

Connecting the DOTs

Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization Newsletter

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In This Issue

OSDBU Acting Director Message	page 1
OSDBU Highlights	page 2
OSDBU on the Road	page 3
OSDBU on the Road (cont.)	page 4
Contract with DOT	page 5
Contract with DOT (cont.)	page 6
DOT & Small Business	page 7
Success Stories	page 8
BEP Highlights	page 9
Welcoming New Staff	page 10
Grant Opportunities	page 11

Contact Us

Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization

U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE Washington, DC 20590

Email: dot-osdbu@dot.gov

Phone: <u>202-366-1930</u>





A Message from OSDBU Acting Director

I am honored to be leading the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) in this Acting Director capacity. In this role, I look forward to continuing the work OSDBU and the Department are doing to expand opportunities and technical assistance for small and minority-owned businesses that are ready, willing, and able to

compete for contracts. This is truly an exciting time at the U.S. Department of Transportation as we are undergoing historic investments through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and institutional changes to support the small and disadvantaged business community.

The Department developed an Equity Action Plan (EAP) to provide a foundation for institutionalizing equity at the core of all USDOT policy and programs, including our distribution of funds, to create a more equitable transportation system. There are four focus areas in this plan – wealth creation, power of community, interventions, and expanding access – to guide the Department's equity advancement efforts and investments across the nation, especially for our historically underserved, overburdened, and disadvantaged communities. Our office is currently working with the Department to update the Equity Action Plan and focused on delivering this once-in-a-generation investment in our nation's infrastructure with an emphasis on wealth creation for small and disadvantaged businesses.

Our team provides small and disadvantaged businesses with various tools to be competitive in the procurement process. The team is currently working on an interactive Access to Capital networking system in partnership with Small Business Investment Companies (SBICs) and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to help small and disadvantaged businesses get an infusion of capital so they can scale up and grow. Additionally, OSDBU provides an up-to-date procurement forecast for direct federal contracts, regional technical assistance through our SBTRCs, and bonding education. Also, our Procurement Assistance Division hosts monthly Connections MarketPlace webinars where firms can gain insight on federal contracting with USDOT and network with procurement officials, large prime contractors, and national stakeholders.

Check out the <u>OSDBU website</u> for upcoming events like our regional Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Small Business Contracting symposium series and other resources. As always, feel free to reach out to our team and technical assistance providers to learn more about our USDOT programs to prepare your small business for procurement today.

Sincerely,

Tyra Redus
OSDBU Acting Director

OSDBU HIGHLIGHTS

Updates for the Small Business Community



Big Things Coming for Access to Capital

The Access to Capital Initiative (ACI) Virtual Connector is under construction and on track to be unveiled this summer. The ACI Virtual Connector is designed to be an online platform to house basic information about Small Disadvantaged Business (SDBs), Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) and private capital providers. The platform will encourage and facilitate meetings between SDBs, DBEs and private capital providers in a secure, confidential, and user friendly manner so that they may build relationships and prospective deal opportunities.



Access to Capital Initiative Director, Samuel J. Boyd Jr. speaks about initiative at the Mid-South Atlantic Symposium event in April

Over the past year, access to capital moderated panel sessions have been integrated in the SBTRC BIL Symposium series that OSDBU has hosted across the nation. At each of the regional

symposiums, SDBs and DBEs are offered comprehensive insight of the capital landscape and financial capital connections to grow and scale their businesses. These events serve as outreach opportunities to inform SDBs and DBEs of the resources available to them from federal government agencies, particularly USDOT OSDBU, U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), and U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Federal agencies are at the forefront in representing investment programs like SBA's Small Business Investment Company (SBIC) program, Treasury's Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) programs. They also serve as gateways for private capital investors to learn more about SDBs and DBEs and source prospective deal opportunities.



