with community partners and WMBE firms, SPS and its contractors have gained a clearer understanding of the level and timing of outreach needed to create meaningful access. These lessons now provide a roadmap for strengthening WMBE participation on future SPS capital projects.

Bottom Line

The strongest outcomes occur when outreach happens early in the project lifecycle. For workforce pathways, this means contractors recruiting pre-apprentices and community workers before project staffing decisions are finalized. For WMBE participation, it means engaging WMBE firms during preconstruction and structuring subcontract opportunities that support their participation.

The SCWA works best as a bridge, connecting Former SPS Students and other new workers to real construction careers, while also opening the door for WMBE firms to get work on SPS projects. The program succeeds when community members and businesses are connected to the opportunities created by SPS capital projects.

Sustained workforce progress depends on continued entry-level hiring and expanding this pipeline across both general contractors and key subcontractors, with Preferred Entry serving as the program's most effective pathway for increasing access for the SPS community. At the same time, intentional outreach and thoughtful subcontract packaging remain critical for expanding access for WMBE firms.

Purpose of Report

This annual report is prepared by the City of Seattle Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) in fulfillment of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the City of Seattle and SPS.

As the designated third-party administrator, FAS oversees implementation of the SCWA and related social equity requirements, including WMBE participation, acceptable worksite standards, prevailing wages, apprentice utilization, and workforce goal monitoring and enforcement.

The report summarizes workforce and contractor performance on designated SCWA projects during FY 2024-2025, highlighting key effects, areas of success, and opportunities for future improvement.

Projects and general contractors listed in order of construction start date

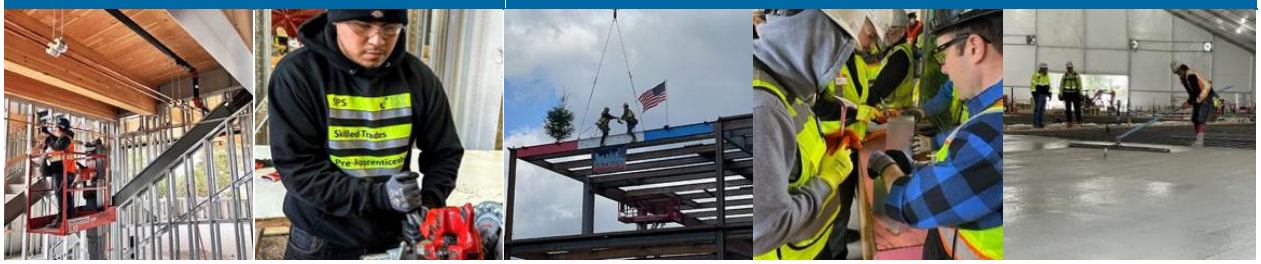
Project Name	Prime Contractor
Northgate Elementary Replacement Project	Lydig Construction, Inc.
James Madison Middle School Classroom Addition	FORMA Construction, Inc.
West Seattle Elementary School Renovation & Addition	Jody Miller Construction, Inc.
Viewlands Elementary School Replacement Project	Absher Construction Company
Kimball Elementary School Replacement Project Phase II	Cornerstone General Contractors
Rainier Beach High School Replacement Project	Lydig Construction, Inc.
Van Asselt School – Interim Site - Classroom and Gymnasium Addition Project	Cornerstone General Contractors
Asa Mercer International Middle School Replacement Project	Cornerstone General Contractors
Montlake Elementary School Addition and Modernization Project	Skanska Building USA

Alki Elementary School Addition and Modernization Project	Cornerstone General Contractors
John Rogers Elementary School Replacement Project	Lydig Construction, Inc.
John Stanford Center Central Kitchen Phase 2	FORMA Construction, Inc.
Nathan Eckstein Middle School Window Replacement Project	Lydig Construction, Inc.
John Muir Elementary School Early Learning Addition and Misc. Improvements Project	Absher Construction Company
AV & Security Systems Upgrades at Multiple Sites	Valley Electric

As of August 2025, 11 projects (Northgate ES, James Madison MS, West Seattle ES, Kimball ES, Viewlands ES, Van Asselt School Interim Site, Montlake ES, John Rogers ES, Asa Mercer MS, John Stanford, John Muir ES, and Nathan Eckstein MS) were either complete or in closeout phase. Meanwhile, construction activities continued on the remaining four projects: Alki ES, Rainier Beach HS, John Stanford Center, and AV & Security Systems Upgrades. Sellen Construction began work July 1, 2025, on the Memorial Stadium Replacement project, however that data is not included in this report.

FY 2024-2025 SCWA Highlights

$37.2 M	*$8.1 M*	*$5.5 M*	*$4.2 M*	*$41.23*
Paid to WMBE firms	**Amount paid to apprentices**	**Amount paid to 419 Priority Hire workers**	**Amount paid to 254 Priority Hire workers from SPS ZIP Codes**	**Average hourly wage for Priority Hire workers**



Student and Community Workforce Agreement





Introduction

SPS and the City of Seattle are pleased to present this annual report on the ongoing implementation of the Student and Community Workforce Agreement (SCWA). Building on foundations established in prior years, the agreement continues to expand access to construction careers and contracting opportunities connected to SPS capital projects. Through the SCWA, SPS construction investments support meaningful, high-wage employment opportunities for Former SPS Students, SPS Wage Earners, Women, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), while also expanding participation by women and minority-owned business enterprises.

Over the past year, SPS strengthened its partnership with the Seattle/King County Building and Construction Trades Council and the Western Regional Carpenters Union. Following the FY 2024–2025 reporting period, SPS and its labor partners executed an extension of the original agreement, ensuring program continuity through 2027, when SPS will begin negotiations on a successor agreement.

The SPS Pre-Apprenticeship program, a formally recognized pre-apprenticeship by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council, reached its two-year milestone in November 2025. As the SCWA continues to mature, the program's impact is increasingly reflected in long-term outcomes such as retention, wage progression, and career stability, rather than only first-year placements.

This year, two Former SPS Students reached an important milestone — completing their apprenticeships and becoming journey-level carpenters. They were not graduates of the SPS Pre-Apprenticeship program, but their progression still provides an example of the long-term career pathway that SCWA workforce participation can help support.

The SCWA's impact is also reflected in WMBE contracting participation. By aligning workforce goals with inclusive contracting practices, SPS capital projects support both individual career mobility and business-level economic opportunity.

During the past year, SPS also created the SCWA Coordinator role to expand outreach and awareness activities, with particular emphasis on strengthening participation by Former SPS Students, SPS Wage Earners, and WMBE firms on SPS projects. The position has focused on developing outreach hubs at select SPS schools to increase visibility of construction career opportunities and connect SPS families and community members with upcoming project opportunities.

Program Overview

After four fiscal years of implementation, the SCWA is now entering its fifth year. Over time, the agreement has evolved from a set of policy requirements into an operational system that aligns SPS construction projects with workforce recruitment, training and hiring pathways, while expanding participation by women and minority-owned business enterprises.

This system relies on early outreach, contractor engagement, and deliberate entry-level hiring. The program prioritizes connecting workers and businesses to project opportunities before workforce and procurement decisions are finalized. Workforce pathways depend on sustained hiring and retention of new entrants, primarily through graduates of SPS's in-house Pre-Apprenticeship program and secondarily through other recognized training pathways. WMBE participation is driven primarily by procurement decisions made during preconstruction.

Within this framework, several functions work together to support program goals. Outreach and WMBE engagement efforts are led by the SCWA Coordinator, Virginia Bethea, while training and workforce preparation are led by SPS Pre-Apprenticeship Coordinator Jay Connolly. A third component, the union dispatch agreement, governs how workers are supplied to projects when contractors request labor through union hiring halls.

For clarity, this report examines SCWA outcomes in two areas. The first portion focuses on **workforce participation**, measured through hours worked and hiring activity on active SCWA projects. The second portion examines **WMBE contracting participation** across those same projects. While these outcomes are discussed in separate sections, both workforce hiring and WMBE contracting are pathways through which SPS construction investments expand access to economic opportunity.

