



CENTRAL 70 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
SEP-14 LOCAL HIRE PILOT PROGRAM - FINAL REPORT

August 2023

Program Overview

Central Interstate 70, between I-25 and Chambers Road in Denver, is one of Colorado's economic backbones. It is home to 1,200 businesses, providing the regional connection to Denver International Airport and carrying upwards of 200,000 vehicles per day. The Central 70 Project reconstructed a 10-mile stretch of I-70, added one Express Lane in each direction, removed an aging 57-year-old viaduct, lowered the interstate between Brighton and Colorado boulevards and placed a 4-acre park over a portion of the lowered interstate. This portion of I-70 runs through various communities including, Globeville, Elyria, Swansea (GES), Northeast Park Hill, Stapleton, Montbello, Gateway and parts of Aurora, all of which are considered both disproportionately impacted and environmental justice communities.



From the late 1800s, immigrants have called the neighborhoods of GES home. Globeville was originally settled independently around the Globe Smelting and Refining Company, eventually becoming part of Denver in 1902. Elyria and Swansea were likewise founded and annexed separately. Over the years, the neighborhood has evolved and seen Central and Eastern

European settlers move on, replaced by new residents with Latin American roots. Sitting at the literal crossroads of Interstates 25 and 70, the nearly 100,000 residents of GES today face the evolving impacts of massive nearby infrastructure projects in Denver, including the Central 70 Project. While these projects have started to bring the attention, funding and infrastructure the GES neighborhood has been lacking for years, they also bring new and very real concerns about gentrification, rising taxes and rent, and displaced residents.

The Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods have one of the largest Hispanic populations in Denver. Nearly 84 percent of the residents in Elyria and Swansea and 68 percent in Globeville identify as Hispanic. These neighborhoods also experience unemployment rates that are ten times higher than that of the rest of Denver. Many do not have adequate transportation or childcare that is needed to get to work or go to doctor's appointments.

In preparation for the inevitable upgrades needed along this stretch of the I-70 corridor, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) began planning for the Central 70 Project in 2003 with the I-70 East environmental process. By 2008, nine structures on the corridor were classified as either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete and in critical need of repair, rehabilitation, or replacement. That same year, CDOT completed the Environmental Impact Statement between I-25 and Tower Road.

The GES communities, being the ones who would be most significantly impacted by the project due to the placement of the aging viaduct, did not agree with the preferred alternative CDOT originally presented for this stretch of roadway and requested that CDOT continue to evaluate a variety of solutions, keeping the community top of mind. In response,

CDOT conducted five additional years of neighborhood outreach during which the communities and CDOT came to an agreement to lower the highway between Brighton and Colorado and add a cover park adjacent to Swansea Elementary School.

This ‘preferred alternative’ was presented in the supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 2014 and the final EIS in 2016. Ultimately, federal approval was given to the Project in January 2017, and in August 2018, construction began on CDOT’s largest-ever infrastructure project.

Simultaneous construction projects in the GES neighborhoods have a cumulative effect on the community that CDOT has taken seriously. In conjunction with data and information received from over 300 public meetings held prior to construction, CDOT made nearly 150 community commitments to be completed over the Project’s lifespan. These commitments include major renovations to and expansion of Swansea Elementary School (located just 100-feet away from I-70), contributions to local affordable housing efforts, and continuous air monitoring for dust during construction. In addition, the Project offered home improvements to nearly 300 homes within a one-block radius of I-70, providing these residences with air conditioning units, attic insulation, interior storm windows and better weatherization.



Taking into consideration the high unemployment rate in the GES neighborhoods and the community stating fears of being forced out of the neighborhood due to higher costs of living, the Central 70 Project also set a goal of having at least 760,000 hours worked on the Project by individuals in the 13 “Local Zip Codes” adjacent to the Project corridor with half of the local hires needing to be new hires, just starting in the industry or beginning work with a Central 70 contractor after the Project began.

Nationwide trends demonstrate a strong need for workers across the transportation industry both due to industry growth and an aging workforce. The economic benefits of the Central 70 Project are both significant and long lasting. The Project anticipated requiring an estimated 4,000 positions - from skilled craft workforce to administrative support. CDOT reached out to numerous community partners to gather potential ideas and opportunities regarding workforce development and the Central 70 Project. CDOT conducted a roundtable discussion with over two dozen representatives from workforce and supportive services organizations; met with the Colorado Workforce Development Council to explore partnership opportunities;

reviewed relevant comments from the Supplemental Draft EIS; and consulted recent economic reports and forecasts.

CDOT's Workforce Development Program goal is to provide supportive services in training, job placement and other qualified support to increase the number of women, minorities, veterans, ex-offenders, and other disadvantaged individuals in the highway construction industry and to meet OJT requirements outlined in the State of Colorado's OJT Special Contract Provision.

