



LADOTD OJT Program



January, 2019

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2019 Calendar Year Wrap-Up

As the year draws to a close, the progress of the LADOTD OJT Program needs to be assessed to evaluate whether trainees were enrolled and actively participating in their approved Training Programs. The number of trainees that were enrolled in Calendar Year 2018 increased from the number in Calendar Year 2017, which had no enrolled trainees. Seventeen trainees were enrolled in the Calendar Year 2018 and all are currently active. However, with only 17 trainees enrolled and actively participating, the OJT Program is still not meeting the requirements of the *23 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 230*. Some minorities and Caucasians have had the opportunity to learn highway construction crafts, but many more could have been trained.

The Contractors with multiple projects committed to enrolling 20

trainees per year, which has not been met. The LADOTD, in conjunction with the LAGC, held OJT Contractor Forums quarterly to present the OJT Program to the Contractors. The LADOTD offered OJT Supportive Services to the Contractors to develop customized Training Programs or provide guidance in the enrollment of trainees. Additionally, the Compliance Programs Section listened to the Contractors and streamlined the OJT submittals to facilitate the enrollment and monitoring of the OJT Program. Several Contractors contributed by enrolling trainees, but much more progress needs to be made.

Let us look towards the future by working together and increase the number of trainees enrolled and completing the OJT Program. With the LADOTD construction program of \$600 million, more trainees

should be able to gain highway construction skills through the OJT Program. Please identify actions in your companies that can be taken to meet the commitments of 20 trainees per year. Mr. Ken Naquin, LAGC CEO, will also continue to provide support, as he has stated in the article, *LAGC Perspective*, in this Newsletter. We stand ready to assist you in any manner to work together to ensure compliance with the *23 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 230*.

Stephanie Ducote,

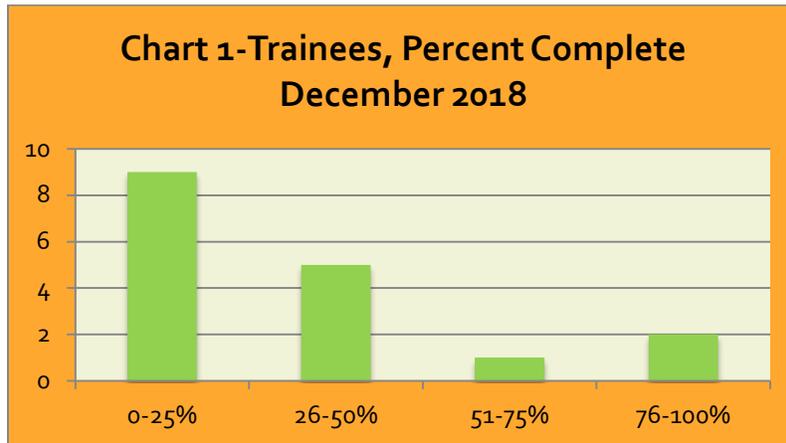
LADOTD Program Director
Compliance Programs Section

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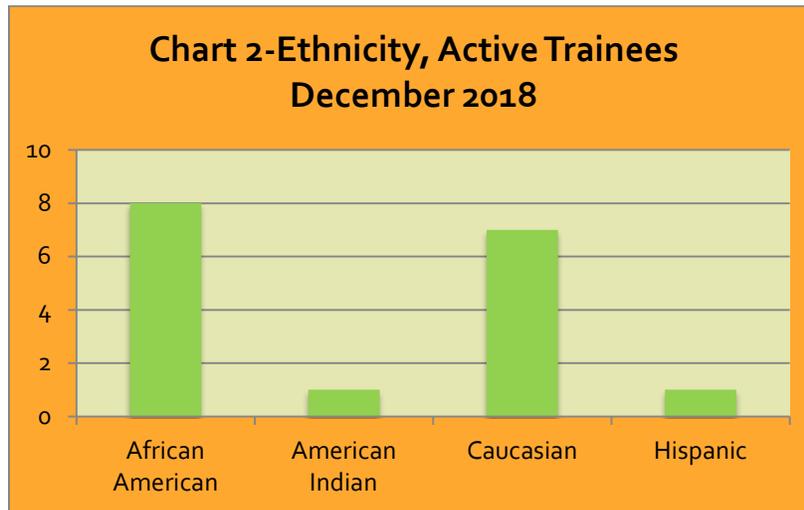
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Current Status of the OJT Program

A total of 17 trainees are currently active on the LADOTD construction sites. Most of the active trainees are approximately 25% to 50% completed of their designated training hours, to date. Two trainees are nearing completion of their trainings, as shown on *Chart #1-Trainees, Percent Complete*. The Contractors should ensure that all the active trainees complete their programs.



