



The Respectful Workplace Initiative

Solutions for workforce retention in Oregon's construction industry

A respectful workplace is one in which all employees feel safe, valued, and treated with respect. Unfortunately, on many construction sites, harassment and discrimination are still prevalent. As a result, the construction industry struggles to retain employees who are key to addressing the industry's persistent labor shortage.

While many construction companies have taken initiative to improve job site culture, the industry is hampered by a lack of tools to evaluate the progress companies are making toward establishing a culture of respect in the workplace.

The Respectful Workplace Initiative addresses this challenge; it offers tools and resources to develop and retain the construction workforce. The Initiative has two components: the Respectful Workplace Climate Scale and the Respectful Workplace Resource Hub.

Respectful Workplace Climate Scale

The Respectful Workplace Climate Scale is a scientifically validated measurement and predictive tool that gauges workplace culture through employees' perspectives. The Scale was developed and validated by Dr. Emily Huang at the Climate Safety Laboratory at Oregon Health and Science University. Using the tool, organizations can address key dimensions of worker retention, including: discrimination, organizational justice and fairness, bullying and harassment and workplace civility.

The Scale can be used to:

- Evaluate the status of your organization and recommend areas in need of improvement
- Establish a benchmark against other organizations and track the status and progress of your organization
- Validate the effects of your efforts to build a respectful workplace



Respectful Workplace Resource Hub

The Respectful Workplace Resource Hub is an online repository of evidence-based and evidence-informed tools, training, and frameworks for construction companies seeking to adopt and implement respectful workplace practices. The Resource Hub is designed to address challenges highlighted by the Respectful Workplace Climate Scale.



For more information on the Respectful Workplace Initiative, please contact Erin Flynn at: rwi@ohsu.edu



A photograph of two construction workers in the foreground, wearing hard hats and high-visibility vests, looking at a set of plans. In the background, a construction site with a large piece of machinery is visible under a clear sky.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Respectful Workplace Initiative?

The Respectful Workplace Initiative is a partnership between the Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) to create new tools and resources that develop and retain a construction workforce. The Initiative has two components: 1) Respectful Workplace Climate Scale, and 2) Respectful Workplace Resource Hub. These tools will work in tandem to evaluate and improve construction work site culture, ultimately increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the construction industry.

Why was the Respectful Workplace Initiative developed?

ODOT and BOLI seek to stabilize the construction labor force through recruitment and retention. Retaining employees in construction has proven to be challenging due to discrimination, bullying, and harassment on construction job sites.

What is the Respectful Workplace Climate Scale?

The Respectful Workplace Climate Scale is a scientifically validated and predictive tool that measures employees' perceptions of company policies, procedures, and practices as they relate to building a respectful workplace. The Scale draws on over 40 years of research in the safety climate arena to address key dimensions of discrimination: organizational justice and fairness, bullying and harassment and workplace civility.

What does the Respectful Workplace Climate Scale offer organizations?

The goal of this tool is to help organizations: 1) evaluate their current status regarding respectful workplace practices and propose areas for improvement 2) serve as a benchmark relative to other organizations as well as an internal yardstick to track progress, and 3) validate the effects of respectful workplace interventions.

What is the Respectful Workplace Resource Hub?

The Respectful Workplace Resource Hub is designed to address areas of improvement identified by the Respectful Workplace Climate Scale. The online hub is home to evidence-based respectful workplace training, resources, and frameworks to support organizations in implementing and adopting respectful workplace practices.

Why should our company consider utilizing the Respectful Workplace Scale and Resource Hub?

Research shows that the implementation of respectful workplace practices contributes to improved physical health outcomes, better mental well-being, lower turnover rates, and higher levels of job performance.