Within the workforce system, many Priority Hire and diversity goals are achieved through the existing contractor workforce. Contractors often already employ workers who qualify under SCWA categories and assign those workers to SPS projects without requiring new dispatch requests or out-of-order placement. These outcomes reflect the composition of the regional construction workforce as well as contractor staffing practices.

The Preferred Entry apprentice category functions differently. Preferred Entry apprentices (also referred to as **pre-apprentice graduates**), are individuals who have completed a recognized pre-apprenticeship program and are entering the trades as new apprentices. Because these workers are new entrants, they are rarely present within an existing contractor workforce and therefore must be hired intentionally at the point of workforce entry.

Dispatch activity illustrates how SCWA tools operate in practice. Contractors may reference multiple priority or diversity categories when requesting workers; however, many apprentice requests are submitted without specifying those categories. In addition, while union partners continue to support SCWA goals, consistent identification and dispatch of highly specific classifications such as Former SPS Students or SPS Wage Earners remains operationally difficult within current membership systems.

Requesting a Preferred Entry apprentice provides a more direct method for aligning hiring decisions with SCWA goals. When contractors request Preferred Entry apprentices, those workers frequently meet multiple priority categories simultaneously, including Former SPS Student status, SPS ZIP code residency, and representation among women and people of color. Focusing hiring activity on Preferred Entry apprentices therefore advances multiple program goals through a single workforce entry decision.

The SCWA is increasingly emphasizing recruitment and hiring of new entrants rather than reassignment of existing workers. This approach places program attention where its influence is strongest, at the point where individuals first enter construction careers.

SCWA Priority and Diversity Definitions

The SCWA tracks workforce participation through two distinct groups of reporting categories: Priority Hire and Diversity Hire. These definitions are used throughout the report to describe how workers are classified for participation reporting on SPS construction projects.

Priority Hire

For purposes of this report, Priority Hire refers to workers who fall into one or more of the following categories:

1. **SPS Students:** Students, former students, graduates, and individuals with a verified SPS attendance history, regardless of graduation status.

   *For readability, individuals in this category will be referred to throughout this report as **Former SPS Students**, reflecting that most workers recorded under this classification are no longer current students.*

2. **SPS Wage Earners:** Workers who have a currently enrolled SPS student in their household.
3. **SPS ZIP Code Workers:** Journey-level or apprentice-level workers who reside in an Economically Distressed ZIP Code within SPS boundaries.

Diversity Hire

4. **Women Workers**: Journey-level and apprentice-level women.
5. **BIPOC Workers:** Journey-level and apprentice-level workers who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color.

Note: These priority and diversity categories are broken into eight project level aspirational goals.

Workforce Participation

Apprenticeship Utilization

The primary entry point onto SPS construction projects

SPS projects typically maintain apprenticeship utilization rates of approximately 20%, with overall averages frequently exceeding the state minimum. Within that overall performance, general contractors account for a substantial share of the apprentice hours contributing to project compliance and workforce entry.

Table 1: FY 2024-2025 Apprenticeship Utilization Summary

Level	SCWA Hours	Payment Totals
Apprentices	169,203	$8,111,933
Journey Workers	672,640	$43,335,194
Totals	**841,843**	**$51,447,127**
Apprentice Utilization Percentage	**20%**	**$47.94 hr./average**

At its core, the SCWA is structured around apprenticeship as the primary entry point onto work on SPS construction projects. The agreement's principal practical leverage point is at the entry-level hiring stage. Each project must meet the 15% apprenticeship utilization requirement established under Washington State law and incorporated into the SCWA. The SCWA then builds on that baseline through its 20% Preferred Entry apprentice requirement, which creates a stronger opportunity to connect apprenticeship openings to SPS and community workforce pathways. Although not every Preferred Entry apprentice is a brand-new entrant to the trades, this remains the point in the workforce system where new access can be shaped most directly.

There are two firm workforce requirements on SCWA projects: the 15% State of Washington apprenticeship utilization requirement, and the SCWA requirement that 20% of apprentice labor hours, among apprentices who work more than 700 hours on a project, be performed by Preferred Entry apprentices. **During the reporting period, Preferred Entry apprentices accounted for 15% of all apprentice labor hours overall.**

Preferred Entry Apprentices

One hire advancing multiple SCWA goals

Key takeaways

- Preferred Entry apprentices are **more likely to reflect new or early-career workforce** entry than the composition of the existing workforce.
- In FY 2024–2025, 30 unique Preferred Entry apprentices **helped advance multiple SCWA goals simultaneously**, with many individual hires qualifying under several SCWA categories at once (Table 2).
- The 700-hour credit threshold supports retention, and because SPS projects often last several years, most Preferred Entry hires **remain employed well beyond the minimum threshold.**
- **Scaling impact depends on subcontractor hiring across more trades**, not general contractor hiring alone.

The SPS SCWA is distinguished from many other public agency project labor agreements because it is supported by an in-house pre-apprenticeship program. That structure gives SPS a stronger connection between outreach, training, and actual job placement, creating a more defined landing point for new workers entering the trades. SPS is positioned to support a fuller pathway from

training to placement on projects, to apprenticeship progression, and ultimately toward journey-level wages.

Why Preferred Entry is different

Preferred Entry is best understood as an umbrella hiring category. A single Preferred Entry apprentice may simultaneously qualify as a Former SPS Student, an SPS Wage Earner, an SPS ZIP Code resident, a worker of color, or a woman, meaning one limited hiring opportunity can advance several SCWA goals at once.

This is where it is most clear that SCWA is creating new access to our projects.

Unlike broader workforce measures, which can reflect the composition of workers already established in the industry, Preferred Entry data shows where new access to the trades is being created. Table 2 provides the clearest picture in this report of SCWA's ability to connect SPS students and community members to entry-level construction opportunities.

Among the 30 unique Preferred Entry apprentices during this past fiscal year, more than 1/3 were Former SPS Students, 30% resided in SPS ZIP Codes, 60% were BIPOC Workers, and 30% were Women Workers.

Table 2. FY 2024–25 Preferred Entry Apprentices, characteristics of 30 unique workers

Category	Count	Preferred Entry Apprentices
Former SPS Students	11	38%
SPS ZIP Code	9	31%
BIPOC Workers	18	60%
Women Workers	9	30%
Hispanic	7	23%
African American	9	30%
Asian	3	10%
White	8	27%
Carpenters	21	70%
Electricians	9	30%
Total Unique Preferred Entry Apprentices	**30**	**100%**

Note: Each Preferred Entry apprentice is counted once by primary trade. Demographic and residency categories may overlap. Percentages reflect the share of the same 30 unique workers and are not intended to sum to 100 percent across categories.

To meet SCWA's 20% Preferred Entry apprentice requirement, general contractors typically hire between two and four new Preferred Entry apprentices per project. These hires are willful and

planned, with contractors prioritizing Preferred Entry apprentices who have an SPS background and who must be brought onto projects as new workers rather than reassigned from existing crews.

Retention and the 700-hour credit threshold

Under the Preferred Entry requirement, apprentices are credited only after completing at least 700 hours on the job, roughly equivalent to three months' full-time work. Most Preferred Entry hires brought on by general contractors remain for a large share of the project. Because many SPS projects extend over several years, those opportunities can support a meaningful portion of an apprentice's path towards journey-level status. This initial threshold promotes continuity by creating a meaningful trial period for both the contractor and the apprentice, and because Preferred Entry hires are typically well-vetted and work-ready, they are often retained well beyond the minimum threshold.

General contractors also frequently carry Preferred Entry apprentices from one SPS project to the next, and in some cases continue employing them even after SPS project work has ended.

These trajectories extend beyond the duration of any single SPS project and outlast project-specific SCWA workforce requirements. This reflects the larger value of the work. The goal is not only to finish projects, but to help workers stay employed long enough to complete apprenticeships, increase earnings, and build long-term stability for workers and their families.

> On the John Stanford Central Kitchen Project, FORMA Construction hired two Preferred Entry apprentices, Luis Antonio Rodriguez Alamillo and Sasha Andrade, both of whom continued working after the SPS project ended and moved on to subsequent non SPS assignments. Luis transitioned to the Hazen High School Modernization Project (non-SPS), where he will remain through the completion of his apprenticeship, while Sasha moved to the Port Angeles Middle School Project and is also now working on projects outside the SPS portfolio.

