



SMALL BUSINESS PRESS

Empowering Small Businesses to Help Keep California Moving

2025, Issue 3

Civil Rights Deputy Director Welcome

Welcome to the Small Business Press. Caltrans Office of Civil Rights publishes this newsletter to share the latest information, pertinent articles, and updates to small, disadvantaged, and disabled veteran businesses. Small Businesses are vital Caltrans partners, and we cannot rebuild California's transportation system without you. We hope you find this information useful and informative.

David DeLuz
Deputy Director of Caltrans Office of Civil Rights



Federal DBE Program Update

By David DeLuz, Caltrans Civil Rights Deputy Director and DBE Liaison Officer

The federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program has long been a cornerstone of ensuring fairness and opportunity in federally

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A Capital Boost for California's Small Contractors

New Loan Program Levels the Playing Field for Firms Competing for Caltrans Contracts

For California's small contractors, the path to winning a Caltrans job can feel like scaling a mountain—with one of the steepest cliffs being access to capital.

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Federal DBE Program Update

funded transportation projects. On October 3, 2025, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) published an Interim Final Rule (IFR) that significantly updates the DBE Program's regulations. The rule is effective immediately, and Caltrans—as well as all local agencies that administer federally funded projects—must now operate under these new requirements.

The IFR makes several important changes that will reshape how the DBE Program is administered:

- **Certification standards will change.** Race- and gender-based presumptions of disadvantage have been eliminated. All applicants must now provide individualized evidence of social and economic disadvantage.
- **Currently certified DBEs will be reevaluated.** Every firm must be reviewed under the new standards, and only those that meet the new requirements will remain certified.
- **DBE contract goals and counting will be paused.** Until reevaluations are complete, agencies may not set new DBE contract goals or count DBE participation toward goals. Existing projects with established DBE commitments, however, will continue under their current terms.
- **Overall, DBE goal-setting will be revised.** States must now use more detailed disparity study methodologies, including stronger capacity analyses, to establish annual DBE goals.
- **Reporting requirements will change.** Agencies are no longer required to collect or report the race or gender of firm owners; reporting will now focus only on DBE certification and participation data.

These are substantial changes, and Caltrans is committed to a smooth and transparent transition. We are working closely with our federal partners, local agencies, and industry stakeholders to put the new requirements into



practice. Our priority is to ensure that DBE firms, prime contractors, and local agencies understand the new rules and receive the support they need.

In the weeks ahead, Caltrans will issue detailed implementation guidance, host outreach sessions, and provide technical assistance to help stakeholders adapt to the new requirements. We know these changes raise important questions, and we will continue to provide updates and resources as this process moves forward.

The DBE Program remains a vital part of Caltrans' mission to expand opportunity and strengthen California's transportation economy. With the IFR now in effect, we are entering a new phase—one that we will navigate together, with fairness, compliance, and collaboration guiding the way.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the Caltrans Office of Civil Rights via email at DBE.compliance@dot.ca.gov. We value your partnership and will keep you informed every step of the way.



A Capital Boost for California's Small Contractors

Even the most qualified small businesses—those certified as Small Business (SB), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), or Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE)—routinely face an all-too-familiar roadblock: banks hesitate, personal credit gets maxed, and high-risk lenders circle like vultures. That crucial cash flow needed to cover payroll, materials, equipment, and bonding costs can dry up just when firms need it most—often before a shovel ever hits the dirt.

But help is on the way, thanks to a groundbreaking partnership between Caltrans and the State Treasurer's Office - California Pollution Control Financing Authority (CPCFA). The new CPCFA Loan Participation Program (LPP), funded by the State Small Business Credit Initiative 2.0 (SSBCI 2.0), is making \$50 million available in its loan program for Caltrans, with the goal to make \$250 million available for small businesses within three years. This effort is specifically designed to deliver short-term working capital and equipment financing to firms doing—or planning to do—business with Caltrans.

And here's the kicker: contractors can get pre-approved for a line of credit even before they win a contract.

