

2021 WINTER UPDATE



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY DIVERSITY

Driving Economic Opportunities

Building Partnerships with Diverse Firms in 2020

Despite dealing with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Illinois Tollway in 2020 succeeded in providing diverse firms with greater opportunities to participate in its *Move Illinois* capital program as minority-owned businesses last year won construction contracts worth \$348 million, or nearly 26 percent of the \$1.34 billion in contracts awarded.



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Tollway Offering More Building for Success Webinars for 2021



The Illinois Tollway is scheduling a new year of free, virtual business assistance events in 2021, as part of its ongoing Building For Success webinar series for firms interested in working with the Tollway and building new business skills. More than 1,500 participants registered for webinar events in 2020.

[Register for a webinar](#)

Contact [Lorena Ponce](#), DBE Program Manager, with questions

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Cardinal State Landscaping Business Blooms After Joining Illinois Tollway's Technical Assistance Program

Participating Small and diverse businesses gain opportunities to work on Tollway projects

Roger Wiese launched his Cardinal State landscaping company in 2012, but his fledgling firm didn't really begin to grow until he joined the Illinois Tollway's Technical Assistance program.



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Martinez Frogs Keeps Growing Through Illinois Tollway's Technical Assistance Program



Ricardo Martinez launched his business more than 20 years ago with one dump truck that he drove himself. Since that humble beginning, his company, Martinez Frogs Inc., has expanded to include about 15 employees and now takes on jobs involving excavation, demolition and concrete work.

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Partnering for Growth and a Call for Construction Mentors

Tollway program pairs the big with the small, benefitting all

The Illinois Tollway is looking for partners interested in helping shepherd new and growing firms in the construction industry, while getting an edge themselves on future Tollway contracts.

Partnering for Growth is a program that pairs larger and established contractors with smaller, DBE- and veteran-owned firms in a mentor relationship, with the goal of helping these smaller firms grow into self-sufficient, competitive and profitable businesses, and expanding the pool of eligible firms for work on Tollway projects. Mentor and protégé firms will 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.

Mentors can come to the program with a protégé in mind, but there also are proteges ready to be paired. In return for their time and expertise, mentor firms can gain an edge when bidding on Tollway contracts by earning up to \$100,000 per year in bid credits that may be applied toward future Tollway construction bids, increasing its chances of being the low bidder.

Mentors interested in participating should visit the Tollway [website](#) or [contact the Illinois Tollway](#) to learn more and get involved.

Program Updates



ConstructionWorks

Since 2018, the Illinois Tollway's ConstructionWorks (CW) program has prepared historically underrepresented men and women for apprenticeship and training program opportunities in the heavy highway construction industry. CW 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

POWERED BY THE ILLINOIS TOLLWAY

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. Under this program, the protégé works on a specific Tollway contract with the mentor on agreed-upon scope designed to help expand the protégé's technical capabilities and develop skills needed to work with the Tollway.

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



SMALL BUSINESS INITIATIVE

POWERED BY THE ILLINOIS TOLLWAY

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 (SBI) program 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 SBI download the [application](#),

Contact [Shavon Moore](#), DBE Program Manager, with questions.

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