



# Minority Participation Plan

## City of Springfield Sangamon County Hanson Professional Services Inc.

December 16, 2013





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# **Minority Participation Plan**

## **City of Springfield**

## **Sangamon County**

### **Hanson Professional Services Inc.**

### **December 16, 2013**

## **Introduction**

Hanson Professional Services Inc. in conjunction with the City of Springfield, Sangamon County and the Illinois Department of Transportation, is committed to the continued involvement and participation of minority and disadvantaged businesses as part of the Springfield Rail Improvements Project and the Multimodal Facility. Our goal with this program is to create a model that will be successful in mentoring minority youth towards full time employment in engineering and railroad-related fields. This plan describes a multi-pronged approach to existing and proposed programs and ideas to further develop the minority participation for these and other projects.

## **Local Minority-based Organizations Workshop**

Hanson, with assistance from Vector Communications Inc., will coordinate with minority-based organizations within the Springfield community to identify middle school through college-aged students with an interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) that may wish to pursue careers in engineering, science or related fields. The Springfield School Board and/or the three high schools and middle school principals will be solicited for minority students with these interests and a willingness to participate in these programs. In addition to the schools, the following organizations will be requested to attend the workshop with ideas on identifying potential candidates for these programs.

- National Society for Black Engineers
- Springfield Black Chamber of Commerce
- Urban League
- Frontiers International – Junior Frontier’s Program
- Minority Fraternities & Sororities
  - Alpha Phi Alpha
  - Delta Sigma Theta
- Ministerial Alliance
- United Way
- Lincoln Land Community College/UIS



## Mentoring

Hanson will contact the candidates received from the workshop and meet with them individually to further identify their interests and goals. Hanson will mentor the candidates with the goal of placement in one of the many minority-oriented programs described in the next section. Hanson's commitment to this program will be to identify and select up to three upper class high school or college-level minority students for paid internships within our organization every summer. These internships will be intended for additional training, education, and on-the-job-experience for students interested in future full time employment with Hanson or in the engineering field.

Hanson will also encourage their subcontractors on the Springfield Rail Improvements Project to participate in this Minority Participation Plan. In addition, Hanson will actively seek other Community Partners and the participating railroad companies to join this worthwhile effort.

## Existing Programs

### Springfield Black Chamber of Commerce - Summer Youth Initiative

The Springfield Black Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with **The Springfield Project (TSP)**, sponsors a Summer Youth Initiative (SYI) which gives local youth from 15 to 21 years of age an opportunity to spend their time off from school in a productive manner by gaining new job skills while earning a paycheck. Since its inception, close to 400 youth have been employed or have participated along with over 50 businesses.

Partnerships are established with local businesses and agencies, including Hanson, throughout the Springfield, Illinois community, which serve as job site locations where youth participants work. Over a six week period (4-hr work days / 4 days per week), youth participants are engaged in "earn while you learn" activities to expand their job skills.

The youth participants experience working in job positions that represent administrative support, maintenance, camp counseling, and yard/landscaping projects.

Ultimately, the SYI serves to prepare qualifying youth for real-world work experience by allowing them to be evaluated on their attitude, timeliness, appearance, and overall work ethic. Emphasis is also placed on assisting youth on development in the areas of time and money management, college preparation, and professionalism.

The Springfield Black Chamber of Commerce also awards five scholarships, each worth \$500 to five worthy Springfield, IL students annually. Scholarships are awarded by Springfield Black Chamber members based on a variety of criteria, including financial need, career goals, major/minor, and student determination to further their academic goals.



The 2013 student recipients are:

**Kelsea Currie**

LincolnLand Community College  
Nursing & Medicine

**Clifton Jones**

Robert Morris University  
Drafting & Design Technology

**Alyssa Hughes**

LincolnLand Community College  
Forensic Psychology

**Kiarria Mehundrew**

LincolnLand Community College  
Teaching

**Kendall Smith**

University of Illinois at Springfield  
Teaching / Education

**Illinois Department of Transportation – Highway Construction Careers Training Program**

IDOT's Highway Construction Careers Training Program was initiated in 2009 in an effort to increase jobs for minorities, women, and disadvantaged individuals. This program provides opportunities for further education and assistance to improve employability in the highway construction industry. This program is administered by the Illinois Community College Board and implemented through ten Community Colleges throughout Illinois.

