

# **Governor Pritzker Kicks Off 'Illinois Works' Pre-Apprenticeship Program To Prepare Students For Jobs In The Construction Trades**

January 27 2022 12:01 PM



CHICAGO – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today joined partner organization Rebuilding Exchange to discuss the Illinois Works pre-apprenticeship program. Earlier this month, Gov. Pritzker [announced](#) a nearly \$10 million investment in pre-apprenticeship programs through to benefit more than 1,000 participants through 23 partner organizations. Grantees are currently in the process of recruiting diverse participants and making preparations to launch programming. [Illinois Works](#) is a groundbreaking program designed to create a qualified talent pipeline in the construction trades while leveling the playing field for underrepresented populations, including women and people of color.

“The Illinois Works program aims to help break barriers for more people of color to take advantage of the thousands of jobs created by our infrastructure investments, while simultaneously creating a sustainable pipeline of qualified workers,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Earlier this month, my administration announced a \$9.6 million to do just that – supporting wrap-around pre-apprenticeship programs that help workers turn aspirations into apprenticeships, and in turn, careers.”

“This program is about equity and opportunity, about preparing people from every community for in-demand careers in the growing field of construction,” said Lt. Governor Stratton. “Our administration continues to invest in people as we utilize the historic Rebuild Illinois capital plan to create jobs and invest in vital projects throughout the state.”

As part of the program kick-off, Governor Pritzker and Acting DCEO Director, Sylvia Garcia, visited Rebuilding Exchange, a non-profit organization participating in the program. Their training provides hands-on skills and wrap around services that will help participants qualify for a Department of Labor registered apprenticeships. The Bucktown location is actively recruiting a diverse cohort and expects to launch its Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship programming in the coming weeks.

"DCEO is committed to strengthening the construction industry by creating a diverse talent pipeline," said Acting Director of DCEO, Sylvia I. Garcia. “The Illinois Works pre-apprenticeship program, helps Illinoisans who have traditionally been underrepresented in the construction and building trades get their start in the 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. The \$9.6 million training program is funded by the Illinois Works Jobs Program Act as part of Rebuild Illinois which is working to provide more Illinois residents access to jobs created by State capital projects.

“The Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program is not only an effort to grow a talent pipeline in the construction trades. It is also more broadly to build a community that is grounded in equity and sustainability, that values every person and believes in their ability to succeed,” said Aina Gutierrez, Executive Director, Rebuilding Exchange. “The Rebuilding Exchange is thrilled to be a part of this program that will result in a more diverse construction trades workforce, stronger local economy, and more Illinois residents working in family sustaining careers.”

"The Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship program coming to the Rebuilding Exchange in Bucktown is a perfect example of how the State of Illinois can leverage dollars to revitalize our workforce" said Rep. Ann Williams (D-Chicago). "We need more people of color and more women to have access to the building trades, and I know this will make a real impact not only on the individuals engaged in the program, but families and communities as well."

“I am pleased that nearly two dozen organizations received funding for pre-apprenticeship programs, which provide a pathway for good-paying jobs,” said Rep. Will Davis (D-Harvey). “More workforce organizations than ever are getting the support needed to recruit and train Black men and women for careers in the building trades.”

Programs will provide technical instruction and industry-recognized certifications and will 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, wraparound services, and a workplace experience that provides them with hands-on exposure to construction job sites.

Additional programs are located in counties across the state including Cook, Macon, St. Clair, Tazewell and Winnebago. To learn more about Illinois Works and to find a pre-apprenticeship training location, please visit DCEO’s [website](#).

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

Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville \$240,000

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

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  
Rebuilding Exchange \$535,514  
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  
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](#).