USDOT Announces Procurement Forecast Enhancements

Every year, OSDBU publishes the DOT Procurement Forecast in compliance with Public Law 100-656. The forecast is one of many tools available to small businesses to assist in planning and marketing efforts to the Federal Government. To further serve the Small Business Community, we have made some updates to the DOT procurement forecast:

- New forecast link: <u>DOT Procurement Forecast</u>. We will no longer have a separate forecast for
 each fiscal year. Instead, we have one summary forecast. As new requirements emerge, they
 will be added to the procurement forecast in accordance with the Small Business Act.
- On the main forecast page, users have new options to sort by Fiscal Year and by Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding.
- We have added several new data fields including: expected period of performance, place
 of performance, security clearance requirements, anticipated award date, contract vehicle,
 incumbent contractor and modification date.



OSDBU ON THE ROAD

Engaging with Our Partners at Spring Outreach Events

U.S. Secretary of Transportation and OSDBU Discuss Future of Minority-Owned Businesses at AEE Event

On May 11, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg joined National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial for a fireside chat at the "Paving the Way for Minority-Owned Businesses" event; a collaborative event with the National Urban League and Third Way. Their conversation included the Administration's once-in-ageneration investment in infrastructure and its equitable implementation. The Secretary addressed the opportunities and challenges for minority-owned businesses, and emphasized the priority to deliver this historical investment in a manner that creates generational wealth for our small and disadvantaged business community for decades to come.

Following the fireside chat, panelists from USDOT Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), The District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DC DOT) and the Greater Washington Urban League spoke on the current barriers for minority-owned businesses participation in federally-funded procurement. The USDOT OSDBU Acting Director, Tyra Redus shared various ways USDOT is supporting our small and disadvantaged business communities to boost their procurement of these federal investment dollars.

These included providing nationally outreach through our <u>BIL contracting symposium series</u> and virtual <u>Connections MarketPlace</u> webinars to provide





Top Photo (Left to Right): Fireside chat with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and President & CEO of the National Urban League, Marc H. Morial.

Bottom Photo (Left to Right): Panel with DC DOT Deputy Compliance Officer, Andrea Jackson; USDOT OSDBU Acting Director, Tyra Redus; Greater Washington Urban League Entrepreneurship Center Director, Shymaine Davis; and Director of Alliance for Entrepreneurial Equity, Imani Augustus.

insight on federal procurement and connections with primes, USDOT Operating Administrations and other transportation stakeholders. Additionally, utilizing our <u>USDOT Small Business Transportation</u> <u>Resource Centers</u> to be a gateway to their local procurement opportunities and networks, as well as the technical assistance needed for minority-business firms to be willing, ready and able to compete for these contract opportunities. Acting Director Redus also shared new initiatives around USDOT wealth creation goals, such as our Access to Capital Initiative (ACI) Virtual Connector which will house a database of Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDBs), Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) and private capital providers. This system will allow SDBs and DBEs to connect with private capital providers to help them scale up their businesses. You can read the ACI update on page 2.

OSDBU ON THE ROAD

Engaging with Our Partners at Spring Outreach Events



USDOT Shares Contracting Opportunities for Tribal Communities at the Reservation Economic Summit 2023

During the first week of April 2023, the OSDBU team and other USDOT members participated at the Reservation Economic Summit referred to as "RES 2023." RES is an annual multifaceted event put on by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED), a non-profit organization that has over 50 years of experience assisting American Indian Tribes and their enterprises with business and economic development.

The RES 2023 Summit brought together respected tribal leaders, members of Congress, federal agency representatives, state and local



U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg delivers opening remarks at RES 2023

elected officials, and CEOs on a national platform. Attendees at the event were provided various sessions for high caliber networking, teaming opportunities, and business development workshops centered around building bridges of opportunity with and for the American Indian Enterprise.



