



# LADOTD OJT Program



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT

July, 2019

## New LADOTD Compliance Programs Director

Ms. Paula Merrick Roddy is the new Compliance Programs Director, starting in August 2019, as I will be retiring. Ms. Roddy has been with the LADOTD since May 28, 2019. She has a B.A. degree in History and Secondary Mathematics from L.S.U.-BR and a Master's Degree in Public Administration with a concentration in Finance from Southern University-BR. Ms. Roddy brings a wealth of knowledge from the city and state level government perspectives as she has worked positions from frontline worker to Executive Staff team member. You can reach Ms. Roddy by phone at 225-379-1382 or by email at Paula.Roddy@la.gov.

The LADOTD OJT Program is slowly improving. Contractors are enrolling more minorities and women on the various trades; however, the OJT Program needs to improve further. The goal of the OJT Program is to enhance diversity among the workforce of the heavy/highway construction projects. Additionally, the OJT Program is a benefit to the

construction Contractors. The LADOTD provides \$3.00 per hour reimbursement for the trainees, more than in many other states. That is basically free money to the Contractors to help meet the diversity requirements.

The construction workforces have percentages of minorities and females that are required to work on the projects. If the workforces do not meet these percentages, the projects are non-compliant and the LADOTD is required to take appropriate actions. Why not avoid those actions and be compliant while benefiting your companies by receiving the \$3.00 per hour reimbursements?

The Compliance Programs Section is interested in assisting the Contractors to be successful with the OJT Programs. The LADOTD OJT Supportive Services Consultant is available and ready to assist you. Please ask your Project Managers to cooperate with the OJT Supportive

Services Consultant to help your company be successful.

Please provide your full support to Ms. Roddy to ensure compliance with the *23 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 230*. It has been a pleasure to work with the construction Contractors. I wish you all a continued successful construction program.

**Stephanie Ducote**

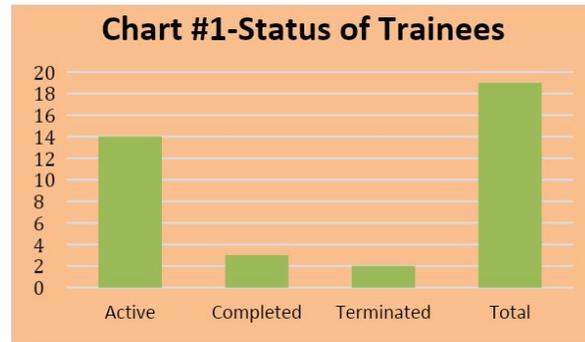
LADOTD Program Director  
Compliance Programs Section

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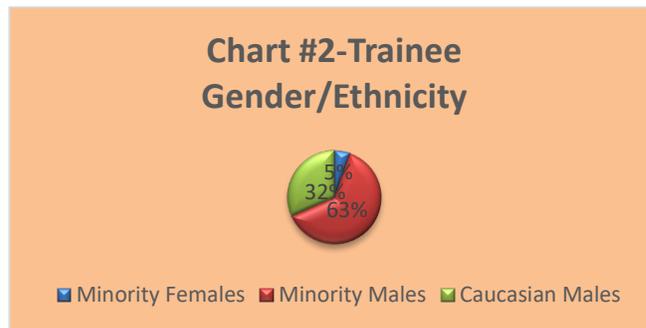
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## Current Status of the OJT Program

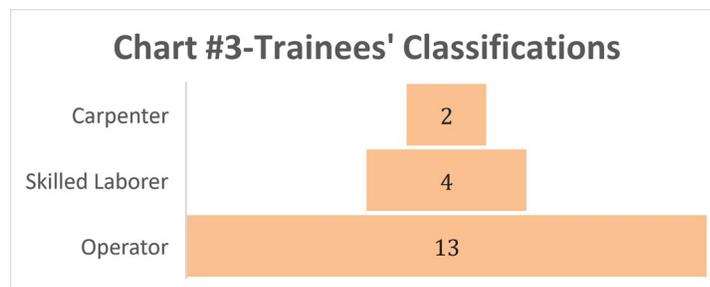
A total of 19 trainees were active during the quarter, as shown on *Chart #1-Status of Trainees*. Three trainees completed the following classifications: two as Carpenters (Highway/Bridge) and one as a Backhoe Operator. Currently, fourteen trainees are active with two trainees close to completions. One African American male and one Caucasian male trainee were terminated.



*Chart #2-Trainees' Gender/Ethnicity* shows that the OJT Program includes one minority Female, 12 minority males and six Caucasian males. The OJT Program is for the minorities, women and the disadvantaged individuals of Louisiana interested in working in heavy/highway construction. The Contractors should strive to enroll more minorities and women.