In February 2016, CDOT received approval from the Federal Highway Administration to implement a local labor hiring preference for the Central 70 Project. This approval was granted under a one-year program (Special Experimental Project No. 14 - Local Labor Hiring Pilot Program) created to encourage state transportation departments to pilot local hiring provisions on projects receiving Federal funding.

CDOT is one of nine state transportation agencies across the United States participating in this program that allows requirements for contractors to hire a certain percentage of workforce from within specific geographic boundaries. In the case of the Central 70 Project, CDOT focused hiring targets on neighborhoods adjacent to the Project corridor. As part of CDOT's contract with the Project Developer, Kiewit Meridiam Partners (KMP), during the estimated four and a half-year Project, KMP is required to have 760,000 hours (approximately 20 percent of estimated craft hours) completed by employees from the local community.

To support successful design, implementation and evaluation of local hiring preferences for Central 70, CDOT solicited proposals in 2015 for a partner to help develop and implement the Central 70 Workforce Development Program. CDOT contracted with the Community College of Denver's (CCD) Center for Workforce Initiatives in 2016 to advise the Department on an appropriate goal and to prioritize programmatic recommendations. Community College of Denver was able to collect data and insights through:

- 20 targeted neighborhoods statistical profiles;
- 15 focus groups with 147 participants;
- 528 unique resident surveys;
- 69 stakeholder interviews; and
- Four employer focus groups and/or interviews with regional contractor organizations.

The insights shared by neighborhood residents, community organizations, education and training partners, civic leaders, and local employers supported the identification of goal recommendations and program action strategies related to the outreach, training and skills development, and supportive resources needed to help residents attain and retain employment on Central 70. Some of the programmatic recommendations identified in the study included:

- Identify and recruit for positions that would attract a broad candidate pool and provide transferable career pathways, such as laborers, equipment operators,

commercial drivers, on-the-job trainees, administrative assistants, and accounting clerks.

- Establish a sole workforce convener that would coordinate community intake hubs, standardize assessment and referrals, and track training and placement outcomes.
- Align multiple training programs to create a pipeline system capable of preparing a wide range of students, job seekers, and workers, and ensuring existing or new training is included on the Colorado's Eligible Training Provider List.
- Continue partnering with experienced construction workforce partners, trade associations, and the Colorado Construction Building Trades Council, to inform and educate community organizations, local residents, and training partners on industry practice and expectations.
- Commit to public and transparent reporting on the local hiring program with periodic collaborative forums that engage all stakeholders in identifying and resolving potential issues.

Government investments that create jobs and federal investments that prepare people for jobs are not always aligned. This can lead to a disconnection between economic development initiatives such as infrastructure expansion and workforce development priorities that build the skills and increase the earning potential of community residents. Through thoughtful collaboration, the approved Local Labor Hiring pilot helped CDOT and its partners bridge workforce and economic community development efforts. The alignment of training and job opportunities that help residents in low-income neighborhoods to access training, high-quality jobs with connected career pathways, increases not only individual economic mobility but also the number of skilled workers to fulfill future project needs.

Effective local hire programs can connect residents of communities with high unemployment to new career opportunities. It also creates a pipeline for a future workforce addressing the needs of local workers and businesses. The federal Department of Transportation's (DOT) approved Local Hire initiative provided CDOT an unprecedented opportunity to leverage funds to expand Colorado's signature roadway into local jobs and economic growth for underserved communities along the Central 70 corridor.

Through the data CCD collected, CDOT and its partnering agencies were able to establish a critical need for a training and resource network to make the local hiring program successful and to address identified construction workforce pipeline gaps. The partners recognized that a comprehensive training and supportive services program would both support local individuals looking to begin work in the construction industry, as well as supporting the goals of the USDOT's official on-the-job training (OJT) program, which targets moving women, minorities, and disadvantaged individuals into journey-level positions to help meet highway construction hiring needs and address the historical underrepresentation of these groups in highway construction skilled crafts. After hosting several focus groups with various contractors to determine what would be reasonable OJT and local hire goals, CDOT solidified in the Project Agreement that the Developer is required to provide 200,000 training hours to employees in the skilled craft. The Local Hire pilot was an unfunded initiative, but on June 27, 2016, FHWA awarded CDOT \$400,000 from its Ladders of Opportunity Initiative On-the-Job



Photo Courtesy of Gary Community Investments

Training/Supportive Services Pilot Program. These funds - combined with additional leveraged funding - were essential to support resources needed to achieve workforce goals and encourage local individuals to begin training in construction careers.

