

# Workforce Development and Small Business Support

ODOT's Office of Civil Rights includes workforce development and small business support programs, in addition to ensuring labor compliance and equal opportunity, supporting disadvantaged businesses, and overseeing environmental justice.

## Workforce Development

- Studies have shown Oregon will be short approximately 14,000 workers in the coming years for highway construction.
- In 2006, ODOT implemented its **Workforce Development Plan** to identify, recruit and train a new and larger qualified construction workforce, as well as build sustainable career opportunities for Oregon workers.
- The Plan received the **Exemplary Practices Award** from the American Public Works Association in 2007, recognizing outstanding contributions to diversity. ODOT then created a **Workforce Development Program** that became operational statewide in 2008.

## Small Business Programs

- During 2005 – 2007, ODOT's Emerging Small Business program experienced its greatest growth since its inception, awarding **70 contracts valued at \$2,214,878**, with an average size of \$31,641. While the program is race and gender-neutral, it awarded contracts to a diverse group of bidders: **17.6 percent (15 contracts) went to minority-owned firms and 23.3 percent (20 contracts) went to women-owned firms.**
- **ODOT's Small Business Initiative:** This program increases economic opportunities by boosting participation in transportation projects. The Small Contracting Program for Professional and Technical Services launched in October 2006 and in the first month, **117 firms registered, with two-thirds registered as a disadvantaged, minority-owned, women-owned or emerging small business.** In 2007, ODOT's Small Contracting Program for Construction began

operations, aimed at diversifying the size of companies awarded ODOT construction contracts.

- **Mentor Protégé program:** A project-specific Mentor Protégé Pilot Program is helping small businesses (protégés) learn how to develop their companies and compete for prime contract and subcontract awards by partnering with large companies (mentors).
- **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program:** ODOT commissioned a study in 2006 to determine whether disparity had occurred in awarding subcontracts. The study found many worthy efforts, such as the Emerging Small Business program and the Small Contracting program. In construction subcontracting, the study found two areas where subcontractors had been underutilized: African American-owned and Asian American-owned firms. Overall, the study provided enough data to propose establishing selective race- and gender-conscious goals. The federal government agreed, and in fall 2008, ODOT began setting goals on selected projects. Another study in 2009 – 2011 will review and assess ODOT's efforts.
- Other support services:
  - **Turner Construction Management School.** ODOT partners with the school's small business program, offering intensive courses in critical business skills.
  - **Electronic bidding subscriptions.** In 2008, ODOT is finalizing a contract that allows awarding electronic bidding subscriptions to certified firms.
  - **Small business management.** ODOT is partnering with the state's Small Business Development Centers in fall 2008 to provide in-depth coaching to qualified small businesses learning to secure government contracts.

For more information, visit the OCR web site at [www.oregon.gov/ODOT/CS/CIVILRIGHTS/](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/CS/CIVILRIGHTS/).