

# **Belt Secures Nearly \$700,000 For Metro East Pre-Apprenticeship Programs**

by Celeste Holmes

January 30 2023 10:31 AM



**EAST ST. LOUIS** – Construction and building trades will be expanded in the Metro East thanks to a nearly \$700,000 investment secured by State Senator Christopher Belt.

“Expanding the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship programs will bring more opportunities and jobs to Metro East residents looking for a new career,” said 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.”

The Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship was created to promote diversity, inclusion and use of apprentices in state-funded capital projects. 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.

A total of \$13 million for the program's second year will expand access to the program across the state and will serve up to 1,400 pre-apprentices – a 40% increase from the program's inaugural year. With the support of Belt, a total of nearly \$700,000 will be coming to Teens Against Killing Everywhere and Southwestern Illinois College in the Metro East.

“College isn't for everyone — there's other options for successful careers paths out there,” Belt said. “Uplifting the trades industry, especially in underserved communities, is a win for all. This key investment will expand access for residents interested in starting a career in the 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 to prepare and qualify them to continue to a registered apprenticeship program in one of the trades.

Information on the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program can be found [here](#).