Trade concentration, and the carpentry pathway risk

These pathways are reinforced by SPS's in-house Pre-Apprenticeship program and key regional partners, including ANEW, PACT, and the former NWCI program. However, on SPS capital projects, Preferred Entry apprentices most often entered through the Carpenters' pre-apprenticeship program, accounting for approximately 70% of Preferred Entry apprentices during the reporting period. This reflects the fact that SPS general contractors are signatory to only a limited number of unions, and the Carpenters' pathway has also been the most accessible. At present, SPS general contractors carry the primary responsibility for hiring new apprentices on SPS projects.

Recent organizational changes within the Carpenters' training system have introduced uncertainty into this pathway. The continuity of the articulation process that previously supported SPS Pre-Apprentice entry into carpentry apprenticeship is no longer assured. If that pathway becomes harder to navigate, SPS students will face more delay and less clarity at the point where they are trying to enter apprenticeship.

Expanding Preferred Entry hiring through subcontractor engagement

Each trade operates under distinct apprenticeship intake rules, sponsorship requirements, and dispatch practices. To date, union partners have consistently emphasized that expansion of entry-level access will depend primarily on contractor hiring decisions rather than changes to union intake processes. As a result, future growth in Preferred Entry hiring will likely depend on greater engagement with subcontractors, who perform most of the craft work across SPS capital projects.

Recommended framing for project requirements:

- Explore extending Preferred Entry expectations more directly to subcontractors.
- Encourage subcontractors, where feasible, to prioritize direct hiring of Preferred Entry apprentices, particularly Former SPS Students, where feasible.
- Reinforce retention expectations by building beyond the 700-hour threshold and consider incentives that support continued hiring throughout the full apprenticeship.

Expanding Preferred Entry hiring at the subcontractor level represents the clearest opportunity to increase workforce access across multiple trades and deepen community impact across SPS construction projects, beyond what general contractors alone can achieve.

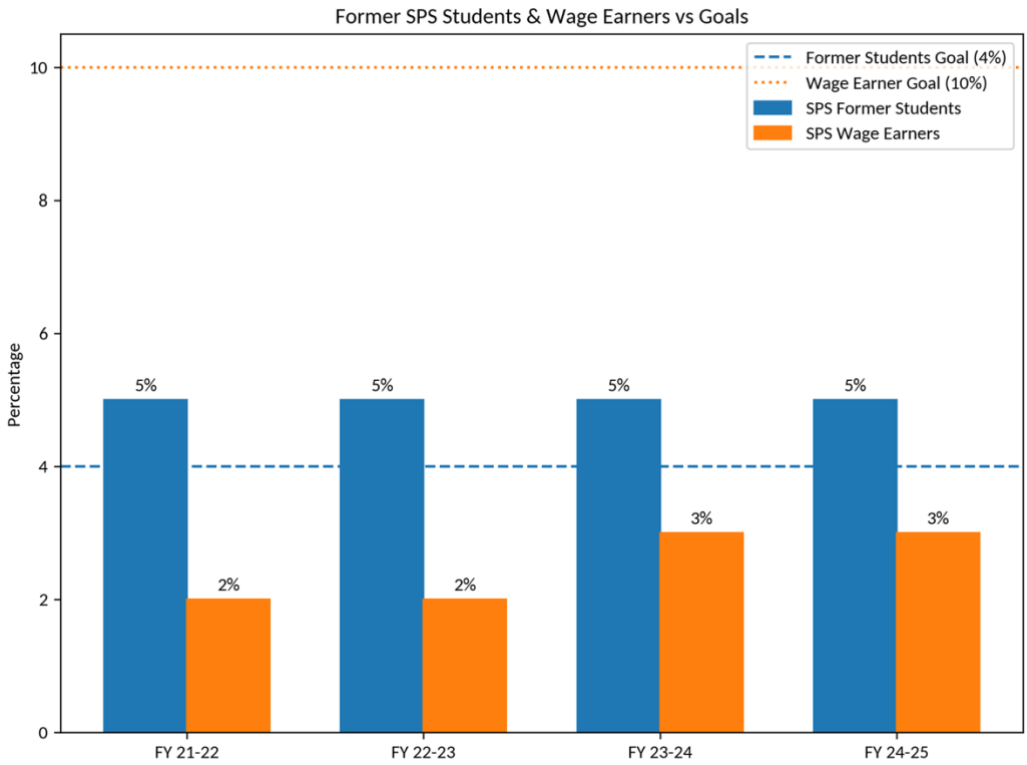
Lydig, the general contractor on the Rainier Beach High School (RBHS) project, demonstrated exceptional leadership by employing 14 Preferred Entry apprentices on the project, the highest number recorded on any SPS project to date. This was achieved by having subcontractors also hire these apprentices, creating more opportunities for these workers to enter project work. This model demonstrates the scale of impact possible when subcontractors also adopt Preferred Entry hiring practices.

Among these apprentices, the highest cumulative hours were performed by African American and Women workers. Two of the 14 apprentices, Ryder Bertino and Caleb Cazares Garay, were also direct graduates of the SPS Pre-Apprenticeship program.

Priority Hire

Consistently meeting the Former SPS Student goal; Wage Earner performance below target

Figure 1: Former SPS Students & Wage Earners 2021-2025



Former SPS Students

Over the past four fiscal years, participation by Former SPS Students on SPS projects has remained relatively stable at approximately 5%, as shown in Figure 1, while SPS Wage Earner participation has increased modestly but remains below aspirational targets. This steady 5% represents 102 Former SPS Students employed on SPS projects during the most recent fiscal period.

Across SPS projects, the 4% Former SPS Student goal is often met through a mix of existing workforce assignment and a smaller number of deliberate new hires. For general contractors with larger staffs, much of the goal can be reached by assigning current employees with SPS attendance histories to SPS work. Additional Former SPS Students are then captured through surveys when established union workers with SPS backgrounds arrive on projects through normal workforce movement.

The Former SPS Student category matters because it reflects one of the clearest purposes of the SCWA: getting SPS students onto SPS projects. In many ways, this has become the defining outcome of the program. SPS Pre-Apprenticeship helps create that access directly. When a Preferred Entry apprentice is also a former SPS student, that is one of the strongest outcomes the SCWA can produce, because it advances both new access to the trades and direct opportunity for SPS students at the same time.

It is important to distinguish between Former SPS Student participation and program-driven access. Former SPS Students appear on SPS projects through two primary pathways: (1) new entrants hired as apprentices, often following pre-apprenticeship training and through Preferred Entry hiring, and (2) journey-level workers already established in union workforces and who are assigned to SPS projects through normal workforce movement. Journey-level workers account for much of the Former SPS Student hours recorded on projects, because journey-level hours dominate overall construction work. For this reason, SCWA's clearest leverage is concentrated at apprenticeship entry, where intentional recruitment and hiring decisions can expand access for newer former students entering the trades.

Looking ahead, meaningful increases in Former SPS Student participation are unlikely to result from additional general contractor hiring alone, as that capacity is largely saturated. Continued progress will depend on expanding deliberate entry-level hiring at the subcontractor level, particularly for apprentice and Preferred Entry positions.

> Cornerstone, the general contractor on the Asa Mercer International Middle School (MMS) project led the way in having 21 Former SPS Students employed on their project during the reporting period.
>
> Cornerstone has demonstrated a clear understanding that Former SPS Students are the focus of our Priority Hire goals, and they were the first contractor to hire a graduate from the SPS Pre-Apprentice program, Johan Gaspar-Jimenez, who most recently worked on the Alki ES project.

SPS Wage Earners

SPS Wage Earners remain an important goal of the SCWA because they reflect the program's broader purpose of supporting families experiencing housing and food insecurity through access to construction work. At the same time, SPS Wage Earner participation has remained lower in part because the program is still working to determine where its point of impact is strongest for this category. One question is whether the greatest opportunity lies at workforce entry, by identifying SPS wage earners earlier in apprentice and Preferred Entry pathways. Another is whether the larger opportunity is in better recognizing SPS Wage Earners who are already active in the construction workforce, particularly journey-level workers already moving onto SPS projects through normal dispatch channels. In either case, more consistent identification is key.

