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# CIVIL RIGHTS

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# AOT's Bureau of Civil Rights Overview

- Promoting a culture of workplace respect, civility & inclusion through interactive training, interdisciplinary strategies and best practices, and leadership by example.
- Maintaining AOT in full compliance with all federally mandated programs to ensure equal opportunity & non-discrimination, including the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise & Small Business Programs, Internal & External Equal Employment Opportunity, Contractor Compliance, On-the-Job Training, Labor & Wage Compliance, Title VI, and the ADA Program.
- Implementing a proactive approach to all oversight, compliance & enforcement responsibilities, with an emphasis on continuous improvement and user-friendly tools and resources.
- Cultivating dynamic and respectful partnerships & collaborations with all internal & external stakeholders.
- Strong emphasis on youth outreach, training & employment practices grounded in equity, inclusion and fairness.



# Promoting a Culture of Workplace Respect, Civility, Equity & Inclusivity: Policies, Practices, Partnerships, and Training

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- AOT Leadership is key to creating a culture of inclusivity & workplace civility: Elevating the issues, setting the tone & creating clear performance expectations.
- AOT mainstreams Civil Rights & equity practices into all phases of the talent acquisition pipeline & employee development: Outreach, recruitment, hiring, onboarding, & training
- Building a strong diversity, equity, & inclusion (DEI) network across state government: AOT Serves on a broad range of councils, task forces, & teams to share best practices, tools, & resources
- It Takes A Village: The Civil Rights Bureau networks extensively with other state agencies, academic institutions, contractors, trade groups, and community-based organizations to build a robust applicant pool and to build a workforce that thrives and embraces the AOT culture of respect, teamwork, safety and innovation.
- During 2022, AOT partnership projects included work with the Vermont Office of Racial Equity on the Statewide Language Access Project, work with the Regional Planning Commissions on the Transportation Equity Framework Project, work across the State of Vermont Enterprise on the successful resettlement of New Americans, and work with Vermont Works for Women on gender and racial equity in the infrastructure workforce.

# Dynamic Outreach, Recruitment, Hiring & Onboarding Program

- Civil Rights spearheads the Agency's outreach, recruitment, hiring, and onboarding programs using many platforms and venues to promote AOT as an employer of choice and to successfully attract, hire, onboard, develop, and retain a diverse and excellent workforce.
- Despite a variety of workforce challenges, AOT achieved unprecedented levels of internal hiring and promotion for State Fiscal Year 2022, particularly for historically underrepresented populations. AOT hired and onboarded 178 new hires into its permanent workforce. Eleven percent of all new hires are individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOCs).
- All new hires receive a comprehensive onboarding experience, including an introduction to AOT's Leadership Team, our Resource Ambassadors, and training on Workplace Civility, Unconscious Bias, and Preventing & Addressing Sexual Harassment.
- In 2022 the Civil Rights Bureau coordinated the Agency's participation in more than one hundred outreach and recruitment events, including a return to many in-person career fairs.
- AOT promotes year-round youth outreach to expose students to rewarding and diverse careers in the transportation industry. These include the Agency's participation in numerous career fairs, panels, and conferences; serving as a host site for students engaged in Community Based Learning or short-term job shadows; employing and paying 16- and 17-year-olds in the Intern Maintenance Worker Program; and providing an annual summer program for high school and middle school students each summer as part of FHWA's National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI). In 2022, thirty-three students participated in the AOT NSTI Program.

# AOT's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Small Business Programs

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- The DBE Program is federally mandated by USDOT to encourage participation by firms that are at least 51% owned and controlled by women and minorities. AOT is the lead certifying agency in SOV.
- The AOT Small Business Program is a self-certification program to encourage all small businesses to actively participate on AOT contracting & procurement opportunities.
- Both programs are completely free, and all participants receive marketing through online directories and weekly notification of contracting & training opportunities!
- Women and minority-owned businesses accounted for almost 5.4% of all federally-funded Agency contract awards in FY 2022. 70 new firms were added to the AOT DBE Program in 2022, an increase of almost 30%.
- AOT collaborates with ACCD, BGS, & other SOV and federal agencies to provide networking, training, & matchmaker events to promote government contracting to all Vermont businesses.

