



To: Monica Pavlik, FHWA

From: CDOT Civil Rights & Business Resource Center;
Central 70 Project Team

Date: October 7, 2016

Subject: Quarterly Report for Ladders of Opportunity Initiative OJT/SS Pilot Program Grant

On June 27, 2016, CDOT was awarded \$400,000 from FHWA's Ladders of Opportunity Initiative OJT/SS Pilot Program. The funds will provide training and supportive services to workers and prospective workers on the Central 70 Project, which will be Colorado's largest highway construction project to date. The project will require an estimated 4,000 employees. The creation of the Central 70 Workforce Development Program and the administration of these grant funds is a joint effort between CDOT's Civil Rights & Business Resource Center and the Central 70 Project. This is CDOT's first quarterly report submission as required by the Ladders of Opportunity Initiative OJT/SS Pilot Program.

Since the submission of its grant application in December 2015, CDOT has adjusted the schedule for the Central 70 project, which has shifted the date for construction start to early 2018. The workforce development schedule described in CDOT's grant application was based on a construction start of late 2017 and stated that training sessions and other supportive services would begin this fall. However, CDOT is now working with its workforce development partner to create a new schedule for training and supportive services that better aligns with the project schedule in order to optimize opportunities for individuals on the Central 70 project. This quarterly report reflects this revised implementation schedule.

Enclosures: Quarterly Report Submission #1;
Denver Post article (June 27, 2016);
Community Job Readiness and Workforce Needs Assessment.





Central 70 Workforce Development Program

Quarterly Report Submission #1

Submitted: October 2016

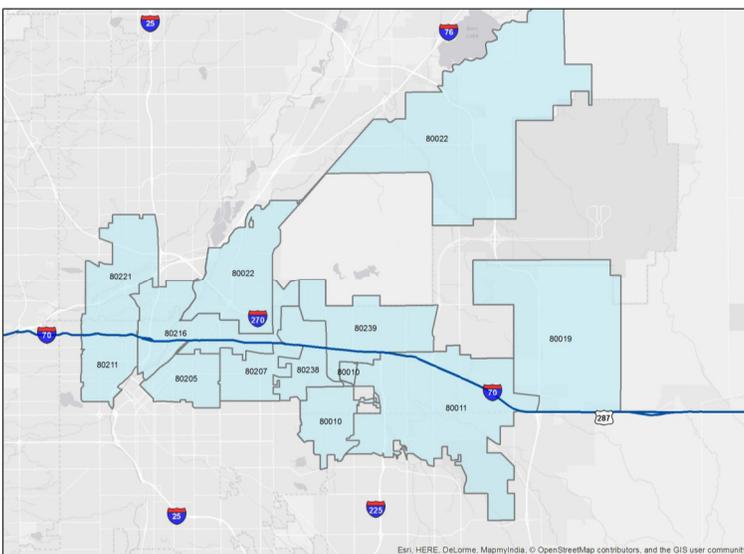
Strategic Partnership

CDOT solicited proposals in December 2015 for a partner to help develop and implement the Central 70 Workforce Development Program. CDOT selected the Community College of Denver's Center for Workforce Initiatives through this competitive process and finalized the contract in March 2016. The Center for Workforce Initiatives previously operated Denver's Regional Transportation District's workforce development program for its Eagle P3 rail projects.

The Community College of Denver's first task for CDOT was to conduct a Community Job Readiness and Workforce Needs Assessment. The study was released in August and is structured to:

- Identify the need and value for a proposed local hiring program;
- Summarize demographics of the communities near the Central 70 project area;
- Highlight key findings from stakeholder data analysis; and
- Identify a local hiring goal and make programmatic recommendations.

Based on data from the study, CDOT established a geographic boundary for its local hiring pilot program. This geographic area, which consists of various neighborhoods near the project area, will be the area targeted for the Central 70 Workforce Program's recruitment and outreach efforts. Information from the study also led CDOT to double the project's proposed On-the-Job Training Goal from 100,000 to 200,000 hours.



Recommended Local Hire Geographic Area

Quarter #1 Key Accomplishments

- *Selected Community College of Denver through competitive process to develop and implement program.*
- *Held second roundtable with dozens of workforce training and supportive providers to share progress to date and seek input on next steps.*
- *Prepared and publicly released Community Job Readiness and Workforce Needs Assessment for the Central 70 Project Area.*
- *Established initial boundary for local hire geographic area and hiring goal.*
- *Doubled On-the-Job training goal from 100,000 to 200,000 hours based on results of Assessment.*

The study identifies existing construction-related workforce development resources in the Denver area. It also highlights gaps in resources and existing barriers to employment for local area residents.

Programmatic recommendations include the following:

- Identify and recruit for positions that would attract a broad candidate pool and provide transferrable career pathways, such as laborers, equipment operators, commercial drivers, OJT 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 Building Trades, 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.

CDOT and the Community College of Denver are now working to implement these recommendations. The current plan is to launch customized adult education in March 2017. We will also start aligning with existing technical skills programs that will allow for participants to shift into our customized program closer to the start of construction. This approach will provide a pathway for people interested in training now but also better leverage our resources to align with the project schedule.