U.S. Department of Transportation officials share opportunities and resources during "What the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Means for Tribes" panel

USDOT Deputy Secretary Polly
Trottenberg (pictured) delivered
opening remarks to kickoff the
second day of the week-long summit.
Additionally, USDOT officials led a
discussion on the Bipartisan
Infrastructure Law (BIL) including
how tribal communities can benefit
from contracting opportunities, the
Thriving Communities Program, and
the National Electric Vehicle
Infrastructure (NEVI) program. The
USDOT team consisted of moderator

Tyra Redus, Acting OSDBU Director; panelist Peter Kontakos, OSDBU Regional Assistance Division Manager; panelist Jeffrey Baker, FAA Director of Acquisition Policy and Oversight; panelist Valerie Burnette, Build America Bureau Outreach Coordinator; and panelist Arlando Teller, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs (pictured).



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SBTRC BIL Regional Symposiums for Small Business Opportunities

USDOT Northeast SBTRC Hosts BIL Small Business Contracting Symposium in Albany, NY

On May 17, the Northeast SBTRC hosted a <u>regional symposium</u> in Albany, New York. The event located at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center, nearby the New York State Capitol, helped to reach approximately 200 small businesses in upstate eastern New York and rural western sections of all neighboring New England states. The event was also livestreamed for audiences in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.





Left picture: DOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg provides video welcome remarks at NE SBTRC Contracting Symposium Right picture: Group picture of panelists, USDOT OSDBU and NE SBTRC representatives after "Fueling Growth: Access to Capital for Infrastructure Transportation" panel

The U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg delivered opening remarks via pre-recorded video; and U.S. Department of Commerce MBDA Under-secretary, Donald Cravins Jr. also participated by delivering pre-recorded video remarks to symposium attendees. SBA Regional Administrators Marlene Cintron and Mike Vlacich participated as featured morning speakers. Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee also delivered pre-recorded video remarks during the event. Other representatives in attendance included SBA District Directors from Connecticut and Massachusetts, SBA Albany Branch Chief from Upstate New York District Office, MBDA officials from HQ and Manhattan Business Center, State DOTs

from New York and Vermont, Small Business Development Center and APEX Accelerator representatives, capital providers, and prime contractors. Additionally, USDOT OSDBU and Northeast SBTRC held a Connections Marketplace to connect small businesses with Federal agency officials, local contracting officials, prime contractors, and resource providers.

Special thanks to our Federal DOT panel members for their support sharing BIL contracting opportunities; Christine M. Sager, Management and Program Analyst, Acquisition Policy and Oversight Small Business Program, Federal Aviation Administration; Christopher Gatchell, Director of New York City Metro and Local Programs Management Office, Federal Highway Administration; Scott Pichon, Equal Opportunity Specialist, Office of Civil Rights, Federal Transit Administration; Wade Morefield, Infrastructure Development Program Manager, Office of Port Infrastructure Development, Maritime Administration; and Maximillian "Max" Diah, Chief of Procurement, Maritime Administration.



Northeast SBTRC Project Director, Lizbeth Rodriguez provides remarks at symposium

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SBTRC BIL Regional Symposiums for Small Business Opportunities





BIL Transportation Leaders discussion during MSA SBTRC Contracting Symposium Left to Right: MSA SBTRC Executive Director, Joe Jackson; FAA Associate Administrator of Airports, Shannetta R. Griffin, P.E.; ATL Airport Deputy GM of Infrastructure, Frank Rucker; and Georgia Department of Transportation Chief Engineer, Meg Pirkle

USDOT Mid-South Atlantic SBTRC Hosts Small Business Contracting Symposium in Atlanta, GA

The USDOT Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) and its Small Business Transportation Resource Centers (SBTRCs) continue to partner with Federal agencies to host our regional Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Small Business Contracting Symposiums. The symposium series is a shared collaboration with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) within U.S. Department of Commerce. These regional symposiums provide small

businesses information and resources related to upcoming contracting opportunities generated at the Federal and state levels from the BIL.

