



OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY NEWS

SUMMER 2020

SPOTLIGHT: OEO IS PLEASED TO WELCOME ALBERTO VALENTIN, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MANAGER

Alberto has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Puerto Rico, a Juris Doctorate from the Interamericana Law School of Puerto Rico, was admitted to the Bar of Puerto Rico in 2015, and has a Master of Laws in Environmental Law from Vermont Law School. Alberto worked as legislative advisor for the Senate of Puerto Rico and executive director of the Federal Affairs Legislative Committee.



Alberto also worked as attorney-at-law for a legal firm in San Juan Puerto Rico advising public agencies, departments and municipalities. He served as a legislative advisor to the Governor of Puerto Rico, led the first LGBT & Human Rights Advisory Board of the Governor of Puerto Rico, and served on the Puerto Rico Recycling & Environmental Board. Finally, he worked as the director of the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Education of Puerto Rico. Please help us in welcoming Alberto to WSDOT!

TITLE VI PROGRAM AGENCY NEWS

As part of its obligations under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, WSDOT must have a Title VI program. According to the [Federal Highways Administration](#), “a successful Title VI program gives the public the assurance that agency services and resources will be allocated fairly and any negative transportation impacts shared equally.” Every transportation agency receiving Federal-aid financial assistance must be unbiased in its actions. Agencies must also promote fairness in all employment and contracting practices, and in making decisions allocating transportation services. WSDOT’s compliance with these civil rights program components is our agency’s first line of defense against civil rights complaints, lawsuits, and the potential loss of FHWA financial assistance.

What are the elements of a Title VI plan? According to the FHWA’s [Title VI plan checklist](#), a Title VI plan should contain the following elements:

OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Office of Equal Opportunity provides leadership, direction, and guidance in carrying out its equal opportunity and civil rights responsibilities in compliance with state and federal guidelines.

We find ourselves across the state, nation and globe, living through unprecedented times, facing a health crisis that has disrupted life at every level.

In light of this reality, the OEO’s Summer Newsletter will highlight information and updates about how our programs are addressing these uncertain times.

- Full-time staff dedicated to enforcing Title VI
- Program review policies
- Regular review of sub-recipients and their compliance with Title VI
- An effective and documented complaint process
- Policies for language access
- Data collection and analysis processes
- Regular staff training on Title VI rules and regulations

WSDOT is in the process of restructuring its current [Title VI plan](#). As part of this restructuring, OEO will be working with designated Title VI liaisons from all of WSDOT's regions, divisions and programs. The restructured Title VI plan will be completed this October. If you would like to learn more about WSDOT's Title VI restructuring, you can contact Allison Spector at spectoa@wsdot.wa.gov.

TITLE VI LOCAL AGENCY GUIDELINES MANUAL REVISIONS

While WSDOT is required to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act as a recipient of federal assistance, so must any political subdivision. Whether receiving assistance directly or through WSDOT programs/services, the local political subdivisions and their sub recipients must also comply with Title VI.

WSDOT provides guidance to the nearly 300 local entities through Chapter 28 of the Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) manual. The first major revision in over a decade is to be published this summer.

The revision clarifies Title VI as a required eligibility element for WSDOT programs, projects and services. It also structures the annual reporting schedule. Among the new appendices are complaint and public involvement templates in 17 languages for use by political subdivisions. The chapter now includes guidance on data collection, environmental justice and language access.

For specific details, contact TitleVI@wsdot.wa.gov.

PRE APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM REMAINS STRONG

WSDOT received \$2 million in Connecting Washington funding for the 2019-2021 biennium to provide Pre-Apprenticeship Support Services 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 inclusion, and building a workforce that looks like the people and communities the agency serves.

WSDOT has eight providers across the state who offer pre-apprenticeship training and support services. A new PASS program initiative, WSDOT Youth DIRECT, has been awarded to the Pacific Northwest Ironworkers and R3 Services. This will connect young adults aging out of the foster care system and those leaving the Juvenile Rehabilitation community with Direct Entry Pre-Apprenticeship training opportunities and support services.

PASS training providers across the state have started their training back up, following the Governor's [Safe Start WA](#) Phased Plan.

WSDOT & FHWA HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION TRADES SCHOLARSHIPS

WSDOT's On the Job Training Support Services Program, through partnership with the FHWA, is in the process of awarding more than \$149,000 in tuition assistance to students across the state. This program is designed to increase support for women, minorities, and other disadvantaged individuals

interested in working in the highway construction trades. Students awarded scholarships include those enrolled in a technical college, starting a Pre-Apprenticeship training program, beginning their apprenticeship, or training for a Commercial Driver's License.

Scholarship award amounts have been from \$500 to \$4,000, and have gone to students receiving training as operating engineers, electricians, diesel technicians, CDL truck drivers, welders, ironworkers, carpenters, cement masons, and many others. Many of the awardees are first generation Americans who will be helped with these scholarship awards to further their education and training to begin work in the highway construction trades. Other individuals have been incarcerated, and others have aged-out of the foster care system. Scholarship applications are currently on hold until we receive new funding.

DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE SUPPORT SERVICES UPDATE

On May 11, 2020, WSDOT was notified that the remaining anticipated funds for Federal Fiscal Year 2020 have not yet been distributed. We are hoping that we will be able to allocate the funds in October 2020. Until then, the DBE Supportive Services federal program will be paused, as we have no remaining funding.

Training with WSDOT's Internal Audit Division will occur on August 5 from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. for DBE's from both Washington and Oregon interested in the I-5 Bridge Project. For more information, please email Diane Gard at GardD@wsdot.wa.gov.

CAPACITY BUILDING MENTORSHIP PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW

Since its launch in July 2018, the Capacity Building Mentorship Program has been increasing its own capacity! Cohorts 1 and 2 of the mentorship program had 55 firms participate and when asked if they wanted to extend their pairings for another year, an overwhelming 87 percent said yes.

Cohort 3 members were finalized in August 2019 and has 17 active pairings. This program is critical in reaching out and targeting underserved diverse businesses and expanding the pool of availability within each ethnicity.

Survey results show that the mentors have an overall satisfaction rate of 99.08 percent, similar to last year's survey, and 82 percent for the protégés, an 11 percent decrease.

The Capacity Building Mentorship Program participants consider the program a worthwhile use of their time. Mentors believe that their experience has been a valuable addition to their business, and they are helping the protégé with development needs based on the protégé's development plan.

Protégés' similarly regard their experience in the program as valuable and are encouraged with their business growth.

To learn more about how to participate in Cohort 4, please email GardD@wsdot.wa.gov.

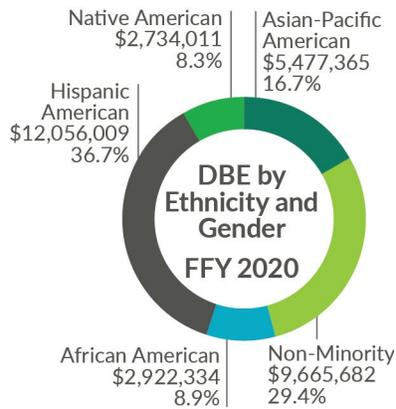
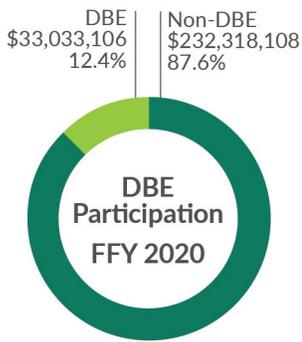
WSDOT MOVING TO PHASE II OF THE OEO DIVERSITY ROADMAP EARLY 2021

Current voluntary measures to increase diversity on state funded contracts goals and contract language, inclusion plans, community engagement, technical assistance and the capacity building mentorship program, have made little progress toward meeting the [Governor's goals](#) for increased Minority Business Enterprise, Women Business Enterprise and Veteran Business Enterprise participation on state funded transportation projects.

In order to increase progress toward meeting the Governor's goals, WSDOT will begin to implement new race and gender-neutral measures. These measures, to be enacted in early 2021, include an enforceable Small and Veteran Business Enterprise Program.

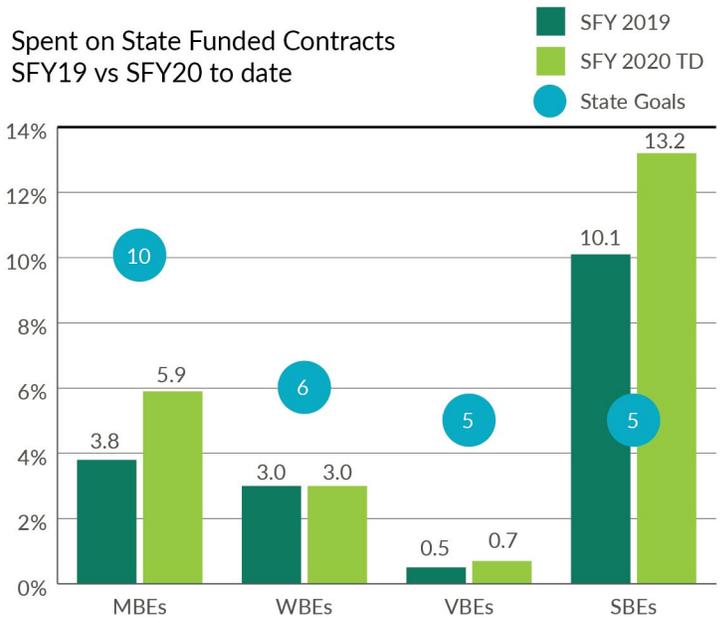
DIVERSE BUSINESS SPEND

For Federal Fiscal Year 2020, October 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, WSDOT is attaining 12.4 percent in awards and commitments in our FHWA funded transportation construction and consulting projects. Currently, the overall DBE goal is 19 percent, but WSDOT is not able to achieve the goal due to the white women owned business waiver, which makes up 10.3 percent of all DBE availability. Additionally, WSDOT is not able to set DBE goals for the 10.3 percent white women owned business availability.



STATE FUNDED DIVERSE BUSINESS SPEND

WSDOT has implemented many measures to increase state funded diverse business participation as outlined in the State Funded Contracts - Diversity Roadmap. Currently, WSDOT is implementing the Capacity Building Mentorship Program to enhance our state funded participation.



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.