What the Program Offers

This isn't just another bank loan. The LPP is a public-private capital access program crafted with small contractors in mind—especially those in underserved, rural, and disaster-impacted communities. Here's what businesses can expect:

- **Short-Term Working Capital Lines of Credit**
Transportation Line of Credit (TLOC) up to \$350,000 for up to 24 months to support everything from mobilization and payroll to insurance and bonding.
- **Equipment Loans & Expansion Capital**
Term loans targeting the \$50,000 to \$3 million range, up to 10 years for access to capital to finance trucks, tools, and tech to grow capacity and bid on larger jobs.
- **Interest Rate Buy-Downs**
Strategic use of federal funds to make borrowing affordable—especially important in today's high-rate environment.
- **Flexible Underwriting**
With support from Community Financial Institutions

(CFIs) and Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs), borrowers with limited credit histories still have a shot.

- **Pre-Eligibility Platform**

A user-friendly online system will streamline the eligibility process.

Why It Matters

According to Caltrans, up to 37% of certified SB, DBE, and DVBE contractors identify lack of capital as one of their biggest obstacles to performing on Caltrans projects. For years, the state could offer certification, training, and technical assistance—but not direct access to the dollars that make a contract viable.

"This is a game-changer," said David DeLuz, Deputy Director of the Caltrans Office of Civil Rights. "With the TLOC program, small businesses don't need to mortgage their homes or rack up personal credit card debt. They now have a clear, fair path to the capital they need to grow and compete."

A "Team California" Approach

The CPCFA SSBCI 2.0 LPP is about more than loans. It's about jobs, justice, and building California's infrastructure inclusively. The entire ecosystem—from banks to borrowers to the backend support—is based in California, ensuring that every dollar reinvests in the local economy.

"This is about investing in people," said Shela Tobias-Daniel, Executive Director of CPCFA. "Our collaboration unites CPCFA's expertise in capital access programs with Caltrans' commitment to increasing small business participation. Together, we're enabling SBs, DBEs, and DVBEs to take on bigger contracts, grow their operations, and support jobs across California."

How It Works

The program is administered by Community Capital Alliance (CCA), which has developed a proprietary platform and lending network of California-based community banks and minority depository institutions. These institutions are not just familiar with small business lending—they specialize in it. They know how to serve borrowers who may be rich in opportunity but thin in financial backing.

"We're proud to partner with CPCFA and Caltrans to bring this innovative program to California's small businesses. When local businesses grow and infrastructure projects move forward efficiently, entire communities benefit - creating jobs, strengthening relationships, and powering the state's economic engine," said G. Brant Smith, President of Community Capital Alliance.

Each of Caltrans' 12 districts will be matched with one or more "anchor banks" to ensure geographic coverage across all 58 counties, including rural and tribal regions. Through its District Small Business Liaison (DSBL) offices, Caltrans will help promote and connect small contractors with lending opportunities.

Most notably, CCA will help coordinate contract invoicing, cash flow, and drawdowns to keep funds moving and projects on schedule.

When & How to Apply

The program will soft launch in December 2025, with a full launch slated for early 2026. In the meantime, small businesses can learn more by emailing CPCFA at Cal-Cap_LPP@treasurer.ca.gov.

Final Word

Capital access shouldn't be the reason a good contractor gets left behind. With CPCFA's SSBCI 2.0-backed Loan Participation Program, California is betting big on its small businesses—and giving them the fuel they need to build a better state.



Left to right: California State Treasurer's Office's California Pollution Control Financing Authority Analyst Kamika McGill, Section Manager Lauren Dominguez, and Analyst Erin Loriaux, stand with Executive Director Shela Tobias-Daniel at the Caltrans 2024 DBE Summit in Roseville, California.

Building California's Future

How Caltrans' Mentor Protégé Program is Transforming Infrastructure Through Equity and Excellence

In California's ongoing infrastructure transformation, one program is making an impact that goes far beyond roads and bridges. The **Caltrans Construction Mentor Protégé Program (CMPP)** is building dreams, careers, and generational wealth by connecting small and disadvantaged businesses with Caltrans, seasoned contractors and other industry players across the state.