Many in the SPS Wage Earners category may already be appearing on SPS projects as journey-level workers dispatched through normal union workforce movement, without being identified under that category at the time of dispatch. In other words, current participation levels may reflect both the limited new hiring into this category and incomplete identification of workers who already qualify.

To support more consistent identification of Former SPS Students and Wage Earners already active in the construction workforce, the SCWA Coordinator is developing a verification process that would allow workers to verify qualifying SPS connections and share that information with their unions. This process would reduce ambiguity, improve consistency across dispatch decisions, and help qualifying workers be more consistently recognized within existing dispatch structures

SPS ZIP Codes

Translating capital investment into community wealth

During the reporting period, SPS spent approximately $243.6 million on SCWA projects. Of this total, $5.5 million was paid to 419 Priority Hire workers (Former SPS Students, SPS Wage Earners, and SPS ZIP Code residents), earning an average hourly wage of $41.23. Workers residing in economically distressed ZIP codes accounted for $4.2 million of these wages, representing most of Priority Hire earnings during the fiscal year.

Table 3: FY 2024-2025 Wages Earned by Workers from Economically Distressed (SPS) ZIP Codes

Category	Hours	% of Hours	Wages
SPS ZIP Code-Journey Worker	40,301	5%	$2,928,038
SPS ZIP Code-Apprentice	26,825	3%	$1,300,205
Totals	**67,126**	**8%**	**$4,228,243**

A review of dispatch activity has documented instances where contractors formally requested workers by SPS ZIP Code designation and unions returned eligible workers consistent with those criteria. The documented prior use suggests the dispatch mechanism functions as intended for this SPS priority category when it is explicitly requested. When contractors intentionally utilize this tool, it reinforces the connection between project-level hiring decisions and community-level economic outcomes.

These wage and hiring outcomes reflect an important dimension of public investment. When voters approve school construction levies, they are not only investing in safe, modern learning environments, but also in opportunities for local workers and families to participate directly in the economic benefits of those investments. **Through SCWA, a portion of public capital spending is purposefully recirculated back into the community as family-supporting wages, reinforcing the principle that public infrastructure projects can advance both educational and economic equity.** For many families, these wages represent more than short term employment. They support housing stability, childcare, and the ability to remain rooted in the communities SPS serves.

SPS ZIP Code Apprentices

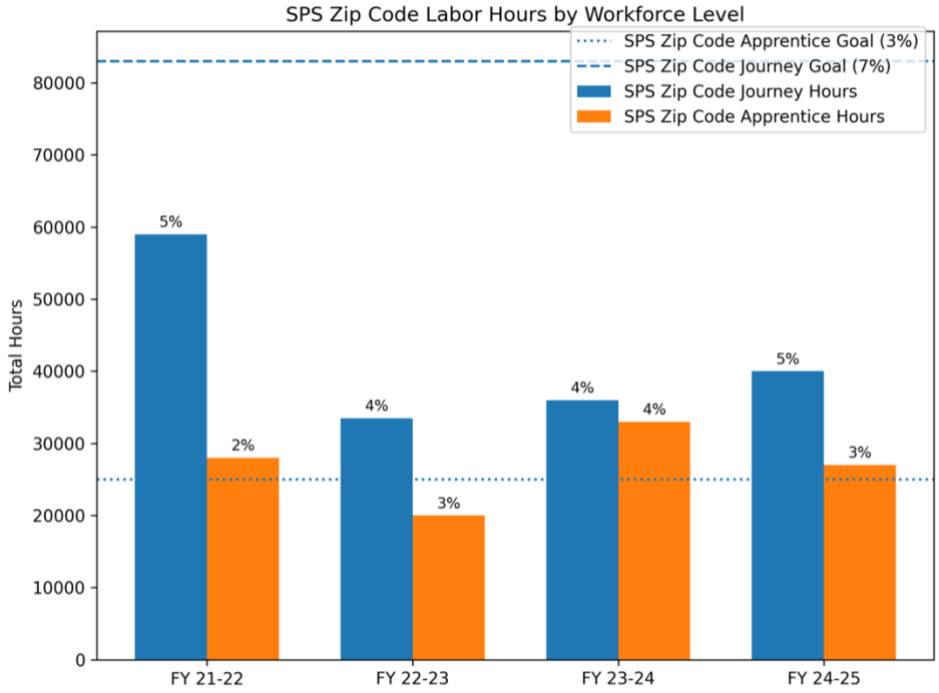
A long-term generational investment

Of the 419 Priority Hire workers, 254 were SPS ZIP Code workers, and a majority of their hours and wages were earned by journey-level workers. Figure 2 shows that this pattern has remained consistent over the life of the program. This distribution suggests that SPS ZIP Code outcomes reflect more than a single dispatch or hiring decision. They also reflect the longer workforce development systems through which workers first gain access to the trades, remain employed, and eventually advance.

SPS ZIP Code worker participation on SPS projects should be understood in that broader context. For many workers, access begins well before they ever step onto an SPS project. Pre-apprenticeship programs such as ANEW, PACT, and the former NWCI program were created through public investment and targeted outreach to expand access for residents of distressed ZIP codes, women,

and historically underrepresented populations, including African American and Hispanic workers. In some cases, that bridge is strengthened further through direct contractor participation and support.

Figure 2: SPS ZIP Code participation by Workforce Level, 2021-2025



A clear example is Lydig Construction's engagement at RBHS. Through community outreach and partnership with the Carpenters' pre-apprenticeship program, Lydig fully funded a pre-apprentice cohort made up of Former SPS Students, SPS ZIP Code residents, and BIPOC Workers. That cohort later produced multiple Lydig hires who appeared on SPS projects as Preferred Entry apprentices. This is the larger pattern the SCWA is designed to reinforce, connecting community-based access efforts to real construction employment and sustained career opportunity.

One such worker, Arlando Norwood, was featured in the FY 2022–2023 Annual Report as a fifth-level carpenter apprentice and Preferred Entry worker on the RBHS project. Since that time, he has completed his apprenticeship, reached journey-level carpenter status, and continues to work for Lydig. His progression from apprentice to journey-level worker reflects the steady economic stability made possible through sustained employment and wage advancement. Like many workers who successfully complete apprenticeship training, Arlando has now been able to purchase his first home, demonstrating the kind of economic mobility these careers can provide.

Arlando's progression is not an isolated example. Israel Pressley, who presented at last year's Oversight Committee meeting as a Preferred Entry apprentice at RBHS, has likewise completed his apprenticeship, journeyed out with Lydig, and recently became a first-time homeowner.

These outcomes help clarify the larger meaning of SPS ZIP Code participation. The intended impact of SCWA policy is not limited to initial placement on a single project. The larger goal is sustained employment that allows workers to advance through apprenticeship, increase earnings, make long-

term financial decisions, and build stability beyond any one jobsite. At the same time, as workers advance and earnings grow, some may eventually relocate outside SPS ZIP codes to purchase homes or secure more stable housing. That dynamic points to the need for additional ways of measuring workforce impact beyond initial placement alone.

Program refinements should continue to emphasize apprentice retention and recognize contractors that support continuous employment across projects. This is where the broader SCWA bridge becomes most visible, linking community outreach and pre-apprenticeship access to lasting construction careers and long-term community reinvestment.

Graduates of the in-house SPS Pre-Apprentice Program

Special attention should be given to recent graduates of the SPS Pre-Apprenticeship program, which continues to serve as a key entry point into apprenticeship and construction careers. To date, six program graduates have been hired by SPS general contractors over the life of the program. Among them is Caleb Cazares Garay.



Caleb graduated from Ingraham High School in 2025 and is currently a 19-year-old carpenter apprentice. While Caleb had early exposure to construction through his father, who worked as a painter, his decision to pursue carpentry was solidified during his time in SPS's pre-apprenticeship program. A classroom visit by Dani Ferris, an apprenticeship trainer with the Carpenters, played a pivotal role in helping Caleb understand the long-term career potential of the trade and motivated him to pursue apprenticeship.

After graduating from the SPS Pre-Apprenticeship program, Caleb was able to directly enter the pre-apprenticeship with the Western States Carpenters Training through an established articulation agreement and was subsequently hired by Lydig Construction to work at RBHS.

