

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



**FISCAL YEAR 2021
SUMMARY REPORT**

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“ Archer Western Construction’s Florida teams are happy to be a part of the program as it gives our community members seeking jobs during these hard times a chance to learn new trades and grow within our company. ”

*– Donald Cowan,
Senior Project Manager,
Archer Western Construction*

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION



Since first authorized by the Florida Legislature in 2019, the Statewide Workforce Development Program instituted and operated by the Florida Department of Transportation has reached many milestones in the goal of providing opportunities – for both experienced and entry-level workers - to build successful careers to improve lives.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) created and implemented a road and bridge workforce development construction program that was accompanied with an appropriation of \$2.5 million for Fiscal Years 2020, 2021 and 2022 as set forth in Chapter 2019-43, Laws of Florida. The FDOT was given the responsibility to oversee and deliver the program, which involves working with community partners to identify and connect qualified workers with contractors for gainful employment on road and bridge construction projects.

During the 2021 Florida Legislative Session, a portion of the program was repealed including funding for Fiscal Year 2022. The legislation as amended retained the authorization for the FDOT to provide a road and bridge construction workforce development program with funding to be allocated by the agency from its annual Work Plan appropriation. This legislative refinement was included in Senate Bills 100 and 1126 and was signed into law on June 29, 2021 by Governor Ron DeSantis.

This Statewide Workforce Development Program Fiscal Year 2021 Summary Report is respectfully submitted to detail program activities, benefits and progress. The report also provides performance metrics that were used to measure the program and cost effectiveness, as well as to lay out future program goals. Although the legislative guidance was slightly modified in 2021, the overall goals and objectives are retained and include the following:

- Provide employment opportunities in road and bridge construction
- Provide direct economic benefit to the communities where FDOT is constructing infrastructure projects
- Consolidate all FDOT workforce development programs under one robust, integrated effort
- Address the construction labor shortage by recruiting and developing a skilled workforce to support FDOT projects being delivered on time and within budget

The objectives of the program are:

- Attracting adult workers and students to a career in road and bridge construction
- Recruiting workforce to meet the current and future needs of the transportation construction industry
- Training the construction workforce in traditional and emerging construction methods and techniques
- Providing support services to remove barriers for workers to be successful in pursuing a career in road and bridge construction

PROGRAM SUMMARY

BUILD MORE THAN A JOB... BUILD A LIFE.

PROMOTING CAREER PATHWAYS IN FLORIDA'S ROAD AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The Florida Department of Transportation Statewide Workforce Development Program in the past year changed the trajectory of hundreds of Floridians' lives, and shined a light on pathways to potential careers in road and bridge construction for thousands of others.

Key to the mounting success of the program is the collaboration with an expanding network of state and local agencies, contractors, non-profit and community groups and schools. Agency and community partners have enthusiastically embraced introducing careers in the road and bridge construction industry to their constituents. As evidence, the number of such program partners almost doubled from 80 in the inaugural year, to 145 in Fiscal Year 2021.

The drive to find workers for the construction industry reached a new level during the pandemic. Florida made the bold decision to escalate construction schedules and reduce lane closure restrictions due to reduced roadway traffic, opening the opportunity for contractors to increase production and stimulating the need to hire. The Statewide Workforce Development Program team was there to work shoulder-to-shoulder with Florida's roadbuilders to try to meet their skilled and entry-level labor needs.

With the FDOT approved appropriations for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 of \$10.3 billion, including \$9.44 billion for the State Transportation Work Program, as well as additional federal funding anticipated from a pending infrastructure and jobs proposal, the pace of improvements to Florida's roads and bridges – and the related labor needs – are expected to continue to soar. The magnitude of the need cannot be overstated: The latest FDOT Work Program will construct an additional 682 new lane miles of roadway, resurface or reconstruct 13,044 lane miles of existing roadway, repair 240 bridges and replace 73 others.

Simply put, the FDOT's workforce projection model indicates an FY 2022 need of 2,545 construction positions based on projects with a construction cost over \$80 million.

With such increased production needs, this program is expected to be even more critical in finding and securing talented skilled and entry-level workers to fill the workforce for transportation projects – planned and underway – around the state. Additionally, as the state and country climb out of the economic disruption of the pandemic, the industry will continue to face the challenge of competition for employees from residential and commercial construction, among other market sectors.

Connecting Floridians with jobs in roadway construction goes beyond just benefiting individuals. Opening job opportunities within communities around the state – in urban and rural areas – creates a ripple effect of economic development and prosperity – including for businesses that serve the construction industry and its workers. From concrete plants and fueling depots, to restaurants near work zones and department stores where workers shop on their time off – roadway construction is good business on many levels.

The impact of the global pandemic in the last year was unprecedented. It forced program staff to be nimble in pivoting to virtual and other innovative approaches to continuing this all-important mission – to recruit, interview and hire workers for the road construction industry. That included actively engaging high school students to see the possibilities for a future career in this industry.

Building a pipeline of students as potential future workers in road and bridge construction is crucial, as many longtime employees reach retirement and succession plans become more critical. Program elements including the Student Construction Internship provide a real-life gateway for young adults into the transportation industry – with demonstrated results. Of the 114 construction intern participating in the last year, 28 were hired following their internships into permanent positions.

In the first full year of this multi-faceted career training and employment program, authorized by the Florida Legislature and executed by Governor Ron DeSantis in 2019, the statistics are noteworthy programwide:

- 438 people were hired through Contractor Job-readiness Hiring and Training initiative alone. That brings the total number of people getting a chance to work in the industry to 835 since this initiative started in March of 2020.
- The OnBoard4Jobs Construction Careers component pre-screened another 596 job candidates and referred them to 120 participating contractors throughout the state.
- Program staff connected with transitioning military service members and veterans, providing contractors with more than 60 referrals.



