Industry Led. Community Focused.

NOVEMBER 2026 E-NEWSLETTER



Joliet Mayor, Will County Executive Celebrate 24 Graduates, with Several Already Starting in Apprenticeship

Twenty-four participants graduated from HIRE360's Illinois Works Will County Pre-Apprenticeship Program after completing nine weeks and 183 hours of hands-on training, test preparation and job readiness activities. The graduation ceremony at the Will County Courthouse brought together Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, Joliet Mayor Terry D'Arcy, and Pat Young of the Will and Grundy County Building Trades Council.

Several have already begun union training, including Knight Middleton, Brianna Rauch and Julian Bautista with Carpenters Local 174, Angel Campos with Operating Engineers Local 399, among others. Others are pursuing apprenticeship opportunities and interviews as they prepare to join the union building trades. Congratulations to all 24 graduates, and thank you to everyone who joined us at the Will County Courthouse to celebrate their achievements!

Chicagoland Workforce

Applications for **HIRE360's Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Programs in Cook, Kane and Will counties open November 30.** The free programs offer hands-on training, apprenticeship test preparation and career readiness support to help participants pursue opportunities in the union building trades.

Apply now! Space is limited!

- Will County
- Cook County
- Kane County

Interested? Register for an information session to learn more about the programs and application process.

From Training to a Welding Career at S&C Electric Company



Chicago's 4th Ward resident Christopher Stevens joined HIRE360 in March 2020 while exploring career options beyond the traditional college path. He went on to complete HIRE360's Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program and the JPMorgan Chase Clean Energy Construction Trades Pathway, earning OSHA-30 and forklift certifications along the way.

Christopher was accepted into Roofers Local 11 and received an invitation to test with the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council. Later on, he secured a position as a welder with S&C Electric Company, where he is putting his training and skills to work.

Helen Davros Finds a New Career Path with Pipefitters Local 597



After years of working minimum-wage jobs, Chicago resident Helen Davros was looking for an opportunity to build a career with greater financial stability and room for growth. She turned to HIRE360 for support as she explored apprenticeship opportunities in the skilled trades.

Through HIRE360's Virtual Test Prep and Tutoring Program, Helen attended regular sessions to strengthen her skills and prepare for apprenticeship exams. Her dedication paid off when she earned acceptance into Pipefitters Local 597!



Five Tradeswomen Represent HIRE360 at National Conference in Houston

HIRE360 sponsored five women to attend the 2026 Tradeswomen Build Nations Conference in Houston, Texas. Hosted by TradesFutures, the conference brought together tradeswomen from across the country for a weekend of networking, professional development and opportunities to share experiences.

Throughout the weekend, attendees connected with fellow tradeswomen, gained insights to support their career growth and explored ways to encourage the next generation of women entering the skilled trades. We look forward to seeing them continue building their careers and to next year's conference in Kansas City!





Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi Visits HIRE360 to Highlight Workforce Investments

Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi visited HIRE360's Training and Business Development Center to highlight $2 million in federal funding he secured for Elgin Community College's Manufacturing and Technology Center. The investment will help expand workforce training opportunities and prepare more individuals for careers in manufacturing.

Thank you to Congressman Krishnamoorthi and Elgin Community College for joining us at HIRE360 to highlight the importance of investing in workforce development!

Read More About the $2M Workforce Investment

HELP US CONTINUE OUR MISSION!

Central and Southern Illinois Workforce

The **Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program** is opening doors to the future of clean energy in Illinois. Designed to recruit and prepare candidates from across the state, the program provides a pathway into unionized clean energy construction jobs—careers that offer stability, opportunity, and growth.

Interested in pursuing a career in the construction and building trades through the free Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program? Learn more about careers in the clean-energy industry.

Jeffrey Trask Earns Acceptance into Carpenters Local 243



For graduate Jeffrey Trask, completing the Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program with the East Central Illinois Building & Construction Trades Council was just the beginning. After graduation, he earned acceptance into the registered apprenticeship program with Carpenters Local 243 in Champaign, Illinois, where he'll have the opportunity to develop his carpentry skills through on the job training.

Congratulations to Jeffrey on earning his place in the union carpentry trade!



13 Climate Works Participants Graduate in Champaign

Thirteen participants graduated from the Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program in Champaign, delivered in partnership with the East Central Illinois Building & Construction Trades Council. Over 13 weeks, participants completed hands-on training, prepared for

union apprenticeships and visited wind farms, solar farms and clean energy construction sites to explore careers in the skilled trades.

