

# **Gov. Pritzker Announces \$13 Million For Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program Expansion**

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CHICAGO — Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today awarded \$13 million to 30 recipients to expand the Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program, which creates a qualified talent pipeline of diverse candidates in construction and the building trades. The program's second year expands access to the program across the state and will serve up to 1,400 pre-apprentices – a 40 percent increase from the program's inaugural year.

“The Illinois Works program aims to break barriers down for more women and people of color to take advantage of the thousands of jobs created by our state’s nation-leading infrastructure investments, while simultaneously creating a sustainable pipeline of qualified workers for an industry that is booming,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “These are the types of strategic investments that ensure we have a workforce ready to take the jobs available right now in fields that offer growth for the future. And most importantly, it keeps our state’s best assets — our people — at the forefront of economic progress.”

The Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program launched in 2021 with the goal of increasing diversity and access to apprenticeship programs. Comprehensive pre-apprenticeship programs help participants gain admission to apprenticeship programs, which provide a greater opportunity to obtain employment in the construction trades and secure long-term employment. During the first program year which concluded in December of 2022, Illinois Works awarded nearly \$10 million in funding to 22 organizations, supporting 1,024 participants across the state – the vast majority of whom come from diverse backgrounds.

“Opportunities represent growth, the path to becoming your best self, and the ability to contribute to one’s family and community. This program provides that kind of life-enhancing chance for people from diverse backgrounds and regions,” **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton**. “Thank you to the Governor and DCEO for continuing to involve local government and stakeholders, along with developing legacy partnerships, in order to provide programs and jobs that broaden access for all people to be part of work that builds a better Illinois.”

As outlined in statute, the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship program was specifically designed to increase access to good-paying jobs in the trades for historically underrepresented populations. The inaugural class of pre-apprenticeships far exceeded the diversity of apprentices in Illinois overall:

	Diversity (Black, Hispanic /Latinx, Asian, Native American)	Women
Percentage of Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program Participants in 2022	85 percent	21 percent

Percentage of Illinois Apprentices (as of 2021) 28 percent

5 percent

Through Illinois Works, DCEO is expanding its statewide network of providers to recruit, prescreen, and provide pre-apprenticeship skills training. Equally important, the program providers offer structured pathways and manage the program graduates' transition from the pre-apprenticeship program to a full apprenticeship program in construction and building trades.?

Participants of the program attend tuition-free and receive a stipend and other supportive, barrier reduction services to help enter the construction industry. Upon completion of the program, pre-apprentices receive industry aligned certifications which will prepare and qualify them to continue to a registered apprenticeship program in one of the trades.

“Apprenticeships lead to stable, good paying careers and the Illinois Works program increases access to this critical pathway for historically underserved communities,” **said DCEO Acting Director Kristin A. Richards**. “We’re excited to expand the program to more locations across the state and serve more students as we work build a pipeline of diverse, qualified apprentices.”

“We're thrilled to continue training and shaping the future of the construction industry,” **said Jacqueline Gomez, Executive Director, HACIA**. “Through the Illinois Works Program, HACIA provides underserved communities with real hands-on experience and exposure to industry leaders to help them build their own toolkit to successfully transition into DOL registered apprenticeships and other employment opportunities within the construction industry. Our next construction pre-apprenticeship program begins on Feb 13. Learn more and register at [www.haciaworks.org/hacia-u](http://www.haciaworks.org/hacia-u).”

“We’re thrilled to have Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship programs continue in the Metro East region through Southwestern Illinois College and a new program administered by Teens Against Killing Everywhere,” **said State Senator Christopher Belt (D- Swansea)**. “By providing people with support and training, we’re opening the door for Illinoisans to secure stable, good-paying careers in a high-demand industry.”

“Investing in pre-apprenticeship programs provides an opportunity for Illinoisans to secure good-paying jobs, especially for people of color,” **said State Senator Cristina Castro (D-Elgin)**. “Organizations like HACIA help Illinoisians gain the skills, training and support they need to excel in DOL-registered apprenticeship programs and beyond.”

“The Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship program and HACIA are on the cutting edge of workforce development and recruiting diverse populations for the trades,” **said State Representative Hoan Huynh (D-Chicago)**. “As we expand the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program this upcoming year, we recommit ourselves to providing opportunities for those that need them most—whether they are immigrants looking to provide for their families or those from disinvested communities that are ready for a second chance.”

