



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY DIVERSITY

Driving Economic Opportunities

Illinois Tollway Expands Partnering for Growth Program

Due to the success of the Illinois Tollway's Partnering for Growth program, there is a growing demand for mentors as the program has been expanded to allow protégés to now earn bid credits.



PARTNERING for GROWTH

POWERED BY THE ILLINOIS TOLLWAY

Partnering for Growth pairs larger and established contractors with smaller, DBE- and veteran-owned firms in a mentor-protégé relationship, with the goal of helping these smaller firms grow into self-sufficient, competitive and profitable businesses ready for prime contractor roles, and expanding the pool of eligible firms for work on Tollway projects. Through the program, mentor and protégé firms work side-by-side as the protégé learns various aspects of the industry, such as business planning, project management, financial counseling and bonding, equipment utilization and submitting quotes.

Bid Credits Now Available to Protégés

Furthering its commitment to supporting diverse and veteran businesses, the Illinois Tollway is proud to announce beginning May 1, 2021, Partnering for Growth for Construction is offering participating protégés the opportunity to earn \$100,000 per year in bid credits. Partnering for Growth bid credits - earned by mentors and protégés - may be applied toward future Tollway construction bids to lower the bid amount and increase the chances of winning the contract as the low bidder. In a highly competitive industry, bid credits give contractors committed to helping smaller and diverse firms succeed, as well as small and diverse firms looking to grow, a bidding advantage on Tollway construction contracts.

Mentor Recruitment Underway

The Illinois Tollway continues to look for partners interested in helping guide new and growing firms in the construction industry, while getting an edge for themselves on future Tollway contracts.

Mentors can come to the program with a protégé in mind, but there also are protégés ready to be paired. In return for their time and expertise, mentor firms can gain an edge when bidding on Tollway contracts by earning bid credits.

Knowledge sharing is critical in developing opportunities for diverse firms. In addition, becoming a mentor allows firms to gain diverse perspectives on project

solutions and strengthen ties within the communities they serve.

How to Participate

Illinois Tollway [Technical Assistance Program](#) providers are available to assist both mentors and protégés at every step. Protégés interested in the program should connect with an Illinois Tollway Technical Assistance provider for an assessment, and when needed, access to comprehensive, customized business development assistance to prepare them for participation.

Prospective mentors should contact the Illinois Tollway Diversity and Strategic Development Department at diversity@getipass.com to complete enrollment and take the next steps toward forming a Partnering for Growth partnership.

Illinois Tollway Leadership Prepares Industry for 2021 Construction Season

Kicking off the 2021 construction season, the Illinois Tollway reaffirmed the agency's commitment to keeping work moving forward during its virtual March *Move Illinois* Quarterly Meeting.

"Our ability to meet project milestones, maintain safe roadways and plan for the next successful construction season is a result of the constant collaboration between all of us," Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez told the online audience of more than 350 representatives from construction and professional engineering services firms.

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Illinois Tollway 2021 Contracts Supporting New and Growing Construction Businesses

In 2021, the Tollway anticipates awarding more than 80 new contracts with an emphasis placed on offering Small Business Initiative and unbundled contracts.

And, during the first quarter of the year, the Tollway has already advertised two new unbundled contracts and 17 new contracts under the Small Business initiative.



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Construction Business Builds Record of Success With Help From Illinois Tollway's Technical Assistance Program

Terrazas LLC participating in multiple Tollway projects



Robert Terrazas enjoys driving across the new northbound Mile Long Bridge on the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) because he's proud that his growing construction company helped build the 4,800-foot-long structure that opened last year.

His firm, Terrazas LLC, worked as a subcontractor on the Illinois Tollway's \$500 million project, pouring portions of the concrete curbs, as well as the approach and transition slabs leading to the massive bridge.

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Illinois Tollway Teams with State of Illinois to Deliver on Diversity

The Illinois Tollway and Illinois Department of Central Management Services have teamed up to deliver a study on which to build future Diversity participation goals on goods and services contracts.

