

Gov. Pritzker Announces First Of Its Kind Aviation Maintenance Training Programs To Open In Illinois

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CHICAGO — Governor JB Pritzker joined the Aviation Institute of Maintenance (AIM), Congresswoman Marie Newman, City of Chicago officials, and members of the community today in announcing a first-of-its-kind aviation training facility opening in Chicago's McKinley Park neighborhood. With support from the State of Illinois, the

new AIM campus will expand access to industry-standard aviation training programs, increase the talent pipeline for Illinois' growing aviation industry, and unlock a long-term investment of 75 permanent jobs for the community.

At 137,000 square feet, the Chicago facility will be AIM's largest training program in the nation, and its 14th campus overall. Working with longstanding industry partners and a range of educational partners in Chicago, the new campus plans to begin enrolling for classes set to begin on September 27th.

"Our long-term economic success as a state depends on our investment in the next generation of leaders, who will soon take on the task of steering our most important industries to meet the demands of the next decades," said Governor JB Pritzker. "As governor, I'm committed to building on Illinois's transportation leadership by working to educate and empower new talent and bring historically underrepresented populations into the field. Today, we have a new partner in that work: with the support of an EDGE agreement from the state, the Aviation Institute of Maintenance, or AIM, is set to open its largest aviation training facility in Chicago. I look forward to watching the AIM campus take the talent, diversity, and strength of our workforce to new heights."

Construction on the training facility is now complete at 3711 S. Ashland Ave. AIM converted a former warehouse into a modern training facility with a large hangar, 17 classrooms, an avionics lab, and 31 administrative offices to support students. The Chicago campus will be 30% larger than AIM's two current largest campuses, which will allow them to bring aviation maintenance training currently lacking in the area. AIM is a leading provider of training for students pursuing certification in aviation maintenance.

"AIM is thrilled to bring our proven industry training programs to Illinois as we work to prepare the next generation for exciting roles in the aviation industry," said Aviation Institute of Maintenance (AIM) Executive Vice President, Dr. Joel English. "Thanks to support from the State of Illinois, City Colleges of Chicago, and numerous industry partners, we will launch our latest program in the country, with an emphasis on delivering training programs to match the needs of local employers and to increase diversity in the workforce. We look forward to launching classes this fall, partnering with Olive-Harvey College and with colleges and universities statewide to bring students access to training that will allow them to compete for well-paying jobs in this fast-growing field."

"Connecting our residents to stable, good-paying and meaningful careers in growing industries is a critical component to our post-pandemic economic recovery strategy," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "I am pleased to see the Aviation Institute of Maintenance support this goal by expanding its presence and educational resources in

our underserved neighborhoods. Chicago's airports have long been renowned for being world-class, and this new campus will provide an entryway for residents to take part in this splendor through exciting education and employment opportunities."

AIM received an Illinois Economic Development for a Growing Economy ("EDGE") Tax Credit based on its plans to deliver a \$10 million capital investment in the McKinley Park community and 75 jobs by the end of 2022.

"Under Governor Pritzker's leadership, Illinois continues to make significant investments in workforce training opportunities for high-growth industries, like transportation," said DCEO Acting Director Sylvia Garcia. "The launch of the new Aviation Institute of Maintenance Campus in Chicago is a win-win for Illinoisans as we work to bring in-demand job training programs to all of our communities, help Illinois employers meet their future talent needs, and continue our efforts to boost investment and economic opportunity across the state."

AIM will deliver FAA-certified aviation maintenance training for students, with an initial 40 students to be enrolled in 2021 and plans to serve 200 students next year. Following approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and other industry accreditation approvals, AIM has established a credit sharing agreement with the City Colleges of Chicago, allowing it to offer coursework this fall. AIM has also partnered with Southern Illinois University's School of Aviation to provide opportunities for AIM students to receive a bachelor's degree post-graduation and will also pursue articulated agreements with additional Illinois universities and colleges to spur the recruitment of minority students. With the Olive-Harvey College partnership, students will have the opportunity to take four General courses while in high school and those General courses will transfer into AIM's A&P program and beyond.

Graduates focusing on the field of aviation maintenance in the Chicago metropolitan area will have the potential to earn an annual wage of \$72,000 per year, according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). In addition to higher-than-average wages, the job outlook for aircraft mechanics shows faster than average growth – with jobs in the aerospace industry in Illinois projected to grow 9% over the next 10 years, compared to just 3% for the U.S.

AIM considers a number of factors when establishing a new campus, including the needs of employers. Recruitment efforts are now underway for the Chicago campus and will focus on the local demographic and underserved populations within a 50-mile radius of the campus.

Training programs will prepare students with certifications needed to work for AAR, United Airlines, or any number of airline or aviation industry partners based in Chicago

and Illinois. AAR and industry partners will receive discounted tuition rates for employees to encourage more diverse recruitment and solidify a consistent pipeline of industry professionals.

“AAR is proud to have forged a strategic alliance with such a quality group of organizations to support the aviation workforce pipeline in Chicago,” said John Holmes, President, and CEO of AAR. “Our vision started with a small sheet metal program in 2018, and now we welcome our largest Eagle Career Pathways Program partner, AIM, to the area. This one-of-a-kind pipeline, from high school to a bachelor’s degree, will help our underrepresented populations find careers in aviation.”

“Over the next five years, United plans to add hundreds of brand-new aircraft to our fleet which creates an opportunity to hire 25,000 new team members across every department, including up to 3,000 in Illinois alone,” said Tom Doxey, United’s Senior Vice President of Technical Operations. “Because of the specialized training our maintenance teams require, it’s imperative that we have access to state-of-the-art facilities and programs like this one to help ensure we are pulling from a pipeline of quality talent. This is an exciting step forward and we’re proud to work alongside the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago as the vision for the new AIM campus now becomes a reality.”

"Aviation has been at the heart of Illinois' 3rd Congressional District and Chicago's Southwest Side since Midway International Airport called us home nearly a century ago. With the opening of AIM's state-of-the-art aviation training facility in McKinley Park, our district and the entirety of Illinois are reaffirming our global reputation as a proven leader in transportation investments, innovation, and opportunity," said Congresswoman Marie Newman (D-3rd District). "Through the workforce training programs at this new campus, we are not only preparing Illinois' next generation for the jobs of the future but also delivering the critical economic development and new, sustainable good-paying jobs to keep our communities thriving."

“Chicago is a top-ranked U.S. city for transportation. Our central location, infrastructure, and incredible pipeline of diverse talent are responsible for the accelerated growth we are seeing in this sector,” said Michael Fassnacht, CEO & President, World Business Chicago, and CMO, City of Chicago. “We are proud that Chicago, and especially our McKinley Park neighborhood, is now home to the biggest campus of the largest aviation maintenance school in the United States. This program’s partnership with City Colleges of Chicago and long-standing partnerships with leading Chicago companies including AAR, Boeing, and United Airlines, have it positioned to realize tremendous success.”

Through the Governor's 5-year plan for economic growth, the State recognizes transportation as a major source of growth and opportunity in the years ahead. As a result, the Pritzker administration has prioritized investments to support its continued success – with funding allocated to workforce training, apprenticeship programs, and through the \$45 billion Rebuild Illinois bipartisan capital plan – all focused on long-term sustainability for the transportation, distribution, and logistics sector.

For more information on AIM or how to enroll, please visit www.aviationmaintenance.edu/.