PROGRAM OVERVIEW

LEAN IN CIRCLES FOR UNION TRADESWOMEN

Everything you need to run your Circle meetings
Welcome to your Lean In Circle!
LeanIn.org, North America’s Building Trades Unions (NABTU), and Build Together are excited to launch this new program to connect and empower women in the trades. We’ve been working hard to develop this program specifically for tradeswomen, and we can’t wait to share it with you over the next six months. There is power in women coming together—and we’re looking forward to starting this journey with you!
Thank you for volunteering to be a Circle moderator. Your leadership is key to the success of your Circle!

About Lean In Circles
Lean In Circles are small groups of women who meet regularly to support each other and learn new skills together. Your Circle is a safe space to connect with other tradeswomen, speak openly about the challenges you’re facing, and build the skills and confidence you need to navigate bias at work.

What to expect
MONTHLY MEETINGS
You’ll join a Circle with 8 to 12 other tradeswomen. Your group will meet once a month for 6 months.
CUSTOM MATERIALS
Each meeting features activities and tools created specifically for women in the trades.
WIDER NETWORK
You’ll be invited to our private Facebook group for tradeswomen participating in the program.

Your Role as a Moderator
We’ll give you everything you need to run productive and supportive meetings and make this a positive experience for all Circle members. This starts with creating a safe space for women to share their experiences and making sure everyone’s voice is heard.

In each monthly meeting, you’ll lead an activity and a guided discussion to help your Circle members discover common experiences, learn to handle bias, and build skills for succeeding at work. As a moderator, you’ll keep time for activities, ensure everyone has a turn to share, and keep discussions on track.

To ensure your meetings run smoothly, we recommend you spend 15 to 20 minutes before each meeting to get familiar with the agenda, activities, and materials.

This box contains everything your Circle will need for the next six months. There is one envelope for each month containing the materials for that meeting. We recommend bringing the full box with you to each meeting to make sure you have everything you need in one place.

If you have any questions about running the activities or managing your Circle, visit the Facebook group for Circle moderators.

About Tradeswomen
Understanding gender bias can be crucial for tradeswomen. 

Women in the trades face gender bias. When women find themselves overqualified for the job, they are often mistaken for apprentices, even though they are journeymen. These circumstances may be perceived as belonging to men, so tradeswomen have to work even harder to prove their skillset, and they may be mistaken for someone more junior, forced to provide more evidence of their competence, and have their experience underestimated while their male counterparts are overestimated. 

It is not just the gender bias that women in the trades deal with. Workers in the trades tend to be seen as belonging to men, so tradeswomen have to work even harder to prove themselves. Women are often not given the chances to succeed at work. They are far more likely to experience everyday sexism—also known as conditions they deserve.

The Lean In Circle program is designed specifically for tradeswomen, and we can’t wait to share it with you.

Building skills: How to ask for what you need (and have earned)
Practice ways to help you get the opportunities, flexibility, and respect you deserve.

Building skills: How to be taken seriously at work
Talk about obstacles that may prevent you from being taken seriously at work and explore ways to overcome them.

Navigating bias: The “Only” experience
Learn about the effects of being an “Only” on your jobsite and practice strategies for navigating these experiences.

Connecting with your Circle: Getting to know each other
Get to know the members of your Circle and begin to build trust as a group.

Connecting with your Circle: Shared experiences
Discover what experiences you share with your Circle members.

Navigating bias: When your qualifications or abilities are questioned
Discuss the experience of having to prove yourself again and again at work; and practice strategies for handling these situations.

TOPIC BY MONTH | MATERIALS IN YOUR BOX
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MONTH 1 | Connecting with your Circle: Getting to know each other
Get to know the members of your Circle and begin to build trust as a group.
Moderator Guide | Intro to Circles Handouts | Connection Cards
MONTH 2 | Connecting with your Circle: Shared experiences
Discover what experiences you share with your Circle members.
Moderator Guide | Situation Cards (25)
MONTH 3 | Navigating bias: When your qualifications or abilities are questioned
Discuss the experience of having to prove yourself again and again at work; and practice strategies for handling these situations.
Moderator Guide | Learning Handouts | Situation Cards (10)
MONTH 4 | Navigating bias: The “Only” experience
Learn about the effects of being an “Only” on your jobsite and practice strategies for navigating these experiences.
Moderator Guide | Learning Handouts | Situation Cards (10) | Strategy Card Box
MONTH 5 | Building skills: How to be taken seriously at work
Talk about obstacles that may prevent you from being taken seriously at work and explore ways to overcome them.
Moderator Guide | Learning Handouts | Situation Cards (10) | Strategy Cards Box
MONTH 6 | Building skills: How to ask for what you need (and have earned)
Practice ways to help you get the opportunities, flexibility, and respect you deserve.
Moderator Guide | Learning Handouts | Situation Cards (10) | Strategy Card Box