



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PREPARING TO LAUNCH NEW CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

Agreement with Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership will promote inclusion within skilled construction trades by providing access to apprenticeships, careers and training

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee today recommended approval of a new contract with the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (CCWP) to provide pre-apprenticeship training and support services to underemployed men and women seeking jobs and career opportunities in the highway construction industry, including members of minority groups, women and veterans.

The services will allow the Tollway to launch a new construction workforce initiative with the goal of increasing access to opportunities for disenfranchised individuals within the critical heavy-highway construction industry needed to work on construction projects as part of the Tollway’s 15-year, \$14 billion *Move Illinois* Program. These jobs include including laborers, equipment operators, carpenters, electricians, iron workers and cement masons.

“We want to broaden our base of new candidates interested in heavy highway construction careers because it is vital to the region that the people working on Tollway projects reflect the rich diversity of the customers and communities we serve each day,” said Illinois Tollway Board Member Corey Brooks, chairman of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. “We are extremely pleased to recommend this team of experienced, accomplished professionals to administer this crucial workforce development program on our behalf.”

The Tollway’s construction workforce initiative is expected to train and place at least 150 individuals in apprenticeship and training programs or advance participation within the skilled trades during an initial three-year term, with an emphasis on heavy highway skilled construction trades.

Under the \$4.2 million contract, the CCWP will assemble and manage a consortium of service providers and affiliated agencies to provide a range of services on behalf of the Tollway including recruiting eligible participants, conducting pre-apprenticeship training and providing ongoing support and case management services. Services will be available at designated locations in Chicago and the South Suburbs, Waukegan, Aurora and Rockford.

Further, CCWP will help identify and directly place trainees in meaningful construction industry opportunities, such as U.S. Department of Labor-approved apprenticeships and training programs, while also assisting underemployed construction industry workers seeking to move into more highly-skilled trades through referrals to basic skills and adult education resources.

The CCWP will be responsible for developing relationships with key stakeholders including trade associations, construction contractors and other regional transportation agencies to broaden the reach and impact of the Tollway’s construction workforce initiative. Eligibility is determined by federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act standards.

The CCWP was selected based on the strength of their submittal, which detailed prior success managing construction workforce development initiatives for public sector clients such as the Chicago Transit Authority and Cook County Health and Hospital Systems. The organization has also established funding relationships with private foundations like the Walmart Foundation, Citi Foundation and AARP Foundation, and has experience managing large consortiums with partners such as the United Way, the Chicago Federation of Labor and the Chicago & Cook County Building & Construction Trades Council. The Partnership also has extensive experience in workforce development in Aurora, Waukegan and Rockford, which are potential areas of expansion where the Tollway seeks to establish the Workforce Development Initiative. In 2017, the Partnership managed a budget of \$70.6 million to administer workforce programs across Chicago and Cook County.

The Illinois Tollway Board of Directors is expected to vote to approve the contract at its May 24, 2018, meeting.

About the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership

Created in 2011, the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership combines city and county resources to broaden the reach and impact of workforce services for employers and job seekers. As the largest non-profit managed Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) in the United States, the partnership encompasses the city of Chicago and more than 200 other municipalities. Together, the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership provides the training, business services, career coaching and data analysis necessary to connect construction job seekers with career and employment opportunities on projects throughout the region, and especially the Tollway.

About Move Illinois

The Illinois Tollway's 15-year, \$14 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 294 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.

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