

## **ACEC Small Firm Roundtable Notes**

### **April 15, 2020**

#### **PPP/Advocacy Discussion**

- Informal poll of audience for PPP: 50 % have applied; 20% received SBA number
- Steve Hall/Katharine Mottley reported more guidance has been released and will be sent out to members and that construction/ engineering industry has been heavy users of program; ACEC putting together an online seminar with CPA firms to discuss best practices
- Documentation is key if a firm plans to apply for forgiveness, however money does not need to be kept in a separate account; Firms discussed the advantage of coding activities related to the loan money (job numbers) in order to track it
- Work with accountant on record-keeping/policies; will help with guidance on tracking the program and with sick/family leave policies included in program
- Recovery phase to hopefully include infrastructure; may be other packages to follow
- ACEC President & CEO appointed to White House Task Force to restart the economy within Construction/Workforce/Labor group; will be opportunity to reach out to groups within ACEC for input/feedback

#### **Engaging Employees**

- Firms having employees not feeling safe to go to work, have conversation with staff and walk through any guidance that has been put out by client/state; need to balance safety of employee vs firm compensation
- Dealing with employees trying to get work hours in while balancing family at home, firms being creative in defining work weeks to include Sat/Sun; communicate to everyone that still in business and need to provide service to clients as best as possible
- Looking for ideas to engage with employees remotely now, check in with all staff several times a week, create teams within company and have senior leadership check in with them by phone
- Folks are using different platforms to communicate, from standard conference calls and e-mails using Microsoft Teams
- There is an advantage to firm leaders having daily check-ins and communicating regularly with all staff
- For tracking time of employees have created specific "COVID" codes
- Some firms are deferring local holidays (with everyone at home) to later in year
- Firms utilizing Microsoft Teams/Zoom to keep in touch with employees
- Do virtual Book Clubs, Fitness challenge (ACEC staff currently doing both), happy hours, virtual lunches; have a senior leader do daily updates to everyone to keep everyone informed and interject some fun facts within email.

#### **Project/Business Impacts**

- Many reporting infrastructure work being considered essential work
- Working on sending out recommendations to states for use with governors' offices (per DHS guidance)
- Some requiring documents for field work for extended periods of time on projects
- Firms going beyond and securing own letters from clients for required work on projects
- Several federal agencies providing info to firms doing work
- Firms have used own safety policies to cover current situation, "stop work" areas
- Dealing with sudden project cancellations with public agencies: only focusing on transportation-other projects put on hold indefinitely

- Firms are finding it very hard to get necessary feedback from public agencies on all projects (true for public and private) such as review, comments, approvals, permit-related activities, etc.
- Some states are 'freezing' budgets – concern about impact to future infrastructure spending
- Oil/gas & commercial work has slowed or stopped