Workforce Development Program Execution

Using the FHWA funds, CDOT worked alongside stakeholders to establish a collective impact workforce program, WORKNOW. This collective was presented by Colorado Resource Partners (CORE) to place, retain and advance workers on Central 70 and other regional infrastructure or enterprise projects to build incomes for families through high-wage jobs and targeted resource support. CORE includes nearly 20 resource and training organizations supported by the Center for Workforce Initiatives at Community College of Denver. WORKNOW participants include all individuals accessing training and/or supportive service resources through CORE, not limited to activities funded by the FHWA OJT-SS grant.

As the inaugural, catalytic project utilizing WORKNOW, Central 70 is one of several WORKNOW funders, as well as a key beneficiary of WORKNOW services. Even WORKNOW participants who have not received services directly funded by Central 70 have been eligible for recruitment on the Project.

Through various outreach events and partnerships, CDOT, WORKNOW and the CCD were able to catch the attention of a local private foundation, Gary Community Investments. The foundation made an initial investment of \$1.06 million into the Program, which helped mitigate barriers to employment, such as affordability of personal protective equipment, transportation and childcare to support program launch. A second matching commitment of \$865,000 was awarded in December 2019.



To encourage the local community to attend on-the-job training courses, CDOT opened a Neighborhood Training Center on CDOT's Right of Way in a walkable area in the Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods. Construction Careers Now, a 48-hour basic skills boot camp run by the local chapter of the Associated General Contractors (AGC), started offering courses at the Neighborhood Training Center. The first cohort to graduate at this location were all from the local hire area, indicating that the new location helped with retention among local participants. A WORKNOW Career Navigator also began holding regular office hours at the Neighborhood Training Center, which coincided with the Construction Careers Now boot camp, providing program participants with direct access to coaching services in the late afternoon and evening. Kiewit Infrastructure Co. (KIC), the Central 70 Project's prime contractor, also assisted in developing two additional entry-level courses designed to connect more job seekers to highly needed industry positions. Since KIC was a signatory contractor, additional WORKNOW classes included English as a second language and math skills to support apprenticeship readiness. Through union and non-union



KMP Hiring Fair

partners in WORKNOW, training for both signatory and non-signatory contractors was provided to local individuals.

The Central 70 Project Developer, Kiewit Meridiam Partners (KMP), hired a Workforce Development Coordinator to help with coordinating workforce recruitment, outreach and hiring as well as monitoring and reporting on Central 70 workforce efforts. KMP and WORKNOW co-hosted several Contractor Meet and Greet sessions at the Neighborhood Training Center to support informal community connections with job seekers interested in working on the Project. Sessions featured project contractors, local unions and registered apprenticeship programs for carpenters, laborers, operating engineers and electricians.

KIC is a signatory to the local Carpenters, Operators and Laborers Unions, which provided a significant portion of the project's OJT hours. One of Kiewit's main electrical subcontractors is also a signatory to the Unions and works with two local electrical Unions for their workforce. KMP continually cites its partnerships with Unions as being one of the key factors to the success of the Workforce Development Program. It was through Kiewit's close partnership with the Unions that they were able to make residents aware of open positions and the Workforce Development Program. Working with WORKNOW partners and community leaders, KMP also held several hiring fairs that included coaching and PPE at the event itself to bring in more employees. Three large-scale, in-person hiring events with integrated career support were held to connect residents with training programs to support industry skills building and with contractors hiring on Central 70. These hiring fairs were held at the Neighborhood Training Center or other convenient locations within the local communities.



March 2022 "Women in Construction" event hosted by KMP

In addition to large-scale hiring events with family-friendly activities, the partnership hosted quarterly "meet and greet" sessions with partner contractors and apprenticeship programs during peak hiring timeframes. Graduates of partnering pre-apprenticeship programs, community residents and contractors would meet over food and learn about employment opportunities and training pathways. In 2019, KMP began co-hosting "Building an Inclusive Workforce" series with WORKNOW and developed a "Women in Construction" hands-on workshop in partnership with KMP's signatory unions.

Other outreach tools such as live streaming on Facebook and YouTube were done to help teach the local community about hiring opportunities from four contractors and three unions. These virtual events were produced through partnership between WORKNOW and the Black

Business Initiative, a local minority- and female-owned organization advocating for economic equity for Black communities. Nearly 200 people tune in to these events. One hundred percent of the participating trade partners and registered apprenticeship programs made hires from the hiring live streams.

Results of Local Hiring Program Efforts

As of February 1, 2021, the Central 70 Project's local hiring goal of having 760,000 hours (approximately 20 percent of estimated craft hours) completed by employees from the local community was surpassed.

