



OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY NEWS

FALL 2019

OEO'S DIVERSITY EFFORTS RECOGNIZED AT COMMUNITY AWARDS GALA

The National Association of Minority Contractors - Washington Chapter handed out six awards on October 4, 2019. These awards include the Emerging Business Award, the Established Business Award, the General Contractor of the Year, the Public Agency of the Year Award, and the Founder's Award. WSDOT's Mega Projects Inclusion consultant Regina Glenn was honored as the Diversity Advocate of the Year, and in the future the award will be named after her.



(Pictured left to right: Vicky Schiantarelli, Regina Glenn, Roger Millar, and Irene Reyes)



OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Office of Equal Opportunity is responsible for the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, Minority & Women's Business Enterprise, Title VI, Equal Employment Opportunity, American with Disabilities and the On-the-Job Training Support Services Programs. Our goal is to ensure that WSDOT is an organization that is free from discrimination in all program areas and promotes equity and equality during every facet of our day-to-day business activities.

WSDOT FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM DISPARITY STUDY

In January 2018 WSDOT, in conjunction with a consultant and the support of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds, launched a statewide Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program Disparity Study. The intent of the DBE Program is to create a level



Walla Walla airport

playing field for firms owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals on projects that receive US Department of Transportation FAA, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration funds.

This WSDOT-FAA Study evaluated contracting data for 64 Washington state airports to determine the availability versus utilization of minority and women owned firms on FAA funded projects. The evaluation examined FAA funded construction and consulting contracts let by FAA recipients during Federal Fiscal Years 2012 through 2016. Given WSDOT's successful completion of studies in 2005, 2012 and 2017, the FAA requested WSDOT manage this project.

A completed study will provide all airports in Washington state the tools needed to enhance implementation of their DBE Program. This study will also help the airports set their overall DBE goals.

Stakeholder benefits of this study include the following:

- Reduced cost and time spent by conducting one DBE Disparity Study for all 64 airports (instead of 64 separate studies and consultants)
- Assurances that each airport's DBE Program Disparity Study will meet federal requirements
- A legal foundation to evaluate data as required to properly implement their DBE Program
- The ability to identify specific areas for improvement and allow for the development of best practices for airport DBE Programs
- Provides the airports and both DBE and prime communities with a greater understanding of Washington state's airport construction market.

The study is anticipated to be released later this fall.

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

In 2018, apprentices worked 703,708 hours on WSDOT projects, earning experience that is expected to help them advance in their trades. Of the apprentice hours reported, 312,741 (or roughly 44 percent) represent hours worked by



women and minorities. WSDOT values diversity and inclusion; the agency endeavors to see that there are fair and equal opportunities for everyone to participate in its contracts.

WSDOT requires apprentices be used on projects to help individuals gain experience needed for successful future employment in the construction trades and to ensure there are skilled construction industry workers able to complete Connecting Washington projects. These are not WSDOT employees, but rather, they apprentice with construction firms with whom WSDOT contracts.

Pre-apprenticeships increase minority and women in the trades

WSDOT received \$2 million in Connecting Washington funding for the 2019-2021 biennium to provide Pre-Apprenticeship Support Services (PASS) grants to pre-apprenticeship training providers that increase the number of minorities and women gaining meaningful employment in the highway construction trades. This underscores WSDOT's commitment to building a workforce that looks like the people and communities the agency serves.

Eight providers across the state have begun their outreach, training, and educational programs after being awarded contracts during the acquisition process.

Three Skilled Trades Preparation (STP) graduates from Spokane Community College and all PASS grant graduates recently spoke at Spokane Pathways to Apprenticeship. The three women spoke to high school counselors about their path to apprenticeship and how their lives have changed and improved since entering the trades. Two of the women were incarcerated while attending STP and upon release from the Department of Corrections, they entered apprenticeship programs, building careers and giving back to the community. Pictured are two third-year ironworkers and one second-year laborer.



WSDOT & FHWA COLLABORATE TO PROVIDE HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION SCHOLARSHIPS

WSDOT's On the Job Training Support Services Program, through partnership with FHWA, is in the process of awarding more than \$90,000 in tuition assistance to students across the state. These students either are just beginning their apprenticeships with the Operating Engineers; were already electricians, diesel technicians, CDL truck drivers; were enrolled in technical colleges; or were starting a Pre-Apprenticeship training program. The program is designed to increase support for women, minorities, and other disadvantaged individuals interested in working in the highway construction trades.

For FFY18, over 40 individuals across the state have received scholarship awards. Award amounts have been

between \$500 and the limit of \$4,000, and have gone to students receiving training in the electrical field, CDL drivers, heavy construction operators, and diesel technicians. Many of the awardees are first generation Americans, who are excited to be helped with these scholarship awards to further their education and training to begin work in the highway construction trades. Other individuals were formerly incarcerated, and others have aged out of the Foster Care system.

