



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2019

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY CONGRATULATES FIRMS GRADUATING FROM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY IHCC

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway celebrates the leaders of 14 firms graduating from its Technical Assistance Program administered by the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (IHCC) in Chicago.

As part of the graduation on Tuesday, April 30, IHCC also organized a LaunchPad Networking Event in Chicago for the graduates to pitch their businesses and network with prime construction contractors and utilities, as well as representatives from transportation agencies including the Chicago Transit Authority, the City of Chicago and the Illinois Department of Transportation to establish new connections with the goal of building successful teams for future work.

The Technical Assistance Program's newest graduates include 14 Chicago-area firms from various industries, including electrical, landscaping, excavation, concrete and masonry work, commercial cleaning, demolition and remodeling and land acquisition services. Graduates to be recognized for their accomplishments include:

- Mike Seay, Allstate Concrete Cutting – Ingleside
- Alex Quintanilla, Aztech Landscaping – Sandwich
- Saul Marchan, Blu Commercial Cleaning – Chicago
- Bernie McNally, Brophy Excavation – Chicago
- Paul Arnold, Feather Group – Chicago
- Jose Sanchez, JMS Commercial Cleaning – Cicero
- Julie Wrightsman, Maintenance Coatings – South Elgin
- Paul Ruiz, Modern Living Construction & Management – Chicago
- Anthony Griffin, Molite Electric Inc. – Chicago
- Margaret Pawlik, MPZ Masonry Inc. – Chicago
- Luis Ochoa, Ochoa Mechanical Group – Chicago
- Virgil Ramirez, Ramirez Group – Lansing
- Mike Kirkpatrick, Rozalado Services – Chicago
- Ricky Regalado, Rozalado Services – Chicago
- Nicolas Torres, Torres Electrical – Chicago

The Illinois Tollway Technical Assistance Program prepares emerging and established transportation-related construction firms including disadvantaged, minority- and women-owned firms, as well as veteran-owned and small businesses, to participate as prime contractors and subcontractors on highway and vertical construction contracts, including the Tollway 15-year, \$14 billion *Move Illinois* capital program.

As a result of the Tollway's investment, more than 550 bids total have been submitted by clients since 2017, including nearly 210 bids on Tollway projects. These bids submitted on Tollway projects have resulted in 26 firms winning bids as prime or subcontractors on 19 contracts in 2017 and 59 contracts in 2018.

Participants in the Technical Assistance Program 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

Each participant in the program administered by IHCC must have been in business three years or more and earn annual revenue of at least \$250,000. The cohort-based program provided individual companies approximately 30+ hours of strategic one-on-one coaching and a series of group conferences to maximize collaboration and peer feedback from October 2018 to March 2019.

The Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is one of seven organizations that the Tollway partners with on the Illinois Tollway Technical Assistance Program. The program is designed to assist businesses gain the experience and expertise to handle more complex projects while increasing the pool of contractors available to perform work on Tollway projects. There is a total of 12 locations providing technical assistance for emerging businesses in Chicago, Cook County, the south suburbs and Rockford.

About the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

IHCC empowers entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. With decades of combined business experience, IHCC engages entrepreneurs through community advocacy, networking, and innovative one-on-one training designed to help them be leaders and agents of change in today's world. IHCC contributes to the financial strength of the economy by helping businesses create jobs, increase their revenue and be more profitable.

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 294 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.

###