On April 27, the Mid-South Atlantic SBTRC, which services the state of Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee, hosted a regional symposium in Atlanta, Georgia. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg delivered opening remarks via pre-recorded video; and U.S. Department of Commerce MBDA Undersecretary, Donald Cravins Jr. also participated by delivering pre-recorded video remarks to symposium attendees. SBA Georgia District Director Terri Dennison and MBDA Senior Business Development Program Manager Angela Washington participated as featured morning speakers; and U.S. Senators Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock also delivered pre-recorded video remarks during the event.

Moderated panel sessions included topics focusing on Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) equal employment opportunities as well as best practices between prime contractors and DBEs; insights from varied BIL Federal, state, and local transportation leaders; Federal technical assistance resources; and access to capital. Additionally, USDOT OSDBU and Mid-South Atlantic SBTRC launched the Connections Marketplace at a BIL symposium to connect small businesses with Federal agency representatives, state and local county contracting officials, prime contractors, and additional resource providers.



OSDBU Lead Program Analyst, Steronica Mattocks moderates a panel about the types of technical assistance the Federal modes offer small businesses.

Special thanks to USDOT modal participants Shannetta Griffin, P.E., Associate Administrator of Airports, Federal

Aviation Administration (FAA); Alexander Horton, National Team Lead, DBE/ACDBE Office of Civil Rights, FAA; Jeri Bird, Small Business Specialist, FAA; and Dr. Yvette Taylor, Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration Region 4.



DOT & SMALL BUSINESS

Get to Know our DOT Small Business Specialists



Meet the Small Business Specialist for DOT Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

Barakat Shakir currently serves in a hybrid role at the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) <u>Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)</u> as a Small Business Specialist and a Procurement Analyst. Prior to being a Small Business Specialist, Barakat worked as a Contract Specialist & Contracting Officer at the USDOT's Federal Highway Administration's Information Technology Acquisition Center of Excellence, and at the U.S. Department of Education. As a Massachusetts Bay Stater who moved to Washington.

DC in 2005, Barakat is a proud New England Patriots fan, which he believes is "the dominate team in the NFL." He is also a fan of Star Wars, comic books such as the Black Panther and Superman, and Anime.

What is Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) mission?

FMCSA has an important mission to ensure safety in motor carrier operations and prevent commercial motor vehicle-related fatalities and injuries through enforcement of safety regulations.

What are the most common NAICS codes for FMCSA procurement?

541519 - Other Computer Related Services

541715 - Research Development in Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences

541511 - Custom Computer Programming Services

541512 - Computer System Design Services

541611 - Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services

How should a small business reach out to procurement officials and do you have any tips? Small businesses can learn more with an in-person meeting than a phone call or email. However, we live in an email world, and if a small business wants to send an email they should consider this first: How does my email stand out from everyone making a similar request? Additionally, the small business firm should be clear on what NAICS codes they operate within so we can immediately determine alignment between the business' capability and the needs of FMCSA. They should be looking to understand all of the Program Offices (or sub-offices) under the FMCSA umbrella, their requirements, and the funding leading to a solicitation release. A clear understanding of the mission of these Program Offices helps the small business refine their capability statement and better target their government audience.

What is FMCSA's small business achievements from the past fiscal year?

The nature of FMCSA's requirements are small business friendly. FMCSA has achieved all of the Small Business socio-economic goals including Women-Owned, Service Disabled Veteran and HUBZone goals for the last three fiscal years. The FMCSA Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) goal for FY2022 was 20% and we exceeded our goal with 37.94% of FMCSA contracts going to SDBs. We anticipate achieving all Small Business socio-economic goals this fiscal year as well.

Are you a small business interested in direct procurement with the FMCSA? Reach out to Barakat Shakir at Barakat.Shakir@dot.gov or call (202) 366-1229 today!

SUCCESS STORIES





USDOT Southwest SBTRC Bonding Education Program Increases Contract Opportunities for Plumbing Firm in California

<u>Luna's Plumbing, Inc</u> is a small, California based firm with over 15 years of industry experience in the commercial plumbing business. This firm specializes in the following: new construction, tenant improvements, remodels, additions, remediations, retrofits, installation of sewer venting systems, water distribution, and reverse osmosis water and filter systems. While the firm contracts on small and large commercial development projects, the primary focus is placed on medical clinics, hospitals schools, warehouses and large commercial business facilities.



