

CASE STUDY



The Minnesota Department of Transportation Leads the Way in Civil Rights & Labor Activities

CHALLENGE ▼

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) was experiencing a variety of challenges with paper processes and outdated software, ranging from cumbersome payroll to time-consuming reports.

SOLUTION ▼

Alongside 11 other states, MnDOT pursued the development of AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor™ with AASHTO and Infotech®. The creation and implementation of this module would help tackle major pain points for multiple states.

RESULTS ▼

With AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor, MnDOT achieved their goal of digitizing their payroll while achieving efficiencies in entering contract data and federal reporting. The department also experiences fewer and faster fraud investigations.

“From a compliance perspective, it’s invaluable.”

Charles Groshens
AASHTOWare Supervisor,
Minnesota Department of
Transportation

≈ 150K
TOTAL PAYROLLS PROCESSED

≈ 820
CONTRACTOR USERS

≈ 22K
PAYROLLS PROCESSED IN 2020

Interested in implementing
AASHTOWare Project
Civil Rights & Labor?

Contact your Infotech Account Manager
or visit aashtowareproject.org/apr-crl
for more information.

The Benefits of AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor



REDUCED PAPER USAGE & COSTS

It may have been a long process, but MnDOT was able to achieve their goal of digitizing their payroll. The issue wasn't only in the accumulation of paper, but in the paper handling process that involved a lot of time and effort. What they didn't save in hard costs, they saved in workload.

“There were savings. There were paper savings and a lot of workload savings. Paper: you have to file it, store, pull it when people need to see it, redact information, make copies, etc. There were a lot of additional costs, and then we got into security issues, and we had to set security up. If you added it all up, the savings would be huge.” - Charles Groshens, AASHTOWare Supervisor, MnDOT



INCREASED ACCURACY IN REPORTS

The data collected in AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor is more accurate and robust than what's captured through paper forms. MnDOT currently runs a few contracts with locals on paper,

and the difference in data quality is stark. Dual entry into multiple systems has also been eliminated thanks to easy information access in the AASHTOWare Project Unified Database.

“If I give you the highway projects in AASHTOWare, it will be a more conclusive and inclusive data set than we get in our paper process. We have more data to work with and it's easier to monitor it and make sure it's being submitted.” - Amy Sullivan, Business Analyst, MnDOT



IMPROVED AND EXPEDITED FEDERAL REPORTING

As anyone who works in an Office of Civil Rights or a Labor Compliance Office knows, federal reporting is a large part of the job. Before implementation, information requests could take months as the team worked to track down various pieces of paper and gather it together for the US Department of Labor, FHWA, and other interested parties.

“We've had all kinds of data practice requests and those take, literally, a few minutes. We work with the state legislature, the US Department of Labor, our labor department, and

multiple unions, so we couldn't do what we're doing now without AASHTOWare Project and the information it contains.” - Charles Groshens, AASHTOWare Supervisor, MnDOT



FEWER AND FASTER FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS

With electronic access to labor compliance data and instant access to field data, fraud is incredibly easy for MnDOT to detect and handle. Under the paper process, payrolls would be produced without much context. In AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor, all the context is right in the system alongside the payment information. The system also acts as a prequalification program because it requires that contractors put all their information into the system before they can work on projects.

“Our investigations have reduced, at least in volume. It's so easy to pick up and identify that it doesn't get big enough. We still have investigations, we still have issues, but they don't take long at all. We used to tie up projects for years getting data together, now the information is right in your hand.” - Charles Groshens, AASHTOWare Supervisor, MnDOT

AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor: An Origin Story

One of the great advantages of working with AASHTO software is the relationships it introduces with other states. The ability for states to combine their resources to achieve something together that they could not alone is a core principle of the platform. Joint development is the founding principle of AASHTOWare, as it's how modules like AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor were created.

Following their software search, MnDOT decided to present their idea for a civil

rights and labor platform at the Project Users Group (PUG) meeting (known as the TUG at the time) in 2004. Several states were interested, and a total of 17 agencies followed MnDOT back to Minnesota for an ad hoc meeting to determine multiple use cases for the fledgling software. Once states agreed, it would return to AASHTO for a bid with Infotech, the official AASHTOWare Project contractor. While payrolls were a focus of the potential usage, states also wanted a way to electronically capture Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)

and small business information for easier federal reporting.

In the year that followed, that initial group continued to meet to finalize contract details and raise funds for the development of the software. Towards the end of 2005, the group ended up with 12 founding states that funded the creation of AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor.



PARTNERING WITH INFOTECH FOR CONTRACTOR TRAINING

In January of 2013, two Infotech employees that were heavily involved in the development of AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor traveled to Minnesota to build a training program for the state's contractors. Infotech's goal is always to ensure agencies have the tools to train and develop their employees after the initial training is complete, so over half of the ~15 training sessions were handled solely by MnDOT staff. After conducting training sessions across the state and ensuring primes knew they would be accountable for how their subcontractors handled things, the team was ready to pilot the software for the first time.

Agency Advice Column

Dear MnDOT,

My agency is considering an implementation of AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor. What advice would you give to an agency interested in the module?

Sincerely,
Paying for
Papercuts

Dear Paying for Papercuts,

As one of the first teams to implement AASHTOWare Project Civil Rights & Labor, we learned a lot over several years of implementation. Here are a couple steps you can take to ensure your process goes smoothly:

- ▶ Engage the Associated General Contractors (AGC) and other contractor groups early on in the process. For many contractors, it may be the first time they're using electronic payroll. If you're going to change how someone does business, make sure you give them lots of lead time and do some research into how their process will be affected.
- ▶ Ensure your business folks are heading up the implementation. When the IT staff is the primary team moving things forward, you can lose the essence of the business functionality. Work side by side with your IT team to guide aspects like regulations.
- ▶ Make sure your federal classifications are set-up properly so everything is dispersed right when payroll comes in.
- ▶ Clean up your vendor list and ensure you have a group that handles loading vendors into the system properly. Our Prime contractors are loaded by our Pre-Letting Group since they have Digital IDs but our subcontractors come in through the Labor Compliance unit and our Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) come in through our Civil Rights Group.
- ▶ Set up a good website with information necessary for your contractors to be successful, Yearly training sessions are helpful, and a good business managed support network for the contractors with an email box & help line.
- ▶ You will also need to incorporate good contract specifications to define the new processes for prime contractors and subcontractors to follow.

Hope that helps,

MnDOT Civil Rights & Labor Team