Since expanding statewide in 2023, CMPP has quickly become a cornerstone of equity in construction. By November 2025, the program will have graduated 250 protégé firms, equipping them with the tools, confidence, and industry knowledge to successfully compete for public works contracts.

Hands-On Learning and Real-World Impact

CMPP's hybrid model blends hands-on workshops and personalized one-on-one mentoring that mirror the full lifecycle of a Caltrans project—from bidding through closeout. Protégés gain practical experience, while mentors and Caltrans staff provide real-time solutions to everyday challenges.

CMPP addresses four critical competency areas:

- **Relationships and Connections:** Building lasting professional networks
- **Education, Resources, and Guidance:** Accessing critical business information
- **Caltrans Fluency:** Understanding agency processes and requirements
- **Technical Skills:** Enhancing construction and project management capabilities

The program is also driving innovation. Feedback from participants led to the creation of the Caltrans [Contracting Opportunities Portal \(CCOP\)](#), a one-stop hub for upcoming projects, bid documents, and contracting opportunities. The portal has simplified access to Caltrans work, helping small and disadvantaged businesses compete more effectively.

Headquarters centrally coordinates the program with local support through district-appointed "CMPP Construction Champions." This model keeps costs low while maintaining consistent, high-quality training across the state.



On August 4, the Central Region CMPP held its 2024-25 graduation in Clovis.

Photo by Caltrans Photography



Left to right: Francis Electric International LLC Owner Leon Francies and his wife L'Tayna Lynn Francies, stand with Caltrans Director 6 Director Michael Navarro at the Fresno Construction Mentor Protégé graduation ceremony on August 4.

Photo by Caltrans Photography

Success Stories Across California

For participants, the results are tangible:

- **Chris Post of 2M General Engineering** credits CMPP with helping him secure six contracts by combining traditional bidding skills with new tools like artificial intelligence and the CCOP portal.
- **Ana Pano of Pano's Concrete** said the program removed the intimidation factor of Caltrans contracting: "Going through the process demystified what seemed so mysterious at first," she said.

- **Dr. Gail Crooms of Francis Electric** gained new insights into the breadth of Caltrans' administrative requirements and has recommended even more business management training for future cohorts.
- **Jessica Ascensio of Premier Sign Service, Inc.** exemplifies the power of preparation, perseverance, and partnership. Since graduating from CMPP, her firm has secured more than \$13 million in Caltrans contracts for furnishing and installing overhead signage—an achievement that reflects both her leadership and the impact of CMPP.

Mentors also benefit from the program. “Iron sharpens iron,” said John Bates of Granite Construction. “In this program, mentors and protégés both get stronger.”

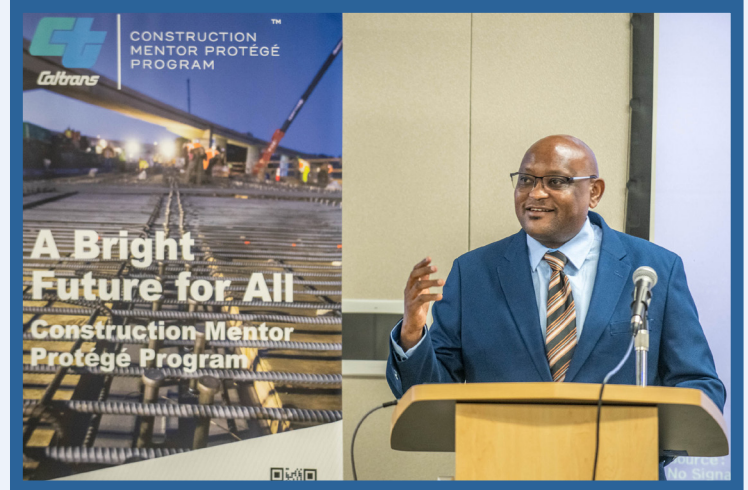
Timothy Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald Contracting discovered new perspectives through his mentoring experience.

“I’m used to working with large companies, but now I understand that sometimes it’s one person running the business—pouring concrete one day, handling bids the next,” he said. “I need to give them more time and information upfront so we can succeed together.”

