DIVERSIFYING THE CONSTRUCTION TRADES

Charlotte Keith & John Goldstein
ABOUT INVESTIGATIVE POST

- Non-profit
- Partners
- Funders
- Events
WHY NOW?

• Construction boom

• Major publicly funded projects

• Unfinished business from schools project
UB MEDICAL SCHOOL
HARBORCENTER
SOLARCITY
DEMOGRAPHICS

• “Minorities” are the majority in Buffalo
• 18 percent of Erie County’s workforce
• Around 11 percent of building trades membership
EXISTING POLICIES

• City, county, and state set workforce diversity goals
• City & county apprenticeship laws
• MWBE
BUT...  

- Different agencies, differing goals  
- Lack of guidance over how to follow state rules  
- Lack of transparency around participation  
- City has failed to enforce local laws
WHY?

• Disconnect
• History of mistrust
• Apprenticeship rules
• Barriers
WHY UNIONS?

• Existing training programs
• Wages & benefits
• Job quality
• History of work on public projects
IT’S NOT JUST BUFFALO

Cities across the country face similar problems...

But change is possible:

• Los Angeles
• Minnesota & Vikings stadium
• Milwaukee
IT CAN BE DONE

• Pre-apprenticeship programs with unions
• Enforcement/improvement of existing laws
• More transparency
• Major projects as catalysts
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