Most trainees are Equipment Operators, with a few enrolled in the Skilled Laborer and Carpenter Classifications, as shown on *Chart #3-Trainees Classifications*. The Contractors can enroll in any classification shown in the LADOTD OJT Classifications Manual, approved by the FHWA. However, DOTD strongly encourages using those classifications currently listed on the approved Wage Decisions assigned to the projects.



## Kort's Construction, Inc. Trainee Spotlight



Mr. Darrell Thomas, Light Equipment Operator with Kort's Construction Services, Inc. (Kort's), is a trainee in the LADOTD OJT Program. This is Darrell's second round of training, as he was a Skilled Laborer trainee previously. Darrell states that he is excited to be learning new skills on construction crafts. He is currently learning how to operate a skid steer and a mini excavator. He is also learning how to work with the other trades on the project. Before joining Kort's, he worked in a chemical plant. This was quite a switch for Darrell. However, he was able to make the transition to highway construction without issues due to the training by Kort's.

Darrell shares that he attends a Safety Toolbox talk every morning. The Foreman discusses what the crews will be performing each day. The Foreman also shares the traffic patterns so that Darrell and the other crew members are aware and can work accordingly to stay safe. Kort's has a Safety Committee and according to Ms. Cristi Hinson, OJT Program Administrator for Kort's, Darrell may be on the

Safety Committee at some time in the future to share his insights.

Darrell stated that he *always liked working with machines and would like to learn how to operate other heavy highway construction equipment*. His favorite part of the training is operating the heavy machinery and, of course, going home after a safe working day.

Mr. Wayne Pontiff, Kort's VP, believes that the OJT Program is a good program and is beneficial to both the trainee and the company. It helps the trainees to know that the company is investing in them by providing training both when the trainees join the company and to upgrade their classifications. Additionally, Cristi has set up a successful *Career Path for Employees* Program, which was based on the LADOTD OJT Program. Overall, the OJT Program is needed and Kort's will continue to enroll trainees.

## 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 Tuesday, July 16, 2019 from 10:30-11:30 am at the LADOTD District 04 Conference Room, 3339 Industrial Drive, Bossier City, 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](mailto:joyce.brignac@la.gov).



## Impact of Saying *No* to the OJT Program

The OJT Supportive Services has been contacting the Project Managers of Contractors to help to improve the OJT Program. Most Contractors eventually see the value of the OJT Program along with the necessity of implementation due to *23 CFR Part 230* requirements and indeed implement the Program. However, a handful of the LADOTD Contractors have said an outright *No* to implementing the OJT Program ever! What is the effect of these few LADOTD Contractors simply saying *No*, after being awarded contracts? In other words, can they walk away, and no consequences ensue?



The resulting outcome of non-participating Contractors is that they place burdens on other Contractors for the implementations of the OJT Program, to ensure compliance for the LADOTD. Further, due to the voluntary nature of the program, the LADOTD Project Engineers can only encourage, cajole, etc. but cannot compel these non-participating Contractors to enroll trainees. The real question is this: When small, medium and large-sized Contractors are working through the process and showing success, why are several Contractors simply saying *No*? Is providing training/jobs to the minorities and women of Louisiana in the heavy/highway construction fields to ensure parity not important even when it is a requirement?

The reasons may be many; however, regardless of the reasons, these handful of Contractors who are expecting other Contractors to help the LADOTD be compliant with the OJT Program are showing that they are not willing to *carry their load*. No contractor should excuse themselves citing a cumbersome nature of the program, lack of desire, trainees being hard to work with, etc. One outcome that these non-complying Contractors are not recognizing is that if all Contractors said *No*, there may be no federal construction funds for any Contractor to obtain work from the LADOTD, due to non-compliance. Further, the OJT Program outcomes are periodically compared, state agency to state agency, across the United States, in a Report to the US House and Senate. What results do these Contractors want the OJT Outcome Report to contain for Louisiana, in comparison with the 49 other states? It is not until and unless every Contractor works diligently to implement the OJT Program can the Program be successful. Therefore, all contractors should carry the weight proportionally, as per the construction contracts they have been awarded.

By saying *No*, these Contractors put the LADOTD in a predicament. Ensuring parity on the workforce is a requirement by the Federal Highway Administration. Therefore, it is time for *every* construction Contractor to do its part to assist the LADOTD in showing success in the annual *OJT Program Report* submitted to the FHWA in January. The 2019 summer season is fully underway, and opportunities exist, if these Contractors shift from a *No* to a *Yes* position and enroll trainees now!

### OJT Program Contacts

Ms. Juanita Linton, OJT Program Contract Compliance Manager, (225) 379-1364

Ms. Joyce Brignac, OJT Program Specialist, (225) 379-1364

Ms. Sumathi Ravindraraj, OJT/SS Project Manager, (717) 795-1073