

VISION STATEMENT

The Illinois Tollway Department of Diversity and Strategic Development is a driving force for increasing economic opportunities in the diverse communities we serve.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

The Tollway recognizes the social and economic importance of creating contracting opportunities for disadvantaged, minority- and women-owned businesses (D/M/WBE), as well as for small veteran-owned firms, and ensuring access to job opportunities for underemployed individuals. While our current programs have achieved substantial results – making the Tollway a national leader that serves as a model for other states to follow – we remain focused on removing obstacles to participation, creating new opportunities and providing assistance to increase access.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) PROGRAM

The Illinois Tollway Technical Assistance (TA) Program is designed to prepare established transportation-related construction firms to participate on highway and vertical construction contracts, for D/M/WBE firms, service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSB), veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB) and small businesses.

The TA program is comprised of seven partners who offer a range of services for businesses at 12 locations across the Tollway system. These partners provide programs targeted to their region's needs and objectives, allowing the strongest possible response to any given situation.

The Tollway has served more businesses seeking a broader range of services than ever before. The number of interactions has increased nearly four-fold since the Tollway expanded the program in 2016.

The Tollway is auditing the TA Program to identify what works, what can be improved and what challenges lay ahead. The findings will be made public and will help guide future decisions as the program evolves.

Key accomplishments, since 2015:

- Grown to 7 contractors across the Tollway system from only 2 contractors in 2015.
- More than 430 businesses and individuals served to date (up from 99 in 2013-2014).
- More than 300 bids total have been submitted by TA program participants, with nearly 70 of those bids on Tollway projects.
- Since the expansion of TA contractors in 2016, nearly 250 unique clients have been served, nearly two-thirds of which were African American-owned business owners.



BY THE NUMBERS

Since January 2015, compared to the previous three years:

Total payments to D/M/WBE construction and professional services firms has increased by

57 percent

(\$696.8 million from 2015-17)

Total payments to D/M/WBE construction firms has increased by

81 percent

(\$449.0 million from 2015-17)

Total payments to D/M/WBE professional services firms has increased by

26 percent

(\$247.9 million from 2015-17)

African American payments increased by

142 percent

(\$101.9 million from 2015-17)

Hispanic payments increased by

47 percent

(\$305.5 million from 2015-17)

Asian Indian/Pacific payments increased by

33 percent

(\$107.9 million from 2015-17)

Caucasian Women payments increased by

58 percent

(\$177.0 million from 2015-17)

EARNED CREDIT PROGRAM (ECP)

The Tollway's Earned Credit Program has functioned as an innovative way to reward contractors that hire and retain historically underrepresented men and women for construction industry workforce opportunities. More than 345 men and women have earned more than \$17 million in wages on Tollway projects – money that they may not have otherwise earned if not for the Tollway's commitment to greater inclusion in construction.

The Tollway is exploring additional ways to bolster the program and increase the number of participating firms. Additional changes to Earned Credit Program will be introduced with the launch of the Workforce Development Initiative, as well as the development of other new initiatives.

PARTNERING FOR GROWTH (P4G)

Partnering for Growth (P4G) encourages contractors and professional services firms to assist D/M/WBE firms and VOSBs in remaining self-sufficient, competitive and profitable by serving as mentors providing meaningful knowledge, to protégés in construction, engineering and business.

The Tollway recently expanded P4G to include construction firms. The expansion of the initiative will have similar long-term impact on preparing emerging construction firms to become better businesses and more successfully compete for Tollway work.

These initiatives are most successful when the prime contractor brings a preferred subcontractor to the Tollway with specific goals in mind. As the program continues to grow, future matchmaking opportunities driven by the Technical Assistance Program providers will offer additional ways to pair primes and subs for this program.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE - Fall 2018

The Tollway is working with The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership to provide pre-apprenticeship training and support services throughout the Tollway system to underemployed men and women seeking jobs and career opportunities in the highway construction industry, including members of minority groups, women and veterans. The initiative will increase access to opportunities for disenfranchised individuals to work on Tollway construction projects in jobs including laborers, equipment operators, carpenters, electricians, iron workers and cement masons.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The Tollway is a leading agency in bringing together regional stakeholders to maximize collective investments and increase workforce diversity, especially in the skilled trades.

The Tollway is currently moving ahead on two fronts. We are at the table with the Chicago Transit Authority, Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA), and philanthropic organizations like the MacArthur Foundation, Chicago Community Trust and the Chicago Workforce Funder Alliance to tackle the lack of diversity in skilled trades. The goal is to develop and implement a one, five and ten-year approach to addressing disparities.

Additionally, the Tollway and ComEd are discussing ways to share information and provide additional access to entry-level construction industry opportunities through the Workforce Development Initiative, and ComEd's CONSTRUCT Program which provides training for opportunities such as meter readers, truck drivers, customer service representatives, linemen, and electrical apprentices.

The Tollway Earned Credit Program will now further incentivize contractors to hire and retain eligible individuals by **doubling the maximum amount of bid credits contractors can utilize on Tollway bids**, up to 500,000 credits, depending on the size of the contract.