



# **Gov. Pritzker Announces \$240,000 Investment To SWIC, Others, To Support Pre-apprenticeship Programs And Increase Diversity In Construction Trades**

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SPRINGFIELD – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced \$9.6 million in grant funding to

support construction pre-apprenticeship programs, which will help create a qualified talent pipeline of diverse candidates as part of the groundbreaking [Illinois Works](#) initiative.

Among the 23 organizations to whom this grant is being awarded, is Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville, which will receive \$240,000. These organizations have been recognized because they provide pre-apprenticeship training and wraparound supportive services to more than 1,000 participants, the vast majority of whom are underrepresented in the construction industry.

Comprehensive pre-apprenticeship programs can help participants gain admission to apprenticeship programs, which provide a greater opportunity to obtain employment in the construction trades. According to a [2020 report](#) from the Illinois Department of Labor, only four percent of Illinois apprentices are women and only 29 percent are people of color. By supporting pre-apprenticeship training programs that primarily serve these groups – while also providing the needed wraparound supports for participants to succeed – these grants will help participants break barriers to enter into apprenticeships while simultaneously creating a sustainable pipeline of qualified, diverse candidates for the future economy.

“My administration is committed to supporting workforce training programs that are equitable and accessible for all Illinois residents, regardless of their background or what neighborhood they call home,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “This \$9.6 million investment in the Illinois Works program will support nearly 1,000 pre-apprenticeships, giving participants the skills, they need to earn family-sustaining wages and succeed in the jobs of tomorrow.”

The program is funded by the Illinois Works Jobs Program Act as part of Rebuild Illinois which is working to grant more Illinois residents access to jobs created by State capital projects. The program aims to open doors to career opportunities in the construction and building trades, including those who have been historically underrepresented in this industry. Through this innovative model, the grantees will offer structured pathways to help graduates transition from the pre-apprenticeship program to a full apprenticeship program in construction and building trades.

"Under Governor Pritzker's leadership, DCEO is more committed than ever to growing a diverse workforce that will boost local economies while creating sustainable career paths for all Illinoisans," said Sylvia I. Garcia, Acting Director of DCEO. "Women and people of color face significant barriers to good-paying construction jobs and we're proud to invest in pre-apprenticeship programs that will create a more dynamic and inclusive workforce."

The average grant size awarded is \$417,000, with all projects focused on supporting workforce priorities, such as equity and inclusion, and creating a qualified talent pipeline in construction and the trades. Recipients include non-profits, community-based organizations, industry associations, community colleges, and more.

“This is a unique moment for the advancement of women and people of color in trade careers and Chicago Women in Trades applauds the state’s timely investment in pre-apprenticeship training and contractor incentives to build the diversity of Illinois’ well-paid construction workforce,said Jayne Velinga, Executive Director of Chicago Women in Trades. “This critical investment will enable CWIT to pilot an innovative new pre-apprenticeship program in partnership with apprenticeship programs and contractors, providing an additional 50 aspiring tradeswomen with the most comprehensive possible preparation, support and connection to launch successful careers in the construction industry.”

In addition to delivering technical instruction and industry-recognized certifications, these programs include transition services to help participants enroll in Department of Labor (DOL) registered-apprenticeship programs. All programs also include stipends for participants in the program and workplace experience that provides them with hands-on exposure to construction job sites.

### **Organizations selected for grants include:**

Bethel Family Resource Center, Chicago Heights \$400,000  
Chicago Women in Trades, Chicago \$500,437  
Children First Fund, Chicago \$250,000  
Community Assistance Programs, Chicago \$493,794  
Community Development Institute, Chicago \$500,000  
EDDR Foundation Chicago, Chicago \$500,000  
EDDR Foundation Rockford, Rockford \$400,000  
Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse, Evanston \$535,514  
HIRE 360, Chicago \$550,000  
Hispanic American Construction Industry Association, Chicago \$500,000  
IL Foundation of SkillsUSA-VICA, Pekin \$500,000  
Lumity, Chicago \$170,673  
Macon County, Decatur \$499,832  
Metropolitan Family Services, Chicago \$500,000  
Quad County Urban League, Aurora \$397,978  
Revolution Workshop, Chicago \$400,777  
Safer Foundation, Chicago \$500,000  
Sista Girls & Friends, Inc, Decatur \$500,000  
South Suburban Community Services, South Holland \$436,000

Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville \$240,000

St. Paul Church of God in Christ Community Ministries, Chicago \$250,000

Tools Up Foundation, Chicago \$326,587

YBLC, Inc, North Chicago \$250,000

For more information on Illinois Works, please visit [DCEO's website](#).