



*Move Illinois:
The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 28, 2016

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY ADOPTS REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSE BUSINESSES TO COMPETE FOR AGENCY CONTRACTS

Tollway remains committed to providing level playing field for firms owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway Board of Directors today reaffirmed the agency’s commitment to diversity by adopting recommendations from the Tollway’s Diversity Study Report that will reduce barriers for small, veteran-, minority- and women-owned firms competing for Tollway contracts.

The report contains 27 recommendations describing steps the Tollway is taking, plans to take in the future or will study further to increase participation by diverse businesses in all aspects of its operations, including its 15-year, \$12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*.

“Implementing these recommendations will build on the steps the Tollway already has taken to be more inclusive and to eliminate barriers that prevent firms from doing business with us,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. “We are committed to diversity and as we move forward we will consider other actions that may be necessary to support our efforts.”

The Tollway has worked successfully to increase access to opportunities for disadvantaged, minority- and women-owned business enterprises (D/M/WBE) and veteran-owned firms, and is continuing to expand and refine those efforts by using additional programs, extensive community partnerships and new structures within the agency, including a Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Between January 1, 2011 and June 30, 2016, the Tollway paid \$3.8 billion on construction and professional services contracts, with D/M/WBE businesses being paid \$855 million of that amount, or 22.5 percent.

The Diversity Study Report includes recommendations made by the Tollway’s 2015 Disparity Study and the agency’s Diversity Advisory Council, which is comprised of community and industry members. The Disparity Study concluded the Tollway needs to continue its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program to remove obstacles limiting diverse businesses from bidding on construction and professional services contracts awarded by the Tollway.

Some of those recommendations have been implemented, including the unbundling of larger contracts into subcontracts valued at no more than \$5 million each to encourage competition and provide more prime and subcontracting opportunities for small and disadvantaged firms, as well as using set aside construction contracts that are awarded only to registered small businesses.

The Tollway since 2012 has awarded 98 contracts under \$5 million collectively valued at \$231 million. A small business initiative that sets aside contracts generally valued at \$1 million has resulted in the Tollway awarding 30 contracts valued at about \$28 million since 2012. These efforts helped move the

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agency in 2015 from fifth place to first place in the annual ranking of the top 10 agencies participating in the state's Small Business Set-Aside Program.

Additionally, the Tollway's Veterans Business Program has paid about \$28 million to veteran-owned firms between January 2015 and June 2016.

Other recommendations are being put into practice, including the launch of a new Mentor/Protégé Program for construction that will allow small, diverse and veteran-owned construction contractors to partner with larger firms to learn how to become self-sufficient, competitive and profitable businesses.

The Tollway is implementing additional recommendations that include obtaining software to better manage diversity programs and posting online reports detailing contractors' compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) guidelines.

"We are working aggressively to level the playing field so everyone has a fair opportunity to work with Tollway," said Illinois Tollway Board Director Corey Brooks, who chairs the Tollway's Diversity and Inclusion Committee. "These new initiatives will generate additional opportunities for more diverse businesses to provide their skills and experience to the agency, but our efforts to make our contracting process more open and competitive will continue."

Other recommendations that have been proposed and may be implemented in the future include requiring contractors to submit EEO workforce projections before starting on Tollway projects and establishing a new Diversity Advisory Council subcommittee that would bring together trade unions, contractors and industry groups to determine how to create more diverse workforces for Tollway construction projects.

The Tollway also will have the ability to amend the Diversity Study Report and take additional steps in the future to improve its diversity programs.

About Move Illinois

The Illinois Tollway's 15-year, \$12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, will improve mobility, relieve congestion, reduce pollution, create as many as 120,000 jobs and link economies across the Midwest region. *Move Illinois* will address the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system; rebuild and widen the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a state-of-the-art 21st century corridor; construct a new interchange to connect the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57; build a new, all-electronic Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project and fund planning studies for emerging projects.

About the Illinois Tollway

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 292 miles of roadways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway.

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