The graduation also recognized the program's partnership with the City of Champaign and its community violence prevention efforts. Among the graduates was Urbana resident Christopher Baker, who spoke with WCIA about how the program has given him an opportunity to pursue a new direction and build a better future for himself and his family. "Everybody has a chance. Everybody has the same opportunity, as long as you make the effort," he shared.

Watch Christopher Baker's Interview with WCIA

Meet Chris, Climate Works Instructor at Illinois Central College



Chris is a Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program instructor at Illinois Central College, helping participants prepare for careers in the skilled trades. Her role includes recruiting and interviewing candidates, coordinating training schedules, site visits and apprenticeship tours, and teaching MC3 and Greater Peoria Essential Abilities and Knowledge (GPEAK) classes.

During the eight-week program, participants gain hands-on experience with tools, blueprint reading and construction math while earning OSHA-10 and First Aid/CPR certifications. They also receive resume and interview preparation to help them pursue union apprenticeships.

For Chris, one of the most rewarding parts of teaching is watching participants build confidence, develop new skills and form friendships along the way. She hopes to continue strengthening partnerships with local unions and contractors while expanding awareness of the program throughout the Peoria area.

Business & Supply Chain



AHCB Connects Local Contractors with O'Hare Airport Opportunities

Contractors and construction industry partners gathered at HIRE360's Training and Business Development Center for the AHCB S2 Contractor Outreach event, hosted in collaboration with the AECOMHunt, Clayco and BOWA joint venture team. The event

connected businesses with prime contractors and potential contracting opportunities related to the New Concourse E development at O'Hare International Airport.

HIRE360 Executive Director Jay Rowell welcomed attendees, while AECOM's Kendall Williamson introduced the project team and upcoming opportunities. HIRE360's Ryan Brown and Deborah Whitaker shared workforce and business development resources, and attendees learned about access to capital, bonding, Compass prequalification and airport requirements.

The event also gave contractors an opportunity to introduce their businesses, ask questions and connect directly with project representatives. As Adrian Mobley, President of A&W Contractors, shared, the event helped his company better understand what prime contractors are looking for and how to position itself for future opportunities. Thank you to the AHCB team, prime contractors and industry partners for connecting businesses with resources and potential contracting opportunities!

HIRE360 Welcomes Clark Construction's Strategic Partnership Program



HIRE360 is hosting the 13th Chicago cohort of Clark Construction's Strategic Partnership Program (SPP), bringing small business owners together for training designed to strengthen their business and construction management skills. Offered at no cost, the program covers financial management, insurance and bonding, project management, contract review, estimating and networking to help businesses prepare for future contracting opportunities.

The program kicked off on September 30 at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), with HIRE360's Business Development team working alongside Clark Construction's Javid Aboutorabi to identify participating businesses, including several HIRE360 clients. During the event, HIRE360's Dave Thomas, Manager of Business Development and Supply Chain, and Dale Morrison, Senior Director of Procurement Diversity for the University of Illinois System, spoke with participants about the opportunities ahead. Thank you to Clark Construction and our partners for helping small businesses build the skills and connections needed to grow!



Need Help Renewing Your Business Certification?

Is it time to renew or recertify your business? HIRE360's Business Development team can help you navigate the process, prepare required documentation and explore certification opportunities, including MBE, WBE, DBE, VBE, Section 3 and BEP certifications. The team also offers assistance with DBE Personal Narrative Statements, capability statements and business development consultations to help businesses prepare for future contracting opportunities.

Need assistance? Reply to this newsletter to connect with our Business Development team and learn more about available support, or email info@hire360partners.org

Grow Your Business with the Cook County Small Business Source



If you're looking to start, grow, or expand your business, the Cook County Small Business Source is here to help. As Cook County's trusted network for small business support, it connects entrepreneurs with expert guidance, personalized business advising, and valuable resources—all at no cost.

Whether you need help developing a business plan, strengthening your marketing, preparing for funding opportunities, or navigating procurement opportunities, the Cook County Small Business Source's network of trusted advisors can support your business's growth.

Learn more and connect with a business advisor today!

Youth Engagement







30 Hyde Park High School Students Explore Careers in the Skilled Trades

Thirty students from Hyde Park High School explored career opportunities in the construction trades through an interactive event featuring HIRE360 and the Obama Presidential Center.

Students participated in a panel discussion and small group conversations about career pathways and the benefits of working in the trades. They also put their teamwork and problem-solving skills to the test in a model-building competition using toothpicks and marshmallows, followed by a museum tour that included a behind the scenes look at its HVAC and engineering operations.

