



*Moving  
Forward  
Together*



## Contracting Opportunities for Small Businesses on the 75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvement Project

The 75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvement Project (75<sup>th</sup> St. CIP) consists of multiple professional services and construction contracts over the next five years to advance critical freight and passenger rail congestion relief projects. These opportunities include federal, state and local funding; thus, professional services and contracting opportunities must include participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms, as certified by the Illinois Unified Certification Program. The CREATE partners are proactively engaging the small business community to encourage DBE participation on the 75<sup>th</sup> St. CIP through the following steps:

### ◆ Right-sized work packages

Whereas the scope of design and construction contracts on infrastructure projects often exceeds the capacity of smaller businesses, the CREATE partners have made a concerted effort to divide bid opportunities into several smaller contracts, more appropriately sized for DBEs and small businesses.

### ◆ Outreach to DBE, woman and minority owned firms

Each bid advertisement for the 75<sup>th</sup> St. CIP is distributed by email through Cook County, Illinois Department of Transportation and City of Chicago DBE, minority and/or women-owned business lists. Bid announcements are also distributed to associations serving women and minority business owners, including the African American Contractors Association, Black Contractors United, Chatham Business Association, Chicago Urban League, Chicagoland Black Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Women Contractors, Hispanic American Construction Industry Association, Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Minority Contractors Association. Additionally, bid advertisements are emailed to the CREATE procurement listserv, posted on the CREATE Program's Facebook page and website, and listed in local newspapers. The CREATE partners utilize this approach to maximize awareness of these opportunities among current and potential DBEs.

### ◆ Pre-bid networking events

Networking sessions for prime firms and DBEs to start discussing partnership opportunities are scheduled for each professional services solicitation or bid, usually on the same day and in the same location as the mandatory pre-bid meeting.

### ◆ Get On Board Networking Events

The CREATE partners hosted a Get On Board business-to-business networking event in January 2019 at Kennedy-King College. Professionals representing small businesses, public agencies, major freight and passenger railroads and prime contractors participated. In addition to networking, the event included presentations on expected contracting needs on the 75<sup>th</sup> St. CIP and how to become a railroad supplier. Over 190 people attended, including 70 DBE participants. The next Get On Board is anticipated for 2021.



*Pre-bid networking session*



*Get On Board, January 2019*

## Anticipated Opportunities

Some of the teams completing design work on the 75<sup>th</sup> St. CIP were selected summer 2019. Other design, engineering, and construction contracts have not been awarded yet. There will be additional opportunities for design, engineering, construction and suppliers on the 75<sup>th</sup> St. CIP. Interested businesses should sign up for the procurement list at [createprogram.org/bid.htm](http://createprogram.org/bid.htm) to receive notifications of upcoming bid opportunities.

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