The Local Hire goal was met by:

- Hosting outreach events to show individuals career pathways in the construction industry.
- Recruiting workers for construction and construction-support jobs using a variety of communication tools, including websites and social media; meetings with small businesses, schools, community associations and trade organizations; as well as a presence at job fairs and information in the Project newsletters.
- Collaborating with local training and service partners early in the Project timeline, ultimately leading to the local collective impact partnership, WORKNOW. WORKNOW was the first partnership of its kind in the Denver area and allowed CDOT - and other industry partners - to work together to improve hiring events, training courses and access to supportive services, ultimately decreasing barriers to entry for local individuals and those new to a career in construction.
- KMP, in collaboration with CDOT and WORKNOW, had a volunteer mentorship program where existing workers networked with new workers and a volunteer ambassador program where existing and new workers could network with the local community.
- KMP, in collaboration with CDOT and WORKNOW, created flyers to communicate the process for getting training, a job with the signatory unions on the Project, or support services. Flyers were distributed within the local community and are available at the Project office.

Assistance to Prospective and Current Local Employees

Residents face numerous barriers to accessing employment opportunities in the construction industry. KMP worked with WORKNOW to identify barriers and develop joint/coordinated strategies to help mitigate them.

The Workforce Development Team worked with CDOT's and KMP's Public Information team to make sure employment/union information is available online. The Workforce Development Team had union information available at the Project office.

The WORKNOW program offers a wide range of support services for new local hires and current employees to help them develop a career in the construction industry. Some of these

supports were provided to trainees through CDOT's Ladders of Opportunity grant, but braided funding from other partners was also necessary for WORKNOW to provide the wide array of supportive services needed by construction workers.

Employee retention was promoted by encouraging craftsmen to mentor new workers. The table below shows some of the ways KMP has worked on alleviating barriers in the previous contract years.

Method	Assistance Provided	How it Alleviates Barriers
Project Office	From Monday - Friday between 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Project Office, the Workforce Development Team was available to provide information about job opportunities and refer local workers to unions for apprenticeship and training programs.	The Project Office is located within the community, providing local workers easy access to immediate referrals. KMP had staff members who were bilingual and had information packets available at the front desk in both English and Spanish.
Unions	KMP collaborated with unions representing operators, carpenters and laborers and refers local workers to training and apprenticeship programs.	New workers to the construction industry can join the union and apply for apprenticeship programs. Current union members can increase apprenticeship hours and position themselves to move from apprentice to journeyman. Unions have their own training programs, training facilities and resources for employment opportunities, which supplement the Project's resources.
Community, Educational and Industry Partners	KMP worked with partners to identify capable individuals and direct them to relevant training, pre-apprenticeship programs, basic computing/office skills classes, etc.	KMP coordinated with WORKNOW program to provide assistance.

Method	Assistance Provided	How it Alleviates Barriers
Cultural Awareness Training and Language Classes	KMP has offered Spanish-language classes for Project supervisory staff and English-language classes for workers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).	English classes reduce language difficulties for LEP workers; Spanish-language classes and cultural training help supervisory staff productively engage with local workers. Apprenticeship, safety, and other trainings in Spanish also help with career development for LEP workers. The Workforce Development Team utilized a local non-profit, Focus Points, for one-on-one and group trainings for craft as needed.
Project Events	KMP advertised opportunities, participated in job fairs and held other events to reach prospective local workers as needed.	These events are free and readily available to the public.
High School Career Fairs	Personnel from a variety of staff, craft and support functions on the Project spoke to high school students about diverse careers in the design and construction industry.	Job fairs educated participants regarding diverse opportunities in the construction industry.

Counting Local Hiring Program Participation

The Local Hiring Goal consists of the following zip codes: 80010, 80011, 80019, 80022, 80205, 80207, 80211, 80216, 80221, 80238, 80239, 80249, and 80266.

For a worker's hours to be eligible for the Local Hiring Goal, the individual must perform a function on the Project (whether as skilled or non-skilled labor) and meet one of the following eligibility criteria:

- **Current Resident:** An individual that has resided in the local hire geographic area for a minimum of 60 consecutive calendar days and continues to reside in the geographic area. A current resident's hours are eligible to count toward the Local Hiring Goal for as long as the individual resides in the local hire geographic area.
- **Former Resident:** An individual that resided in the local hire geographic area for a minimum of 180 consecutive calendar days provided that such period of residency ended no more than one year prior to the agreement date. A former resident's hours are eligible to count toward the Local Hiring Goal for the duration of the Construction Period.
- **Displaced Resident:** An individual that was subjected to a right-of-way relocation. A displaced resident's hours are eligible to count toward the Local Hiring Goal for the duration of the Construction Period.