The partnership, the first of its kind between the Illinois Tollway and the state, will deliver information critical to the success of Illinois diversity programming while creating synergy and capitalizing at a time both agencies are looking to operate efficiently as possible.

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Tollway Diversity Advisory Council Meets Virtually to Talk Tollway Diversity Successes, Future

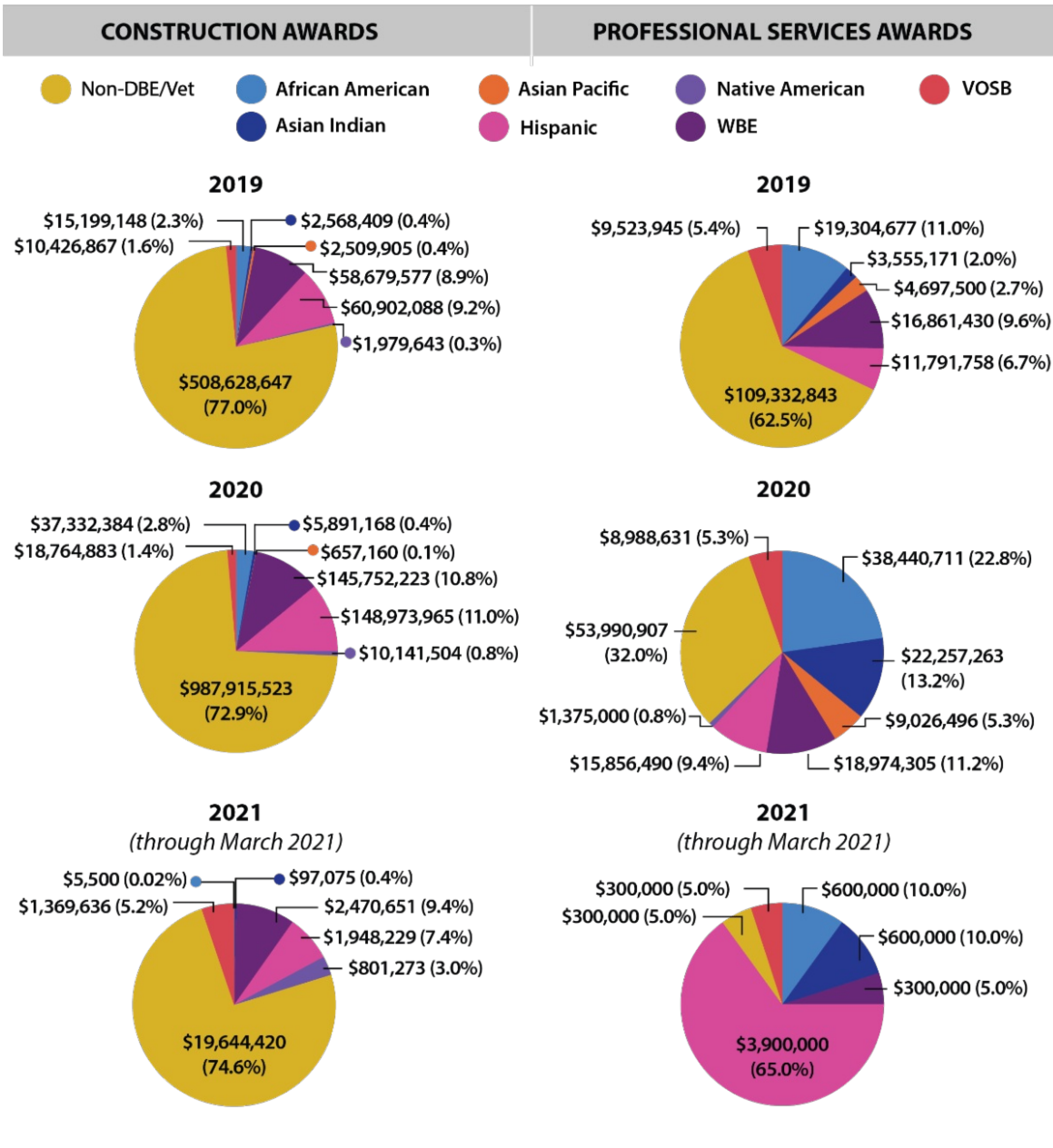
In February, the Illinois Tollway brought together its Diversity Advisory Council for the first meeting in 2021.

