



## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

*“This diversity and full inclusion effort is about making sure that the IBEW genuinely represents the interests of every single worker in our industries. It’s about ensuring that people entering the workforce today – members of one of the most diverse generations in history – feel that they have a place in the IBEW.”*

— International President  
Lonnie R. Stephenson



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# IBEW POLICY BRIEF

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Biden-Harris administration has put diversity, equity and inclusion at the top of their agenda since day one. In his first executive order as President, President Biden declared his administration’s commitment to “advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.” In his American Jobs Plan, President Biden outlined the critical need to provide opportunities for and access to good-quality jobs, emphasizing that such opportunities and access are “especially important for workers of color and for women, who have endured discrimination and systematic exclusion from economic opportunities for generations.”

As one of the largest unions in North America, the IBEW has a key role to play in helping the administration meet and exceed these objectives. The IBEW is committed to facilitating the growth of the middle class and fostering a culture that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion as integral parts of ensuring industry viability.

### IBEW’s Diversity Efforts

Especially in recent years, the IBEW has engaged in a number of efforts to improve diversity and inclusion in our union.

### IBEW Strong

The IBEW believes in addressing all forms of inequity by organizing and supporting workers of all backgrounds, including those who have historically been the most under-represented throughout all IBEW sectors. To that end, the IBEW created the IBEW Strong initiative to support diversity, equity and inclusion and create opportunities for people from all backgrounds.

### IBEW Standing Committee on Diversity and Full Inclusion

The IBEW Standing Committee on Diversity and Full Inclusion grew out of a unanimously passed resolution at the 39th International Convention in 2016. The committee includes IBEW officers, leaders, and members from every branch, district and background, including members from the IBEW’s

women's committee, young workers committee and the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC). The officers of the IBEW, along with the IBEW Diversity and Inclusion Committee and a variety of IBEW leaders, worked together to lay the foundation for how this work can be done.

Together, the Standing Committee identified five themes that form the strategic plan to strengthen and grow the IBEW:

1. Organizing/Expanding Membership: Develop and expand outreach, recruitment and marketing programs to young people, nontraditional and historically marginalized communities
2. Education and Training: Deliver training and education programs that address the importance and need for inclusion to all IBEW members and leaders
3. Building Member Activism and Engagement: Offer inclusive opportunities for members to learn and develop leadership skills and foster local union activism
4. Leadership Advancement: Provide opportunities for all local union members to take on leadership roles
5. Replicating Best Practices: Document, share and replicate best practices for creating a stronger IBEW through outreach and inclusion programs

### IBEW and NECA Joint Statement Affirming Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion

In 2020, the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and IBEW issued a joint statement setting forth the organizations' collective commitment to promoting and embracing diversity and inclusion. The IBEW and NECA maintain a zero-tolerance policy against discrimination deeply woven into the industry-wide Code and Standard of Excellence. Through awareness campaigns, training and education, the IBEW and NECA work together to champion policies, practices and initiatives to foster workplaces free from discrimination and grounded in respect and acceptance.

### Pre-Apprenticeships

In 2015, after International President Lonnie Stephenson was elected, he initiated a program with the primary objective of bringing more individuals from underrepresented populations into our apprenticeships. Pre-apprenticeship training involves learning basic electrical-industry standards and job-readiness skills, with employer partners providing workforce knowledge and on-the-job work training. Pre-apprenticeship programs help to improve the retention and completion rates among apprentices from demographic groups that have not historically pursued careers in the electrical industry.

### Improvements in Diversity and Inclusion at the IBEW

A review of diversity within the IBEW between 2015-2019 shows that our efforts are succeeding. During this time period:

- IBEW apprenticeship programs saw a 75% increase in enrollment by minority males
- IBEW apprenticeship programs saw a 90% increase in enrollment by women

### **Biden-Harris Administration's Commitments to Diversity**

### Tackling the Climate Crisis, Creating Good Union Jobs, Achieving Environmental Justice for Historically Disadvantaged Communities

For decades, historically marginalized communities have been disproportionately harmed and overburdened by the effects of pollution and climate change through government failure to invest in critical infrastructure like housing,

transportation, water and wastewater. On January 27, 2021, President Biden issued an executive order aimed at addressing these injustices while tackling climate change and creating good-paying union jobs.

The order calls for a whole-of-government approach to addressing climate change, with a role for all federal agencies and departments to play in the transition to cleaner energy and creates the "Justice40 Initiative," which directs federal agencies to take steps to ensure that at least 40 percent of the benefits from federal investments in clean energy will benefit the disadvantaged communities that have been the most impacted by climate change and pollution.

Justice40 requirements now apply to hundreds of programs across the federal government and to federal investments in clean energy production and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, the remediation and reduction of legacy pollution and the development of clean water infrastructure.

The Justice40 Initiative is a vital step forward on the path to fulfilling the administration's promise of a clean energy revolution that creates good-paying union jobs, builds sustainable infrastructure, and achieves environmental justice for the communities and individuals most impacted by climate change.

### Good Jobs Initiative

The Good Jobs Initiative is an effort led by the Department of Labor to provide information to workers, employers, and government agencies to improve job quality and create access to good jobs that are free from discrimination and harassment for all working people — with an emphasis on people of color, LGBTQ+ people, women, immigrants, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and individuals in rural communities.

The initiative coordinates the pro-worker policies of the Biden-Harris administration under one program to promote good jobs and, subject to legal authority, ensure agencies can implement job quality standards and equitable pathways to family-sustaining union jobs. Specifically, the initiative will focus on empowering workers by:

- Providing easily accessible information to workers about their rights, including the right to bargain collectively and form a union
- Engaging with employer stakeholders as partners to improve job quality and workforce pathways to good jobs; and
- Supporting partnerships across federal agencies and providing technical assistance on grants, contracts, and other investments designed to improve job quality

### DOL and DOT Memorandum of Understanding

As historic investments ramp up as a result of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Department of Labor and the Department of Transportation released an agreement on March 7, 2022 to promote cooperative efforts between the agencies to create and support pathways to millions of good-paying infrastructure and transportation jobs with the free choice to form a union. This effort will place an emphasis on drawing on the strength and creativity of every worker in America and bringing in people who have not had the opportunity to attain good-paying infrastructure jobs.

Importantly, this agreement sets forth the shared goal of DOT and DOL of increasing numbers of underrepresented workers on federal contracts through the use of PLAs and registered apprenticeship programs, with an emphasis on recruiting, training and retaining a more diverse workforce.

In the MOU, DOT and DOL pledge to:

- Integrate job quality, labor standards and equal employment opportunity standards across all transportation infrastructure grants
- Assist state and local government partners and private-sector industry who can identify, train, employ, reskill, and retain a diverse infrastructure workforce
- Engage stakeholders and develop strategic partnerships with organizations including coalitions that represent underrepresented populations
- Support proven workforce development strategies that train the workers needed for successful project delivery (project labor agreements, registered apprenticeship programs)

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**Policy Expertise**

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