



Workforce, Small Business and Diversity Initiatives

Workforce Development

- Record levels of transportation investments in Oregon and neighboring states have created a potential shortage of skilled highway construction workers. In July 2005, ODOT launched a comprehensive Workforce Development Plan to expand diversity in employment, increase apprenticeship participation, and create more highway construction jobs. Workforce development is a top priority, and ODOT is ensuring that its activities support the statewide efforts.
- ODOT-led regional workforce alliances are implementing the plan. Members include unions, minority groups, community colleges, workforce providers, local and state agencies, and transportation stakeholders. The alliances are recruiting, assessing, and training people for highway construction and related jobs.
- The focus throughout ODOT's Workforce Development Plan is on sustainable careers instead of one-time jobs. By collaborating with other agencies and interested organizations, ODOT is tracking workers who participate in the plan's programs to help ensure career growth.

Small Business Contracting

In addition to ODOT's Workforce Development Plan, the agency continues expanding opportunities for qualified small businesses:

- ODOT's Emerging Small Business program has contracting opportunities set aside for qualified minority-, women-owned and emerging small businesses. By early 2006, some 53 projects valued at \$2.1 million were designated specifically for ESB participants.

- ODOT has begun a small business initiative to increase the number of firms doing business with the department, including increasing technical training and improving networking opportunities for small businesses to meet with ODOT prime contractors.

Diversity Efforts

- ODOT has enhanced its internal efforts in diversifying its workforce by implementing an updated Affirmative Action Plan, participating in an annual Diversity Conference with the Department of Human Services, and continuing to support and build the ODOT Diversity Council. Goals of the department's AA plan include recruiting more women and minorities in technical positions. In 2006, the Diversity Council created a "tool box of ideas" for supervisors and managers to use in recruiting, retaining and supporting diverse employees.
- Externally, through both the Workforce Development Plan and the Small Business Initiative, ODOT continues to support diversity. The Region 1 Workforce Alliance (Portland metropolitan area), for example, has a particular focus on recruiting and training females and minorities for potential jobs in highway construction. Among the Small Business Initiative work group's goals are "identifying and reducing contracting barriers for disadvantaged business enterprises, minority- and women-owned businesses and emerging small businesses."

ODOT's Office of Civil Rights oversees all of these programs. For more information, visit the OCR web site at www.oregon.gov/ODOT/CS/CIVILRIGHTS/.