## Employment Diversity in Highway Construction (EDHC)

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- With funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), AOT provides training and job opportunities in highway construction for women, minorities, and other disadvantaged individuals who have encountered barriers to employment through the Employment Diversity in Highway Construction (EDHC) Program.
- During FY 2022, EDHC provided workforce training and support to 103 women & minorities, who entered or advanced careers in Highway Construction. Program components include Commercial Drivers License (CDL) training, On-the-Job Training, & other skills training subsidies
- In FY 2022, fifteen On-the-Job Trainees (OJTs) received paid training on 14 construction projects in 6 skilled work classifications: Entry & Advanced Bridge Construction, Construction Supervisor, Highway Construction, Truck Driver, & Traffic Coordinator.
- Eighty-eight women & minorities participated in CDL training in FY 2022. Forty-six participants earned their CDL permits and 37 earned their CDL licenses. Since 1999, we have assisted more than 1,020 women & minorities to obtain their CDLs, with funding from FHWA.
- EDHC provides additional training subsidies year-round for a diverse range of safety and technical skills, including welding, OSHA training, heavy equipment, project supervision, etc.
- EDHC participants receive supportive services to remove barriers and build career ladders, including vouchers for safety equipment and tools, career counseling and pre-employment readiness training, steel-toed boots, job referrals, & post-program support.
- Almost 30% of EDHC participants are New Americans from 22 countries of origin.

# Contractor Compliance and External Equal Employment Opportunity

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- Civil Rights provides technical assistance, training & compliance monitoring on all AOT federally funded construction projects to ensure all federal requirements are met.
- Construction projects are monitored from design through completion to ensure non-discrimination in the contracting & award process, and equal opportunity for all contractors, sub-contractors and their employees.
- Civil Rights participates in pre-construction meetings, conducts site visits, collects demographic data and certified payrolls, and monitors prompt payment from primes to subs.
- In March of 2022, Civil Rights delivered Annual Contractor Training to AOT's highway construction contractors to ensure they understand and meet all Civil Rights federal requirements, including Equal Employment Opportunity, Sexual Harassment, & Davis-Bacon.
- For the 2022 construction season, the AOT contractor workforce consisted of 1,320 employees, comprised of 89.6% male and 10.4% female employees. This is the highest percentage of non-clerical females in our contractor workforce ever reported! Minorities comprise 6% of our contractor workforce, well in excess of the federal goal and Civilian Labor Force statistics for Vermont in this industry sector.

# Davis-Bacon & Labor Compliance

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- Civil Rights has primary responsibility for administering and enforcing Davis-Bacon requirements on all AOT federally-funded construction projects.
- Civil Rights works in close partnership with AOT's Construction Section, our contractors, & USDOL to ensure the timely collection and review of all certified payrolls.
- AOT is tested annually for Davis-Bacon compliance during the A-133 Audit, as well as periodic audits by state and federal regulators.
- We provide annual training and year-round technical assistance on Davis-Bacon compliance to our Construction Section, our contractors, and other SOV agencies & departments.
- We work closely with our contractors to quickly correct all Davis-Bacon violations and collect pay restitution for underpaid workers. In FY 2022, we collected \$11,283 on behalf of 105 workers.



# Federally Mandated Reporting, Program Plans & Compliance Reviews

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- To maintain AOT in full compliance with all federal & state requirements, Civil Rights does extensive data collection & reporting, and participates in audits, surveys & compliance reviews by USDOT & USDOL.
- In FY 2022, Civil Rights submitted in excess of three dozen mandatory reports, updated program plans & surveys to USDOT and USDOL.
- Mandatory reporting includes demographic data for our internal & external workforces, DBE participation data, Davis-Bacon compliance data, and data on all discrimination complaints and investigations.
- Civil Rights has worked closely with the Agency of Digital Services (ADS) to automate our data collection and reporting systems and to create user-friendly tools for online self-reporting by our contractors.