

Executive Order Signed—Mayor Peduto wants to increase minority participation in construction work/unions

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Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto has issued two executive orders designed to increase minority participation on city construction projects and increase the number of minorities in union training programs.

The first one calls for a single Project Labor Agreement with the trade unions covering all city construction projects—totaling \$1.1 billion in the current budget—valued at \$500,000 or more. It will require at least 12 percent minority participation on the actual job site. This is over and above the city's Minority- and Women-owned contracting goals of 18 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

“We’re going to show that we value workers,” said Peduto at the May 29 press announcement at the City-County Building, Downtown. “And we’re going to need a lot more of them. I’d rather get them from Homewood and the Hill than Ohio or Delaware.”

The second order creates a Workforce Development Fund to increase recruitment and enrollment in trade union training programs, creating a pipeline to bring more minorities and women into the trades. The fund would be seeded with \$250,000 in city funds and another \$100,000 from the Pittsburgh Regional Building Trades Council.

“We believe these two steps are raising the bar for city construction projects and building a pipeline to the worksite for people who have traditionally been excluded,” said Peduto.

“Additionally, Councilmen Corey O’Connor and Danny Lavelle will be working to write legislation making this part of the city code—so it lasts longer than just one mayor.”

County Councilman DeWitt Walton, who is also vice president of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, said he was proud to stand with the mayor as he made the announcement. The Randolph Institute has been training African American youth for trade union careers for more than 20 years.

“It is with distinct pleasure that I stand with the mayor today, and I want to echo what state Rep. Ed Gainey has said, that if you want to fix what’s wrong—poverty, drug, violence, lack of housing—raise the per capita income,” Walton said. “People who look like me have dreams. People who look like me have aspirations. We just want a fair shake.”

Peduto said he hoped others, like Allegheny County, and entities such as UPMC and Allegheny Health Network—which together are projected to spend more than \$3 billion on construction in the next five years—would follow the city’s lead. He said he would also like to see the boards of the city’s authorities, including the Water and Sewer Authority and the Urban Redevelopment Authority, enact similar initiatives to cover their much-larger construction budgets.

Peduto then turned questions over to Community Affairs Officer Grant Gittlen, who said the PSAs were unique in that they covered all city contracting going forward; and had the job site participation requirement.

“Previously, all PLAs were done on a project-by-project basis, and frankly the actual job-site participation was nowhere near 12 percent. So we think this will be a significant advancement,” he said.

The executive orders were the result of work done during the past year by multiple city departments and its Construction Industry Task Force along with City Council, trade unions, and workforce development partners such as the Randolph Institute, Community Empowerment Association, Partners4Work and the Energy and Innovation Center.