A proposed local worker must have been accepted by CDOT for such individual's hours to be counted toward the Local Hiring Goal. Acceptance must occur before the participation can be counted toward the Local Hiring Goal. To gain acceptance, KMP would submit the following to CDOT for each local worker:

- Complete local hiring program enrollment, in a form to be agreed between the Parties (both acting reasonably).
- A self-certifying residency disclosure, in a form to be agreed between the parties (both acting reasonably), signed by the individual whose employment hours are to be counted toward the Local Hiring Goal.
- Any additional documentation to prove residency or prior residency on a case-by- case basis as CDOT determines is necessary.

Hours worked by local workers were documented and reported to CDOT in a format mutually agreed upon by KMP and CDOT (both acting reasonably).

Final Deliverables

The Workforce Development Program produced the following key deliverables:

- **Central 70 Opportunities Website:** Completed fall 2017. The website directly links to WORKNOW and all quarterly reports are also accessible via the website. The website continued to be updated throughout the Project to reflect hiring pathways as construction ramps up. The website can be found at: c70jobs.codot.gov.
- **Smartphone "Job Alert" App:** CDOT proceeded with a license agreement for a trade-skills matching app, which allows contractors to search for and request applications from potential employees based solely on the individuals' previous job experience, training certifications, and skills. The platform is free to all job seekers. [https://work- now.org/building-more/tradeskills-match/](https://work-now.org/building-more/tradeskills-match/)
- **Quarterly Progress Reports and Final Report:** Program provided progress reports on a quarterly basis throughout the Project. All reports were made publicly available on the Opportunities Website.

Tracking Outcomes

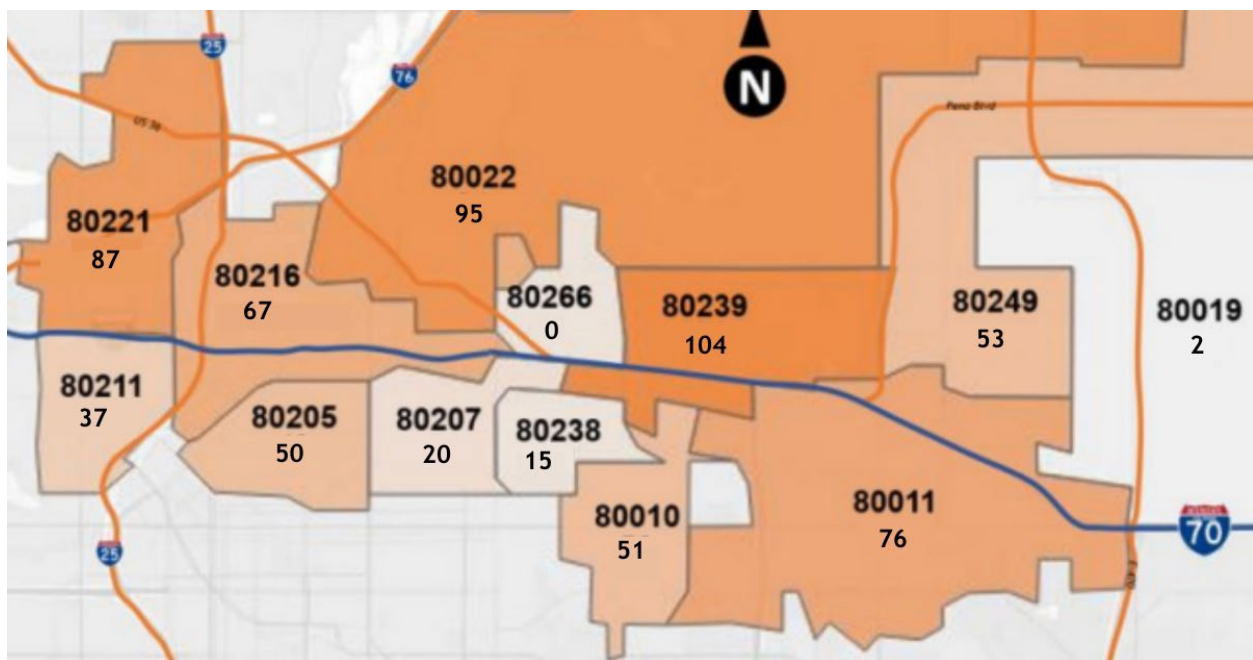
Accurate and up-to-date records of local worker participation have been prepared by KMP. Below is the projected schedule:

Year	Local Hire - Craft Hour	Local Hire - Professional Hours	Local Hire - Total Hours
Approved Hours for Contract Years 1 & 2	112,339	74,744	187,083

Year	Local Hire - Craft Hour	Local Hire - Professional Hours	Local Hire - Total Hours
Approved Hours - Contract Year 3 (July 1, 2019 - June 20, 2020)	282,123	69,328	351,451
Approved hours - Contract Year 4 (July 1, 2020 - June 20, 2021)	267,191	58,280	325,471
Approved Hours - Contract Year 5 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022)	127,341	27,865	155,206
Total Approved Hours - Contract Years 1-5 (per July MPR)	789,836	232,841	1,022,677
Projected Hours - Contract Year 6 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)	13,440	2,840	16,280

The Project goal was achieved in Contract Year 4. The workforce projection detail for Contract Year 6 is in the Appendix.

