



*Move Illinois:
The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*

NEWS

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**ILLINOIS TOLLWAY RECOGNIZED FOR COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY
BY ILLINOIS HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Hispanic Chamber honors Tollway for expanding Technical Assistance Program

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway will receive the IHCC Government Leadership Award at the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce awards gala in Chicago tonight in recognition of the Tollway's demonstrated commitment to diversity.

The IHCC Government Leadership Award recognizes agencies that have an extensive record of commitment to inclusion and diversity while providing support to Hispanic businesses. The Hispanic Chamber singled out the Tollway for expanding its Technical Assistance Program to increase opportunities for small, diverse and veteran-owned firms to participate in the 15-year, \$14 billion *Move Illinois* capital program.

"This award underscores the Tollway's commitment to inclusion and diversity, and we're proud that others believe our efforts – from our Board of Directors to staff in the field – are making a difference," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. "The Illinois Tollway shares the IHCC's passion to help small and diverse firms succeed because their success is what will help our local and state economies thrive and, in turn, lead to greater competition for Tollway contracts."

The Illinois Tollway created its Technical Assistance Program to prepare emerging businesses as well as established transportation-related construction firms to participate as subcontractors and prime contractors on heavy highway and vertical construction contracts. Participants receive comprehensive, customized business development assistance to build financial understanding and business plan development for increased business stability and growth in the transportation-related construction industry.

Services are customized to the assessed strengths, challenges and needs of participating firms. This includes education, guidance and feedback on general business and construction-specific operations, including strategic planning and assistance with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) pre-qualification application. Technical assistance is designed to help new or emerging businesses strengthen their existing operations and help established businesses gain expertise in new areas so they can expand their operations.

The Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is one of seven organizations working in partnership with the Tollway to manage the Technical Assistance Program at 13 locations throughout Northern Illinois. Since 2013, more than 350 firms have participated in the program.

"IHCC recognizes the Illinois Tollway for its vision and leadership in the effort to build the pipeline of diverse contractors capable of performing quality work on infrastructure projects in Illinois," said IHCC President and CEO Omar Duque. "The Illinois Tollway has been a committed partner in IHCC's small business development programming efforts, including creating opportunities for mentorship to establishing technical assistance. We look forward to continuing working with the Tollway in equipping small business owners with the tools to succeed."

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About Move Illinois

The Illinois Tollway's 15-year, \$12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, is improving mobility, relieving congestion, reducing pollution, creating as many as 120,000 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. The first five years of *Move Illinois* is on schedule and within budget, delivering the rebuilt and widened Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a state-of-the-art 21st century corridor and opening a new interchange connecting the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57. Progress continues on projects addressing the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system, delivering the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project and planning for emerging projects, including reconstruction of the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294).

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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