Each of the ten Community Colleges offers two to three, eight week training sessions per year in which individuals receive intensive training in highway construction-related skills, such as mathematics for the trades, job site readiness, carpentry, concrete flatwork, blueprint reading orientation, introduction to tools, forklift operation, and OSHA safety certification.

Upon completion of the training, each College provides its graduates with assistance in obtaining placement in the highway construction trade unions, apprenticeship programs and/or with IDOT's highway construction contractors.

**IDOT's - Student Outreach Opportunities**

IDOT organizes and participates in numerous outreach activities across the state and the nation. Management and staff actively recruit prospective employees to diversify IDOT's workforce through IDOT Career Days, participation in regional and national career fairs, coordination of training programs to enhance professional and job-specific skills, and continuing alliances with professional and academic institutions.



IDOT builds professional and academic alliances with various state agencies and educational institutions across the state and nation to increase awareness of IDOT career opportunities in Illinois. Through these alliances, IDOT assists in developing educational programs, provides scholarships to eligible students. These alliances and programs help IDOT reach and communicate with students from the K-12 and college or university classrooms, in efforts to promote awareness and recruit potential employees to diversify and strengthen the IDOT workforce.

### Other IDOT Student Opportunities

**Cooperative Education Program:** In conjunction with colleges and universities, IDOT offers a Cooperative Education Program that provides participants with employment during and/or after college education. Through the program, one can receive practical experience with a wide range of transportation responsibilities and practices as one continues professional development and advancement.

**Graduate Public Service Internship (GPSI) Program:** This program is a 21 month internship through the University of Illinois at Springfield. The actual process of hiring these individuals is conducted by the University. Students simultaneously work towards a professional career while earning a master's degree from the University of Illinois at Springfield.

## Proposed Programs

### University of Illinois' – National University Rail (NURail) Center

The NURail Center is a consortium of seven partner colleges and universities offering an unparalleled combination of strengths in railway transportation engineering research and education in North America. The Center is headquartered at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The NURail Center consortium is committed to increasing the diversity of the rail transportation and educational communities. The most important aspect is the encouragement and support of women and underrepresented minorities in their activities. The NURail consortium includes one Minority Institution (Northwestern - UIC), and all the rest have substantial percentages of women and minority students and campus-wide programs to broaden participation of people of different genders, races, and cultures.

NURail Center partners are pursuing several initiatives aimed at engaging minority and female students at a young age. Their approach is to use both people and technology as a bridge to attract their interest, first in rail and transportation, and then as an avenue to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) topics. Railroads hold a special fascination



for many young people. Primary and secondary school teachers are open to classroom visits or invitations to visit campuses, laboratories and local rail museums. These involve hands-on activities that are particularly effective at capturing and holding young students' attention.

Engaging undergraduate and graduate students to function in the teaching role (with full faculty support) enhances the learning experience. Primary and secondary students tend to identify with these students who are closer to them in age. Their approach is to engage and support their American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) student chapters in this role. One example involves a railroad that they are currently working with, to engage inner city children. The railroad is in a position to offer their facilities and support as part of their community building efforts. By involving a NURail partner college the railroad's effectiveness in this effort will be enhanced and the college students and faculty involved will also have a more interesting and meaningful experience. NURail also has a commitment from Hanson for a major rail capital rebuilding project in an urban area (The Springfield Rail Improvements Project) that will affect minority neighborhoods. There is support from the parties involved to mitigate the impacts by engaging students in learning about the engineering elements involved and the employment opportunities that will ultimately become available as a part of the STEM education.

### **High School Students**

NURail and Hanson will identify high school-aged minority students with an interest and aptitude in railroads and railroad engineering for weeklong summer youth program for rail and intermodal transportation at Michigan Tech University in Houghton, Michigan. This program is designed to create awareness and stimulate interest in the area of rail and intermodal transportation. Full paid scholarships, excluding travel arrangements, are available for this program.