Equity as a Cornerstone

At its heart, CMPP is about more than contracts—it’s about changing the face of California’s construction industry.

“Equity is the cornerstone of progress,” said Bonny Nyaga, CMPP Statewide Program Manager. “Working together—as mentors, protégés, and Caltrans—we are breaking barriers, reshaping who builds California’s infrastructure, and building bridges both literal and metaphorical.”



Caltrans Construction Mentor Protégé Program Manager Bonny Nyaga speaks to the 2025 Fresno graduating Mentor Protégé class on August 4.

Photo by Caltrans Photography

District 6 Director Michael Navarro agrees: “These efforts are not just good practice—they’re how we reshape who builds California’s infrastructure. Programs like this are not side initiatives; they’re integral to our future.”

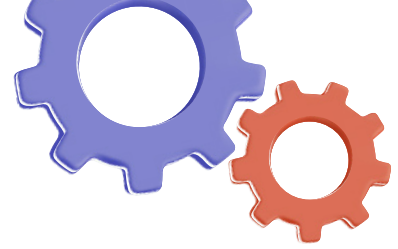
A Movement for the Future

With billions in federal and state infrastructure funding ahead, CMPP ensures that small and disadvantaged businesses can play a meaningful role in California’s historic investments. Its unique 2:1 protégé-to-mentor ratio, coupled with its “Once a member, always a member” philosophy, builds lasting professional networks that extend well beyond graduation.

Or as Nyaga put it: “When we invest in small businesses, we invest in the soul of our communities and the strength of our state. This is more than a mentor program—it’s a movement reshaping California’s construction landscape, one protégé, one project, and one success story at a time.”



For more information, visit [Construction Mentor Protege Program | Caltrans](#)



Pull out Facts

The Caltrans Office of Civil Rights (OCR) sets small, disadvantaged, and disabled veteran business project goals, certifies Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), oversees the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Infrastructure Program, analyzes data, develops the workforce, provides outreach, and supportive services to level the playing field and provide equal opportunities for ALL.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program

Caltrans has an office that certifies businesses that are eligible for the [DBE program](#). This certification helps small, disadvantaged businesses compete fairly on federally funded projects.

For federal fiscal year 2024-25, Caltrans OCR's [DBE Certification](#) Office is on pace to process nearly 500 DBE applications and continues to confirm DBE eligibility for over 6,100 firms. Demand for DBE certification increased 13% over FFY 2023-24 totals, and 73% over FFY 2022-23.

In 2025, Caltrans concluded its triennial Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)-sponsored **Disparity Studies** to measure the availability of minority contractors available to participate in Caltrans' federally assisted contracts and procurements. In July 2025, Caltrans announced its new FTA DBE overall participation goal of 6.7% for Federal Fiscal Years 2026-2028. The FTA study analyzed contracts awarded between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2023. In December

2024, Caltrans announced its new FHWA DBE overall participation goal of 21.35% for Federal Fiscal Years 2025-2027. The FHWA study analyzed contracts awarded between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2023. Disparity Studies are in-depth, year-long examinations that determine the overall federal FTA and FHWA DBE goals on construction, procurement, and services for the next three years. Caltrans will review the decision to commission another disparity based on the outcome of the Mid-America Milling Company v. US Department of Transportation ([Case No. 3:23-cv-00072 court case](#)), which could potentially remove the need for race-conscious goals. For more information, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/disparity-study>.

Data

So far, in federal fiscal year 2024-25 (October 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025), Caltrans awarded 270 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) assisted contracts, valued at over \$3.8 billion. Of that, Caltrans committed nearly \$849 million (or 22.14%) of its contracts to DBEs."

In state fiscal year 2024-25 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025), Caltrans awarded \$2.2 billion in state-funded contracts. Of that, Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE) were awarded \$57 million or 2.5% of state-funded contracts. Certified Small Businesses (SB)s received \$890 million and participated in 38.8% of state-funded contracts, surpassing the 25% state participation goal outlined in [SB1](#) and [AB 2019](#).

