

BUILDING DIVERSITY—AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH

Through the OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program, ODOT is building 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 will repair or replace hundreds of bridges, pave and maintain city and county roads, improve and expand interchanges, add new capacity to Oregon's highway system, and remove freight bottlenecks statewide. About 17 family-wage jobs are sustained for every \$1 million spent on transportation construction in Oregon. Each year during the OTIA program, construction projects will sustain about 5,000 family-wage jobs.

A new approach to expanding participation

- The Oregon Department of Transportation is responding to community and industry feedback and making participation 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 is proactively informing Oregon businesses and individuals about work on the bridge program and monitoring 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 supply of individuals ready to tackle heavy highway construction projects.

Expanding opportunities for small design firms

- ODOT set an aspirational target of 15 percent for participation of disadvantaged, minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses (DMWESBs) in the design contracting of the bridge program and wrote that target into the design contracts.
- The bridge program is one of only a few programs nationwide to track the participation of DMWESBs during design *and* construction.
- Bridge program staff successfully prequalified approximately 120 firms that prime contractors could draw on to fill their needs for specialty subcontractors.
 - › As of June 2006, more than 50 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.
- 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.



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Increasing DMWESB participation in construction

- ODOT established aspirational targets for the participation of DMWESBs as construction subcontractors.
- Targets are set for each bundle, depending on factors such as the size of the project, the number of firms available to participate and others.

Increasing apprenticeships and job training programs for individuals

- To help build the pool of workers available to work on highway construction projects, the agency created a Workforce Development Plan 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.
- To implement diversity efforts using existing infrastructure, ODOT-led regional workforce alliances recruit, assess and train people for heavy highway construction jobs. Each regional alliance draws on local resources to implement programs specific to its region.
- With the unions and other industry stakeholders, ODOT set goals for participation of apprentices in the bridge program workforce. In the second year of the bridge program, the number of apprenticeships on bridge program projects increased by 20 percent.
- Compliance is tracked through the agency's updated Civil Rights Compliance Tracking system throughout the project, so that issues can be addressed up front.

