



Task 23-3: Opportunities to Enhance Trucking Training, Mentorship, Education, and Advancement and Outreach Programs That Would Increase the Number of Women in the CMV Industry

Task 23-3: Discuss examples across the industry where women drivers and employers are already creating opportunities for developing the next generation of women in the CMV industry and promoting the advancement of their careers. FMCSA asks WOTAB to focus on independent operators and carriers that have successful initiatives in place for mentorship and advancement of women. FMCSA asks WOTAB to identify best practices and strategies that contribute to these successes. In its recommendations, FMCSA asks WOTAB to discuss how employers and the industry can create workplace environments that promote the advancement of women drivers.

I. Opportunities

A. Outreach Programs

1. WOTAB seeks to define a range of opportunities for women to advance that could address the following areas: artificial intelligence (AI) technology, driver shortages, financial hardship, and entry-level training.
 - a. Difficulties persist surrounding wage gaps between men and women, wage growth, and quality of life for women drivers.
 - b. Promoting the stories of active successful women drivers offers potential recruits a career path to follow.
2. Providing additional educational and outreach resources for obtaining a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) could open doors to the industry.
3. WOTAB emphasizes leveraging and mapping successful commercial motor vehicle (CMV)-related digital hubs and websites providing resources, information, and events for potential women drivers.
4. Conferences and established events introduce women to trucking careers and allow them to interface with industry leaders. Person-to-person advocacy is critical.
 - a. The Chattanooga Trucking Event, She Trucking Expo, Job Corps, National Truck Driver Appreciation Week, and Minnesota Trucking Association events are examples of successful outreach.
 - b. Members note the success of American Trucking Associations' (ATA) all-women America's Road Team (ART) captains, including a story of an individual ART captain eliciting enthusiastic responses from women students during a trip to Maryland.
 - c. WOTAB recommends that the ten women competitors at the ATA National Truck Driving Championships be recognized as industry leaders.
 - d. Brenny Transportation, Inc. conducts successful interactions with the Girl Scouts of America aimed at facilitating future cooperation and coordination with the trucking industry.
5. Trucking associations capable of creating a beneficial network for drivers must cease adversarial interactions with each other and collaborate. A coast-to-coast support system of associations could reduce driver isolation.

6. Events featuring truck walk-throughs and pre/post-trip inspection demonstrations give CDL and non-CDL holders an introduction to both a working truck and the trucking industry.
 - a. Members specify this type of “touch-the-truck” event as a successful endeavor.
 - b. WOTAB seeks to leverage the “touch-the-truck” event template nationally.
7. An opportunity exists within the school bus industry to advocate the potential opportunities afforded by a career in trucking or busing. The large numbers of woman drivers regularly interact with young women who may show interest in the industry.
8. Many potential new women drivers seek industry information at their closest Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) or State Driver Licensing Agency (SDLA). WOTAB recognizes that making CDL Handbooks available at every DMV and SDLA location would benefit interested drivers.
9. Women’s shelters represent an area of opportunity for outreach and communication. Obtaining a CDL could offer opportunities for women for a career and the ability to achieve financial stability.

B. Scholarships/Mentorship

1. Community support makes scholarship programs successful. WOTAB seeks to understand what resources organizations across the country offer to potential drivers.
2. The African American Women’s Trucking Association provides scholarships to women as part of a driver development program. Recipients receive mentorship and training to facilitate transitioning into real careers.
3. Trucking schools require unified communications to implement grants and mentorship programs more effectively.
4. National Truck Driver Appreciation Week interacts successfully with trucking schools and companies.
5. The American Trucking Associations will launch its mentorship program in fall 2023.
6. The North Carolina Trucking Association recently debuted a simulator device that provides hands-on interaction to children and adults.
7. WOTAB seeks to facilitate inter-association awareness and collaboration.
8. Trucking schools and industry organizations require financial support to provide and market opportunities for women drivers.
 - a. Areas to consider funding include curriculum, simulators, and educational materials supporting women entering trucking careers.
 - b. Some organizations collaborate with local colleges/universities to secure space for training.
 - c. Funding should not overlook smaller schools and training operations.
9. Many individuals use The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant for entry into trucking school.
10. 3 Girls Trucking Academy provides scholarships to people typically overlooked by the industry.
 - a. Strong potential candidates sometimes cannot afford training.
 - b. Out of 700 students from the training school, more than 640 found placement in industry jobs.

