



LADOTD OJT Program



April 2023

Equity Executive Order

President Biden signed the *Executive Order on Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (Equity Executive Order) in February 2023. This Order states that the *Federal Government shall continue to pursue ambitious goals to build a strong, fair, and inclusive workforce and economy*. It establishes an Equity-Focused Leadership team in the US DOT, which is responsible for implementing a *comprehensive equity strategy* and reporting results annually.

How does the *Equity Executive Order* affect LADOTD? We will input into the progress made by LADOTD in its annual September

Report regarding how the federal funds were budgeted to result in equity. The OJT Program implementation shows that the LADOTD Contractors are committed to the deployment of the Program by hiring and training minorities, women, and disadvantaged individuals. Let's work together in achieving a robust OJT Program, to show the success of equity in Louisiana.

We, in the Compliance Programs Section, along with the OJT Supportive Services, are ready to help you to meet the OJT Program Special Provision, by enrolling trainees. Please reach out to us for the assistance. (Please refer to page 4 for contact information). Please also feel

free to reach out to me directly by phone at (225) 379-1382, or by email at Paula.Roddy@la.gov.

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Current Status of the OJT Program

Chart #1-Active Trainees shows that five trainees were active. Five males were active, along with two minority, and three non-minority employees. No women were enrolled or active. More minority and female trainees could be provided training in the OJT Program. Two trainees completed the trainings. More trainees could continue to work on the projects to accomplish the trainings.

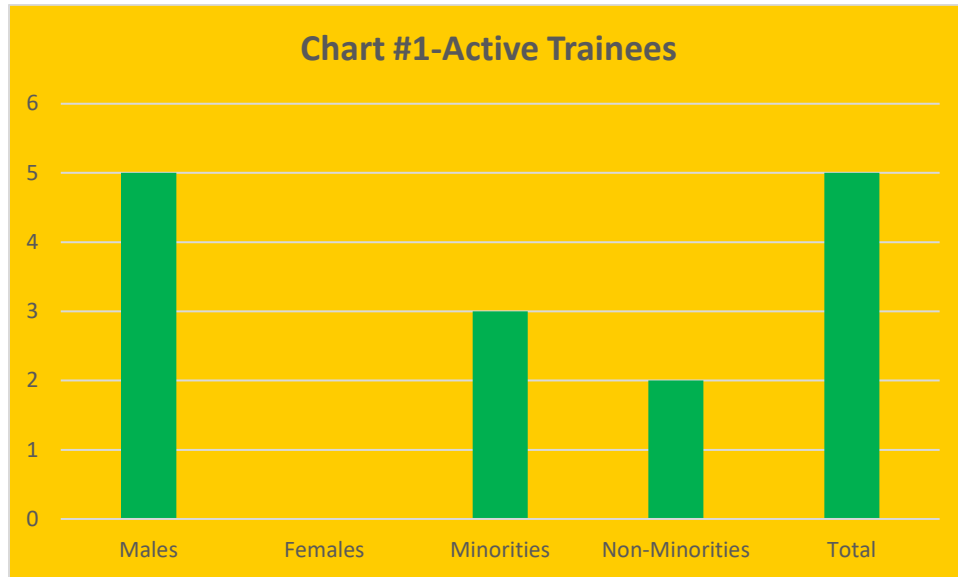
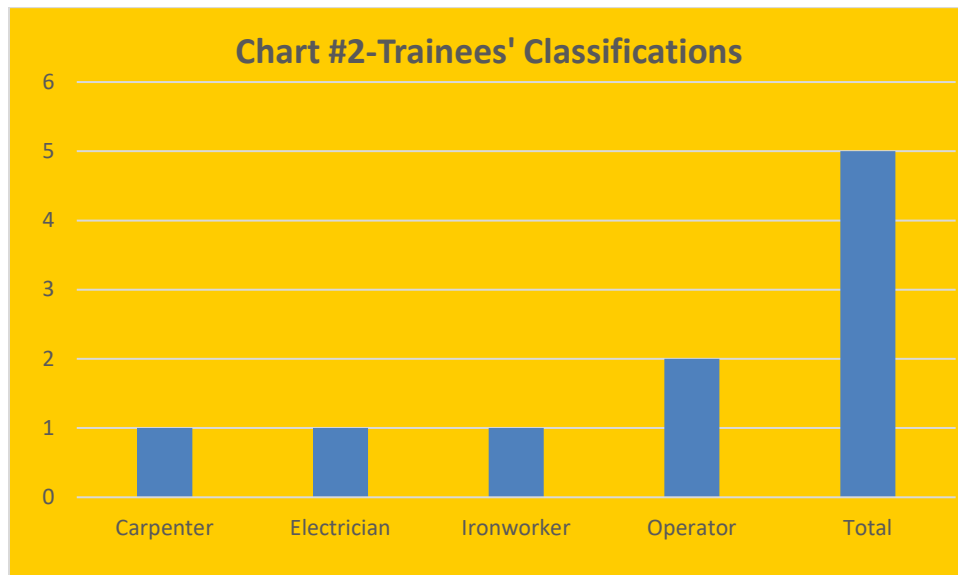


Chart #2- Trainees' Classifications indicates that two Operators, one each of Carpenter, Electrician, and Ironworker were active. The Contractors can enroll trainees in classifications that would benefit the companies. Companies train employees to become proficient. Enrolling trainees on the OJT Program is a win-win for the trainees, Contractors and the DOTD.