FUTURE PROGRAM REFINEMENTS: THE 2022 FOCUS

The Statewide Workforce Development Program in 2022 will seek out even more effective ways to continue connecting road and bridge builders with a diverse and qualified workforce. As health restrictions continue to ease and communities continue to open up, program staff will employ additional tools to offer Floridians employment and career development training that paves the way to a sustainable and financially rewarding long-term career.

We will continue to broaden the network of complementary agencies and community partners to bring economic prosperity to many. Future program refinements include:

- Contractor-Led Job Readiness Hiring & Training: This initiative will be enhanced to focus on incentivizing “retention” of employees who are hired and trained. Program training hours will increase from 160 to 320, with FDOT funding half and the contractor funding half of the training cost.
- Continuation of Contractor-led Group Recruiting, Training and Retention.
- Fast Track staff members endeavor to expand the reach statewide of this initiative by building relationships with additional Florida Department of Corrections re-entry personnel beyond FDOT Districts 1, 5, 6 and 7.
- Efforts also will include intensifying collaboration with Florida HIRES to expand serving more state and private correctional institutions to help inmates find employment upon release.

- Advancement of the Correctional Transition Academy in partnership with the Florida Department of Corrections.
- Military Veterans Recruitment Initiative team will expand working with Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs employment specialists and veterans fraternal and non-profit organizations statewide to increase candidate recruitment.
- Through OnBoard4Jobs Construction Careers, collaborate with more contractors to conduct demonstration-styled job fairs statewide and maximize community partnerships to ensure greater attendance by jobseekers, as well as provide program information at pre-construction meetings for projects with On-the-Job Training commitments.
- Enhance Florida Construction Career Days participation by returning to in-person events, as well as maintaining the virtual experience to broaden participation by students and schools that don’t have reasonable access due to distance from the regional events.
- As an expansion of the CCD, the program will assess opportunities to formally establish “mini-CCD” events to reach rural counties, such as those in Southwest-Central Florida, and in communities where major construction projects are planned.
- CCD staff also will explore opportunities for additional outreach to grades K-8 on CCD initiatives.
- For Student Construction Internships, program staff will endeavor to provide paid, hands-on work experiences in construction to more than 100 students and young adults. This may include strategies such as collaborating with construction-related STEM programs to bring awareness to youth at an earlier stage.
- For communication strategies, program staff anticipates being able to engage in more in-person events, while also seeking out new digital and other ways to connect with those who could benefit from program initiatives.

Program staff in the next fiscal year will seek to cast a wider net with activities to provide jobs and paths to future careers to a greater number of Floridians seeking to provide a better life for their families.



FloridaRoadJobs.com
Info@FloridaRoadJobs.com
833-ROADJOB (762-3562)

PROGRAM RESULTS AND KEY METRICS FY 2021

This program involves targeted activities to connect adult jobseekers with contractors that are hiring, as well as initiatives that inform students about pathways to transportation industry careers:

Adult-targeted Activities:

- Group Recruitment, Training and Hiring
- Contractors Job-Readiness Hiring and Training
- Correctional Transition Fast Track
- Military Veterans Recruitment
- OnBoard4Jobs Construction Careers

Student-targeted Activities:

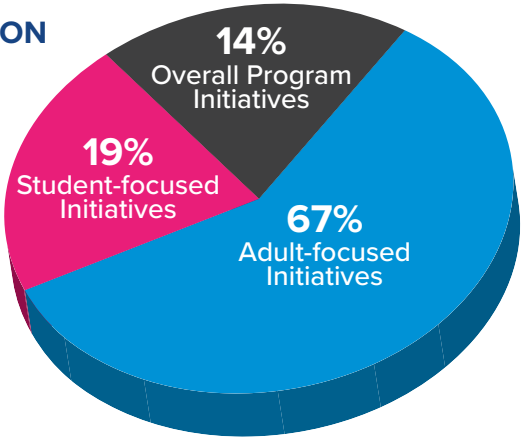
- Construction Career Days Participation
- Student Construction Internship

Community and industry partnerships are, and will remain, key components for this program’s success. The department appreciates the collaboration and support of contractors, FloridaTransportation Builders’ Association, Florida Department of Corrections, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, CareerSource Florida, Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, local CareerSource offices, school districts and other community partners. A complete list of partners begins on page 22.



PROGRAM PARTNERS ENGAGED		145
▶	AGENCY PARTNERS	5
▶	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	43
▶	INDUSTRY PARTNERS	70
▶	SCHOOL DISTRICTS	27

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS



BRIDGING THE GAP FOR ADULT PROGRAMS

RECRUIT. HIRE. TRAIN. RETAIN.

Through the Statewide Workforce Development Training Program, FDOT supports contractors in recruiting, hiring, training and retaining employees. The program enhances current workforce development efforts – and establishes new ones – to create a pipeline of workers to meet the construction industry’s needs for the future.

The program features two types of job-readiness training and hiring for construction workers:

- Instructor-led group recruitment, training and hiring
- Contractor-led job-readiness hiring and training

“The workforce development program is a great way to help contractors offer new opportunities to disadvantaged jobseekers during a challenging time. The program naturally welcomes those ... that have never worked in construction to find work and provide for their families when so many other industries were negatively impacted this past year. Superior Construction is grateful for the partnerships with the Florida Department of Transportation, and for the opportunity to continue to participate in such an impactful program for our local Florida communities.”

*– Pete Kelley, President
Superior Construction*

INSTRUCTOR-LED GROUP RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND HIRING

This initiative was placed on pause due to the COVID-19 social distancing protocols for public health protection. As conditions surrounding the pandemic improve, this important program component may be revisited. The anticipated goal for this adult training initiative, when a safe opportunity is authorized, is to collaborate with the contractors to re-activate this intensive classroom and field training.

