



Roads To Your Future - Winter 2022 e-Newsletter

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Texas ConnectU2Jobs Program Changes Lives Through Community Partnerships

For employers in the highway construction industry in Texas, a constant flow of skilled individuals is needed to sustain the workforce and keep roadways safe. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) collaborated to design the ConnectU2Jobs program to fulfill that demand and offer career opportunities to individuals who typically may not be provided access to such options. The Highway Construction Workforce Partnership (HCWP)

included TxDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Texas Workforce Commission, Dallas College, Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas, the Regional Black Contractors Association, the Regional Hispanic Contractors Association, Lone Star Justice Alliance, and the Associated General Contractors of Texas.

The 10-week pilot kicked off in September 2021 to prepare and train justice-involved young adults, ages 18–24, for careers in the heavy highway construction industry. The inaugural class was made up of 10 individuals, who received classroom instruction and hands-on training. Participants were able to earn wages during the training through paid internships sponsored by potential employers. This first cohort identified several requirements and qualifiers which will need to be addressed and identified through the recruitment process to validate work readiness. All graduates will continue to receive support from transition coaches for 180 days after program completion. The HCWP plans to focus on confirming work readiness during the recruitment process for future cohorts.

To learn more about the TxDOT ConnectU2Jobs program, contact [Kim Hunziker](#). To learn about how you can expand your highway construction workforce, contact HCWP Program Manager [Clark Martin](#).



Source: ConnectU2Jobs

Iowa Extends Workforce Training Program to Launch Careers for Young Adults

To address a lack of diversity in its highway, street, and bridge construction workforce and provide career opportunities for under and unemployed individuals, the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) offers training programs for non-traditional construction workers. The program prepares women, minority groups, and other disadvantaged persons for entry-level positions that can provide long-term career options. With HCWP funding, the Iowa DOT

is collaborating with industry representatives and community colleges to extend its training and placement services to young adults, ages 18–24.

The expanded program highlights general construction knowledge like workplace safety, personal protective gear, equipment safety inspections, and safe operations. It prepares successful trainees to find jobs as construction laborers, heavy equipment operators, and highway maintenance workers. To increase career placement, Iowa also offers recruitment and networking services for program participants.

To learn more about Iowa's expanded workforce training and placement programs, contact [Yareli Reeve-Mendoza](#). For more information on how you can increase diversity among your workforce, contact or HCWP Program Manager [Clark Martin](#).

Massachusetts Increases Career Opportunities With E-Bike Certification

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has a solid workforce development network, but the COVID-19 pandemic made it challenging to match program participants with employment opportunities. With vocational school classes held virtually, co-ops and internships put on hold, pre-apprentice programs suspended, and union apprenticeship programs temporarily shut down, MassDOT turned to alternative mode infrastructure projects to address its career placement challenges.

The workforce partnership continues to train individuals for career opportunities created by the construction of public transportation activities. It offers skills training in technical and transportation careers, the asphalt and aggregate industry, and commercial driver license exam preparation courses. It also now offers an additional career pathway connected with alternative mode infrastructure projects. By introducing an e-bike certification/technician program, MassDOT aims to foster economic inclusion and equity.

To learn more about how Massachusetts increased its career options, contact [Ann O'Neill](#) at MassDOT. For more information on how you can expand your workforce program, contact HCWP Program Manager [Clark Martin](#).

Wisconsin Partners to Focus on Workforce Shortages and Increase Diversity

To address continued demand for skilled road and bridge construction workers as well as a lack of diversity among its highway construction workforce, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) teamed up with various highway contractors and industry associations. The partners decided to utilize WisDOT's existing Transportation Alliance for New Solutions program as a pre-apprenticeship program to recruit, train, and place minority and women workers in lasting construction careers.

By leveraging the existing program, WisDOT aims to increase awareness of highway construction careers and provide training and career opportunities, plus reduce or remove barriers and provide support to participants. Diversifying the workforce also will help decrease unemployment among underrepresented populations, increase access to career path employment with sustainable wages and benefits, and grow the region's skilled workforce.

To learn more about how Wisconsin is increasing diversity among its highway construction workforce, contact [Lea Collins-Worachek](#) at WisDOT. For more information on how you can address workforce shortages, contact HCWP Program Manager [Clark Martin](#).

FHWA Offers Resources to Strengthen Strategic Workforce Development

To help states successfully implement its Strategic Workforce Development Every Day Counts initiative, FHWA offers the HCWP Playbook and Toolkit. It also provides other resources and contacts to help engage with additional stakeholders, such as Tribal communities. The Toolkit will also receive new materials as they become available with its most recent update adding the EDC-6 Strategic Workforce Development's [Initiative White Paper](#) and [Tribal Contacts and Resources](#). For more information on how you can strengthen outreach and recruitment efforts in your state, contact HCWP Program Manager [Clark Martin](#).



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