More minorities than non-minorities are currently active in the OJT Program, as shown in the *Chart 2, Ethnicity, Active Trainees*. African Americans outnumber the American Indians and the Hispanics, however, with almost the same number of Caucasians in the enrollments of the OJT Program. The OJT Program is designated for minorities, women and the disadvantaged individuals.



LAGC Perspective with Mr. Ken Naquin, CEO

Mr. Ken Naquin, LAGC Chief Executive Officer, spoke with Ms. Sumathi Ravindraraj, LADOTD OJT Supportive Services, regarding the Louisiana Associated General Contractors' (LAGC) perspective on the current status of the OJT Program and how best to move it forward.

1. Overall, what do you think of the OJT Program?

The OJT Program is a viable program to help the employees learn new skills. I have dealt with the OJT Program since the 1980s when the reimbursement was \$0.50 per trainee hour. It has evolved since then with reimbursement set at \$3.00 per hour and remains as a voluntary program.

2. Currently, there is an agreement that the Contractors with multiple construction contracts will train 20 trainees per year. However, this goal is not being met. What are the impediments that the Contractors are facing in trying to achieve this goal?

Over the last seven years, the construction program diminished from \$1.2 billion to \$600 million. This has made it difficult for the Contractors to retain their current crews, so hiring new employees to enroll into the OJT Program may not be feasible. It is great that the LADOTD allows the upgrading of current employees. This will help retain skilled employees with the company. Also, because the Contractors have not enrolled trainees recently, they are not as knowledgeable on the process.

3. What can the LADOTD do to help the Contractors be more successful with the OJT Program?

After the Katrina hurricane, there were a lot of funds, such as FEMA and other state funds, that were infused into the construction industry. The construction program was \$850 million before Katrina, \$1.2 billion post-Katrina, and currently \$600 million. The federal funds have remained about the

same; however, the state funds have fluctuated. I encourage the LADOTD to try to obtain more funding for the construction program.

Additionally, the LADOTD has made the OJT Program process much easier to implement. They have streamlined the reporting of the hours and increased the reimbursement to \$3.00 per hour for the trainees, which is helpful. I do, however, encourage the LADOTD not to make the OJT Program mandatory.

4. What can the LAGC do to help the Contractors be more successful with the OJT Program?

The Contractor's Forums on the OJT Program which are held quarterly are helpful. We will continue to participate in the Forums. They should be held in New Orleans and Baton Rouge areas more, since there are more Contractors in these areas. Additionally, I will continue to encourage the Contractors to enroll trainees for the OJT Program at the *Shade Tree Meetings*. Usually Ms. Ducote presents information about the OJT Program at these meetings, which is helpful. I will further encourage the Contractors to take advantage of the \$3.00/hour reimbursement, which is better than in other states.



Upcoming OJT Program Contractor Forum

Quarterly, the LADOTD will conduct Contractors' 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 17, 2019 from

10:30-11:30 am at the LADOTD District 02 Training Room, 1440 US Highway 90W, Bridge 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.

Selecting Trainees and Classifications for the OJT Program

The company receives award of a construction contract by the LADOTD. The next step is to mobilize and begin the project. The Project Manager needs to order materials and equipment and assign crews. Concurrently, the Project Manager, or designee, needs to enroll trainees. How does a Contractor progress on selecting a trainee classification?

Begin with reviewing the requirements of the construction project to determine the number of trainees that it can support. Identify what classifications of employees are needed to complete the project. What levels within the classifications are needed? Once the classifications and the levels are determined, identify the trainee to journeyman ratio which would enable the crew to function effectively and facilitate training.

Next, evaluate the Training Program classifications approved by the LADOTD (*Asphalt Roller Operator* example shown below). Lastly, evaluate the current skills of the employees. Identify the employees who could benefit by the higher skills' trainings. Which employees show an aptitude for taking on higher levels of skills and responsibilities? Or, should the Contractor hire new employees who currently do not possess the skills and enroll them in the OJT Program? The intent of the program is to hire new employees and train them in the highway construction trades. Either way, the LADOTD allows for a reimbursement of \$3.00 per trainee hour to the Contractors.

Training employees to gain higher skills shows interest in the employees and promotes loyalty to the company. It is a win-win for the Contractors, the trainees and the LADOTD.



ASPHALT ROLLER OPERATOR

DOT NO. 859.683-030

Approximate training time: 15 Weeks or 600 Hours

JOB DESCRIPTION

Drives heavy rolling machine to compact earth fills, subgrades, flexible base and bituminous surface to grade specifications preparatory to construction of highways, streets, and runways. Moves levers, depresses pedals, turns hand wheels, and pushes throttle to control and guide machine. Drives machine in successive overlapping passes over surface to be compacted. Performs other related duties.

OJT Program Contacts

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