



*Move Illinois:
The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*

NEWS

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**ILLINOIS TOLLWAY TO HOST NETWORKING EVENT TO PROMOTE
CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE DIVERSITY PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES**

*New Earned Credit Program Hiring Portal launched
to connect contractors with diverse skilled workers*

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway will host a Resources Working for You networking event on Wednesday, February 1, in Glen Ellyn to help construction companies of all sizes and types benefit from workforce diversity incentive programs and resources, including the Tollway’s Earned Credit Program (ECP) and new ECP Hiring Portal.

Created in 2007, the Earned Credit Program is an incentive program designed by the Illinois Tollway to strengthen and diversify the heavy highway construction industry workforce. The program assists qualified laborers and tradespeople, including those with significant barriers to employment, to secure high-quality jobs and careers by encouraging contractors and subcontractors to hire and retain skilled workers.

“As we begin work on the sixth year of the *Move Illinois* Program, the Illinois Tollway is committing nearly \$1 billion in 2017 for construction projects throughout Northern Illinois,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. “We believe that the firms working on these construction projects, from the owners down to the men and women they employ, should reflect the diversity of the communities our roadways serve.”

The Illinois Tollway adheres to federal workforce requirements and works in conjunction with local unions and awarded contractors to facilitate achievement of all workforce goals. The Equal Employment Opportunity Program requires contractors to actively recruit women and minority applicants for employment in accordance with federal and state EEO laws and Tollway policies.

At the event, the Tollway will introduce construction firms to the new ECP Hiring Portal, a web-based platform to help contractors and subcontractors review, select and hire skilled workers from a pool of qualified laborers and tradesman. The portal is designed to help contractors and subcontractors meet EEO workforce requirements, as well as benefit from the ECP.

Contractors and subcontractors earn ECP bid credits that can be applied to future Tollway construction bids when they hire and retain workers from a pool of qualified, pre-screened candidates that includes minorities, women, eligible offenders and exonerated individuals, veterans and other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) eligible individuals.

By applying ECP credits to their construction bids, contractors can lower bids and increase the chances of winning Tollway contracts in the highly competitive heavy highway construction industry. Since 2007, the use of ECP credits has influenced the award of 25 contracts with a cumulative value exceeding \$222 million.

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More than 250 ECP workers have gained employment on construction projects throughout the region since 2007. Collectively, these individuals have earned more than \$13 million in wages.

“The Tollway is offering contractors and subcontractors a bidding advantage in return for helping to raise the bar for workforce diversity,” said Tollway Director James Sweeney. “Of the hundreds of firms the Tollway works with, currently only 26 construction contractors and subcontractors are participating in the ECP, and we believe the industry can do better.”

The Resources Working for You networking event will be held from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the College of DuPage - Jack Turner Conference Center, 425 Fawell Boulevard in Glen Ellyn. For more information, please visit the Doing Business – Construction and Engineering section on the Illinois Tollway’s website at illinoistollway.com.

Speakers will include Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov, Tollway Board Director James Sweeney, who also serves as the President-Business Manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150, Tollway Diversity Advisory Council Workforce Diversity Subcommittee Chair Elder Kevin Ford, as well as staff from the Tollway’s Department of Diversity and Strategic Development.

In addition, during the event Tollway staff will be available to help contractors and subcontractors to register and begin using the new Illinois Tollway ECP Hiring Portal. The web-based resource was initiated by the Tollway in response to feedback from the Illinois Road and Transportation Builders Association, advocacy agencies and training providers participating on the Tollway’s ECP Advisory Council.

The ECP Hiring Portal allows training providers and assist agencies to input and maintain detailed worker profile data and to communicate directly with contractors. Contractors can expedite their search for qualified workers by reviewing pre-screened candidates’ skills and resumes and then communicating directly with individuals for interviews and hiring. The portal also provides email notifications and a dashboard summary of outcomes from contractors to help assist agencies and the Tollway better communicate and serve the needs of the construction industry moving forward.

About *Move Illinois*

The Illinois Tollway’s 15-year, \$12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, is improving mobility, relieving congestion, reducing pollution, creating as many as 120,000 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. The first five years of *Move Illinois* is on schedule and within budget, delivering the rebuilt and widened Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a state-of-the-art 21st century corridor and opening a new interchange connecting the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57. Progress continues on projects addressing the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system, delivering the Elgin O’Hare Western Access Project and planning for emerging projects, including reconstruction of the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294).

About the Illinois Tollway

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 292 miles of roadways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway.