

BUILDING DIVERSITY—AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH

ODOT is helping to build a skilled, diverse workforce and creating meaningful opportunities for small businesses.

The OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program is part of the Oregon Department of Transportation's 10-year, \$3 billion Oregon Transportation Investment Act. OTIA funds are repairing or replacing hundreds of bridges, paving and maintaining city and county roads, improving and expanding interchanges, adding new capacity to Oregon's highway system, and removing freight bottlenecks statewide. Based on 2008 dollars, about 14 family-wage jobs are sustained for every \$1 million spent on transportation construction in Oregon. Each year during the remainder of the OTIA program, we estimate that construction projects will sustain an average of 4,100 family-wage jobs.

A new approach to expanding participation

- The Oregon Department of Transportation is responding to community and industry feedback and making opportunities to participate in agency work more widely accessible and available to all Oregonians.
- The scope and duration of the OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program offer a unique chance for ODOT to foster a more diverse, experienced workforce and increase opportunities for small businesses that will be assets for Oregon long after the bridge program is complete.
- Using a combination of outreach and compliance monitoring, ODOT proactively informed Oregon businesses and individuals about work on the bridge program and continues to monitor the progress of those hired. The aim is not only to expand the diversity of participants but also to build the number of companies and individuals ready to tackle heavy highway construction projects.

Expanding the number of prequalified design firms

- The bridge program is one of only a few programs nationwide to track the participation of design firms in addition to that of construction firms.
- ODOT set an aspirational target of 15 percent for the participation of disadvantaged, minority-owned, woman-owned and emerging small businesses in the design contracting of the bridge program and wrote that target into the design contracts.
- As of November 2008, bridge program staff had successfully prequalified approximately 177 firms that prime contractors could draw on to fill their needs for specialty subcontractors. Of these, 54 are certified as DMWESBs and 29 have been awarded contracts totaling more than \$19 million. As of November 2008, more than 53 percent of DMWESBs on the prequalified list had received work.
- In the first two years of the bridge program, more than 40 percent of all design and program management contracts were awarded to DMWESBs.



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- Six months before a project goes to bid, ODOT notifies small businesses and certified firms so they can better prepare to competitively bid on bridge program projects in their area. After the initial notification, ODOT also provides 90-day and 30-day reminders using a variety of outreach methods.

Increasing participation of construction firms

- ODOT established aspirational targets for the participation of woman- and minority-owned construction firms.
- Targets are set for each bundle, depending on factors such as the size of the project and the number of firms available to participate.
- As of November 2008, disadvantaged, minority-owned, woman-owned and emerging small businesses make up more than 9 percent of all design and construction work on the bridge program.

Increasing apprenticeships and job training programs for individuals

- To help increase the number of workers available to work on highway construction projects, the agency created its Workforce Development Program designed to increase diversity in employment, increase apprenticeship participation, and provide more training resources and opportunities for highway construction careers. The ultimate goal of the plan is to provide Oregonians with the skills to maintain well-paying, sustainable careers.
- Compliance is tracked through the agency's updated Civil Rights Compliance Tracking system throughout the project so that issues can be addressed up front.
- In May 2008, ODOT began a new method for sustaining trained, skilled workers in highway construction. Contractors are reimbursed for meeting or exceeding a per-project apprenticeship and training goal; a disincentive applies for not meeting the goal.