Upcoming Contractor Training

Caltrans hosts free educational [outreach events](#) throughout the state, including:

"Know Your Small Business Resources" virtual training from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., **November 18**. Register [here](#):

"Bonding, Estimating, and Labor Compliance for Subcontractors" virtual training from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. **November 19**. Register [here](#):

"How to Make Your Certification Work for You" virtual training from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., **December 9**. Register [here](#):

Also:

Caltrans' Small Business Council will host its regular meeting virtually from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Friday, **November 14, 2025**. For more information, contact small.business.council@dot.ca.gov

For the latest updates, visit the Caltrans Office of Civil Rights [Calendar of Small Business Events](#).





Business Spotlight Introduction

The Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 (**Senate Bill (SB) 1, Beall, Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017**) required Caltrans to increase outreach to increase disabled-veteran, minority, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) contractors to increase their participation on Caltrans projects.

The bill referenced the federal [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise \(DBE\) program](#), which is designed to level the playing field for women, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific, and Subcontinent Asian Americans, who are presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged; however others can qualify on a case-by-case basis.

The Caltrans [Office of Civil Rights](#) – known as OCR – strives to increase the participation of those groups through [workforce development](#), [outreach](#), [education](#), [supportive services](#), and more. As part of this effort, please read spotlight articles on FMF Pandion for November, as National Native American Month, and Alfred Civil Engineering, Inc. for February, as Black History Month.

Native American Spotlight

“Building Family, Community, and Opportunity”

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African American Spotlight

“Fulfilling a Dream”

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Building Family, Community, and Opportunity

In conjunction with November's National Native American Month, Caltrans is spotlighting Disadvantaged Business Enterprise: FMF Pandion, which is also a Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise. This is part of an ongoing series showcasing Caltrans' sub-contractors' diversity.

For Tommy Wells, launching [FMF Pandion](#) in 2016 was about more than starting a business — it was about building a legacy for his family and creating opportunities for others.

A proud disabled U.S. Marine Corps veteran and member of the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma, Wells drew on his personal history and professional expertise when shaping his company's identity. The name "FMF Pandion" carries special meaning: *Pandion* is a nod to the osprey, a bird he has long admired, and *FMF* represents both "For My Family" and the "Fleet Marine Force." The company logo reflects the Marine Corps colors, with stylized wings forming the letters "FMF."

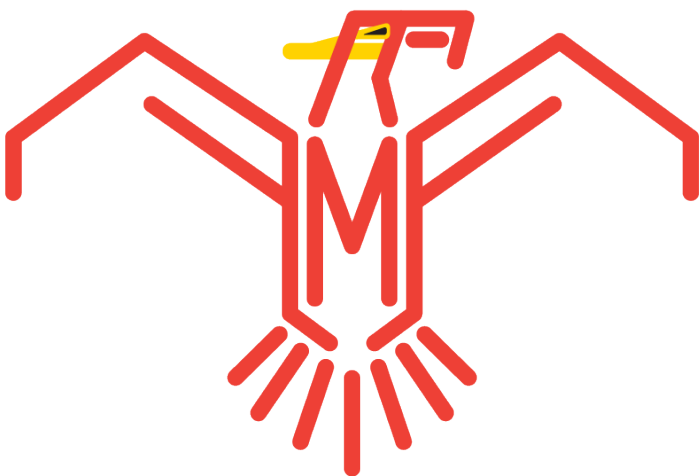
After earning his bachelor's degree in biology with an environmental management focus, Wells built his career in water quality and environmental sciences,

working with both private firms and regional councils in New Zealand and California. Along the way, he saw a persistent challenge: large firms often struggled to find reliable subcontractors who could meet the Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) goals, as well as quality standards. That challenge sparked the idea for his own company — one that would not only help meet small business participation goals but deliver excellence as a partner.

In July 2016, Wells officially launched FMF Pandion from San Diego. What began as a one-man operation quickly grew. By January 2017, he hired his first employee, and today the company has expanded to 12 staff members, including scientists and engineers. His wife, Vanessa, plays a central role as the company's backbone, managing accounting, IT, administration, and marketing.

Like many small businesses, FMF Pandion has faced hurdles. Early on, access to credit was a challenge, with banks hesitant to extend financing to a new company without a track record. Wells recalls the uncertainty of making payroll in those first years. Relief came through [Small Business Administration](#) (SBA) loans, followed by stronger financial footing as the company built its reputation and secured steady contracts. The COVID-19 pandemic brought another test, forcing temporary layoffs and tough decisions. Still, resilience carried the company through.

Certification programs also played a key role in FMF Pandion's success. As a **Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE)** and **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)**,



The FMF Pandion logo reflects founder Tommy Wells' journey as a proud disabled veteran, member of the Quapaw Tribe, and his lifelong admiration of the osprey.

the company gained early opportunities to prove itself. Particularly with partners like [Michael Baker](#), Tetra Tech, Larry Walker Associates, HNTB, and [WSP](#). And agencies including Caltrans, LA Metro, City of Los Angeles, and City of San Diego. Over time, FMF Pandion shifted from relying on subcontracting to securing more prime contracts.

When asked what advice he would give to other small business owners, Wells is clear: “Have your relationships in place first. Once you start a company, you can’t step away and figure out where the work is coming from — you need to be ready from day one. Build your connections and line up opportunities before making the leap.”

From a Marine Corps foundation to environmental science expertise, and from family dedication to Native American heritage, FMF Pandion reflects the many dimensions of its founder. Wells’ journey shows how vision, perseverance, and strong relationships can turn a one-person idea into a thriving small business making a big impact across California.



Tommy and Vanessa Wells run FMF Pandion.

Visit Caltrans’ Civil Rights program webpage to get certified as a [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise](#), or visit the Department of General Services [Cal eProcure](#) website for information on [Small Business Certification](#).



Fulfilling a Dream

In conjunction with Black History Month, Caltrans is spotlighting Disadvantaged Business Enterprise: Alfred Civil Engineering. This is part of an ongoing series showcasing Caltrans' sub-contractors' diversity.

Born in West African, Bori "Alfred" Touray has always wanted to work for himself.

After 34 years of working for large civil engineering design firms in the U.S., he launched his own business: Alfred Civil Engineering, Inc. – and he is helping improve California's transportation system through Caltrans projects.

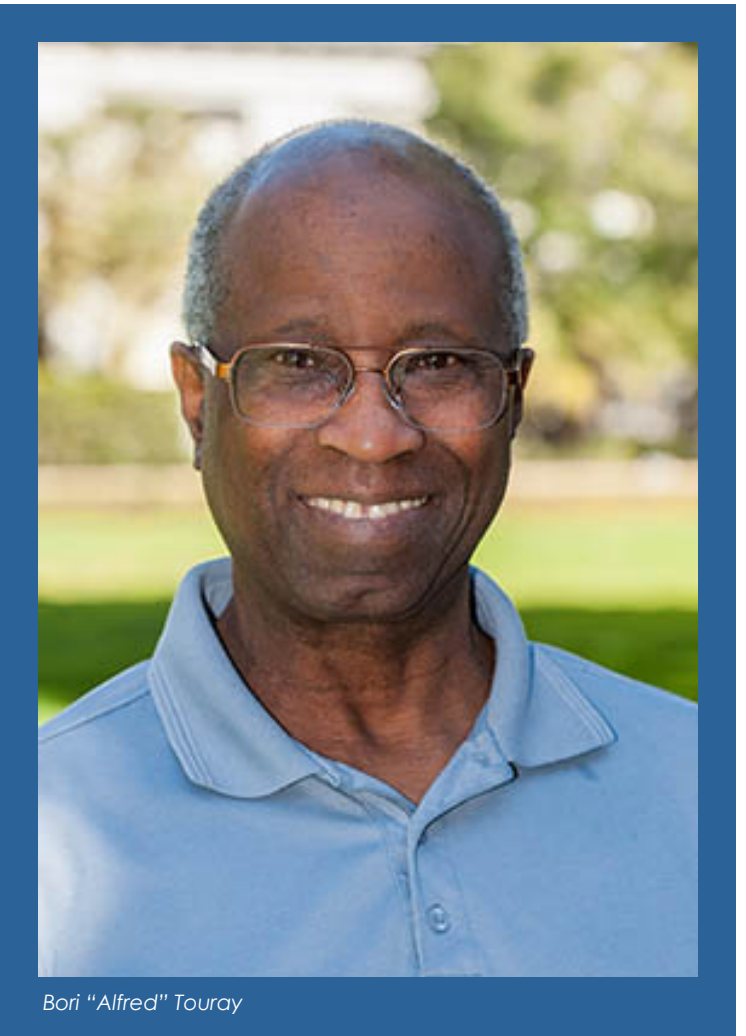
Touray certified Alfred Civil Engineering as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise with Caltrans in 2014. He said the process was straightforward: he worked with [Caltrans Office of Civil Rights](#), proved that he was a U.S. citizen and a member of a socially and economically disadvantaged group, and confirmed that he owned and controlled his business.