“Addressing the systemic opportunity gap in our work force will be a long-term, collaborative effort, and while we are just beginning, the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship program is off to an encouraging start,” **said State Representative Will Davis (D-Homewood)**. “Expanding the program to serve more communities is vital to the State’s long-term workforce goals and efforts to open up the building trades to communities who in the past have not had access to these opportunities.”

“Growing diversity in the building trades is not just a Chicago issue: we are charging forward like never before with three programs between Decatur and Springfield,” **said State Senator Doris Turner (D-Springfield)**. “I look forward to seeing the graduates of these programs working on projects across our region for decades to come.”

“A strong and just economy is built on ensuring all Illinoisian have real opportunities to secure good-paying jobs,” **said State Senator Mike Simmons (D-Chicago)**. “By expanding the Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship program and making it more accessible to communities of color, we are addressing systemic inequities and creating a more diverse and skilled workforce in Uptown and across the state.”

The 2023 Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program recipients:

Organization Name	Area(s) Served	Organization Status	2023 Grant Award
Associated Builders & Contractors, Illinois Chapter, Inc. (Serving Urbana Champaign)	Urbana	New Grantee	\$239,802.50
Bethel Family Resource Center	Chicago Heights	Renewed Grantee	\$400,000.00

Black United Fund of Illinois, Inc. /Awaken Foundation	Rockford, Loves Park (2 locations)	New Grantee	\$500,000.00
Chicago Women in Trades	Chicago	Renewed Grantee	\$500,352.44
Children First Fund	Chicago	Renewed Grantee	\$250,000.00
Community Assistance Programs	Chicago (2 Locations)	Renewed Grantee	\$580,637.25
Community Development Institute	Chicago	Renewed Grantee	\$500,000.00
Danville Area Community College	Danville	New Grantee	\$302,000.00
EDDR Foundation - Chicago	Chicago	Renewed Grantee	\$500,000.00
EDDR Foundation - Rockford	Rockford and Freeport (2 Locations)	Renewed Grantee	\$400,000.00
HIRE360	Chicago (2 Locations)	Renewed Grantee	\$550,000.00
Hispanic American Construction Association (HACIA)	Chicago (2 Locations)	Renewed Grantee	\$551,612.90

Illinois Foundation of SkillsUSA-VICA	Pekin, Morton, Washington (3 Locations)	Renewed Grantee	\$600,000.00
Impact Global Inc	Quincy	New Grantee	\$400,000.00
Lumity	Maywood	Renewed Grantee	\$200,000.00
Macon County	Decatur	Renewed Grantee	\$450,000.00
Metropolitan Family Services	Chicago	Renewed Grantee	\$500,000.00
National Latino Education Institute	Chicago	New Grantee	\$480,000.00
Project Hood Communities Development Corporation	Chicago	New Grantee	\$500,000.00
Rebuilding Exchange	Evanston and Chicago (2 Locations)	Renewed Grantee	\$549,999.65
Revolution Workshop	Chicago (2 Locations)	Renewed Grantee	\$200,000.00
Richland Community College	Decatur	New Grantee	\$450,000.00

Rincon Family Services (Northside of Chicago & Cicero)	Chicago	New Grantee	\$500,000.00
Sista Girls and Friends	Decatur and Springfield (2 Locations)	Renewed Grantee	\$550,000.00
Southwestern Illinois College	E. St. Louis	Renewed Grantee	\$295,071.82
St. Augustine College - Aurora	Aurora	New Grantee	\$500,000.00
St. Augustine College - Grayslake	Grayslake	New Grantee	\$500,000.00
Teens Against Killing Everywhere	East St Louis	New Grantee	\$400,000.00
Tools Up Foundation, INC	Chicago	Renewed Grantee	\$264,000.00
YouthBuild Lake County	North Chicago	Renewed Grantee	\$300,000.00

Signed into law in 2019, the Illinois Works Jobs Program Act is designed to promote diversity, inclusion, and use of apprentices in state-funded capital projects.? The Act created three major programs: the Illinois?Works?Pre-Apprenticeship Program; the Illinois?Works Apprenticeship Initiative, and the Illinois?Works?Bid Credit Program. Together these three programs aim to create a talent pipeline of skilled and diverse candidates to fill new job opportunities created by the Act.