As Caleb tells it, "Where else can you earn $38 an hour straight out of high school?" Caleb continues to live within an SPS ZIP Code in the Bitter Lake neighborhood.

Diversity Participation

Exceeding goals for both journey and apprentice BIPOC workers

BIPOC workers are those who self-identify as African American/Black, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American or Other (e.g. biracial). BIPOC excludes unspecified and White.

Figure 3: Journey and Apprentice BIPOC Representation 2021-2025

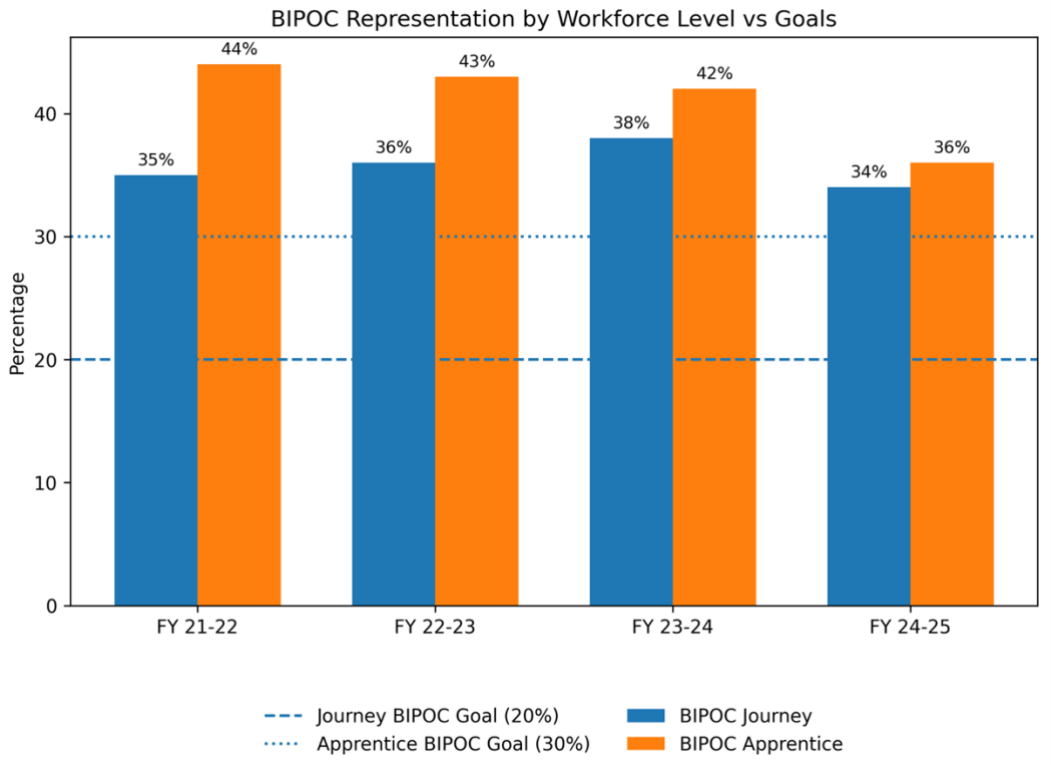


Figure 3 highlights strong BIPOC representation across both journey-level and apprentice labor on SPS projects across the past four fiscal periods. For 2024-25, BIPOC journey workers accounted for 34% of total journey hours, exceeding the district's 20% goal, while BIPOC apprentices performed 36% of apprentice hours, surpassing the 30% apprentice goal. These metrics indicate that SPS projects continue to support meaningful participation by workers of color across multiple workforce levels. The fact that BIPOC apprentice participation exceeds the established goal suggests that workforce entry pipelines are functioning as intended.

While overall BIPOC representation on SPS projects reflects the composition of the regional construction workforce, participation at the apprentice level provides a clearer view of where SCWA efforts have the greatest influence.

Table 4. FY 2024-2025 Race and Ethnicity Representation on SPS Projects by Workforce Level

Race / Ethnicity	% Apprentice Hours	% Total Hours
African American/Black	9%	4%
Asian and Pacific Islander	4%	3%
Hispanic	20%	23%
Native American	0%	1%
White	39%	46%

Hispanic workers accounted for 23% of total hours and 20% of apprentice hours, while African American/Black workers accounted for 4% of total hours and 9% of apprentice hours. African American/Black apprentice participation during the reporting period reflects how SCWA impacts concentrate at the point of workforce entry, particularly on large, community-based projects. On the Rainier Beach High School project, African American/Black apprentices were present at a much higher rate than typically observed, contributing to overall BIPOC apprentice performance exceeding the established goal. This pattern is consistent with projects that combine early-career hiring needs with local labor pools shaped by pre-apprenticeship pipelines and contractor hiring decisions.

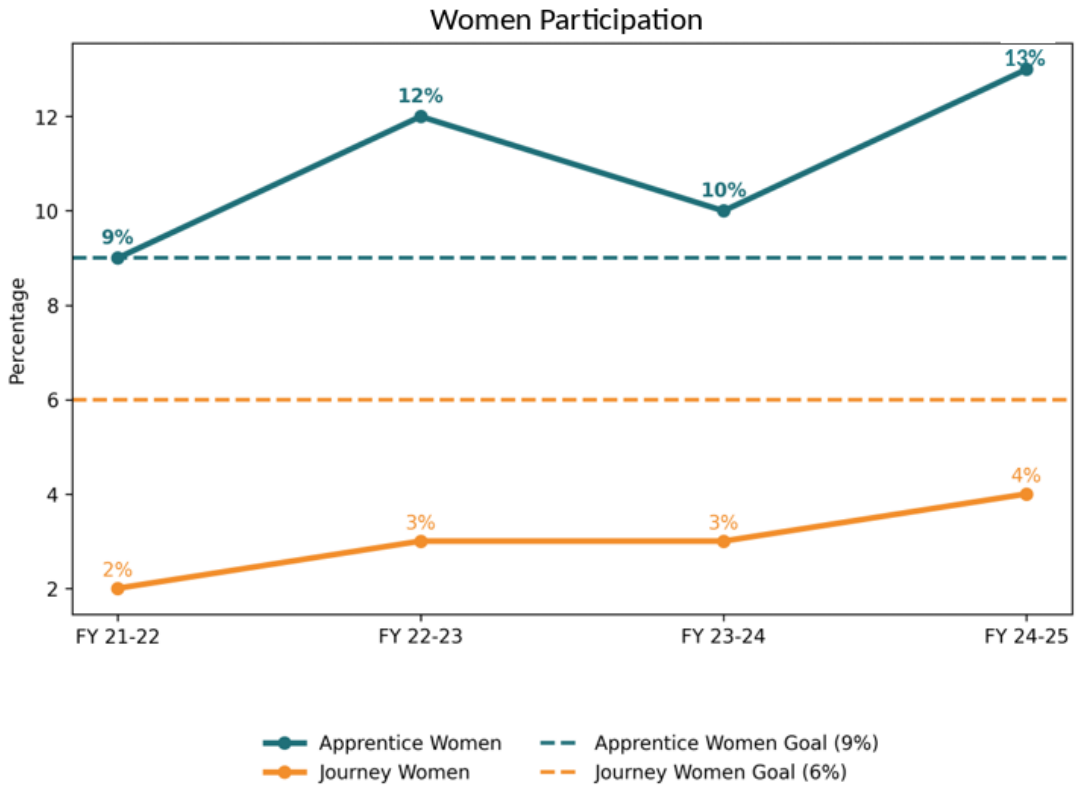
Given the project's location in a predominantly **African American/Black community, these practices translated into a high concentration of African American/Black apprentices, a priority community the program is designed to serve. The elevated BIPOC apprenticeship percentages reflected in Table 4 are therefore not incidental, they are the result of deliberate contractor strategy.**

Women in Apprenticeship

New heights driven by electrical contractors' participation

Participation by Women Workers continues to be strongest at the apprenticeship level, with Women apprentices exceeding the 9% goal in every year shown and reaching 13% in this reporting period. Journey-level Women participation has increased gradually, rising to 4%, though it remains below the 6% goal.