CONTRACTOR-LED JOB-READINESS HIRING AND TRAINING

Under the Contractor Job-Readiness Hiring and Training Initiative, contractors receive reimbursement for recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining new employees to work on FDOT construction projects. This initiative was created for contractors to hire employees and to provide tailored job-readiness training to those employees to meet their multi-faceted, entry-level labor needs. This program element is versatile to adapt to changes in the road and bridge industry workforce needs. Key elements of the Contractor Job-Readiness Hiring and Training program include:

- **Recruiting** – Contractors directly recruit, or partner with program staff or local community entities, to recruit program candidates.
- **Hiring** – Contractors hire candidates that meet their basic employment criteria.
- **Training** – Contractors provide up to 160 hours of individual job-readiness training to prepare their new employee for a career in construction.
- **Retaining** – Contractors to provide career path opportunities for entry-level employees hired under this initiative.
- **Reporting** – Contractors are required to submit monthly program reports tracking the progress of employees’ training and retention record.



Progressions: 438 people were hired through Contractor Job-readiness Hiring and Training initiative alone. That brings the total number of people getting a chance to work in the industry to 835 since this initiative started in March of 2020.

“ The FDOT Statewide Workforce Development program has been a great partner for AKCA Inc. in fulfilling it’s hiring needs in Plant City. Not only do they screen and send qualified candidates to us from their talent pool, they have also been instrumental in facilitating partnerships with other employment organizations in Central Florida. ”

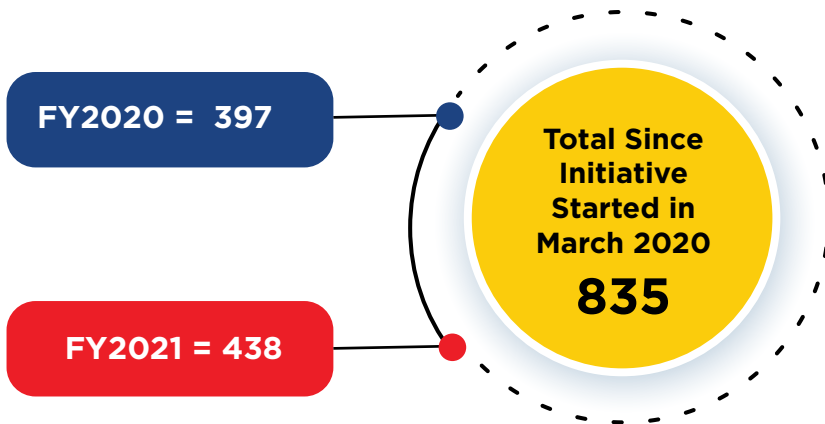
*– Chris Foster,
Sr. Recruiter - InfraStripe*



FUTURE PROGRAM REFINEMENTS

In January 2021, based on an observed data trend that illustrated an increase in attrition, the contractor training reporting was ramped up to require contractors to identify why an employee terminated. In Fiscal Year 2022, an enhancement will be made to this initiative that focuses on incentivizing “retention” of employees who are hired and trained through this initiative. To this effort, a stratified program reimbursement structure has been designed to drive early and continuous engagement by the contractor to retain hired and trained employees. The program training hours will increase from 160 to 320, with FDOT funding half and the contractor funding half of the training cost.

CONTRACTOR JOB-READINESS HIRING & TRAINING INITIATIVE METRICS



“ Recruiting in the construction industry is very challenging and having a resource such as OnBoard4Jobs has been an amazing dimension of assistance in building up our personnel. I can always count on the team to internalize our needs and our requests to help us identify a great candidate. Because of OnBoard4Jobs we were able to hire a maintenance of traffic supervisor along with an office manager for our Gainesville location. ”

– Octavia Smith, Tampa Branch Expansion Manager,
Cornerstone Barricades, Inc.

CORRECTIONAL TRANSITION ACADEMY

The Florida Department of Transportation continued collaboration with the Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) this year to advance the framework for the Statewide Workforce Development Correctional Transition Academy (CTA). With the goals to increase employment rates among transitioning inmates and decreasing the rate of returns to the correctional system, the focus of the Correctional Transition Academy is to:

- Identify inmates and offenders ready to enter the workforce.
- Connect transitional candidates with contractors through the OnBoard4Jobs Construction Careers program, as well as integrate them into the Job-readiness Hiring and Training initiative. Candidates' options will be based on the timing of their release and choice of geographic residency.
- Develop a road construction-focused curriculum for use by all program training staff.
- Work with the FDC Transition Team, OnBoard4Jobs Construction Careers and contractors to employ candidates.

Enhancing the abilities of inmates and offenders to become productive members of their communities after serving their sentence is a key focus of the Correction Department's mission. The academy will support the FDC's Shaping Success and Compass 100 programs, which focus on inmate rehabilitation and successful re-entry into their communities.

FUTURE PROGRAM REFINEMENTS

In 2022, the Correctional Transition Academy initiative will strive to provide new, alternative options to the FDC's existing transitional programs. Collaborating with established re-entry coalitions, the workforce development program staff will create a road and bridge construction curriculum that includes motivational and testimonial videos, as well as job-readiness training. The objective is to introduce a curriculum that will provide training so soon-to-be-released inmates can receive an array of industry certifications. The Correctional Transition Academy team collaborated with the FDC to identify three institutions. Working closely with the Gadsden Correctional Facility, the DeSoto Correctional Institution, and the Polk Correctional Institution, candidates will be identified and advised on job opportunities as they approach their release dates.



Road and bridge construction provides job opportunities for those re-entering the workforce.

“ Multiple individuals on probation have been placed in employment opportunities that could possibly lead to lifelong careers! Thank you ... for your commitment to helping Ex-Offenders with Second Chance Opportunities! ”

**– Matthew W. Ball, Employment Specialist - Circuit 13,
Florida Department of Corrections**

CORRECTIONAL TRANSITION ACADEMY – FAST TRACK INITIATIVE

The partnership with the Corrections Department in 2021 included expanding upon the activity and successes of the Fast Track Initiative, launched the previous year.