Status of Activities and Deliverables

- **Community Job Readiness and Workforce Needs Assessment:** Completed in August.
- **Training Sessions/Supportive Services:** Currently working to establish partnerships with local organizations that will serve as intake hubs and with programs that are currently providing technical or soft skills training. We are working to provide customized adult education by March 2017. The Community College of Denver has facilitated three meetings with local training providers to identify and implement training priority recommendations from the assessment. Two additional meetings are scheduled before the end of the year to finalize priorities.
- **Targeted Outreach and Networking Activities:** CDOT hosted its second Workforce Development Roundtable on September 8, 2016. The event brought together dozens of community representatives and service providers from across the region to discuss workforce development issues and strategies. The Community College of Denver presented its findings from the Community Job Readiness and Workforce Needs Assessment and participants provided input on key next steps for CDOT's program, including gaps in supportive services and training. In the next several months, the Community College of Denver will launch community outreach sessions, in partnership with local training and community resource organizations that promote construction career pathways and the types of occupations available on Central 70.

- **Workforce Development Website and Smartphone Application:** Currently in development. Expected: Winter 2017 (website) and Fall 2017 (app).
- **Understanding Marijuana & Drug Free Work Zones Brochure:** Currently in development. Expected: Spring 2017

Tracking Outcomes

	Current Quarter	Total to date
Number of individuals entered into program	0	0
Number of training courses provided by the program	0	0
Number of individuals to complete at least one training course	0	0
Number of individuals to receive at least one certification (e.g. OSHA-10, etc.)	0	0
Number of individuals utilizing supportive services	0	0
Number of individuals placed on the project and retained after 90 days	0	0
Number of On-the-Job Training hours completed by individuals in the program	0	0
Number of Local Hiring hours completed by individuals from in the program	0	0

Budget Update

To date CDOT has not expended funds from this grant. The Community Job Readiness and Workforce Needs Assessment was completed for \$23,872.20 with state dollars (CDOT pledged \$200,000 in project funds for the Central 70 Workforce Development Program). CDOT is currently working with the Community College of Denver on a new task order as it updates its schedule for providing training and supportive as described above. This next task order may include grant funds.

NEWS > COLORADO NEWS

Proposed I-70 widening draws federal grant to train locals to work on project

\$400,000 job-training grant expected to start this year



Provided by CDOT

Artist rendering shows the I-70 construction proposal.

By **MONTÉ WHALEY** | mwhaley@denverpost.com

PUBLISHED: June 27, 2016 at 4:07 pm | UPDATED: June 27, 2016 at 5:40 pm

A \$400,000 job-training grant for residents living next to the proposed \$1.2 billion widening of [Interstate 70](#) in northeast Denver is a rare gift from the federal government, say opponents and proponents of the project.

“People will get job training, and of course that’s a good thing,” said Thad Tecza, a critic of the I-70 plan, which awaits a final green light this summer from the Federal Highway Administration.

“But the question is the totality of the project,” Tecza said. “Will it improve or make the community worse? And our argument is that overall it will have a negative impact on the Globeville, Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods and the future of the Denver area.”

The I-70 plan calls for a massive rebuilding of I-70 between Interstate 25 and Tower Road. Crews will add new managed lanes to I-70, tear down a 50-year-old viaduct and lower the interstate between Brighton Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard and place a four-acre landscaped cover over a portion of the lower interstate.

The Colorado Department of Transportation will partner with Emily Griffith Technology College and Community College of Denver to provide the training, said CDOT spokeswoman Rebecca White. Classes will include English as second language and math as well as more advanced training, she said.

As many as 300 people will be hired locally, while the entire project will need several thousands of workers. CDOT says it wants to focus its hiring on the neighborhoods adjacent to the project.

Denver City Councilwoman Debbie Ortega said neighborhood advocates have pushed hard for CDOT and its contractors to hire local people to handle a variety of jobs that will surround the I-70 project.

“It’s exciting and important that we have a solid commitment to hire locally,” Ortega said.

Normally, federally funded projects are prohibited from setting geographically based hiring goals. But because of its size, the I-70 project was only one of nine in the country that got this type of grant.

CDOT wants to start the training by the end of the year, which will allow workers to hit the job site as soon as ground is broken in 2017, White said. Even if the project is denied, the training will continue and those new workers can draw paychecks from other projects, she said.

CDOT executive director Shailen Bhatt said the program will allow the department to provide “lifelong career opportunities to local communities and build a skilled workforce to support construction projects across the region.”

The I-70 proposal has the backing of local governments, business groups and Gov. John Hickenlooper, who said it will reconnect the communities originally split by the construction of I-70, add a public park in the neighborhoods and increase mobility.

Others have said the idea will decimate local neighborhoods and cause an environmental disaster. Several groups have joined the Sierra Club in a federal [lawsuit](#) to attempt block the project.

The \$400,000 grant confirms the notion that the I-70 expansion will be approved by federal officials. The hope is that the lawsuit will shutdown the work altogether, Tecza said.

“The real question is the court fight and where that takes us,” he said.

TAGS: **CDOT**

	<p>Monte Whaley Monte Whaley is a Palisade native who covers education and other interesting topics for The Denver Post.</p> <p>Follow Monte Whaley @montewhaley</p>
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