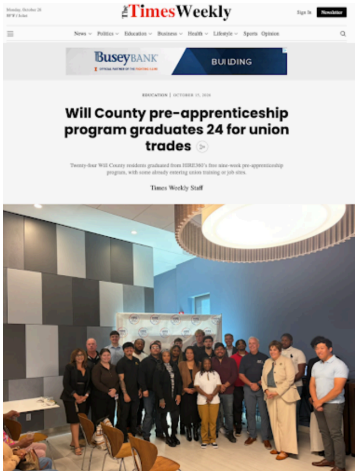
Thank you to our participating partners and industry professionals for spending time with the students and sharing their experiences in the trades!

In The News

Featured Story: The Times Weekly Highlights 24 Will County Graduates

HIRE360's Illinois Works Will County Pre-Apprenticeship Program was featured in The Times Weekly, highlighting 24 graduates who completed nine weeks of training to prepare for careers in the union building trades, including several who have already begun union training.

Read the Full Story in The Times Weekly



HIRE360 also appeared in the news:

Champaign Apprenticeship Readiness Program Celebration | **City of Champaign - Municipal Government**

Business Spotlight

ThorGeneral Contracting

Based in Dolton, Illinois, ThorGeneral Contracting, LLC is a minority-owned construction firm led by Owner and President Brandon A. Newell. Since 2010, the company has provided concrete construction, demolition, site clearing and heavy highway support services to government agencies, commercial clients and industrial facilities across Illinois.

HIRE360's Business Development team connected Brandon with L-G Consultants for assistance with MBE, BEP and Section 3 certifications, as well as another consultant to help address union-related matters.

ThorGeneral's project experience includes concrete work for the Boys & Girls Club in Chicago, concrete and demolition services at a commercial facility in Deerfield, and tree clearing and vegetation management for Illinois Department of Transportation projects.

Connect with ThorGeneral Contracting:
Phone: (773) 879-3779
Email: thorgeneralllc@gmail.com



Our Mission is to Expand Employment Opportunities

Recruitment

Apprenticeship Opportunities & Resources

Explore apprenticeship opportunities and resources across the skilled trades:

Elevator Constructors

- Explore recruitment opportunities through the National Elevator Industry Educational Program (NEIEP), including information for IUEC Local 2 in Chicago. NEIEP notes that local recruitments take place through formal application periods and applicants proceed through an aptitude test and interview process. View NEIEP Recruitment Information. [neiep.org]

Automotive & Diesel Technicians

- Explore apprenticeship and career information for the automotive and mechanical trades. Visit Mechanics Local 701.

Electrical

- IBEW Local 134 (Cook County – Alsip)
- IBEW Local 176 (Will County – Joliet): The JETC currently lists application hours on Mondays. [ibewlocal176.org]
- IBEW Local 701 (Cook & DuPage Counties – Westchester)

Pipefitters

- UA Pipefitters Local 597: Local 597 describes a five-year apprenticeship and directs prospective applicants to check registration availability on the first Wednesday of each month. [pf597.org]

Sheet Metal

- SMART Local 265 Applications can be completed online, but apprenticeship testing is currently paused and scheduled to resume **in May 2027**. [smart265ed.org]

Ironworkers

- Ironworkers Local 63 offers Building and Fence apprenticeship pathways. [iwlocal63.com]

Concrete, Masonry & Laborers

- Cement Masons Local 502 (Cook County – Bellwood)
- Chicagoland Laborers District Council
- Bricklayers District Council Training Center (DuPage County – Addison): The Training Center provides an online apprenticeship application. [bac2school.org]

Roofing, Finishing, and Glass

- Roofers Local 11 (Cook County – La Grange): Chicagoland online apprenticeship applications are currently closed and are scheduled to reopen **in January 2027**. [chicagoroofers.org]
- Finishing Trades Institute – DC 14 (Cook County – Berkeley): provides apprenticeship career information for painting/decorating, industrial coatings, and drywall finishing. [ftichi.org]
- Glaziers Local 27 (Cook County – Lyons): lists a three-year apprenticeship combining on the job learning and classroom instruction. [glaziers27.org]

Heavy Equipment

- Operating Engineers Local 150 (Will County – Wilmington): Candidates interested in heavy equipment and operating engineer career pathways should review the union's current apprenticeship recruitment information before applying.

Need Help Applying?

Our team is here to support you with apprenticeship test preparation, resume updates, recommendation letters, and understanding application requirements.

Contact your Candidate Support Advisor:

- Phone: (312) 575-2500
- Email: info@hire360partners.org

If you are serious about building a career, not just finding a job, now is the time to apply! We are proud to support pathways into union, family-sustaining careers.

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