



Office of Civil Rights

From Startup to Statewide Impact: How Santamaria Concrete Paved Its Way to Success in California's Infrastructure Boom

Caltrans Office of Civil Rights spotlights Hispanic Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Santamaria Concrete owner Alexander Santamaria as part of a series showcasing Caltrans' subcontractors' diversity.

What began as a small concrete company in 2015 has blossomed into a thriving business. Alexander Santamaria, a second-generation Colombian American founder of Santamaria Concrete, has built a business driven by his passion for construction and commitment to supporting California's growing infrastructure needs.

Before founding Santamaria Concrete, Santamaria spent his early career in tech sales, gaining experience in business operations. However, his ultimate dream was to transition into the construction industry, leveraging his expertise to help build and enhance the state's infrastructure. Today, the company celebrates a decade of growth and success.

From the outset, Santamaria Concrete operated as a small, non-union business, but over time, it transformed into a strong union operation. A pivotal factor in the company's success has been its [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise \(DBE\)](#) certification, which has provided access to key opportunities with major clients like Caltrans and utility companies involved in concrete and asphalt construction projects.

Santamaria's journey with Caltrans began with subcontracting work, but it wasn't until the company became part of Caltrans' [Construction Mentor-Protégé Program](#) that its growth accelerated. The program offered critical insights into how to effectively work with the transportation agency, ultimately allowing Santamaria Concrete to secure its first major [emergency contract](#). The landmark project on the San Rafael Bridge marked a turning point for the company, demonstrating its ability to handle large-scale, high-stakes repairs.

Today, Santamaria Concrete serves Caltrans districts 4, 5, 6, and 10, with a primary focus on the Bay Area (District 4) and Sacramento region. The company specializes in concrete flatwork, curbs, gutters, rapid set, and structural concrete, as well as asphalt paving and grading services.



Santamaria attributes his company's success to persistence, accurate project estimates, and a strong commitment to communication. He recommends that newcomers to the industry take full advantage of [Caltrans workshops](#) and the [Construction Mentor-Protégé Program](#) to build strong foundations for success.

"One of the key elements to our success has been ensuring that we understand the requirements upfront, present accurate numbers, and communicate openly with our partners before bid day," Santamaria explains. "And sometimes, just directly asking for the job can go a long way."

The road to success in the construction industry can be difficult and highly competitive, with Santamaria Concrete winning only one out of every eleven bids it submits.

Santamaria emphasizes the importance of not becoming discouraged, advising new firms to avoid scaling up too quickly without a solid foundation in place. He said the [DBE program](#) has supported his company's growth by allowing small businesses to get in on larger projects and demonstrate their skills.

As Santamaria Concrete looks to the future, the company is focused on major infrastructure projects across California, continuing to build its partnership with Caltrans and other key industry players. With a decade of experience under its belt, the firm is poised to play an even more significant role in shaping the state's infrastructure for years to come.

"We've come a long way, but we're just getting started," Santamaria says. "There are still so many exciting opportunities ahead, and we're looking forward to collaborating with Caltrans and its partners across the state to create lasting change in California's infrastructure."

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](#).