Luna's Plumbing, Inc. maintains several professional, business certifications as follows: Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Small Business Enterprise (SBE), and Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB).

Carlos Luna, Vice President at Luna's Plumbing, participated in a Southwest Small Business Transportation Resource Center's (SW SBTRC) Bonding Education Program to acquire new skills and learn how to increase the firm's bond capacity and become contract-ready through a series of 5 workshops facilitated by subject matter experts. Through this program, Luna's Plumbing met one-on-one with industry expert, Sean Kirwan, a Surety Director at Commercial Insurance Associates, and the firm was able to successfully increase its aggregate bonding capacity from \$1 million to \$4 million. In addition, the firm was able to increase its single project bonding capacity from \$500,000 to \$2 million. Thus, Luna's Plumbing, Inc. is now able to pursue larger contracts due to this increased bonding capacity in California!

The Southwest Region Small
Business Transportation
Resource Center is one of 11
centers funded under the U.S.
Department of Transportation's
Office of Small and
Disadvantaged Business
Utilization (OSDBU). The SW
SBTRC center supports small
disadvantaged businesses in
Arizona, California, Hawaii, and
Nevada by providing technical to
improve business tenacity
to compete for and secure
transportation-related contracts.



Southwest SBTRC Project Director and Coordinator welcoming the Bonding Education Program participants to the virtual sessions including Carlos Luna, Vice President of Luna's Plumbing Inc.

carlos@lunasplumbinginc.com ● (714) 366-8551 ● 1485 Spruce Street, Suite G Riverside, CA 92507

Article prepared by Sonia Navarro, Project Director of Southwest SBTRC



BEP HIGHLIGHTS

Updates from the USDOT Bonding Education Program



Mid Atlantic SBTRC Project Director, Michelle Moore welcomes the Bonding Education Program participants at the April kick-off session

Mid Atlantic SBTRC kicks off 30th Street Station Amtrak Project Bonding Education Program

In April 2023, Mid Atlantic SBTRC in partnership with Gilbane Building Company welcomed Bonding Education Program (BEP) participants to the kick-off and bonding insurance workshop in Philadelphia, PA. The Amtrak redevelopment project is a \$400 million renovation to modernize and expand the William H. Gray III 30th Street Station. Over 8 weeks of sessions, participants heard from subject matter experts on a variety of topics such as managing growth, construction accounting, safety and OSHA regulations, teaming and joint ventures, DBE

contract compliance, marketing, surety, and project estimating. Participants were also provided one-on-one guidance from bonding agents to strategize on bonding capacity needs for future projects. The Mid Atlantic SBTRC expects to have these small business participants bond-ready by December 2023.

The Mid Atlantic SBTRC serves the states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. If your small business is interested in learning more about the Mid Atlantic SBTRC or the BEP program, reach out to the Project Director, Michelle Moore at mmoore@theenterprisecenter.com.

South Atlantic SBTRC Graduates Participants in I-40 Project BEP Reboot Series

In March, <u>South Atlantic SBTRC</u> in partnership with Lane Construction delivered a follow-up Bonding Education Program for DBE businesses interested in subcontracting opportunities on the \$236 million I-40 Expansion Orange County infrastructure project in Durham, NC. At the kick-off, opening remarks were provided by the President and CEO of The Lane Construction Corporation, Ignacio Botella. The program had 8 graduates and at the graduation, Dannesia Pullen, the CEO of PullenBoy Hauling LLC, spoke about her experience working with Lane, as well as providing pieces of advice to up and coming small businesses.

These bonding education programs are offered at no cost to eligible small and disadvantaged businesses. If you would like to learn more about the South Atlantic SBTRC, please contact the Project Director, Jenine Stevenson at istevenson@theinstitutenc.org.