Figure 4: Women Participation 2021-2025



Several projects contributed to the strong apprentice-level participation during this period. One notable example was Valley Electric's performance on the AV & Security Systems Upgrades at Multiple Sites project.

Valley Electric maintained an apprenticeship utilization rate of approximately 30%, with women comprising roughly 30% of their apprentice workforce, a level of performance not previously observed on an SPS project. This sustained, project-wide approach materially influenced systemwide results and is the primary factor behind the 13% women apprentice participation reflected in Figure 4.

This case is also notable because Valley was the general contractor on the project, not just a subcontractor. That is unusual. As seen elsewhere in this report, when the general contractor is signatory to the trade performing the bulk of the work and directly controls most of the hiring, project performance tends to follow that trade more closely. In this case, Valley's signatory relationship with the Electricians shaped the workforce outcome in a direct way. Valley is also recognized as a strong SCWA contributing partner when working as an electrical subcontractor under other general contractors. On this project, it had an unusual level of control over both project execution and workforce hiring.

That result did not come from contractor action alone. Leadership within the electrical apprenticeship system has placed a stronger emphasis on outreach to women, which helps explain why a larger supply of women apprentices exists in this trade to begin with. The ANEW pre-apprenticeship program is also a common training pathway for many of the women apprentices and pre-apprentices seen on SPS projects. On this project, several ANEW pre-apprentices were among the women brought onto the job. Valley's performance reflects what can happen when that broader pipeline is matched by a contractor willing to request women apprentices, bring them onto the project, and support them once they arrive.

This is an important example, but it should be understood in context. The success seen here is closely tied to women working as electricians on facilities-type projects, where the available labor pool, contractor hiring structure, and project conditions aligned in a favorable way. That pattern may not transfer evenly across all trades or all types of construction work. Even so, the lesson is still useful: **women's participation improves most when there is both an available pipeline and a contractor in a position to hire with intention and retain the workers once they are on site.**

A stronger pipeline helps, but hiring alone is not enough. Women still face barriers once they enter the trade, and contractor support is often what determines whether they stay and succeed. SPS project conditions further reinforce these placement levels. **The SCWA Acceptable Worksite policy, which prohibits bullying, hazing, and harassment, is reinforced during mandatory site safety orientations and establishes consistent behavioral expectations.** For women entering a historically male-dominated industry, consistent employment, supportive supervision, and clear expectations matter as much as access itself. When those conditions are present, participation follows.

While the previous sections focused on workforce participation on SPS construction projects, SCWA opportunity also extends to contracting. Women and Minority Business Enterprises (WMBE) firms play an important role in delivering SPS capital projects and in expanding access to construction-related business opportunities connected to that work. The following section examines WMBE participation on SCWA projects during the FY 2024-2025 reporting period and highlights practices that supported stronger engagement with diverse firms.

Women and Minority Business Enterprise Participation

WMBE Aspirational Goals

SPS is committed to ensuring that its capital construction investments generate meaningful economic opportunities for diverse communities. Through the voter-approved Building Excellence Capital Levy (BEX V), SPS has invested $1.4 billion over six years in school construction investment, with the SCWA serving as a key means for advancing inclusive contracting.

Active SCWA projects are funded through BEX V and delivered using the General Contractor/Construction Manager (GC/CM) delivery method. GC/CM provides opportunities for early contractor involvement, which can support planned outreach to WMBE firms during bid packaging and procurement. In addition, the **negotiated support services** component of GC/CM delivery allows the district, where appropriate, to **directly engage select WMBE firms for preconstruction and support services**, creating earlier access points that may not be available through traditional low-bid procurement alone.

Self-Identified and State Certified

SPS recognizes WMBE firms as:

- State-certified WMBE firms are women and/or minority-owned firms that complete Washington State's certification through the Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises.
- Self-identified WMBE firms are women and/or minority-owned firms that register in the City of Seattle's OpenGov system and state they are at least 51% women and/or minority-owned businesses.

The WBE classification is designated for white-women-owned business. Minority-women-owned businesses are classified as MBE.

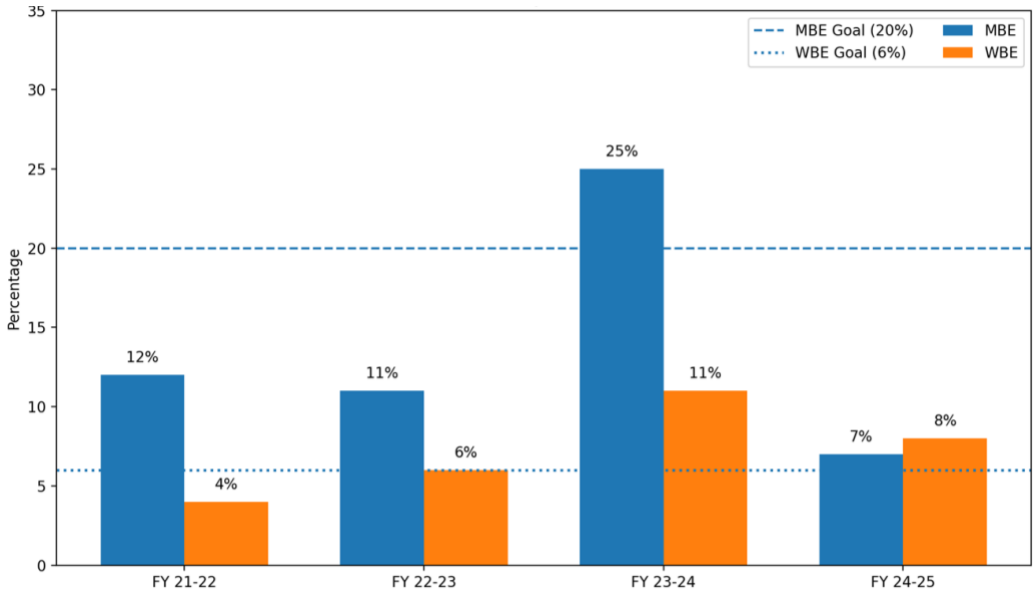
WMBE Participation

Strong WBE results and continued MBE challenges

During FY 2024–2025, SPS paid **$243,613,633** to contractors working on capital projects. **WMBE firms received $37,172,575 of that total, or 15%.**

Figure 5, below, shows WMBE performance across all four fiscal years of SCWA implementation compared with the program's aspirational goals. In FY 2024–2025, **WBE firms received 8%** of total contract dollars, or **$19,414,559,** exceeding the district's **6% goal.** MBE firms received 7%, or $17,758,016, which was below the 20% aspirational goal.

Figure 5: Program-Wide MBE & WBE Participation vs Goals, 2021-2025



Throughout the four fiscal years of SCWA implementation, WBE utilization has generally performed more strongly than MBE utilization in terms of reaching the goals. MBE utilization has rarely reached the program's 20% aspirational target. It is also important to view FY 2023–24 with some caution. That year's **25% MBE result** appears to have been influenced by an unusually large MBE subcontract award on the RBHS project, as noted in last year's report.

Figure 6: Program Wide WMBE Totals vs Combined WMBE Goal, 2021-2025

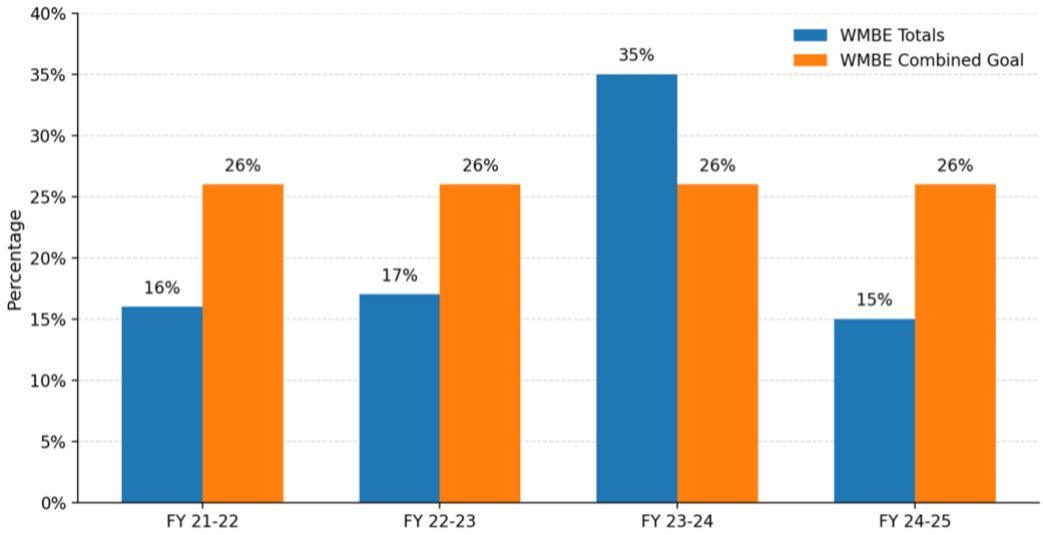


Figure 6 shows total WMBE utilization across four fiscal years of SCWA implementation, using a 26% combined reference point based on the program's separate 20% MBE and 6% WBE aspirational goals.