With certification in place, Touray tapped into resources to grow his business. He worked with a mentor and attended classes through the [Service Corps of Retired Executives \(SCORE\)](#), a national nonprofit organization and U.S. Small Business Administration partner that helps small businesses owners with business planning, mentoring, and access to funding.

"I've always wanted to be my own employer, but with a family, a regular paycheck was hard to give up, so I waited until my two kids graduated from college," Touray said.

Touray, who holds a bachelor's degree in hydrology, specializes in preparing and implementing Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs) across California. His projects include work in Torrance, in Los Angeles County, and along State Routes 171 and 83 in Chino Hills, San Bernardino County.

"I go out and inspect the site to make sure construction is going according to plan," Touray explained. "I make



sure Caltrans' best management practices are followed, and that the work is not polluting the water."

While running his own business comes with challenges, Touray says the rewards outweigh them.

"It is very satisfying. It's not consistent, but I'm a master of my own time, and I get to pick the projects that I do. You can't place a dollar value on that."

Visit Caltrans' Civil Rights program webpage to get certified as a [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise](#), or visit the Department of General Services [Cal eProcure](#) website for information on [Small Business Certification](#).

Building a Culture of Compliance

How Taelor Stamm Is Strengthening Civil Rights at Caltrans

At just 32 years old, **Taelor Stamm** leads one of the most ambitious undertakings in the Caltrans Office of Civil Rights: building a comprehensive **Compliance and Data Analysis unit** that spans across California's second largest department, with 22,000 employees across 12 geographic districts.

Stamm, who was born in San Jose and raised in Vacaville, didn't start her career in transportation. With a degree in art history and fine arts from the University of San Francisco, she was drawn to public service through a fellowship at the State Capitol and early work in workforce development and small business policy. Her journey eventually led her to Caltrans, where in 2024, she became Chief of the Civil Rights Compliance and Data units.

For Stamm, compliance isn't just about regulations — it's about **upholding the public trust**. "Part of the reason I wanted to work in public service is because there are a lot of people who are not honest," she explained. "The public has genuine reasons to be concerned about how their money is spent. Our job is to ensure projects don't just get delivered on time and on budget — but also in line with the requirements that protect equity, fairness, and opportunity."

Her branch manages two critical functions:

- **Compliance:** ensuring that project managers and divisions meet federal and state civil rights requirements, particularly around small business, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) participation.
- **Data Analysis:** identifying trends, gaps, and opportunities to level the playing field for minority contractors in Caltrans contracting.

One of her most significant contributions has been leading the **Compliance Strike Force Team** to address findings from the Federal Highway Administration's 2021 Technical Assistance Report. This effort involved building partnerships with divisions across the Department — from



Taelor Stamm

Construction to Local Assistance, Procurements and Contracts to Maintenance— and developing both tactical fixes and long-term governance structures. Today, those efforts continue through the **DBE Governance Council** and monthly liaison meetings that provide technical assistance and consistency statewide.

