



Move Illinois:  
*The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*

# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**September 26, 2016**

**ILLINOIS TOLLWAY AND ILLINOIS BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO HOST  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MEET-AND-GREET IN WAUKEGAN**

*Event to provide details on how small, diverse and veteran-owned firms can participate in the program*

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** – The Illinois Tollway in partnership with the Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce (ILBCC) will host a free Technical Assistance Program Meet-and-Greet Event on Thursday, September 29, in Waukegan.

The event will provide an opportunity for disadvantaged, minority- and women-owned business enterprise (D/M/WBE) firms, as well as veteran-owned firms and small businesses, to learn about available technical assistance resources available and how they can apply to the Illinois Tollway's Technical Assistance Program.

The technical assistance program is designed to prepare established businesses, including D/M/WBE firms, veteran-owned firms and small businesses, to participate as prime contractors on heavy highway and vertical construction contracts.

“The Illinois Tollway is committed to creating additional opportunities for small, diverse and veteran-owned businesses and individuals to work with us to design, build and maintain our roadways,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. “While we have made strong progress, we are continuing to expand our efforts to ensure the contractors and firms with which we do business are as diverse as the communities we serve across Northern Illinois.”

The event will be held at the Small Business and Contractor Academy, 668 Lenox Avenue, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Online registration for the event closes at noon on Wednesday, September 28. On-site registration begins at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, September 29.

Speakers will include Illinois Tollway Diversity and Strategic Development Chief Gustavo Giraldo, ILBCC President and Chief Executive Larry Ivory and ILBCC Construction Committee Chairman Calvin Williams.

Participants will learn more about the Tollway's commitment to diversity and its technical assistance program, which is administered by the ILBCC.

The technical assistance program is designed to provide free training and assistance to D/M/WBE firms, small and veteran-owned businesses. Contractors and other businesses participating in the program will receive guidance in financing and bonding assistance options, gaining access to capital, help in gaining prequalification from the Illinois Department of Transportation, one-on-one coaching and accounting system assistance.

The program will provide this in-depth technical assistance to participating small, diverse and veteran contractors for two years or longer.

The technical assistance program is just one of many programs developed by the Tollway to offer more opportunities for small, diverse and veteran-owned businesses to compete for agency contracts. The Tollway is expanding its Small Business Initiative to include for the first time a small business goal on professional services contracts. The Small Business Initiative now sets aside small contracts generally valued at about \$1 million for construction contracts.

The Tollway also is preparing to launch its Partnering for Growth Program for construction firms, which is based on the successful mentoring program the agency already uses for professional engineering services firms.

### **About ILBCC**

The Illinois State Black Chamber of Commerce (ILBCC) is the largest, most active voice for African American businesses in the State of Illinois. Our objective is to help promote job creation and growth among African American businesses. Subsequently, we have emerged to become the leading advocate and go-to source for many state and local entities as well as corporations to promote these very principles. Through our strong membership base and network of local chapters, we proactively work to promote a healthier business climate and economic empowerment through entrepreneurship.

### **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 interstate tollways 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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