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## Strategic Workforce Development

Programs like FHWA's Strategic Workforce Development initiative play a pivotal role in addressing the growing demand for a highway construction workforce while breaking down barriers for individuals seeking career opportunities and community improvement.

***Daniel Webster's journey from a flagger on Wisconsin's highways to the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at a construction engineering firm demonstrates the importance of combining opportunity and advocacy to benefit the community. His commitment to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the highway construction industry not only shaped his own career but also opened doors for and inspired numerous individuals from Tribal communities across the region to join him.***

Daniel's introduction to the construction industry came through the Highway Construction Skills Training (HCST) program and, despite lacking prior experience, started as a flagger and was later promoted to a traffic control position. Later in his career, he pursued higher education while working, earning both a bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration. Now, Daniel collaborates with Noel Vandiver, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's North Central Region HCST Director, to prepare graduates for their upcoming careers in highway construction with job interview preparation, resume writing structure, and time and wealth management, just to name a few.

In 2018, Daniel joined his current employer as an HR Business Partner, marking the beginning of his journey in championing DEI within the company. Daniel recognized the underrepresentation of Tribal members in the industry, leading to his advocacy for increased outreach and recruitment efforts in Northeast Wisconsin. His efforts led to hiring over 50 individuals from Tribal communities in the highway construction industry.

One of Daniel's key initiatives encompasses collaboration with HCST programs, particularly in Tribal communities. Through partnerships and outreach efforts, Daniel facilitated numerous individuals' entry into the highway construction industry, providing them opportunities for training, mentorship, and employment.

The success stories emerging from these efforts are a testament to the transformative impact of proactive DEI initiatives within the heavy highway construction industry. Individuals who once lacked access to these opportunities now find themselves thriving in meaningful careers within the construction field.

As Daniel continues to pave the way for inclusivity and equity within the highway construction industry, the legacy of his advocacy resonates across communities. By amplifying diverse voices and fostering a culture of belonging, Daniel is not only transforming lives but also reshaping the future of Wisconsin's highway construction industry.

To learn more about Strategic Workforce Development, contact Chryis Currier, FHWA Office of Infrastructure, Tina Hooper, FHWA Massachusetts Division, or Rhonda Motley, FHWA Nevada Division.