

EDC-6 Strategic Workforce Development Initiative White Paper

December 2021

Now that your State Department of Transportation or City has decided to promote the Strategic Workforce Development (SWD) Every Day Counts (EDC-6) initiative in your State, you may be looking for resources to help you successfully develop this initiative. Listed below are a few resources that provide background/supporting information, plus questions to discuss within your Team that will help outline a strategy for this initiative.

Toolkit

The Highway Construction Workforce Partnership (HCWP)/Strategic Workforce Development (SWD) Toolkit provides resources that may be helpful to your Team. [The Toolkit is located here](#), and includes links to the items below:

- [Playbook](#) – A set of eight “plays” describing how to organize and implement an HCWP/SWD initiative to identify, train, and place individuals into highway construction jobs.
- [Speaking Points](#) – An overview of the HCWP/SWD initiative that can be used for presentations and background information.
- [Videos](#) – Interviews with HCWP Pilot location programs managers about how they implemented the HCWP/SWD and lessons learned.
- [Roads to Your Future](#) – Short video of HCWP leaders and a worker trained and placed through the HCWP.
- [Pilot Profiles](#) – Overview of several HCWP Pilot location programs that provides insight into their organization, operation, and successful practices.
 - Alabama
 - Arizona
 - Idaho
 - Pittsburgh
 - Denver
 - Los Angeles
 - Future Road Builders
- [Case Studies](#) – A focus on key aspects of the HCWP/SWD initiative including successful practices.
 - Outreach
 - Training
 - Working Groups
- [Marketing Materials](#) – Sample of HCWP/SWD marketing materials, e.g. posters, postcards, mailer info, and flyers that can be downloaded and used as is or customized to a particular location.

Other Resources

Another good resource is the “EDC-6: Strategic Workforce Initiative” presentation from the EDC-6 virtual summit. This presentation provides a great background for the Workforce initiative, along with many resource links. The presentation is located here: [EDC-6 Strategic Workforce Development \(Adobe Connect\)](#).

Also, refer to the [EDC-6 Summit Summary and Baseline Report](#) to determine which stage your State/team is currently in as you move forward with your State HCWP team implementation and development. This resource can help guide your team as you move from baseline determinations and development towards more advanced stages.

Questions to Ask

Below are recommended questions to ask or address once you select the EDC-6 Strategic Workforce Development initiative for your State:

Who is on your HCWP Team for this initiative? Does your team for this initiative need to expand beyond the STIC (State Transportation Innovative Council) in your State? Industry leaders (e.g., Associated General Contractors [AGC], National Asphalt Paving Association [NAPA], American Concrete Paving Association [ACPA], etc.) should be engaged. Representatives from the State or local Workforce Development Board may be key to ensuring that Workforce System resources are part of the program. Other State and local economic development organizations, the State Department of Labor (DOL), labor organizations, and training and education organizations can be important contributors to the process. Who should be the lead for this? In this case, industry may be the best option. Even if industry is not the lead actor, contractor organizations should be involved in all aspects of the effort to determine workforce needs, support training program decisions, and place workers into jobs. Consultants could also be an important part of the team.

Would a peer exchange activity help with planning the process your State uses for this EDC initiative? Several pilot States and cities are available for peer exchanges, to answer questions and discuss what has worked and what has not. FHWA is developing a peer exchange guidance presentation that can help kick off these exchanges and direct the conversations so that they are the most useful for your State. A point of contact for each of the pilot States and cities is available in the Pilot Profiles section of the [Toolkit](#).

Needs Assessment

Review all of the relevant information to date that can help you assess the workforce development needs of your State or city. In addition to the resources listed above, consider any State-specific studies that can be used or specific needs that should be addressed. What relevant feedback have you heard in your State at contractor- or industry-led conferences? Does the State Department of Education (DoED) or DOL have hiring resources that can be used or expanded upon to help with this initiative? There are many resources available that can describe guidance or best practices when moving forward with this initiative.

