



*Move Illinois:  
The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*

# NEWS

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**ILLINOIS TOLLWAY TO CREATE CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
TO ASSIST SMALL, MINORITY- AND WOMEN-OWNED CONSTRUCTION FIRMS**

*Will also partner with Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on "Coaching for Growth" Program*

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** – The Illinois Tollway, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (IHCC) today announced plans to develop new programs and provide services to small businesses in the construction industry, including minority- and women-owned firms. The partnerships are designed to provide these firms the assistance they need to participate in the Tollway's \$12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*.

"We know that investments in our state's roadways will continue to drive our economy forward," Governor Pat Quinn said. "Establishing this new Construction Business Development Center and offering one-on-one support for small businesses, especially those led by women and minorities, will create more opportunities for diverse businesses to grow and succeed in the heavy highway construction industry."

"We are embarking on the largest capital program in the Tollway's history," Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur said. "Throughout the next 15 years, businesses will have a chance to play a role in our *Move Illinois* program and put thousands of men and women to work. We want to make sure that all firms, from right out of the gate to the finish line, have an opportunity to compete for and win Tollway contracts and bring them to completion."

Through an agreement with the ICCB, the Tollway will commit \$578,000 to establish a new Construction Business Development Center (CBDC). The CBDC will be led by Prairie State College in Chicago Heights, in partnership with South Suburban College in South Holland, Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills and Waubensee Community College in Sugar Grove. This partnership will develop flexible customized training and technical assistance to provide small, minority and women-owned firms in the construction industry with the skills and knowledge they need to grow and succeed.

Course offerings will include: How to do business with the Tollway; finance and accounting for construction contractors; insurance, bonding, estimating and bidding; introduction to project management; safety and field operations; and business and marketing plan development. Networking events, one-on-one counseling, and post-training assistance will also be provided.

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The CBDC is expected to prepare more than 30 small, minority- and women-owned firms for leadership positions on Tollway projects in its first year.

“We are very excited about the opportunity to partner with the Tollway on an initiative that has the potential to provide employment for so many Illinois residents,” Illinois Community College Board President/CEO Geoffrey Obrzut said.

The Illinois Tollway has also forged an agreement with DCEO that will allow the Tollway and the IHCC to develop a Coaching for Growth Program for small business owners specializing in heavy highway construction.

“The Coaching for Growth Program is an integral part of our ongoing efforts to help women-owned and minority- owned small businesses in Illinois expand and create jobs,” DCEO Director Adam Pollet said.

Small business owners will participate in the six-month, one-on-one coaching program and a series of group workshops. This will provide them with a customized roadmap to help them achieve growth through successful financial structuring, and will include topics such as bonding, insurance, debt equity and capital markets. Program participants will also gain a solid foundation of strong management, financial, operational, sales and marketing practices that will enable them to develop a strategic approach for growth and success in the heavy highway construction industry.

“IHCC is honored to be part of this important initiative to support the development of small businesses that can benefit from the Tollway’s commitment to provide them with opportunities in this vital economic project for Illinois,” President and CEO of the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Omar Duque said. “The initiative will help develop a pipeline of small businesses to participate on Tollway projects.”

#### **About Move Illinois**

The Illinois Tollway’s \$12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, will improve mobility, relieve congestion, reduce pollution, create as many as 120,000 jobs and link economies across the Midwest region. *Move Illinois* will address the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system; rebuild and widen the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a state-of-the-art 21st century corridor; construct a new interchange to connect the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57; build a new, all-electronic Elgin O’Hare Western Access and fund planning studies for the Illinois Route 53/120 Extension and the Illiana Expressway.

#### **About the Illinois Tollway**

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 286 miles of interstate tollways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80).

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