Through this accelerated program component, staff members funnel contractor hiring needs to the FDC. Corrections staff in turn provide a list of transitional candidates who are about to be released back into the community to program staff for hiring consideration. Once the inmates are released, program staff connect them with the contractors who are hiring.

To date, the initiative has forged meaningful relationships with 20 FDOT-qualified contractors to assist transitional candidates with employment in road and bridge construction. As an example, in April of 2021, the FDC referred more than 40 Fast Track re-entry candidates to participating contractors. FDOT contractors meeting the program requirements are being incentivized to provide opportunities to re-entry candidates, with a focus on those meeting the federal On-the-Job Training requirements for the contractor.

Fast Track staff broadened the program reach in 2021 by presenting the employment initiative to trade classes at the Polk County Correctional

Institution. Outreach to community partners increased statewide, with staff collaborating with re-entry agencies including Florida HIRES, Abe Brown Ministries' Ready4Work-Hillsborough, Operation New Hope and Tampa Academy of Hope to boost awareness and program participation.

FUTURE PROGRAM REFINEMENTS

In 2022, Fast Track staff members endeavor to expand the reach statewide of this initiative by building relationships with additional Florida Department of Corrections re-entry personnel. During FY 2021, most FDC referrals came from regions served by FDOT Districts 1, 5, 6 and 7.

Efforts also will continue to grow the network of community partners and contractors statewide to increase the number of transitional candidates and ex-offenders entering the pipeline for road and bridge construction jobs. That includes intensifying collaboration with Florida HIRES to expand serving more state and private correctional institutions to help inmates find employment upon release.

At the forefront of these efforts will be using innovative approaches to connect the candidates with FDOT contractors for employment interviews and possible job placement.



Statewide Workforce Development Program team members worked closely with contractors and new hires throughout the Fast Track pilot initiative.

MILITARY VETERANS RECRUITMENT

The FDOT Statewide Workforce Development Program strives to remain nimble in addressing the evolving needs and direction of the road and bridge building industry. In 2021, Florida’s road builders expressed interest in proactively targeting military veterans to help meet the growing labor needs of the industry.

The program also seeks to work with organizations that can help veterans lower barriers to being able to seize employment in the road and bridge building industry.

The Military Veterans Recruitment Initiative was launched this fiscal year to identify service members before they separate or transition out, get them introduced to the employment initiative, determine transferrable skills and help skilled former service members find work in road and bridge construction. This mutually beneficial initiative seeks to draw, in particular, from veterans having served in armed forces infrastructure and civil engineering divisions such as the United States Naval Construction Battalions (better known as the Navy Seabees) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

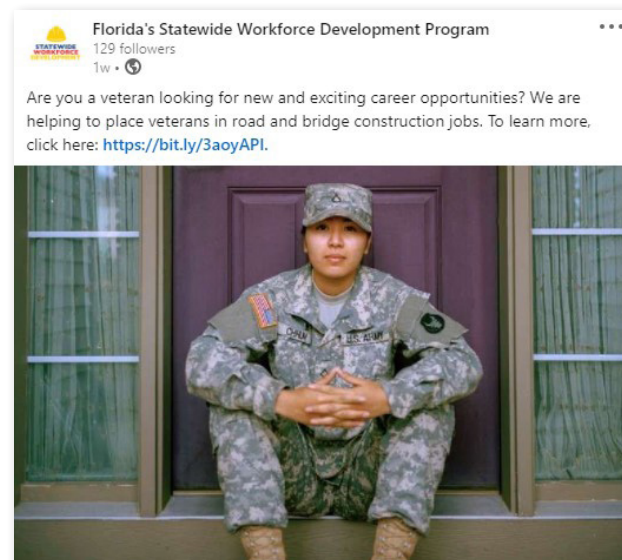
Staff conducted in-person and virtual meetings with non-profits, contractors and community agencies to introduce them to the program and work together to help veteran candidates find work. This collaboration has included working with such entities as CareerSource Tampa Bay, Amvets, Disabled American Veterans and the MacDill Airforce Base Transition group to help employ veteran candidates in road and bridge construction. Activities also included participating in events such as U.S. Congressman Gus Bilirakis’ Veterans Virtual Employment Fair.

Progressions: Program staff connected with transitioning military service members and veterans, providing contractors with more than 60 referrals.



FUTURE PROGRAM REFINEMENTS

In 2022, as the health crisis continues to subside, the Military Veterans Recruitment Initiative team will seek additional opportunities for more in-person engagements to assist veteran candidates with job placements. Staff also will expand working with Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs employment specialists statewide to increase candidate recruitment.



EXPANSION OF EXISTING PROGRAM: ON-THE-JOB TRAINING RECRUITMENT SUPPORT

OnBoard4Jobs Construction Careers is one of the Statewide Workforce Development initiatives that helps jobseekers gain entry-level employment with



local contractors on road and bridge construction projects. Managed by FDOT's Equal Opportunity Office and funded through the Federal Highway Administration, the program includes hiring workers for On-the-Job Training opportunities. The program provides opportunities to unemployed adults, as well as graduating high school seniors and technical school graduates, to secure jobs with the leading road construction contractors.

Since its inception in 2014, OnBoard4Jobs Construction Careers focuses on recruiting a construction workforce, while also increasing the number of minorities, women and veterans on federal and state-funded road and bridge construction contracts. The program provides opportunities to unemployed adults, as well as graduating high school seniors and technical school graduates, to secure jobs with leading road construction contractors.

The focus for 2021 has been on working directly with FDOT contractors to host several project-specific hiring fairs – both virtually and in person. The OnBoard4Jobs Construction Careers tailored recruitment events to meet the specific candidate needs for On-the-Job Training commitments.