Over that period, **annual WMBE utilization ranged from 15% to 35%, with a four-year average of 21.25%,** suggesting SPS has generated a meaningful level of WMBE participation over time. For context, the City of Seattle reported **15% WMBE utilization in construction in its 2024 annual report**, and approximately **20% utilization in construction in its 2025 report**. While SPS operates under a different capital program and project mix, its four-year average appears broadly comparable to recent City of Seattle construction results.

At the same time, the four-year pattern remains uneven. A relatively small group of firms appears repeatedly across projects, and results often depend heavily on the specific opportunities created within each procurement. This reinforces a broader lesson seen throughout this report: WMBE participation is most likely to improve when outreach begins early, contractors are engaged intentionally, and project teams create meaningful opportunities for firms to compete.

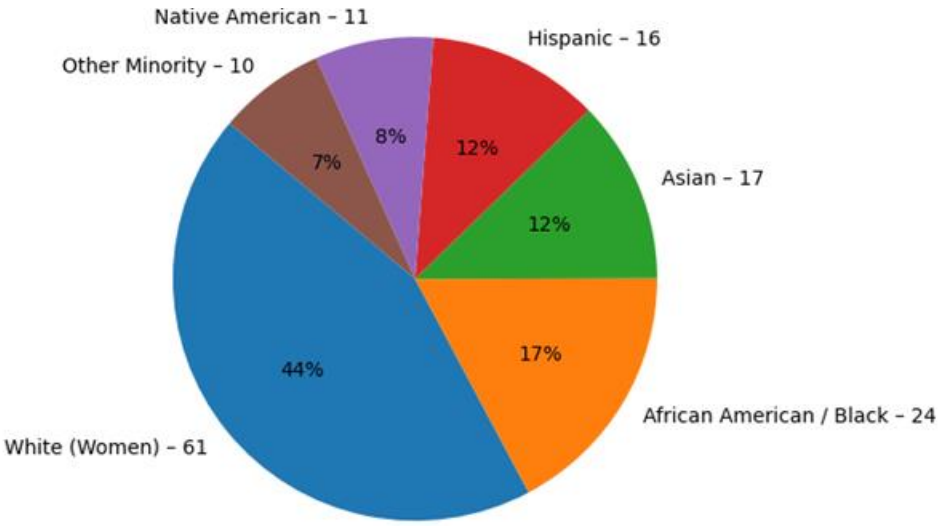
The Rainier Beach High School project provides a clear example of that pattern. Through early outreach events hosted by Lydig before construction began, M. City Street Sweepers, an MBE firm owned by Rainier Beach parent Marty White, became aware of the project and secured a contract for recurring street sweeping services. Lydig and the firm were able to work out a project-specific arrangement that balanced the contractor's operational needs with the project's budget constraints, resulting in a long-term working relationship that has continued for more than two years. **The value of early outreach was not just that it introduced a firm to the opportunity, but that it helped create a workable contract arrangement that led to sustained participation.**



Rainier Beach also shows that outreach can matter before a firm is fully ready to bid. JJ Freeman Construction, a new community-based firm, did not initially bid on SPS work, but participated in orientations and received early technical assistance before submitting its first bid. According to the firm, that support helped position the business for later success, including work with other public owners and readiness to pursue future SPS opportunities. These types of early capacity-building efforts are not always captured in annual utilization totals, but they still reflect an important part of how community outreach can strengthen the pool of firms prepared to compete for public work.

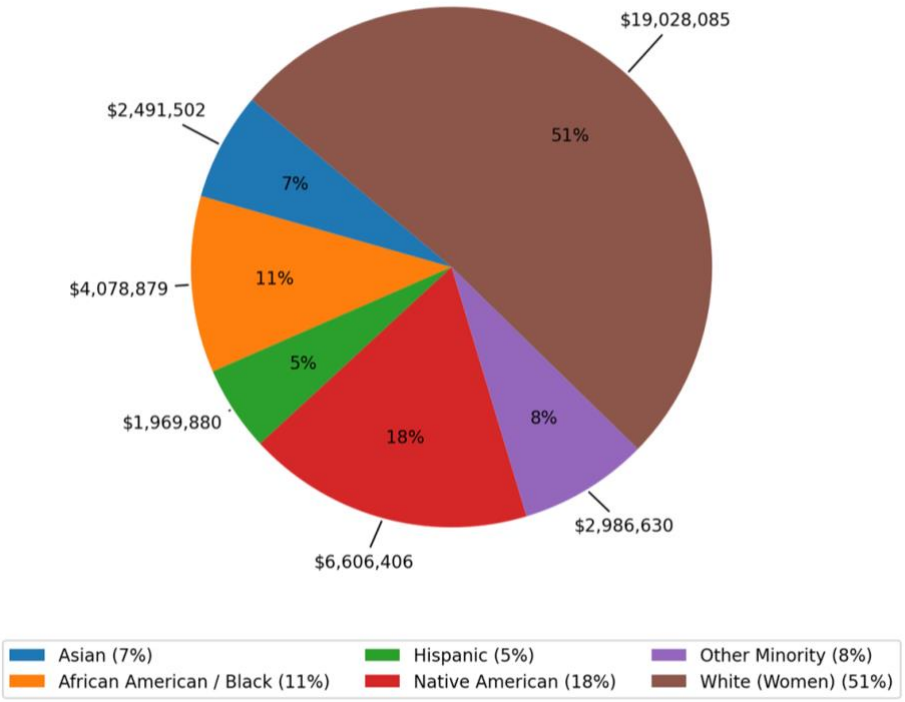
Going forward, SPS may want to strengthen not only how it reports utilization, but also how it evaluates which outreach, technical assistance, and preconstruction practices are most consistently associated with stronger WMBE participation across projects. Those efforts may not always produce immediate contract awards, but they can help build the bridge between community-based businesses and the contracting opportunities created by SPS capital projects.

Figure 7: FY 2024-2025 Breakdown of WMBE Participation by Ethnicity



This chart shows the distribution of WMBEs participating on SPS projects. White-women-owned firms represent the largest share, accounting for 61 firms, followed by African American/Black-owned firms (24), Asian-owned firms (17), Hispanic-owned firms (16), and Native American-owned firms (11). Ten firms identified as Other Minority.

Figure 8: FY 2024-2025 WMBE Payment Distribution by Ethnicity



During the FY 2024–2025, SPS construction projects reported **$37.2 million in payments to WMBE** firms, with utilization distributed across multiple ownership categories.

White-women-owned firms accounted for the largest share of payments at 51% ($19.03 million). Native American-owned firms represented the second largest share at 18% ($6.61 million). Together, these two categories accounted for nearly 70% of total WMBE payments during the reporting period.

African American/Black-owned firms received 11% of payments ($4.08 million), while Asian-owned firms accounted for 7% ($2.49 million). Hispanic-owned firms represented 5% of total payments ($1.97 million). Firms categorized as Other Minority accounted for 8% of total payments ($2.99 million).

Memorial Stadium Replacement Project

The Memorial Stadium replacement project, which entered construction near the close of the FY 2024–2025 reporting period, is another SPS project where important SCWA groundwork was established during preconstruction. Many of the successful behaviors identified in this report, early contractor engagement, advance outreach, and intentional planning for workforce and community access, began taking shape before major hiring and procurement activity were fully underway. Located at Seattle Center, Memorial Stadium is a partnership among Seattle Public Schools, the City of Seattle, and One Roof Stadium Partnership, with SPS retaining ownership and priority student use of the facility.