The meeting, held virtually due to COVID-19 safety precautions, allowed Tollway leadership to discuss its strong and unwavering focus on creating access to economic opportunities for historically disadvantaged companies and individuals

and to bring the Council's membership together in support of these efforts.

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Capital Investment Diversity



Program Updates



ConstructionWorks

Since 2018, the Illinois Tollway's ConstructionWorks Program has prepared historically underrepresented men and women for apprenticeship and training

program opportunities in the heavy highway construction industry. ConstructionWorks participants have access to a network of experienced training partners throughout Northern Illinois who offer customized construction industry preparation, placement and support services to better assist with long-term career success.

For more information please visit the Tollway's [ConstructionWorks](#) page. Contact [Julia Garibay](#), DBE Program Manager, with questions.



Earned Credit Program

The Illinois Tollway's Earned Credit Program is a bid credit incentive program that allows any construction contractor or subcontractor to earn virtual dollar credits, or bid credits, when they hire from a pool of eligible job candidates, including underemployed African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, women, eligible offenders and exonerated individuals, veterans and other economically disadvantaged individuals*. These bid credits may be used toward future Tollway construction bids. Bid credits lower base bid amounts, increasing the chances of winning the contract as the low bidder.

** ECP is a race-, gender-neutral program. Candidate eligibility is determined through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act income guidelines.*

For more information please visit the Tollway's [Earned Credit Program](#) page. Contact [Julia Garibay](#), DBE Program Manager.



Partnering for Growth

The Illinois Tollway's Partnering for Growth program encourages prime consultants and contractors to assist disadvantaged, minority- and women-owned business enterprise (D/M/WBE) firms and veteran-owned small businesses (VOSBs) in remaining self-sufficient, competitive and profitable businesses.

- The Partnering for Growth construction program is term-based (12 to 36 months), enabling partnering contractors to work on areas of development without being contingent upon contract awards, project milestones or completion dates. Contractors have the flexibility to determine areas of assistance including business planning, project management, financial counseling and bonding, equipment utilization and submitting quotes. Illinois Tollway Technical Assistance program providers are available to assist partnering firms at every step.
- The Partnering for Growth professional services program is contract based. Participation in this program allows the protégés to work with mentors on agreed-upon scope to help expand the protégé's technical

capabilities and develop skills needed to work with the Tollway. Prospective protégés may market their firms to potential mentors in connection with a Tollway Professional Services Bulletin. Mentors must include the Partnering for Growth agreement documentation in their statement of interest for a specific professional services solicitation.

For more information please visit the Tollway's [Partnering for Growth](#) page. Contact [Kristen Bennett](#), DBE Program Manager, with questions.



Small Business Initiative

The Illinois Tollway is enhancing its efforts to provide additional prime and subcontracting opportunities for small businesses. Under the Small Business Initiative the Tollway will identify select construction contracts, generally with values of approximately \$5 million or less, specifically for small businesses to perform as prime and subcontractors. The Tollway will create separate categories of contracts in project scopes most common by small businesses, such as landscaping, demolition, electrical, grading/drainage, vertical construction and more. Contract sizes will include projects under \$1 million; \$1 - \$3 million; and \$3 - \$5 million.

View the [Tollway's latest bid-letting schedule](#).

To apply for the Tollway's Small Business Initiative download the [application](#). Contact [Shavon Moore](#), DBE Program Manager, with questions.

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