Accomplishments under the OnBoard4Jobs Construction Careers Programs in 2021 include:

- 596 jobseeker referrals have been provided to contractors seeking to hire
- 120 contractors are enrolled in this On-the-Job Training supportive services program
- 45 people placed into jobs in road and bridge construction
- Represented the industry at events to enhance awareness of careers in road construction, including the Virtual Statewide Construction Career Days
- Innovatively continued Facetime and Microsoft Teams interviewing candidates for contractors to expedite hiring process during COVID-19 epidemic
- Continued to leverage TXT 180 for mass texting to increase community partner, contractor and student engagement
- Planned and participated in multiple hiring fairs statewide, both virtually and in person, in support of expedited construction schedules



“ The Middlesex Corporation has found a lot of value in working with OnBoard4Jobs. OnBoard4Jobs has helped up source candidates, kept us informed about current events, and helped to participate in our job fairs. We are proud of our partnership with OnBoard4Jobs and plan to continue to work with them closely. Thanks for all that you do! ”

**– Taylor Ducote, Recruiter –
Southeast, Middlesex Corporation**

FUTURE PROGRAM REFINEMENTS

OnBoard4Jobs Construction Careers efforts in the next fiscal year will include enhancing and expanding opportunities for candidates to enter into successful careers in road construction by:

- Strengthening follow-up communication with contractors and candidates
- Collaborating with more contractors to conduct demonstration-styled job fairs statewide and maximize community partnerships to ensure greater attendance by jobseekers
- Expanding the number of community partnerships and collaborating on co-hosted job fairs
- Strengthening communication with District Construction Compliance Managers and Construction Compliance Specialists to assist in On-the-Job Training program initiatives
- Attending district contractor meetings to continue strengthening contractor relationships and support services
- Providing program information at pre-construction meetings for projects with On-the-Job Training commitments
- Working with the five Construction Career Days events statewide to provide hands-on experience about career paths in road and bridge construction
- Partnering with the Correctional Transition Academy’s Fast Track Initiative to help provide a quick hiring approach for those just released from prison.



Internships and outreach events enhance awareness of career pathways in road and bridge construction.



Contractor participation has been an important aspect of hiring and training initiatives.

“Working on road and bridge projects requires all types of experience ... Lately it has been difficult to find experienced candidates in this industry. By taking our job descriptions and having a short conversation, (program staff) have been able to find applicants and forward resumes to us. We appreciate the efforts ... put forth into helping applicants in this industry that live in our community.” ”

**– Debbie Haynes, Human Resources Director,
Gator Grading & Paving**

PAVING THE WAY FOR STUDENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

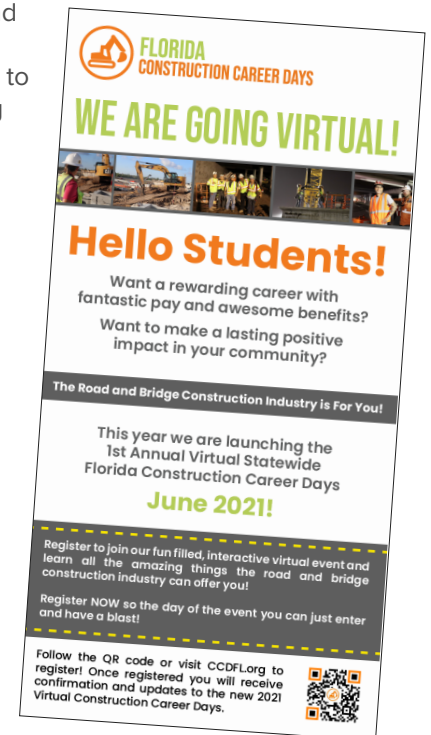
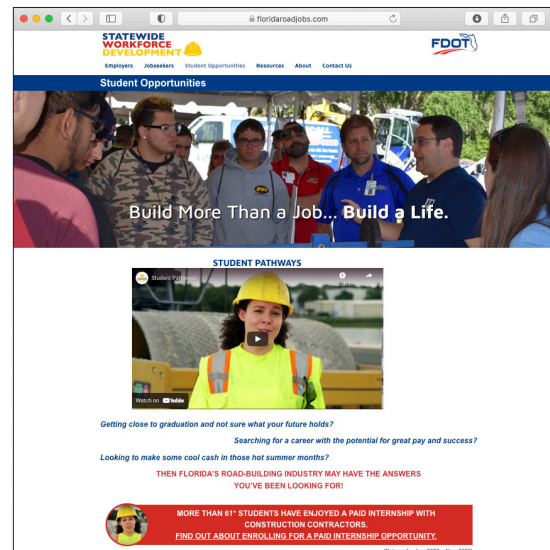
EXPANSION OF AN EXISTING PROGRAM: FLORIDA CONSTRUCTION CAREER DAYS PARTICIPATION

FDOT's Statewide Workforce Development Program participates in outreach to Florida high school and technical school students to educate them about career pathways in the transportation construction industry.

In 2021 the formerly hands-on Florida Construction Career Days (CCD) events were transformed, due to the pandemic, into online interactions. The virtual and immersive experience includes a comprehensive collection of videos that educate and entertain students about potential roadway construction career opportunities. The Statewide Workforce Development Program participated in the planning and development of the Virtual Statewide CCD event, which launched in June 2021.

The CCD online portal allows students to log in for a customized experience, and to opt into future program communications about scholarships and future careers. Outreach is ongoing using website and social media platforms to open direct lines of communications with students, school counselors, and industry and community partners.

An event flyer developed to promote the First Annual Virtual Statewide Florida CCD included a QR code that allowed interested students to register to join the fun-filled event, and to learn about how the road and bridge construction industry could pave the way to future careers. The virtual CCD flyers were emailed to 3,025 students, and to 27 school districts, including 883 teachers and school officials statewide.