### **Undergraduate Students**

All of the NURail partners' campuses have minority student associations such as the, National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), Society of Hispanic Engineers (SHE) and Society of Women Engineers (SWE). Their faculty will work with the AREMA Student Chapters to arrange joint events such as presentations about rail transportation topics, field trips and other activities to encourage development of common interests. If these activities are successful, there may also be opportunities to engage these minority student organizations in the outreach to primary and secondary students.

NURail funds will sponsor scholarships for women and minority students interested in rail transport. We are confident that we can substantially leverage these funds with matching funds from our many private sector rail industry partners. We will also take advantage of our close working relationship with private and public sector rail organizations to help them hire



these students for summer internships. The NURail Center partners will fund undergraduate research assistant positions to encourage participation in rail research projects and summer internships at one of the NURail partner schools. We will also work with NURail affiliates at two-year colleges to identify promising minority and women students encouraging them to complete their Bachelor degrees focused on transportation education at a NURail partner college or university.

### **Graduate and Postdoctoral Study**

NURail partners will make special efforts to attract, engage and encourage qualified women and minority students to pursue graduate study in rail transport. Through the continued strengthening of the NURail academic community, we will be able to identify the most promising minority and women candidates and effectively mentor them toward the appropriate educational and career choices. Additionally, through our NURail Affiliates program, we will be able to establish similar relationships through faculty contacts with students at a broader base of colleges and universities. Our affiliate program will include minority-serving institutions and students graduating from these schools will be able to begin development of a relationship with NURail faculty members before they complete undergraduate study. These students' research assistantships can be funded using NURail or other research sponsor funds. NURail will also support post-graduate study among suitably qualified individuals.

### **Faculty Development**

Encouraging women and minority students' interest in rail transport study and careers is necessary but not sufficient. NURail has been providing ongoing support and encouragement to women and minority faculty members developing rail courses or research at their respective colleges. We will continue these efforts via the Railway Engineering Education Symposium (REES) and when appropriate, provide funding to support selected faculty to attend future REES. NURail is confident that their industry partners will support this objective and leverage NURail funds with their own.

NURail will also engage women and minority faculty in the larger set of rail academic community development activities. This will include exchange of course material, participation in the NURail annual meeting, on-line seminars, engagement in rail activities at TRB, ASCE, ASME, IEEE, INFORMS, Joint Rail Conference, etc., visits to their campus and assistance for their students. This will encourage their scholarship, help them develop contacts in the rail transportation community and generally support their development as effective teachers and mentors for students at their colleges.

NURail staff will prepare articles for print and a website publication describing success stories and lessons learned as a model for other schools, organizations, transportation companies, and





government agencies so that they can learn from this experience and be inspired to pursue similar approaches in their communities.

### IDOT Minority Contractor Prequalification Assistance

Hanson has previous experience with assisting minority contractors in obtaining IDOT pre-qualification as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) so that they will become eligible to participate in highway, airport, and transit contracts that are Federal and state-funded. Hanson assisted in the identification of about 30 DBE firms wishing to become prequalified with IDOT. In addition, Hanson educated these firms on the prequalification process and assisted in preparing and filing of the applications. Over 60 percent of the firms requesting this certification were accepted by IDOT as DBE certified in the State of Illinois.

Hanson will offer this prequalification assistance to local, qualified minority firms wishing to bid on construction contracts for the Springfield Rail Improvements Project or the Multimodal Facility. Construction contracts may involve excavation, demolition, concrete work, electric, landscaping, painting, etc. Hanson will coordinate this effort through Frank McNeil with IDOT.

### Plan Management

An Intergovernmental Agreement for the Minority Participation Plan between the City of Springfield and Sangamon County will be implemented. Hanson will administer and manage this program for two year terms, with optional extensions of the plan.

The City and County have agreed to contribute one third of the project costs along with Hanson Professional Services Inc. to implement this Plan. A fund will be established at \$60,000 per year to implement this program, which equates to \$20,000 per year per plan member.

Hanson will provide mentoring and follow-up with minority individuals placed into the programs previously identified. Semi-annual progress reports will be prepared and provided to the Minority Participation Plan partners to track and measure the success of the program.