Highway Construction Workforce Partnership
Summary of Activity
October, 2019

States
Connecticut
The Connecticut HCWP has modified the Connecticut “Building Pathways” program to emphasize highway construction job training with a focus on developing trade curriculum in high schools. Two high schools have committed to the program with a third expected to participate. Trade unions are very strong and have been involved in the high school curriculum development. Efforts are also underway to educate guidance counselors about highway construction occupations. The initial effort is directed to three schools.

Rhode Island
Rhode Island is focused on bringing women into highway construction jobs through the Rhode Island Building Futures Program. The program is seven weeks and consists of 120 hours of online and classroom training. The program also engages women program graduates as mentors for students. Rhode Island has a predominately union highway construction workforce. The FHWA Rhode Island Division and RI DOT are working with the Rhode Island Workforce Development Board and have been leaders in the HCWP.

Alabama
Alabama has developed highway construction workforce curriculum to be delivered by three community colleges geographic locations throughout the state. Student participation began with the fall, 2019 semester. Students can continue to employment with additional training and development provided by highway construction employers. The longer range plan is to include HCWP as part of the Governor’s economic and workforce development initiative to provide skill development and training to underrepresented, underemployed, and unemployed individuals.

Idaho
Participation and support from CEOs of the Idaho Transportation Department, Idaho Workforce Development Board, Idaho Associated General Contractors of America, and FHWA Division is driving a comprehensive Idaho HCWP. Idaho AGC has also secured a grant from the Idaho Workforce Development Board for training in construction trades included highways.

A major expansion of I-25 in Idaho is also driving workforce need and is a focus for the Idaho HCWP. Idaho as a rural state and low un-employment makes finding potential workers a challenge. Idaho has a mix of union-non-union companies. Idaho had conducted two Heavy Equipment Operator Training programs. All 38 individuals who completed the training were hired. Idaho also conducted a two day training with 60 completing the program. The training was followed by a Job Fair and four were hired at the Job Fair. All 60 also received training in resume writing.
Arizona
There is a very good working relationship between the highway and workforce organizations including strong leadership from the Arizona AGC and the Arizona Workforce Development Board, through its “Arizona At Work” program. The Working Group developed a one week “Industry Readiness” class for prospective highway construction workers. Highway contractors, through AGC, commit to hiring, as trainees, individuals who have completed the Industry Readiness Program. To date, Arizona has conducted four Industry Readiness Programs; 64 have completed the program, 45 have been placed in permanent highway jobs.

South Dakota
South Dakota has good participation from the key partners including the AGC Chapter, SD Department of Labor, FHWA Division and SD Department of Transportation. The workforce challenges are driven by low unemployment in the state and its rural demographics. The Working Group has conducted three pilot outreach and recruiting programs including one on an Indian reservation. Some adjustments to the program are being made from lessons learned in the Pilot program. South Dakota is also working to refine its highway construction training programs as a next step in their HCWP process.

Cities
Pittsburgh
The Pittsburgh Corp has developed a highway construction training curriculum. The Constructors Association of Western Pennsylvania (CAWP), the AGC affiliate, has developed a highway construction career awareness computer application titled “Future Road Builders” (FBR). The FBR serves as an introduction to highway construction jobs and a pathway to highway construction apprenticeships.

More than 5,000 individuals have downloaded the FRB app. Twenty-three percent of 1,000 construction apprenticeship participants became aware of the apprenticeship program through FRB. Alleghany Community College is developing a 1st line supervisor program based on industry need survey results. Thirty-seven individuals have been trained and placed through the Apprenticeship Program. The Pittsburg Job Corp. has trained and place eight individuals into highway construction jobs.

Atlanta
There is significant highway construction activity now and planned for the Atlanta area. Two major projects have been identified. One is the State’s Major Mobility Investment Program, (MMIP) which targets improvements on the highways around Atlanta (285, 75/85 and I-20) to add capacity by addressing repairs, shoulder running lanes, widening of roads, maintenance
and safety. The other is the Fulton Transportation Pilot, which encompasses the surrounding area just outside of Atlanta. Both projects are expected to be fully up and running within the next five years.