FUTURE PROGRAM REFINEMENTS

In Fiscal Year 2022, the program may return to in-person events, as well as maintain the virtual experience to broaden opportunities for participation by students and schools that don't have reasonable access due to distance from the regional events. Program staff will increase participation in the CCD events to foster student interest and connect them to a career path in construction through the Student Construction Internship initiative.

As an expansion of the CCD, the program will assess opportunities to formally establish "mini-CCD" events to reach rural counties, such as those in Southwest-Central Florida, and in communities where major construction projects are planned. The virtual option may include webinars with augmented reality to showcase careers and skills in the road construction industry. Program staff also will explore opportunities for additional outreach to grades K-8 on CCD initiatives.

STUDENT CONSTRUCTION INTERNSHIP

FDOT's Student Construction Internship Program made great gains in 2021, with 19 contractors hiring 114 interns to gain work experience in the road and bridge industry. This initiative exceeded its target of placing 100 interns into hands-on experiences. Program staff continued working with industry partners such as the Florida Transportation Builders' Association (FTBA) and iBuild Central Florida, together with robust outreach to increase awareness of the program by additional roadbuilders, particularly those with projects in the areas where student applications have been received.

Statewide Workforce Development Program staff also expanded communications with community partners to spread the word amongst their clients about the internship opportunities. The internship allows students and young adults, ages 16-24, to learn firsthand about entry-level and skilled trades as a possible

“ I have learned so much in different areas of construction such as structure, roadway, drainage, utility, and submittals. I really like how the company focuses on safety. ... I am very happy to be a part of this great team. ”

– Jesal Patel, Intern, Middlesex Corporation



“ Nothing beats a personal experience like the internship; classroom doesn't compare to this type of opportunity. ”

– Danny Hondal – Red Civil, LLC

career path into Florida's road building industry. Interns work a minimum of 24 hours each week and earn at least \$12 per hour during the internship. FDOT contractors receive reimbursement for up to eight weeks of mentoring interns that have an innate interest in FDOT road construction projects, with the goal of contractors recruiting participants for fulltime employment.

The program requires students and young adults be:

- Ages 16-24 years old
- Able to lift 10-25 lbs.
- Drug free
- Able to work outdoors
- Eligible to work in the United States

This program is one of the many ways FDOT is helping to develop a pipeline of future workers to address the labor shortage in Florida's high-demand, road-and-bridge building industry.

FUTURE PROGRAM REFINEMENTS

In Fiscal Year 2022, the program goal is to use in-person and digital promotions to provide internship opportunities for paid work experiences in construction to more than 100 students and young adults. Strategies to achieve this goal include:

- Collaborating with the TRAC + Rides educational outreach initiative developed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials to administer construction-related STEM programs that bring awareness to youth at an earlier stage.
- Working with industry partners to incorporate road and bridge curriculum into current programs that will segue into opportunities for employment with contractors.
- Developing a contractor-driven internship that allows classroom instructional course work as well as onsite education.
- Building relationships and opportunities for sub-contractor participation in the internships.
- Increasing partnerships with community affiliates to broaden student opportunities.

“I’ve certainly learned a lot about a field I never had any real hands-on experience in. I’ve also been formally introduced to many concepts and software that I would hear about around college, so it’s interesting to see and gain work experience with them.”

*– Nicolas Tellez, Intern,
Middlesex Corporation*



In 2021, 19 contractors participated in hiring 114 interns. As a result, 28 were hired into permanent jobs in the road and bridge industry.



“It’s a great experience. Ask as many questions as possible; that’s the best way to learn. And make sure to get out in the field; that’s the best experience anyone can get.”

*– Lilliana Murado, who interned with
Archer-Western DeMoya JV, highly recommended
the program to other students considering applying.*

BUILDING PROGRAM COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

COMMUNICATING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Strategically communicating the opportunities and benefits of a career in road and bridge building is mission critical for the Statewide Workforce Development Program. To this end, FDOT has developed a strong and cohesive brand across the various program components, founded upon the positioning statement: **Build More Than a Job ...Build a Life.**



This phrase is at the core of the program, which is essentially about changing lives and creating possibilities for brighter futures. In 2021 program staff used proven and creative ways of communicating these potential opportunities to an array of target audiences like contractors, community partners, skilled veterans, transitioning inmates, students and adults who may not have worked in construction previously.

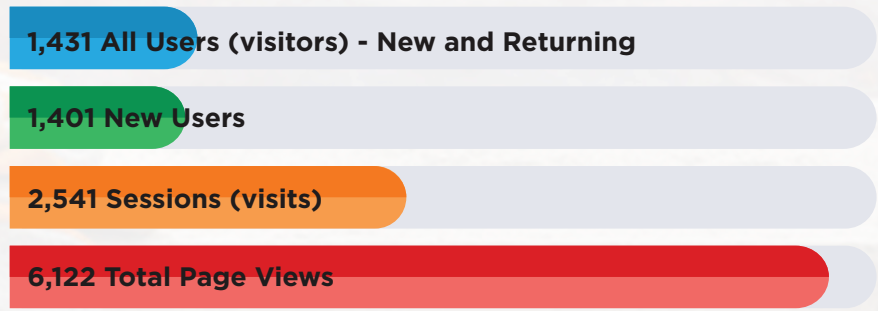
In the COVID era, making virtual connections and providing program information using various digital platforms was not just considered an innovation, but a necessity. For example, Facetime and Microsoft Teams were used to pre-screen candidates for contractors to expedite the hiring process.

Program staff expanded content on FloridaRoadJobs.com, the central hub for jobseekers and contractors to get into the pipeline to take advantage of the various initiatives. The number of ways to access participant applications was increased and made easier to find. On the student webpages, information for parents interested in learning about the program was made more prominent. A series of videos showing students the many pathways to careers in construction was added, as well as statistics on the number of students enjoying paid internships with contractors.