Number of Local Hires from each zip code



Final Workforce Development Program Data

The Local Hire goal on the Project was 760,000 manhours. In February 2021, KMP met this goal. As of June 2022, the local hire hours were 1,022,677.

Job	Total Projected Local Hire Hours (to date through Contract Year 5)	Total Actual Local Hire Hours (to date per July 2022 Monthly Progress Report)	% of Total Projected Hours
Skilled Craft Hours	732,653	789,836	107%
Professional Service Employment Hours	209,852	232,841	111%
Totals	942,505	1,022,677	118%

Incentive Paid

The Developer was paid \$250,000.00 for meeting the goal laid out in the Project Agreement.

Contractor and Developer Perspective

The strong partnership with the Central 70 Project's contractor and Developer helped the Workforce Development Program flourish. KMP understood the importance of leveraging partnerships to make a Program like Central 70's successful and called upon their own resources to meet the Project's goals. The contractor and Developer had the following to say:

"Workforce Development is very important to Kiewit, as a contractor," said Jason Proskovec, Kiewit's Central 70 project director. "We're a local contractor, we've been in Denver and in the community for over 70 years and know that wherever we go it's important to not only help train and develop our construction workforce since it's widely known that it's an aging workforce and we need to develop people to help, not only on this Project, but when we take on more work as well. We need to develop skilled craftsmen and women to build projects such as Central 70. Being able to take the skills learned through the Program to the next job and the next job, even if it isn't for us, it's just more beneficial for the construction industry in general."

"Kiewit Meridiam Partners LLC, the Developer, has been committed to supporting the community adjacent to the Central 70 Project since the proposal stage and will continue throughout the 30-year operations term of the Project," said Cathi Buckley, Kiewit Meridiam Partners chief financial officer. "Part of that support included workforce development and the local hire program developed specifically for the Project. Through KMP's commitment, the substantial goals established by the Enterprises were achieved early, with On-the-Job training goals reached in October 2020 and local hire goals in 2021. The KMP team, in partnership with the Enterprises, educated the local community about the workforce program, the hiring goals and training opportunities. The program enabled the Project to meet the workforce needs by introducing new people to the construction industry, which has been facing a lack of trained labor for many years. The success of the program was reliant on all partners involved, WORKNOW, local trade unions, construction organizations and training partners, as well as commitment by the construction contractor, to ensure hiring local was a priority. To Kiewit Meridiam Partners, the benefits of this Program are many. A stronger and

larger construction workforce base, a more economically sustainable community, and strong partnerships for future project.”

Lessons Learned

The Central 70 Project was one of a few DOTs that were a part of the Local Hiring Pilot Program, which meant CDOT’s Central 70 Project team had no prior CDOT projects to lean on for examples of how to successfully implement this type of program. While this Program was successful, there were a few lessons learned that will help to make future projects even more successful.

- **Establishing a local hiring goal**
 - The Central 70 Project team considered two options for establishing a local utilization goal: using a set number of or requiring a percentage of total hours. A set number of hours is easier to administer, especially when counting professional services hours, so this is how CDOT established Central 70’s 760,000-hour goal. However, initial project estimates during the proposal phase are often underestimated, so establishing a set number goal at the beginning of the project offers a benchmark for proposers but doesn’t allow the goal to adjust depending on the actual hours worked. A percentage goal holds the developer accountable, despite how much the overall number of man-hours fluctuates from the original estimate. To account for these two approaches, CDOT tracked the total number of local hours and the percentages of craft work to determine how the total hours align to the original intent of utilizing local workers for approximately twenty percent of the overall hours.
- **Timeline to implement pilot activities on a construction project**
 - Typical of any Pilot, it takes time to establish clear and actionable processes. The RFP process on Central 70 required all the short-listed Developers to present a general plan for how they would achieve the Local Hire Goal. However, turning the workforce plans into actionable processes that integrated well with other project work areas took nearly a year from Commercial Close. CDOT anticipated a slow start due to the nature of conducting pilot programs. However, despite this anticipation, the time required to create forms and establish processes made it more difficult to incorporate the Local Hire Program into other work areas early on. This affected the way the Local Hire Program was adopted Project-wide, especially hindering the way the Program was communicated during subcontractor on-boarding in early 2018.
- **Developing buy-in takes time**
 - As part of their Workforce Development Plan, the Central 70 Developer showed multiple approaches for meeting the Local Hire Goal, committed to hiring a Workforce Coordinator, and committed to collaborating closely with Department-approved workforce organizations (this refers to the collective impact platform, WORKNOW). However, the Developer team was still uncertain whether the benefits of the Local Hire Program would outweigh the added contractual responsibilities.