Shortages of workers in highway construction have resulted in wage increases for current workers to compete for labor. Employers are paying more as new employees are hired and/or workers are going to competitor entities for higher wages. The result is competition over the same, limited number of workers. Early need assessments have identified for CDL drivers; Heavy Equipment Operators; Consultants (engineers, inspectors, project managers); and maintenance personnel. Efforts underway for contractor validation of needs. Plans to expand the HCWP partnership to include tech colleges, contractors, Goodwill as well as Trade Unions, and to better identify key training outlets are also underway.

Dallas
The greatest challenge to the Dallas HCWP is the significant number of workers needed and a relatively small pool of potential workers. The problem is compounded by a major high speed railroad project that is estimated to need a significant number of workers. There is good collaboration among partners including contractor representation, providing critical real-world information on job and training needs. The Dallas Workforce Solutions (Dallas WDB) has extensive experience in training and placement and is developing a good understanding of the transportation sector. The Working Group is focused on identifying effective approaches for outreach and training.

The Dallas Regional Black Contractors Association (RBCA) has kicked off a three week workforce funded construction training program but will be increased to five weeks in the upcoming (fifth) cohort. RBCA has focused on second chance candidates and is successfully moving them into the workplace with a large group of construction employers. If successful, other employers will be eager and ready to hire, and the program can be replicated with still other organizations. The program is 100% funded through the workforce system.

There is also a focus on “Opportunity Youth” (18-24) as potential workers. Discussions have been initiated with the Regional Hispanic Contractors Association (RHCA) to help with the project. Discussions have also been held recently with the Dallas Regional Chamber, TEXO (an AGC organization) and the United Way (local staff) to explore leveraging the construction related associations together to find common pathways to more effectively move more people through the pipeline.

Denver
Denver has a strong highway workforce development sector strategy in place with a focus on the I-70 Central project that provides for a comprehensive program for highway career awareness, recruitment, training and placement. Local Workforce Boards have formed an alliance with the Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, state workforce board, employers, and other stakeholders. The partners plan to
extend the HCWP partnership activities beyond the I-70 project, but given the scope and workforce need, I-70 will remain the priority. Denver HCWP has trained 287 and placed 55.

**St. Louis**
HCWP activity in St. Louis has been slow. Two major highway construction projects have been delayed and there is little activity due in large part to a lack of leadership despite efforts by the FHWA Division. New projects will need to be identified for the HCWP and the key partners will need to regroup with a greater commitment to organization and progress. Transportation for workers to and from job sites is a problem. The St. Louis Agency for Training and Employment (SLATE) is working to address the transportation problem with ride sharing program in partnership with LYFT.

**Los Angeles**
There is good representation from across the partner spectrum including FHWA, Caltrans, Workforce Development Boards (10 in LA the area), contractors, unions, government, universities, and community colleges. HCWP focused is developing apprenticeship programs in two multi-billion dollar projects identified by South Bay WDB. The two projects are the LA Stadium Project/Entertainment Center and the Los Angeles Airport rental car expansion.

The Stadium Project has identified 400 individuals for the Apprenticeship Program; 200 are in the process of being hired with 80% from the immediate Inglewood area, and strong participation by underrepresented groups. Three different labor unions are involved to handle different phases of project. The LAX rental car project requires 1600 apprenticeships. These apprenticeships are recognized as Registered Apprenticeship and must meet the 2,000 hour DOL requirement for classroom and On-the-Job Training requirements. With Apprenticeship training on these projects, individuals will also be qualified to work on highway projects.

There are 10 Workforce Development Boards in the Los Angeles Metropolitan area. Other WDBs have been asked to identify major highway projects in their areas. Coastline Community College provides highway specific training. HCWP also working with LA Trade and Technical School. In addition to the Apprenticeship Program, the LA HCWP has trained 52 individuals and placed 37 into highway construction jobs.