Her work is already showing results: Caltrans Office of Civil Rights Compliance now maintains a **90%+ closure rate on compliance-related investigations**, has helped the Division of Local Assistance establish its own compliance unit, and has driven updates to contract manager training to ensure consistency across divisions.

Caltrans Office of Civil Rights Assistant Deputy Director Sanjay Singh said, "Compliance can sometimes be seen as red tape, but Taelor has reframed it as a matter of public trust. Taelor has the talent and leadership that will only strengthen with time."

Stamm's perspective on equity is also deeply personal. Of Filipina, Portuguese, and Italian heritage, she recalls hearing about her grandmother's experiences with discrimination growing up in the Central Valley. "I'm white passing. She's not," Stamm said. "Hearing her experiences taught me the importance of respect. Public service isn't about pleasing everyone — it's about enforcing the social contract."

For her, bridging perspectives is one of the toughest but most rewarding parts of civil rights work. "The biggest thing I've learned is that we all have civil rights, regardless of our age, race, or gender. There's an equal level of dignity expected across the board. We may disagree on how to get from point A to point B — but we all have to arrive at the same place with compliance and equity."

Her message to Caltrans employees is clear: **civil rights compliance must remain front and center.** "If we don't keep our eyes on compliance and ensure that these programs and requirements are enforced, then we risk losing them. Just like any other right or privilege — if you don't keep your eye on the ball, you'll miss it when it's gone."

When she isn't leading statewide compliance efforts, Stamm enjoys gardening in her backyard or relaxing with a Netflix series. She's also a fan of early-2000s pop punk — Simple Plan tops her playlist.

As Caltrans continues to modernize how it delivers transportation projects, Stamm is ensuring that **civil rights and equity aren't side notes — they're part of the foundation.**

“

“If we don't keep our eyes on compliance and ensure that these programs and requirements are enforced, then we risk losing them. Just like any other right or privilege — if you don't keep your eye on the ball, you'll miss it when it's gone.”

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Resources

- The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Small Business and Workforce Development Center offers [On-the-Job Training](#), [Heavy Equipment Operator Academy](#), [business development](#), and [supportive services](#) free for all small, disadvantaged, or disabled veteran businesses. For more information, email OJT.SS@dot.ca.gov or DBE.SS@dot.ca.gov
- To enroll in Caltrans free Business Development Program (BDP) fill out the [BDP Enrollment Interest Form](#).
- To receive notifications for upcoming events, training workshops, quick tips, and contract opportunities, opt into the [mass notification system here](#).
- Caltrans also offers a [Construction Mentor Protégé Program \(CMPP\)](#), which supports the growth of small and disadvantaged construction firms, teaching them to effectively compete in Caltrans construction projects. For more information, visit [CMPP](#).



Quick Links

- Learn How to [Contract with Caltrans](#)
- Visit [Caltrans' Contacting Portal](#)
- See Upcoming Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Work on the [A & E Look Ahead Report](#)
- See [Current Construction Projects Advertised](#)
- Click Quick Links on [Cal eProcure](#) to find all small business solicitations and past state purchases.
- Caltrans' [Opt-In](#) Feature Allows Small Businesses to connect with Primes
- Department of General Services (DGS) [Leveraged Procurements as Resellers](#)
- Find your District Small Business Liaison at this [link](#)

Additional Resources

- [Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers \(APTAC\)](#) provide free advice on all aspects of selling to the federal, state, and local governments. Find your local agency on the link to get started.
- [Small Business Development Centers](#) throughout California counsel and train business owners to start, run, and grow their firms. Find your local center for assistance today.
- The [Construction Resource Center](#) provides hands-on technical assistance, eLearning modules, educational materials, and mentorship programs to contractors, tradespeople, and future construction professionals.
- Builders Exchanges, including the [Bay Area Builders Exchange](#), [Humboldt Builders Exchange](#), [Sacramento Regional Builders Exchange](#), [Golden State Builders Exchange](#), and [Central California Builders Exchange](#) help business owners find more work.

Sign up for the Small Business Press, or email questions to Editor Erin.G.vonTersch@dot.ca.gov