



LADOTD OJT Program



January, 2020

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Calendar Year Wrap-Up

The LADOTD construction program for the calendar year 2019 is complete. So also, is the accomplishment of the OJT Program, as required by the *23 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 230*. How did the LADOTD do to fulfill the federal obligations of the OJT Program? We have shown improvement, albeit much more is needed.

The Contractors have enrolled more trainees in the calendar year 2019, and for the first time in several years, some trainees completed the training programs. This means that the trainees obtained the elementary skills necessary to operate equipment, perform carpentry, etc. The trend is certainly headed in the right direction. However, the number of trainees completing the OJT Program is not fully commensurate with the construction program. In other words, minorities, women, and other disadvantaged individuals of Louisiana continue to lose out on opportunities to learn construction crafts. We need to work together to ensure equal opportunity.

Some Contractors have shown enthusiasm in the calendar year 2019 to implement the OJT Program. Others, even after receiving awards for large numbers of contracts, have shown little initiative towards partnering with the LADOTD in enrolling trainees. The objective is for every Contractor to handle its share of ensuring that minorities and females receive training and obtain long-lasting careers in the highway construction industry, in proportion to the contract awards. I encourage more Contractors to participate in the OJT Program on projects in which an OJT goal has been assigned. This is our best option to ensure that future federal funds for state highway, bridge and street projects are not jeopardized.

As the new Compliance Programs Section Director, I am committed to working collaboratively with the Contractors to ensure success of the OJT Program. I have already met some LADOTD Contractors. My plan is to meet many more in the Year 2020 to help remove obstacles to the success of the

OJT Program for the LADOTD. Additionally, I want to encourage the Contractors to attend the Quarterly OJT Program Contractor Forums which will prove beneficial.

I look forward to meeting you at the Quarterly Contractor Forums or in other venues. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out to me by phone at (225) 379-1382, or by email at Paula.Roddy@la.gov.

Ms. Paula Merrick Roddy
LADOTD Program Director
Compliance Programs Section

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Current Status of the OJT Program

A total of 31 trainees were enrolled in the calendar year 2019 with 29 males and two females, as shown on *Chart #1-Ethnicity, Total Enrolled Trainees*. Among the females, one minority and one non-minority female trainees were enrolled. Since the OJT Program is an equal opportunity program, the Contractors can aim for enrolling more minorities, and in particular, minority females.

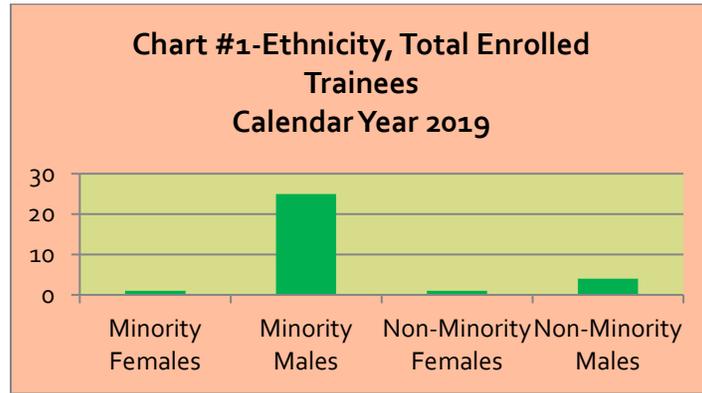


Chart #2-Status of Trainees shows that six trainees have completed the training programs successfully. Five African American males and three Caucasian males completed the OJT Programs. Additionally, one African American male and two Caucasian males were terminated, along with one African American female. The number of trainees who have completed in 2019 is an improvement from the previous years, albeit much improvement is required.

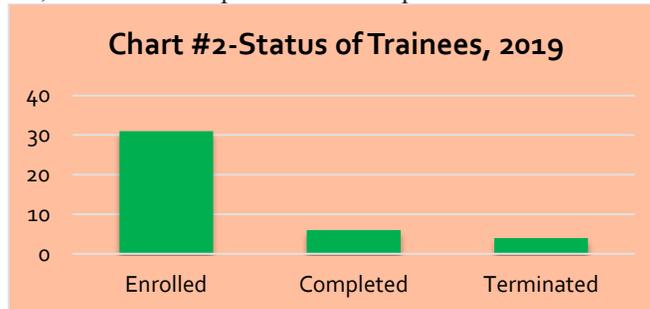
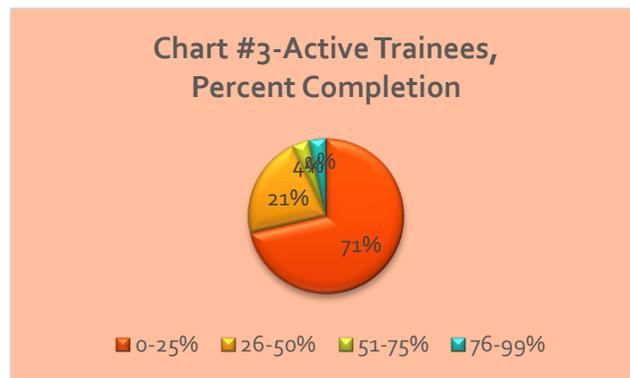


Chart #3-Active Trainees Percent Complete shows that approximately 70% of the Active trainees have completed less than a quarter of the training programs. Almost one-quarter of Active trainees have achieved over 50% of the training hours. About 10% of the Active trainees are almost completed. This means that there are many trainees who may not finish the training programs. The Contractors are encouraged to work with the trainees' supervisors to ensure that the trainees accomplish the hours required to complete the OJT Program.