In the first year of construction, the Developer team started seeing the benefits associated with the Local Hire Program, including monthly hiring events held specifically to support Project workforce needs, supportive resources available to any Project employee, and general recognition of being a good partner in the community.

Part of this buy-in has grown due to close partnerships between CDOT, the Developer's Workforce Coordinator, and the Central 70 WORKNOW representatives. This partnership has led to processes that are reasonable for Project contractors, help connect Project employees to helpful resources and ultimately fulfill contractual expectations.

Increased buy-in is evident by KMP going beyond contractual requirements:

- KMP's request for WORKNOW to host weekly Office Hours at the Project Office at a time when both day-shift and night-shift employees could access support;
 - Two separate Kiewit (Prime Contractor) work areas have requested specialized training courses from WORKNOW partners to assist with current recruitment, placement, and retention difficulties;
 - KMP has launched an English-to-Spanish workshop hosted monthly, open to all Central 70 employees;
 - Kiewit has sent multiple fliers with Central 70 pay stubs to help employees learn about retention services that are available; and
 - Kiewit participated in Project Pathway Road Shows to educate local career navigators about ways to connect with different Central 70 jobs and OJT opportunities.
- **Subcontractor outreach**
 - On a project the size of Central 70, subcontractor outreach and engagement was an on-going struggle for the Local Hire Program. KMP has sent all-project blasts, but these tend to have a low response rate. Kiewit has done the most outreach, but the workforce team initially had trouble contacting lower-tier subcontractors without overstepping subcontracting relationships. Subcontractors would say that they desperately need employees, but there were very limited responses to the formal requests for planning hiring fairs. This made it difficult for KMP and WORKNOW to follow-through with providing hiring support and hosting additional events.
- To remedy this difficulty, KMP hosted a mandatory Central 70 Contractor Civil Rights meeting in May 2019 to introduce subcontractors to WORKNOW reps and reinforce other civil rights contractual requirements. Efforts to remedy this issue proved fruitful, with 657 subcontractor employees being from the local communities.

- **Strategic Hiring Events and Processes**
 - Meet and Greet: KMP hosted informal monthly hiring events called Meet and Greets each month in partnership with WORKNOW. WORKNOW used their grassroots recruitment networks to refer qualified candidates to open positions with Central 70 subcontractors and signatory unions. These events were free of charge for both job seekers and employers. Meet and Greets began as weekly events, but feedback suggested that monthly would be better for both subcontractors, unions, and job seekers. As noted above in Subcontractor Outreach, the biggest difficulty with Meet and Greets is recruiting contractors to participate; some will express their need for employees but then will not attend the Meet and Greet.
 - Position Information Notice Forms: These were developed and implemented in mid-2018. Notice Forms provided a tool for Central 70 contractors to inform WORKNOW about open positions. These have been helpful to WORKNOW navigators, providing job descriptions and requirements. Having a detailed description of a position makes it much easier to recruit qualified candidates. Kiewit and the most engaged subcontractors had been submitting these forms. However, difficulties with subcontractor outreach also directly influenced the effectiveness of this process. If subcontractors do not know about Notice Forms or do not understand how they work, they will not submit them.
 - Large Project-wide Hiring Fair: Hiring fairs were successful. The success was primarily due to extensive grassroots outreach, coupled with good media coverage. Kiewit invested extensively in the events, encouraging their unions and subcontractors to participate in hands-on displays and providing food to all attendees in order to alleviate barriers to attendance.
- **Administrative heavy lift**
 - The certified payroll system (LCP Tracker) can be a great way for the contractor to track how many craft employees were hired from the local community, but it proved to be a challenge when collecting data for those hired on for professional services or were hired through a subcontractor. KMP is required by the Project Agreement to meet local hiring and OJT goals and have incentives to make sure it is meeting these goals. Subcontractors, especially lower tier subcontractors, do not have the same incentives to hire locally or to fill out local hire forms to track participants of the Program, therefore, the necessary data was not always being captured and sent back to KMP. KMP had to communicate with lower tiers on a weekly to monthly basis to remind them to send in their data, but the team rarely received any forms back. There was also a delicate balance on communicating why this data was important to gather to the lower tiers while trying not to make them feel like they were being pressured to submit forms or hire locally. Initial Solution: All employees working in the field are required to attend a Safety Training before they can start working. The Central 70 Project team saw this training as an opportunity to reach those who were local hires and participated in OJT. Forms were given to each attendee to fill out to indicate if they are from the 13 zip codes adjacent to the Project and if they participated in OJT.