The website resources page now features a library of more than two dozen videos featuring various entry-level jobs such as safety coordinators and form setters, as well as positions for skilled veterans such as crane operators and project managers – all of which can provide pathways to new careers.

Traffic is building on the interactive site, which serves as a key portal to the various program components. In its first full year of operation, the website saw:

July 1, 2020 - June 20, 2021*

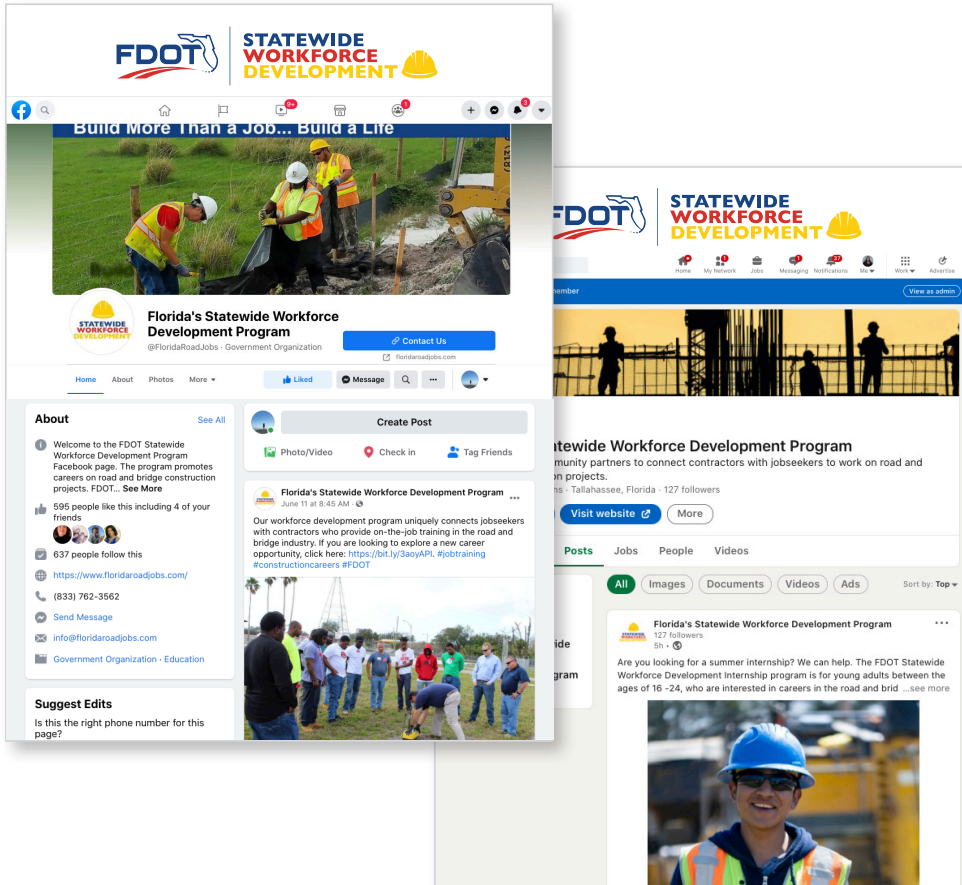


* thru 6/20/21

Facebook and LinkedIn



Program social media pages have been effective tools in widely broadcasting the potential opportunities offered by the various Statewide Workforce Development Program initiatives by targeting the transportation industry and related associations, businesses and community partners. The Facebook and LinkedIn pages highlight opportunities for skilled veterans, the student construction internship program and ways inmates finishing their sentences can productively re-enter society.



TXT 180



Program staff in 2021 amped up the use of TXT 180, texting messages to the entire recipient database, now totaling 516 users, with one click. Those who opted into the service received text campaigns about job fairs and recruiting activities. The communications team sent student construction internship information to high school seniors in targeted regions and communities where participating contractors were working. The service also is used to send links to social media pages and other information to help target audiences understand the opportunities in construction careers.

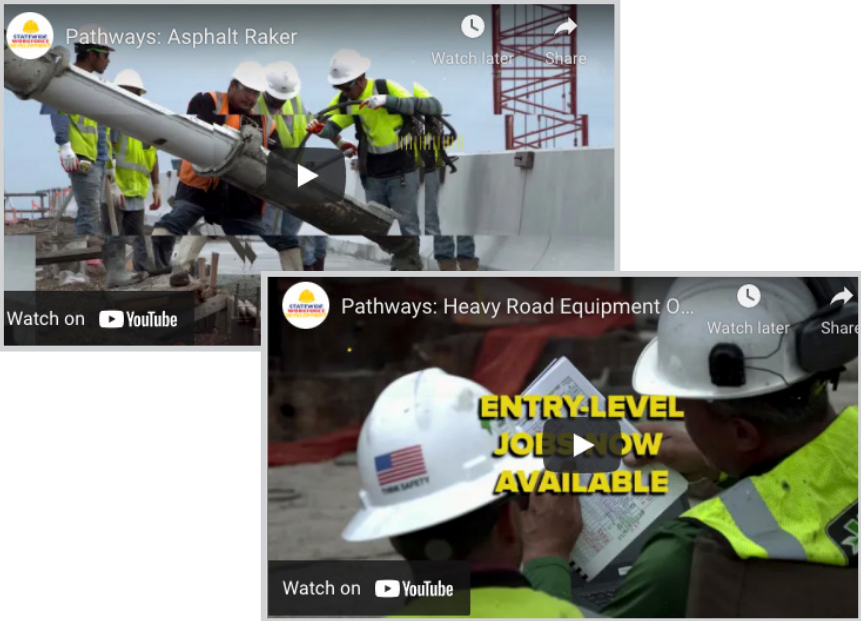


Pathway Videos

Seeing is believing. In 2021 program staff created a library of more than 24 pathway videos to show people what it could be like to work in Florida’s road and bridge building industry. Working closely with contractors who generously provided access to their project sites, the communications team documented examples of the many job opportunities available for entry level, general laborers to the most skilled, heavy equipment operators.