Equitable Workforce Development Funding for Louisiana



The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) continues to benefit Louisiana. It provides funding for improving roadways, bridges, broadband access, etc. As part of the infrastructure enhancements, an emphasis on diverse workforce development is compelled. The federal administration expects the US Departments of Transportation and Labor to collaborate and subsequently, also with the state entities. President Biden stated the commitments on November 2, 2022...to *provide an overview of federal funding resources to support equitable workforce development in the [Workforce Development Guide - Build.gov - The White House](#). Additionally, the Administration's Talent Pipeline Challenge has called on employers...to make tangible commitments that support equitable workforce development in infrastructure—with a focus on three critical sectors: broadband, construction, and electrification.*

The BIL provides \$800 million in dedicated and other investments for workforce development. The funds provide technical assistance to states, and other stakeholders, to ensure that they are used to enhance equity in infrastructure projects. The LADOTD, in conjunction with the LA Workforce Commission, can ensure that the future workforce is diverse through apprenticeships, etc. The infrastructure leaders should have a keen eye on

diversity when hiring. Also, training of minorities, women, and disadvantaged individuals, through the OJT Program, will facilitate new hires to possess the skills needed to perform the job effectively. If new hires do not feel comfortable in performing the jobs, they will have low morale and may eventually quit. Retention is best served by a well-trained employee who is valued in the company. Contractors can strive to enroll at least one trainee per year on the projects. The OJT Program not only benefits the trainees, but also the Contractors, as the companies receive \$3.00 per hour reimbursements.

Louisiana cannot take advantage of the federal funds available for workforce development set by the Administration if trainees are not enrolled by the Contractors. Further, additional funding by the LA Workforce Commission is available for childcare and other services for the trainees. Why not take advantage of the OJT Program reimbursement and the federal workforce development funding to hire diverse employees? It can only occur if more Contractors enroll eligible individuals and set up apprenticeships, etc. The Contractors, working collaboratively with the DOTD, can ensure that the agency receives its share of federal funding available, thus benefiting Louisiana

Upcoming OJT Program Contractor Forum

Quarterly, the LADOTD will conduct Contractor's Forums to discuss the OJT Forums. In these forums, come learn about the OJT Program. Get an overview, information on how to implement, provide input on the OJT Program and ask questions. Interact with the LADOTD staff to ensure meeting the OJT goals. The date of the next OJT Program Contractor's Forum will be

announced. You will receive an email invitation for the Contractors' Forum. Please accept the invitation and come join us. Please contact Ms. Joyce Brignac with any questions at (225) 379-1364 or joyce.brignac@la.gov.

GAO Report for OJT Program

The US Government Accountability Office developed a report, [On-the-Job Training: Federal Highway Administration Needs to Strengthen Program Assessment | U.S. GAO](#) to the US House of Representatives, in 2011. It reviewed, to what extent, the trainees reached journey level status. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) decentralized its management of the Program. The report provided recommendations for executive actions: strengthen criteria through regulations and implement an oversight mechanism. One specific finding is still open: *establish accountability for meeting the OJT Program's goal of increasing the participation of traditionally underrepresented groups in the highway construction workforce.*

The current status, as reported by the GAO report is: *As of August 2022, FHWA has taken steps in recent years to increase its oversight of states performance.* FHWA rolled out a new reporting tool to oversee and track the OJT program in *Civil Rights Connect*.

What does this mean to the DOTD? It means that monitoring and reporting responsibility by the DOTD exists through the web portal, regarding the OJT Program. Contractors, as partners with the DOTD, have an understanding regarding accountability for use of federal funds. Some Contractors have participated and are successfully providing training to minorities, women, and disadvantaged individuals in the OJT Program. However, not all Contractors are active, citing the voluntary nature of the OJT Program.

Since the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law emphasizes workforce development, it is imperative that every Contractor, especially those with multiple awards, enroll eligible individuals on the projects. The Compliance Programs Section has streamlined the process of deploying the OJT Program. The Contractors can select the projects on which to enroll trainees, as well as the trainee classifications which will specifically benefit their companies. The documentation required is minimal. Additionally, the DOTD provides reimbursements and offers great latitude to allow transfer of trainees between projects to enable training programs' completions. Additional Contractors enrolling trainees will ensure that more minorities, women, and disadvantaged individuals will receive trainings on highway construction crafts and obtain family-sustaining careers in Louisiana. In turn, this will enable the DOTD in meeting and exceeding the OJT Program goals.



OJT Program Contacts

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