

FDOT Newsletter

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Volume 72



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Estimating Training
- Building Capacity
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US Department of Transportation Announces \$10M to Help Minority- & Women-Owned Businesses Compete for Federal Highway Contracts

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has announced \$10 million in funding from the Fiscal Year 2021 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/Supportive Services (DBE/SS) program to help eligible small businesses compete for federal highway contracts in 45 states, as well as Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"With these funds, state transportation departments will help minority- and women-owned businesses across the country create jobs and better compete for resources for transportation projects nationwide," said Deputy Federal Highway Administrator Stephanie Pollack.

President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law continues funding for the DBE/SS program for Fiscal Years 2022 through 2026. The funding is provided to State DOTs, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Territories for the purpose of administering programs that provide training and assistance to DBEs to improve their ability to compete on federally assisted contracts.

A DBE is a for-profit, small business owned and controlled by minorities, women or other socially and economically disadvantaged individuals or, in the case of a corporation, one in which 51 percent of the stock is owned by one or more such individuals. More information about DBE eligibility can be

[found here.](#)

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Productivity Is Down. Now What?

Know the detractors & distractors that tank the delivery of quality work

The construction industry is largely based on a simple system: estimates. In fact, it is so simple it might even be slightly unnerving. Imagine if you asked your heart surgeon for a quote and the doctor said, "I think we could knock out that blockage in about seven hours." The more discomfoting feeling would come if the doctor underbid the project just to keep the nursing staff busy and then didn't finish the job on time because they ran out of materials.

However, the construction business uses the system of estimation to create budgets and productivity rates. These rates are established from some historical record and ultimately create the basis for crew sizes and field goals or targets.

It is common to hear that a crew's productivity is down. This should hardly be shocking since the budget was simply an "estimate" and not an "accurate." When we hear that productivity is down, what does that even mean? When we analyze this decrease in productivity, is the root cause the on-site crew's inability to get out of their trailer recliner, or was it something further upstream?

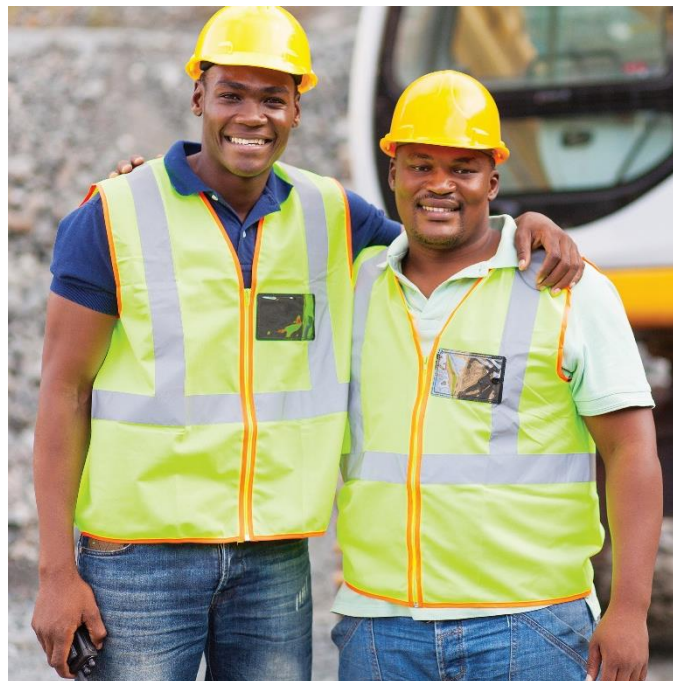
Often, we see the downstream effect of productivity losses in the form of margin erosion, direct cost overruns and missed deadlines. It is also easy to focus on the immediate reasons for failing to efficiently use labor and equipment properly — lack of information, lack of people, supply chain issues, poor engineering/design, poor coordination, etc. These barriers make up the lion's share of complaints from field leaders, which may or may not have credibility.

However, the inadequacies of some drawings and poor timing of information are the equivalent of a football commentator exclaiming, "If the quarterback hadn't fumbled in the end zone, the other team wouldn't be up by a safety." Root cause identification and real operational tactics and strategies are the right measures to take. Put another way, "Why was productivity decreased? Why were drawing errors not addressed? Why was the supply chain not examined?" Proper planning sounds trite and somewhat remedial, however, too many firms think they are planning their projects, but are actually just sending their teams to the field and hoping for the best outcome.

About The FDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on FDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.



CEI DBE Supportive Services

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