Dannesia Pullen, CEO of PullenBoy Hauling LLC sharing her experience with Lane Construction as a DBE firm

The <u>Bonding Education Program (BEP)</u> provides a minimum of 2 BEPs per region annually. Find a BEP in your region by reaching out to a Project Director covering your state <u>here</u>.

WELCOMING NEW STAFF

Meet the New OSDBU Team Members



Meet Mandy Wylie, Senior Small Business Specialist

Mandy Wylie is a Senior Small Business Specialist and the Service Disable Veteran Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) advocate the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization in the Procurement Assistance Division. In this capacity, she serves to help small business owners to market their products and services and increase the participation of small businesses in DOT procurement opportunities.

Mandy has a Master's Degree in Public Administration and 13 years of experience in Federal contracting and acquisition policy. She started her federal career as a Contracts Specialist at the Department of Homeland Security in the Office of Procurement Operations. In the fall of 2016, Mandy joined the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Acquisition and Grants Management as a Senior Contracting Officer. Starting in 2018, Mandy was promoted internally to the Team Leader in the Office of Acquisition Policy and Oversight. In this capacity, Mandy served as the Small Business Specialist for FHWA until she transferred to OSDBU as the Senior Small Business Specialist in March 2023.



Meet Lynn Bailey, DBE Program Analyst

Lynn Bailey is a DBE Program Analyst in the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization in the Regional Assistance Division. In this capacity, she serves as the in-house DBE expert, focusing on how to utilize all Departmental resources to best support DBEs and other small businesses with securing procurement opportunities, especially BIL-related opportunities.

A native of Philadelphia, Lynn earned an undergraduate and master's degrees in Computer Science and Information Systems from West Chester University and Saint Joseph's University, respectively. For several years, she was employed as an IT

professional for "big Pharma" firms, educational institutions, and consulting firms. From 2005-2009, she was owner/operator of a popular Philadelphia dessert franchise then later worked as a Senior DBE Program Specialist for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority's (SEPTA) DBE Program Office. Her responsibilities included DBE certification, all phases of contract monitoring and enforcement, triennial goal setting, DBE firm and procurement contract technical assistance, and community outreach. In 2015, Lynn joined the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Civil Rights where she served as the Regional Civil Rights Officer for Region 2 (NY, NJ) and Region 3 (PA, DE, MD, VA, WVA, and the District of Columbia).



GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Upcoming Funding Opportunities & Technical Assistance

Become a USDOT SBTRC Grantee Today



The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for 8 regional Small Business Transportation Resource Centers (SBTRCs) have been release for prospective applicants interested in becoming a grantee. Find out more information about this opportunity here.

Business-centered community-based organizations, transportation-related trade associations, colleges and universities, community colleges, or chambers of commerce, registered with the Internal Revenue Service as 501 C(6) or 501 C(3) tax-exempt organizations can compete for this funding.

USDOT Small Business Transportation Resource Centers

The USDOT OSDBU established the <u>SBTRCs</u> as a network of grantees to work closely with the transportation contracting community and other technical assistance providers to serve small and disadvantaged, transportation-related businesses. These centers provide technical assistance to small businesses to build their capacity in order to become more competitive when bidding on USDOT procurement opportunities and federally-funded contracts.

White House Releases Updated Fact Sheets for BIL State Investments

The Administration had already announced the once-in-a-generation investment of over \$220 billion from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), including over 32,000 projects and awards that will impact thousands of communities across 50 states, D.C. and U.S. territories.



In honor of Infrastructure Week and the 18-month anniversary of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the White House has released revised state-by-state fact sheets to share project highlights. These highlights include state investments and efforts on infrastructure projects such as rebuilding roads and bridges, improving public transit, modernizing airports, replacing lead pipes to provide clean water, cleaning up legacy pollution, expanding access to affordable, high speed internet, and creating clean energy sources and transportation options.

Read the updated Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investment fact sheets for your state.