

WIN's Incorporation into the FasTracks

Program Response to CDOT 7-2015

The Workforce Initiative Now (WIN) Program is a collaborative workforce partnership led by the Regional Transportation District (RTD) in coordination with the Community College of Denver, Denver Transit Partners, and Urban League of Metro Denver. WIN creates career pathway opportunities on construction and transportation and provides employer-focused workforce services on regional infrastructure projects. The two primary objectives of this project is to 1) develop and implement a community workforce program in the transit and construction industries; and 2) provide a replicable model for linking community workforce development to employment and training opportunities associated with transit infrastructure expansion.

RTD sees transit infrastructure expansion efforts such as FasTracks, as a way to provide a unique opportunity for dedicated employment and training opportunities that prepare local residents, including low-skill, high-barrier individuals, for successful employment. Programs such as WIN can make local residents more desirable candidates for employment and ensure that typical short-term job opportunities are transformed into longer-term career pathways. Additionally, they can provide project employers with a pipeline of qualified candidates not only for the identified project, but also for their long-term workforce needs.

When identifying prospective projects, RTD believes it is important to select a single regional opportunity, or consider a full-scale implementation approach that encompasses all expansion projects (or those above a specified dollar threshold). In the case of WIN, program activities were piloted initially on a single project—the Eagle P3 portion of the FasTracks expansion. Eagle P3 is a public-private partnership comprised of three rail line expansions (including one to Denver International Airport) and a Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility. The total 36 miles of new commuter rail lines are scheduled to open one at a time in sequence in 2016.

The joint-venture team completing the project, Denver Transit Partners, is a partnership comprised of Fluor Corporation, John Laing Investments Ltd., and Lloyds, along with Balfour Beatty Rail and Ames Construction. In addition to committing to a good-faith utilization of 8% to 10% of craft personnel hiring and with a total number of participants to-date of 62; DTP was highly involved in the planning and implementation stages of the pilot, guiding recruitment, screening and placement procedures. The team continues to play an integral role in on-going program development through advisory leadership, funding, and WIN evaluation efforts.

Following the WIN program kick-off on Eagle P3, RTD elected to include WIN requirements on various Requests for Proposals (RFP's) related to FasTracks construction. Additional, placement partnerships under construction include:

- **I-225 Light Rail expansion—a 10.5-mile light rail line within the city of Aurora that will provide key regional connections to the East and Southeast rail lines**
 - WIN Requirement: 7% on professional and skilled craft services.
 - Total Number of Participants To-Date: 145 participants.

- Contractor's Plan to Meet WIN Requirement: Along with their overall 7% WIN requirement, the Contractor also sets WIN requirements for all lower- tier subcontractors.
- **North Metro Light Rail expansion—an 18.5-mile electric commuter rail line that will run from Denver Union Station through Commerce City, Thornton and Northglenn into North Adams County**
 - WIN Requirement: 4% professional services and 8% skilled craft services
 - Total Number of Participants To-Date: 12 participants
 - Contractor's Plan to Meet WIN Requirement: The Contractor created a comprehensive outreach and communication plan inclusive of forecasting workforce needs, installing computers for prospective workers and community partnership
- **Renovation of historic Denver Union Station building—renovation of existing building into boutique hotel and open market retail, the hub for the FasTracks rail expansion**
 - No WIN Requirement in contract; however through good-faith efforts Contractor utilized program participants
 - Total Number of Participants To-Date: 8
 - Contractor's Plan to Meet WIN Requirement: Not applicable, as there was no contractual requirement

Other smaller FasTracks projects include:

- Transit-oriented development and renovation of Alameda Station—station improvements and a multi-unit residential and retail building, workforce development activities designed in partnership with Denver's Urban Renewal Authority (DURA)
- Denver Regional Onboarding Survey— on-to-off survey and onboard transit passenger surveys for various fixed bus-routes and rail routes

Additionally, long-term service and maintenance employment opportunities exist within RTD as well, and as WIN participants gain work experience on building projects, training will provide transferrable skills to compete successfully for RTD positions to operate and maintain transit services. Community College of Denver is currently working with WIN Network Partners, Labor- management partners within RTD, and local school districts to develop stackable certificates to provide accredit training related to entry-level service and maintenance needs.

As a result of these project partnerships, WIN benefits from a rapidly expanding network of general contractors and small businesses who partner with WIN through placement and/or career training. By maintaining a project-based approach, WIN is able to capitalize on transit infrastructure investments and include mandated employment and training opportunities for local residents in contract language and in negotiations with contracting teams. Services for each project are customized through the workforce development plan, submitted by the project

contractor, and individual employer agreements that are prepared by WIN staff. WIN recognizes that each joint venture team or individual contractor bidding has varied workforce requirements and each individual project presents unique career development options. Maintaining this flexibility and understanding the needs of each contracting team and/or partnering employer is critical to being able to provide demand-driven services.