Bridging the Gap

Your Connection to Engineering Services

November 2026

DES Civil Engineering Rotation Program

Jump starting your career at Caltrans is more than just stepping into a new role. It's about becoming part of a department that is committed to shaping California's transportation workforce. The Division of Engineering Services (DES) supports new engineers in building momentum early in their careers through experiences like the DES Transportation Engineer Rotation Program. This is a hands-on immersive program designed to spark curiosity, build confidence, and accelerate professional growth. It provides engineers with an opportunity to gain experience during a 12-month rotation in Structure Construction, six-month rotation in Bridge Design, and then an additional six-month rotation in their choice from the following: Materials and Engineering Testing Services, Geotechnical Services, Structures and Engineering Services, or Program/Project Management and Office Engineer.

During this process, new engineers will take on challenging assignments that will motivate and encourage them to discover or refine their talents and passions, while gaining a better understanding of Caltrans' practices. By the end of the program, participants will have versatile design and project experience that can provide opportunities for future career growth.
A highlight for many new engineers in the Rotation Program is the highly sought after six-week Bridge Academy, which is so popular, it is often wait listed for those outside of Bridge Design. Not only do Rotation Program Engineers secure a spot in the Bridge Academy, but they also have the chance to travel to work on high-profile projects in beautiful locations across California.

Many engineers in the Rotation Program create lasting professional connections. Employees use this time to build strong working relationships with contractors' internal management and an array of other staff. These connections will become invaluable throughout their careers at Caltrans.

As recent graduate Austin Young shared, "The Rotation Program has been one of growth, education, and opportunity! The relationships I built along the way are the reason I ended up landing a full-time position with Bridge Design where I am today." He continues, "I am grateful that Caltrans values investing in young engineers by encouraging us to gain experience in various functional units."

Former program participant, Corey Gardener echoed praise for the program: "Going from Design straight to Construction has given me a really fantastic opportunity to apply my design experience out in the field and give me a more cohesive understanding of the whole process…I've been able to build great relationships with many different people I would have never met but will most likely work with for a long time."

To further strengthen the experience, DES is currently implementing a mentorship program within the rotation program that will pair each new engineer with a seasoned program graduate. This will ensure they have the guidance and support needed to navigate through the rotation program. The DES Rotation Program continues to evolve, ensuring every new engineer has support, mentorship, and opportunities needed to thrive. With diverse rotations, hands-on learning, and meaningful relationship-building, participants leave the program confident, well-rounded, and ready to contribute to California's most important infrastructure projects.

Are you interested in a career with growth opportunities like this? Visit Working with the Division of Engineering Services for more information about current job openings to begin a career with Caltrans Division of Engineering Services.

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