The Straight Path to Success on Trainee Enrollments

Selecting the current employees or new hires who can be successfully enrolled, timely, is the key to the success of the OJT Program for the LADOTD Contractors. Specifically, two components ensure success: selecting a classification which is listed in the *OJT Construction Classifications Manual* (OJT Classifications Manual) and one which has the minimum wages stated on the Davis-Bacon wages for the contract. An approved classification from the OJT Classifications Manual contains the information necessary to provide the training and has the approval of both the LADOTD and the FHWA. Additionally, if the wages for the classifications are listed in the Davis-Bacon wages, the wage rates for the trainees can be established as percentages of the minimum wages and stated on the OJT Enrollment Forms. An Enrollment Form with a classification from the OJT Classifications Manual along with the existence of the wage rates allows the LADOTD OJT Program Specialist to approve the enrollments, as required by the federal regulations, in an expeditious manner.

The OJT Classifications Manual contains over 50 construction classifications in which trainees can receive training, such as *Highway or Bridge Carpenter*. Each classification information sheet includes *Description, Wage Structure* and the *Training Breakdown* showing the number of hours for Orientation, Safety Procedures, Maintenance, and Activities. The information sheets for the classifications in the OJT Classifications Manual have been vetted and approved by both the LADOTD and the FHWA. If a Contractor chooses to submit a classification which is not listed in the OJT Classifications Manual, the information sheet must be developed and approved, prior to proposing the classification on the OJT Enrollment Form. This delays the enrollment significantly sometimes even beyond the life of the project. Another temporary hurdle is that AASHTOWare is currently not programmed to allow including the custom

trainee classifications to be included in the Certified Payroll module.

In the OJT Enrollment Form, the Contractor states the wages for the trainees. If the Davis-Bacon wages do not contain the approved wage rate for the requested OJT classification, the Contractor must submit the completed *SF 1444-Request for Authorization for Additional Classification and Wage Rate* to the DOTD Labor Compliance Program Manager for processing to the US Department of Labor (DOL), which will establish the missing wage rates. DOTD must obtain the approved wage rates from the US DOL, prior to approving the position for an OJT Program on a project. This could result in delaying the trainees' enrollments significantly, sometimes even beyond the life of the project.

The LADOTD is committed to resolving the issues with AASHTOWare to enable including the custom trainee classifications. Additionally, the LADOTD is working with the US DOL to ensure that all possible classifications are listed on the Davis-Bacon wages. Until then, the LADOTD encourages the Contractors to enroll trainees with classifications listed in the OJT Classifications Manual and those with the Davis-Bacon wages listed on the project-specific contracts, to ensure success of the LADOTD OJT Program. The LADOTD's partnership and collaboration with the Contractors will ensure compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations 23 Part 230.



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 next OJT Program Contractor's Forum will be held on Thursday, January 16, 2020 from 10:30-11:30

am at the LADOTD District 61 Training Room, 8100 Airline Highway (US 190), Baton Rouge, LA. 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.

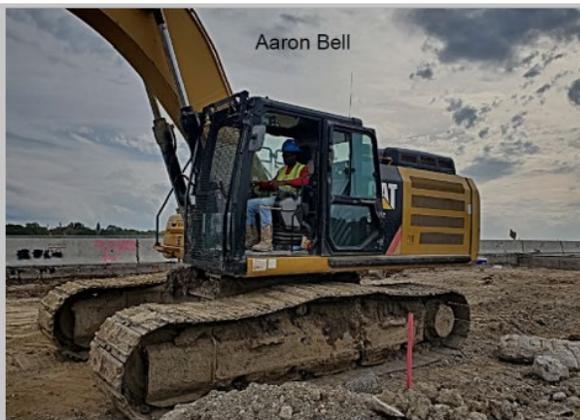
Trainees' Spotlights: James Construction Group, LLC

Phillip Alleman and Aaron Bell are Equipment Operator trainees with James Construction Group, LLC. Both Phillip and Aaron who were approved for training as Backhoe Operators state that the training has been beneficial. Prior to the training, neither could operate any construction equipment. Phillip worked cutting grass for the Streets Department. Aaron performed farming with his father. They have learned how to operate Backhoes and are expanding their skills by learning how to operate the Roller and the Excavator. Phillip has learned how to operate the Excavator with a joystick, etc. Aaron has learned to use both hands and feet at the same time to control and maneuver the equipment around the jobsite. It takes much hand-eye coordination to operate the construction machinery. Learning to operate one piece of equipment gives the trainees skills to operate others.

What's next for Phillip? As Phillip's training is further advanced, he will start to learn how to operate the Front End Loader. He states that he wants to *run it without tipping it over or without ruining it in any way*. Aaron wants to operate the Excavator *to get the correct grades*. Overall, both Phillip and Aaron indicated that they enjoy operating the equipment and are anxious to continue the training to get better.

The suggestion from the Supervisor was that it is difficult for the trainees to accomplish the hours in consecutive manners. The trainees must perform several other activities and may have to shift between operating several pieces of equipment. It is hard to provide *seat time* on one piece of equipment to operate. Safety is important; the trainees receive much training on how to conduct themselves safely. Overall, it takes years to become comfortable operating equipment, such as the Excavator.

The Project Manager states that the OJT Program is a great program for new employees or existing employees interested in gaining additional construction skills. Some difficulty exists with the OJT Paperwork and keeping track of hours. However, overall, the trainees seem satisfied with the learning of the training classifications.



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