WSDOT PROGRAM PAIRS 65 MENTORS WITH 78 PROTÉGÉS

WSDOT has paired 65 mentors with 78 protégés since the Capacity Building Mentorship Program (CBMP) launched in summer 2017. WSDOT re-launched the program in mid-April 2019 with Sound Transit. The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) – Tacoma Business Center is administering the program. WSDOT's CBMP pairs prime contractors or consultants (mentors) with owners of firms who are certified by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises or registered as a small or veteran's business (protégés).

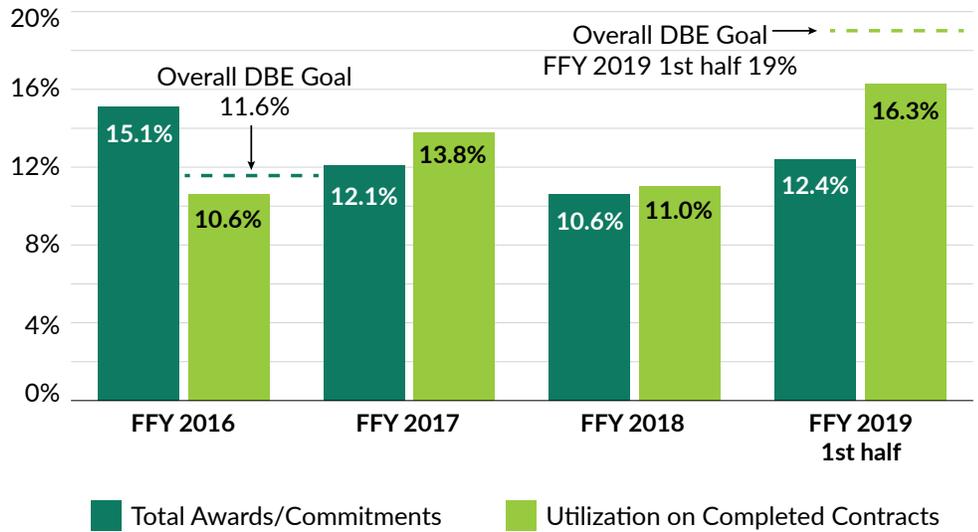
Created in response to Governor Jay Inslee's diverse business participation goal, part of his Results Washington initiative, these partnerships seek to enhance the capabilities and increase the participation of minority, small, veteran, and women-owned business enterprises in the transportation sector.

Additionally, Business Impact NW will administer loans to protégés participating in the program, with a total of \$750,000 in loans available from local credit unions. WSDOT, Sound Transit and MBDA completed the application and assessment rounds for Cohort 3, along with a Meet & Greet in Tukwila on June 19, 2019. This meeting allowed new program participants to meet and discuss potential partnerships. The 17 new mentor and 17 protégé pairings for Cohort 3 were announced in early August.

WSDOT FALLS SHORT OF DBE GOAL IN FIRST HALF OF FFY2019

WSDOT was unable to meet the overall FHWA DBE goal during the first half of FFY 2019 (October 2018 through March 2019).

The current overall goal for FHWA DBE is 19.0 percent. WSDOT was unable to meet that goal in the first half of FFY2019 primarily due to the impact of the white women owned business waiver, which was implemented in June 2017. This waiver excludes white women owned DBEs that contract with WSDOT from counting toward project goal credit. The waiver was requested by WSDOT as a result of a 2012 DBE Program Disparity Study, and took effect in June 2017. That study showed that for FHWA, there was no way of looking at the data to tell which white woman owned businesses were facing a disparate impact. In December 2016, USDOT granted the waiver. WSDOT has since completed a 2017 DBE Program Disparity Study and has requested the waiver be repealed. WSDOT is waiting for USDOT to take action on the repeal request.



Source: WSDOT Office of Equal Opportunity

Notes: FFY 2019 refers to the first half of FFY 2019 (October 2018 through March 2019). Utilization for completed contracts refers to those completed within the stated time. The DBE goal changed from 11.8% in FFY 2016 and FFY 2017 to 19% in FFY 2018. This change was based on 2017 DBE Program disparity study findings.

On August 1, 2019, as part of the DBE Program, WSDOT implemented a [Federal Small Business Enterprise Program](#) to increase race neutral (or voluntary) DBE participation. WSDOT is setting enforceable Federal Small Business Enterprise goals on design-bid-build projects

not having Underutilized DBE goals. The purpose of Federal Small Business Enterprise goals is to eliminate barriers for small business participation as authorized by 49 Code of Federal Regulations § 26.39.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equal Opportunity at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

Title VI Notice to Public: It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OEO's Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7090.