While the Project team was able to get forms from local hires at the Safety Training, CDOT and KMP recognized that there was a cultural barrier that was not addressed prior to starting this new initiative. The Project team had been going into these Trainings to discuss the Program and the need for forms to be filled out, but these discussions were taking place in English and all the forms were in English when many of the hires may only speak or write in Spanish. In addition, many local hires, especially those hired by subcontractors, were skeptical of being asked for personal information, such as for their home address, by a company they did not work for and therefore declined to fill out the form. **Solution:** The Project team hired a bilingual Workforce Coordinator to help communicate about the Program and why they were asking for personal information. All forms were also translated to Spanish. The Workforce team also began spending more time at these trainings to thoughtfully explain the initiative and the importance of collecting this data and what the Project's goal is to gain their trust.

- **Using the incentive-based approach on other types of contracts**

- The Local Hire initiative on C70 worked very closely with supporting individuals who are joining the OJT program. The OJT program is open to anyone and WORKNOW was able to support any individual interested in the trades with a wide array of support. Recruitment into the trades is an area of need across all projects, regardless of contract type. Incentivizing contractors to hire local individuals and also providing supportive services and training to local individuals who are interested in the trades makes sense on any contract that is subject to OJT requirements.
- Incentive based goals seemed to work initially to spark interest but as the Project continued, the Developer stated multiple times that incentives were not the main reason to achieve the goal. Primarily, the Developer realized that outreach to local workforces and also maintaining good community relationships was incentive enough. With C70 and the WORKNOW partnership, we tried to create a holistic, collective recruitment and retention support program that helped project contractors 1) recruit and retain local individuals who were new to the industry, and 2) train local individuals who were already on the project who needed additional skills to advance. The WORKNOW model helped CDOT and project contractors leverage the expertise of training and supportive service organizations that already existed - not requiring significant startup funds to recreate what was already happening. This meant that most of the expense/burden on the Developer was to provide the necessary administrative support for partnering with the WORKNOW platform. This is something that could be implemented on other projects with other contracting methodologies

- **Limiting competition through the contracting approach**

- On a project the size and scale of Central 70, competition was not limited by the incentive-based contracting approach. Each of the shortlisted Developers provided a workforce plan and most of the “burden” for the contractors was to

be willing to work with WORKNOW. CDOT and our partners worked very hard to not re-create what was already being done - ensuring that local training and support partners were brought into conversations early. Each shortlisted Developer had access to the same roundtable discussions if they chose to be there as a partner.

Summary

CDOT's Central 70 Workforce Development Program is an example of how partnership can foster hiring and retention practices that support the construction industry as a whole - and highway construction specifically - while also providing specific benefits to un- and under-employed local residents. Supporting local individuals who are interested in high-wage jobs gain access to meaningful training and supportive services also gives back to the community in a way that transportation projects have not done in the past. The residents hired as a part of the Program will continue to reap the benefits of the skills, resources, networks, and experience they have developed. Many are becoming important leaders in the construction industry, even working on other Denver-area projects. It was through leveraging strategic partnerships and maintaining strong relationships that the Central 70 Project was able to quickly meet its goals and meet the needs of the community.

APPENDIX***Civil Rights Workforce Projections for Contract Year 6***

OJT	Total Submitted OJT Hours To Date (July MPR)		Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Total
Total OJT Hours {Month} •Apprentice			2,300	1,600	1,050	400	60	30	5,440
Total Projected OJT Hours {To Date}•	332,189		334,489	336,089	337,139	337,539	337,599	337,629	2,020,484

Local Hire	Total Actual Hours to Date (July MPR)		Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Total
Local Hire Total Craft {Month}'			7,000	4,000	1,750	600	60	30	13,440
Total Projected Craft Local Hire Hours {To Date}	789,836		796,836	800,836	802,586	803,186	803,246	803,276	
Prof Serv Local Hire Hours {Month}			1,400	800	350	200	60	30	2,840
Total Prof Serv Local Hire Hours (To Date)	232,841		234,241	235,041	235,391	235,591	235,651	235,681	
Overall Total Local Hire {Month}			8,400	4,800	2,100	800	120	60	16,280
Overall Projected Total Local Hire Hours {To Date}	1,022,677		1,031,077	1,035,877	1,037,977	1,038,777	1,038,897	1,038,957	1,038,957