The quick videos – most only about 30 seconds long – demonstrate specific jobs, skills and certifications that pave career pathways and lead to progressively higher wages. With the addition of the military veterans’ recruitment initiative, videos also were created showing skilled service members pathways to careers as crane operators, safety managers project engineers, superintendents – and more.

The program also features video testimonials from foremen and superintendents, general laborers, skilled tradesmen and women, and individuals that have built a life as a result of seizing opportunities in the road construction industry.



FUTURE PROGRAM REFINEMENTS

As the pandemic subsides, program staff anticipates being able to dial back into more in-person engagements and events.

Staff will continue to seek out new digital and other ways to connect with those who could benefit from program initiatives.



Digital outreach and targeted videos enhance awareness of career pathways.



PROGRAM PARTNERS ENGAGED

FDOT and Statewide Workforce Development Program staff are committed to strengthening and expanding program partnerships to benefit adult jobseekers and students exploring career opportunities in the road-building industry. The program's expansion in 2021 was fueled by more than doubling the number of valued agency, industry and community partnerships:

AGENCY PARTNERS

CareerSource Florida
Florida Commission for the Transportation
Disadvantaged
Florida Department of Corrections
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
Florida Department of Education

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Acme Barricades
Ajax Paving Industries of Florida, LLC
Anderson Columbia
Archer Western
Archer Western-de Moya Joint Ventures
Asphalt Group, Inc.
Blacktip Services
Bob's Barricades
Bonn-J Contracting, Inc. of Florida
C.W. Roberts Contracting, Inc.
Cone & Graham, Inc.
Cornerstone Barricades
D.A.B. Constructors, Inc.
Delta Construction Partners Inc.
Dickerson Inc.
de Moya Group, Inc.
Emerald Coast Striping
Ferreira Construction
Ferrovia Services Infrastructure, Inc.
Florida Safety Contractors, Inc.

Florida Transportation Builders' Association
Gator Grading & Paving LLC
Garney Construction
General Asphalt
Global Contracting Group LLC
Highway Safety Devices, Inc.
Hormac
Hubbard Construction Company
InfraStripe LLC (AKCA)
Ingram Signalization
Johnson Bros. Corporation
Jones Benitez Corp.
Jordan Companies
Kiewit
Kimmins Contracting Corp.
Lane Construction Corporation
Lead Engineering
Maylor Foundation Contractors, LLC
McKenzie Contracting, LLC
Middlesex Corporation
Miller Electric Co.
Moores Heavy Haul, LLC
National Center for Construction Education & Research
Nelson Construction
Pepper Contracting Services, Inc.
Port Consolidated
Preferred Materials, Inc.
Prince Contracting, LLC
Prospera USA

Ranger Construction Industries
Redland Construction
RIPA & Associates, LLC
Russell Engineering
Sacyr Construction USA
Safety Contracting
SEMA Construction
Scott Bridge Company, Inc.
Shelby Erectors, Inc.
Skanska
Southeast Highway Guardrail & Attenuators, LLC
Superior Asphalt, Inc.
Superior Construction Co.
Synergy
The Stout Group
Tierra
Traffic Control Devices
Traffic Control Products
United Signs & Signals
Westra Construction Corp.
Wiretek Solutions

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abe Brown Ministries, Inc.
Adult Mankind Organization
CareerSource Broward
CareerSource Central Florida
CareerSource North Florida
CareerSource Northeast Florida
CareerSource Heartland

CareerSource Pasco Hernando
Career Source Pinellas
CareerSource South Florida
CareerSource Suncoast
CareerSource Tampa Bay
Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa, Inc.
Drug Abuse Comprehensive Coordinating Office, Inc.
Feeding Tampa Bay
Florida Hires
Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs
Florida Youth ChalleNGe Academy
Gadsden Correction Institution
Helen Gordon Davis Centre for Women, Inc.
Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office
Hillsborough Ex-Offenders Re-Entry Network
iBuild Central Florida
Jacksonville Urban League
Junior Achievement Inspire of Central Florida
The End Recidivism Project Extreme
MacDill Airforce Base
Metropolitan Ministries
NAACP Empowerment Center

OIC of South Florida
Operation New Hope
Ox School of Construction Resource Center
Pinellas Urban League
Pinellas Ex-Offender Re-Entry Coalition
Ready4Work-Hillsborough
Re-Entry Center of Brevard
Tampa Housing Authority
Tampa Bay Academy of Hope
Soldiers Angels (Non-Profit Org.)
StemXposure
Sunshine Enterprises
University of South Florida Police Department
Veterans Florida

Duval County Public Schools
Glades County Public Schools
Jacksonville Area Public Schools
Hardee County Public Schools
Hendry County Public Schools
Hernando County Public Schools
Highlands County Public Schools
Hillsborough County Public Schools
Lake County Public Schools
Lee County Public Schools
Manatee County Public Schools
Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Okeechobee County Public Schools
Orange County Public Schools
Osceola County Public Schools
Pasco County Public Schools
Pinellas County Public Schools
Polk County Public Schools
Sarasota County Public Schools
Seminole County Public Schools
Volusia County Public Schools

FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Brevard County Public Schools
Broward County Public Schools
Charlotte County Public Schools
Citrus County Public Schools
Collier County Public Schools
DeSoto County Public Schools





**STATEWIDE
WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT** 

Presented under the authority of:

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Kevin J. Thibault, P.E., Secretary

Managed by:

Joseph B. Santos, P.E., Operations Program Engineer