1. What specific contractor needs are prevalent in your State? Is there a need for equipment operators, finishers, flaggers, laborers, etc.? Contractors are likely best suited to provide or know this information. You can also check out the 2021 AGC annual workforce information, including the [AGC workforce needs survey](#). Are these short-term needs or do contractors see a need for additional skilled laborers into the future? The State AGC or American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) Chapter have conducted member workforce surveys at some locations.
2. What is the best way to address or advertise positions in the highway construction industry? How do we reach people looking for good-paying, quality jobs that offer opportunities for advancement? Are there current resources (from AGC, DOL, DoED, etc.) already used by contractors that can be expanded to reach additional populations with these jobs and needs? Do the tribes or Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (TERO) offices have resources available?

High School Outreach

One specific activity that could work in your State is additional outreach with area high schools to ensure school counselors, parents, and students are aware of job opportunities within the construction industry. Summer internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, and “Construction Career Day” engagements may help highlight these activities. Resources are available to provide direction and guidance on promoting construction opportunities at the high school level: visit the National Network for the Transportation Workforce ([NNTW](#)) and the National Center for Construction Education and Research ([NCCER](#)) websites. Information similar to the “[Build your Career in Construction](#)” website developed by the South Dakota AGC may also help your State highlight and promote these opportunities.

Finding Partners

Although many construction contractors are members of their statewide AGC, there are also many that are not, which may include smaller and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) contractors. To ensure your HCWP team is reaching all contractors to determine their current and future workforce needs, it is important to have methods to reach out to these non-AGC contractors. The [HCWP website](#) contains resources and contacts that can help you with this outreach.

Additional Tips

Keep in mind that the needs and challenges to increase the construction workforce in your State may vary based on urban vs. rural project locations. It may be easier to match up potential workers for projects within urban areas and more difficult for projects in rural areas. One issue may be travel obstacles that could prevent potential workers from getting to projects. It may be beneficial to work with your State AGC and contractors to determine what options they have available to provide transportation to project sites. One possible option is to have a pool of potential workers within a region and match them up with upcoming construction projects within that region to avoid the need for long-distance travel to construction sites by workers.

Although optional, developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the HCWP team (and any additional partners) is highly encouraged. This MOU can help define leads, teams, emphasis areas, charter, etc. It can also clarify the team’s expectations and commitments. Sample [MOUs](#) are available upon request from FHWA.

On-the-Job Training/Supportive Services (OJT/SS) funds may be used for HCWP activities. Consider incorporating HCWP-related activities into your annual OJT/SS Statement of Work. Several States are using these funds to support workforce development and can provide examples. This may be a good topic to discuss during a peer exchange or with the FHWA OJT/SS program manager. Supportive services can include, for example, transportation and childcare reimbursement that will help potential employees.

Having your State AGC chapter (or even AASHTO construction committee representatives) as a member on your HCWP team is important. One action that the EDC-6 SWD Implementation Team representatives are taking is to collaborate with AGC and AASHTO at the national level to recognize and support the HCWP. This encourages State AGC chapters to commit to working with your State HCWP team and increases the likelihood that National needs are addressed at the State level, as appropriate. AASHTO, AGC, and ARTBA, along with the Federal DOL Employment and Training Administration and FHWA, are the original national organizations that worked together to establish the HCWP.

Highway Construction Workforce Partnership/ Strategic Workforce Development



Keep your State, Tribal, and local community and technical colleges in mind as you look for ways to develop and train the construction labor workforce. There are likely specific training opportunities that can be hosted through them, such as Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training and craft position training. There may also be job placement opportunities through these colleges. Play 6 of the HCWP Playbook highlights the benefit community colleges can provide to the HCWP. For example, the South Dakota AGC currently sponsors and offers CDL training through State technical colleges. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) funds may be used to fund and support these initiatives at these colleges. [Additional FMCSA information can be found here.](#)

The [EDC-6 Strategic Workforce Development website](#) will continue to be updated with resources that HCWP teams can use to promote or market their initiative, including posters, brochures, best practices, social media, pilot project achievements, etc.