Sellen Construction began work July 1, 2025, with completion anticipated in March 2027. One early success on the project was the hiring of SPS Pre-Apprentice graduate Mark Sanchez by Sellen Construction (right).



SPS Skilled Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Jay Connolly, SPS Pre-Apprentice Coordinator

SPS students engage with the construction careers pathway across multiple stages, beginning with middle school STEM exposure, exploratory high-school wood and metal shop courses, and culminating in advanced half-day training programs. These advanced pathways include residential construction at the Skills Center and the SPS Skilled Trades Pre-Apprenticeship, offered at North and South Seattle locations.

Skilled Trades Pre-Apprenticeship at SPS



Launched in 2021, the **SPS Skilled Trades Pre-Apprenticeship** serves as the instructional entry point of the SCWA. Through this Washington State L&I-recognized training program, students earn Priority Hire eligibility and direct exposure to union apprenticeship pathways. To date, **18 program graduates are active apprentices across eight trades**, with **six having worked on SPS SCWA projects**. In the 2025 graduating class, **36 percent of students transitioned directly into registered apprenticeship programs,** demonstrating the program's strongest impact at the point of workforce entry.

During their senior year, student pre-apprentices spend a half-school-day block studying math and science in the context of a dozen trades taught by our all-journeyman instructor team, guest instructors from our SPS construction projects, trade union partners, and graduate guest instructor apprentices sponsored by their employers to teach units aligned to their expertise.

In addition to applied math and science credit, students earn college credit in welding and complete industry-recognized certifications, including OSHA-10, First Aid/CPR, flagger certification, and forklift operation. Training is deliberately experiential, including rigging instruction using a gantry crane, excavator operation, and other trade-aligned skill development designed to prepare students for immediate entry-level employment or apprenticeship placement.

Expanding Opportunities

Beginning next year, SPS will add an additional morning cohort in South Seattle, expanding program capacity from **30 to 50 pre-apprentices annually**. Students from **12 of SPS's 16 high schools** have participated through cross-enrollment. The program is closely tied to the SCWA, which has enabled

strong graduate placement, consistent industry participation, employer-sponsored guest instruction, and curriculum design informed directly by workforce demand. These industry relationships also support field trips, job shadowing, and early exposure to active job sites.

The SPS Skilled Trades Pre-Apprenticeship illustrates SCWA's most effective role, **not as a redistribution method within the existing workforce, but as a structured-on ramp into the construction industry.**

Community Outreach, Awareness, and WMBE Engagement

Virginia Bethea, SCWA Coordinator

For Virginia Bethea, workforce equity is not an abstract policy goal-it began as a promise to students.

Long before she stepped into her districtwide role, Bethea stood alongside students at Rainier Beach High School advocating for equitable facilities and opportunity. That effort led to the successful rebuilding of the school. The Rainier Beach project demonstrated how capital investments could generate not only new infrastructure, but also real workforce pathways for the surrounding community. Today, as the SCWA Coordinator for SPS, she is building on that community-driven model to develop a districtwide workforce strategy that will be embedded across all major capital projects.

From Project Advocacy to Systems Alignment

The Rainier Beach rebuild became a proof point: when students, families, contractors, and labor partners are intentionally aligned, construction projects can create economic mobility. Bethea ensures that this alignment is intentional, consistent, and accountable across all capital projects.

Since assuming this new role, she has begun providing day-to-day oversight of SCWA implementation across active projects, setting workforce expectations for contractors and subcontractors, monitoring apprentice utilization, and tracking Priority Hire commitments. Beyond these core responsibilities, she is actively developing internal systems to strategically align opportunity creation with SCWA compliance processes. In this work, Bethea focuses on:

- Working in partnership with City of Seattle FAS, which collects and provides SCWA data, allowing her to monitor what is working and what is not, ensure equity commitments are measurable and accountable, and strengthen program integrity and transparency.
- Ensuring workforce participation data is accurately captured through the SPS Verification Link
- Documenting and monitoring apprentice utilization goals
- Measuring contractor performance against established SCWA benchmarks
- Expanding WMBE participation by designing intentional access points within capital projects
- Building strong relationships and guiding contractors, partners, and participants through workforce and contracting processes

Bethea ensures that equity commitments are not only aspirational—they are measurable, accountable, and sustainable. This approach strengthens program integrity, improves transparency, and allows SPS leadership to assess outcomes in real time while maintaining alignment with broader City standards.

Launching the SCWA Workforce Hubs

Building on lessons from Rainier Beach High School, Virginia Bethea has led the development of the SPS SCWA Workforce Hubs — a pilot aimed at providing centralized, physical and digital access points to connect students, families, and community members to workforce pathways on SPS and partner projects. The hubs are designed to combine in-person support with digital tools to reach former SPS students, wage earners, and WMBEs, offering real-time access to career pathways,

project opportunities, and resources to help individuals and businesses navigate entry into the construction and workforce industry.

Developing these types of systems takes time. Creating an impactful pilot requires both funding and community investment. Bethea is actively partnering with local organizations and stakeholders to contribute time, expertise, and resources to make the hubs successful. Beyond exposure, the hubs are integrated with SCWA compliance systems, linking student participation to tracked apprenticeship utilization and Priority Hire benchmarks-creating a full circle from outreach to placement.

A Tiered Pilot Model for Impact

- Tier 1— Awareness: Outreach and storytelling to introduce students and families to available opportunities.
- Tier 2 — Engagement: Hub-based exposure events and career exploration with industry and labor partners.
- Tier 3 — Connection: Direct pathways into pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, certifications, and union placements.
- Tier 4 — WMBE Opportunities: Intentional pathways for WMBE businesses, integrating them early in SPS project planning to ensure meaningful participation and equitable contracting opportunities.

Each tier is designed not only to broaden access but also to connect directly to workforce data and compliance tracking, ensuring measurable, accountable outcomes. This structured, multi-tiered approach transforms what began as student advocacy at Rainier Beach into a scalable, districtwide system of opportunity-aligning exposure, engagement, and connection with equity and workforce development goals across all SPS capital projects.

Strengthening Labor Partnerships

Collaboration remains central to Bethea's approach. SPS continues to engage labor partners and workforce intermediaries, prioritizing the district's pre-apprenticeship program and partnering with unions like IBEW Local 46 for exposure events and pathway development—serving as a model for engagement with other labor partners. These current partnerships are an asset, helping ensure that student access translates into real apprenticeship placements, which are tracked and validated within SCWA compliance systems. Under the guidance of Capital Projects & Planning, the evolution of SCWA reflects a shift from compliance-only oversight to an integrated workforce strategy. Where the Rainier Beach High School project demonstrated what was possible at a single site, today's SCWA framework ensures that every SPS capital project:

- Expands workforce access.
- Tracks and verifies equity commitments.
- Aligns contractor performance with district goals.
- Connects outreach directly to measurable hiring outcomes.

SPS Capital Projects is not only building schools — we are building accountable systems of access, ensuring that public investment delivers both infrastructure and opportunity for generations to come.

Next Phase of SCWA Implementation

These outreach and engagement efforts create the foundation for workforce and contracting outcomes on SPS projects. The next phase of SCWA should focus on strengthening the hiring and procurement practices that turn those early connections into actual workforce participation and WMBE contracting opportunities.

After four full fiscal years of implementation, the SCWA has shown which practices are most consistently associated with stronger results. Projects that engage contractors early, connect with workforce training programs, and make intentional hiring and procurement decisions tend to create the most meaningful access to construction careers and contracting opportunities. The next phase of the program should focus on applying those practices more consistently across SPS projects.

As SPS and labor partners look ahead to negotiations on the next SCWA agreement in March 2027, the lessons from this report can help shape the program's next phase. The SCWA is best understood as a bridge between SPS capital projects and the students, workers, families, and businesses those projects are intended to benefit. The work ahead is to strengthen that bridge by improving the hiring, outreach, and procurement practices that connect community to the construction careers and contracting opportunities created by SPS Capital Projects.