11. A She Trucking survey asked, “How do you pay for your school?” More than 300 women submitted different methods of addressing the cost burden, including WIOA, Department of Labor, contracts, paying on their credit card, and more.

C. Independent Operators and Carriers

1. Stronger relationships between carriers and training schools could usher more women into the industry.
2. Placing employees into roles that complement their talents bears as much importance as initial industry recruitment.
3. Women commonly leave CDL school with their licenses but then struggle to find a carrier to support them when they possess no experience. Carriers need to invest in women.
4. A member provided an example of a carrier offering short-term contracts to drivers due to their view that drivers were “temporary” until AI technology replaced them. This misinformed philosophy deters recruitment and retention.
5. Apprenticeship programs introduce women to all aspects of the industry. Reviewing and documenting successful programs employed by companies would assist development of federal best practices or recommendations.
6. WOTAB seeks to spotlight carriers and operators producing best practices in any communications hubs, online portals, or distributed communications.

D. Promoting Career Advancement

1. Trucking’s role in the American economy needs to be communicated as a foundational to the strength of the nation.
2. Resources should communicate trucking careers as achievable and accessible.
3. The military and the formerly incarcerated are unique groups requiring adaptive communication strategies and considerations.
 - a. Helmets to Hardhats and other organizations help service members transition into new careers.
 - b. Advocate for knowledge test waivers when appropriate for former military and service members.
4. Fast Forward Transportation is a company that develops training for organizations.
5. Utilizing social media and other modern communication strategies enhances traditional outreach methods.
 - a. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and other social media platforms.
 - b. Social media promotion of career fairs.
6. CDL costs create a barrier. A member provided a common-place scenario of recruits who need to quit their current job, pay for their CDL training, and then find a carrier that fits their needs and those of their family. This process makes the career unachievable for many women.
7. Computer applications (or ‘apps’) are a possible avenue to continue marketing the career and developing communications with potential drivers.

II. Recommendations for opportunities and outreach

- A. Promote placement centers as a place to raise industry awareness.

- B. Encourage collaboration between FMCSA/DOT with organizations working with school counselors or associations.
- C. Partner with schools and educational organizations on mentorship efforts.
- D. Initiate a federally driven marketing campaign supporting the career path for women into the industry. Consistent messaging is required to avoid disparate messaging between states, companies, and other industry participants.
- E. Increase FMCSA funding for grant and initiatives for organizations elevating women and their careers.
- F. Direct federal funds to support grant programs that awards mentor support.
- G. Engage with Girl Scouts of America and coordinate collaboration and mentorship.
- H. Initiate communication and recruitment of women in tribal nations.
- I. Provide funding opportunities to secondary and community colleges for simulators to complement academic certification.
- J. Leverage federal funding to create an online hub serving as an entryway into associations and career opportunities.
- K. Develop training framework and guidelines regarding AI's use in trucking.
- L. Determine feasible communication channels to women's shelters (and similar organizations) and introduce trucking as a career pathway for their residents.
- M. Promote recruitment of women leaving the military and incarceration.
- N. Develop a comprehensive listing of the industry's careers and matching resources.
- O. Provide training, awareness and recruitment materials and resources for overlooked or underrepresented areas of employment for women.
- P. Consider mandating education as part of licensing for all motor vehicles focused on road safety with large trucks.

III. Recommendations for creating workplace environments that promote the advancement of women drivers

- A. Require employers to develop and maintain Professional Development Plans to promote career enhancement.
- B. Showcase woman drivers in different workplace environments.
- C. Create a platform like the "Uber" model, which allows drivers more flexibility to manage their own schedule and shipments.
- D. Allow and encourage driver access to industry associations.
- E. Use data and long-term planning to prepare for AI's adoption.
- F. Provide funding to leverage a recruitment bonus for referrals of women drivers into the industry.
- G. Assess examples of company ownership-sharing examples and examine whether ownership-sharing positively impacts driver treatment and retention.
- H. Develop a public service announcement showcasing trucking as a great career for women, by utilizing women-based examples.
- I. Demonstrate that the CMV industry offers careers that match the needs of a diverse set of candidates.
- J. State DMVs and State Driver Licensing Agencies (SDLA) should employ trained women staff members and provide training materials and CDL handbooks in all locations.
- K. Provide support to groups and individuals securing space or real estate to facilitate training and recruitment of women drivers.