



Feature Presentation

Overcoming Challenges - Recruiting, Developing and Maintaining a Workforce to Meet Current and Future Highway Construction Needs

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Civil Rights & Affirmative Action

Overcoming Challenges – Recruiting, Developing and Maintaining a Workforce to Meet Current and Future Highway Construction Needs



History of EEO, Workforce Development and Training Programs

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Federal Aid Highway Act of 1968
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Federal Highway Administration regulations (23 CFR Part 230) introduced in 1975



NJDOT On the Job Training (OJT) Program

- The OJT Program was born out of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1968
- We assess upcoming projects to determine if they can support training goals
- We assign training goals if applicable based on the work to be performed, estimated number of days the project will be active
- Successful implementation of the OJT Program helps develop a competent and diverse workforce to meet current and future hiring needs



OJT Supportive Services Programs

The goal of supportive services is to support the OJT programs

- Prepare individuals for work in highway construction and union apprenticeship programs such as funding pre-apprenticeship training programs
- Support contractors in assisting with recruiting, counseling and other remedial training
- Support mentorships and other initiatives that provide ongoing support and guidance during and after training
- One of the main obstacles we have experienced is support from the unions (getting individuals into the union apprenticeship programs)

Challenges!

- New Jersey is a highly unionized state, and our construction projects are primarily staffed by union workers
- Unions provoked a major change in the OJT program several years after the program began
- By and large unions provide the trainees required to fulfill the training goal requirements on our highway projects
- Contractors compete amongst themselves for individuals to meet their workforce and OJT requirements – Labor Shortages

Challenges!

- Historically, heavy highway union memberships have been nonminority male dominated, except for the laborers' unions
- Aging Workforce and Declining Interest in Construction Trades
- Training, Preparation, and Skills Gaps
- Highway Construction is Different than Vertical Construction
- Competition, Retention, Entry Level Pay Rates/Salaries

Overcoming Challenges Through Partnerships

- Building partnerships and agreements with heavy highway construction contractors and their unions
- Partnering with the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development for Pre-apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Training
- Identifying and engaging with other training providers and exploring/identifying opportunities to coordinate training through community colleges, vocational and trade schools
- Developing relationships with community-based non-profits serving women, minorities, and disadvantaged/at-risk populations to help provide and facilitate information, resources, guidance, direction and job readiness support

Overcoming Challenges

Information

- Develop feedback, score cards, reporting and tracking systems to record and track the success of participants in external pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and internal/external OJT programs
- Establish a funding source to provide supportive services and/or stipends to increase training program success
- Develop a website dedicated to opportunities and benefits working in the highway construction trades
- Hosting construction career days/job fairs for both the internal and external workforces; and targeted workshops specific to women, minorities, at-risk populations and others interested in pursuing highway related work with NJDOT and/or our construction contractors
- Engage professional services (consultants) to provide outreach, recruitment, screening, one-on-one interviews, soft/life skills training and help develop and support career days, job fairs, workshops and other services.

Partnerships

- The Construction Industry Advancement Program of NJ
- Utility & Transportation Contractors Association of NJ
- Associated General Contractors of NJ
- NJ Construction and General Laborers Local
- NJ Youth Corps
- Associations for Women in Construction
- Community Development Corporations (CDC)
- NJ's One-Stop Career Centers
- Community Based Organizations & Advocacy Groups
- State Workforce Boards