Industry Led. Community Focused.

OCTOBER 2026 E-NEWSLETTER

Partners

HIRE360 is now at HIRE360Partners.org. You'll begin seeing emails from us at @hire360partners.org, so be sure to update your contacts. While our domain has changed, our organization, our team and our focus remain the same – partnering to provide opportunities across the construction industry.





Ashiya Davis Continues Her Journey as IUOE Local 150 Apprentice

HIRE360 Illinois Works graduate Ashiya Davis is now an apprentice with Operating Engineers Local 150's Apprenticeship and Skill Improvement Program, where she is enjoying the next step of her career in the trades. Ashiya, also a Chicago Hope Academy graduate, recently joined fellow apprentices during a visit to the Local 150 Training Center in Wilmington, where she spoke with Illinois Governor JB Pritzker about her journey and experience in the apprenticeship alongside HIRE360 Board Member Marc Poulos. Congratulations to Ashiya on this exciting next chapter!

Chicagoland Workforce

Diana Serrano Becerra Builds Her Path in the Electrical Trades



When Diana Serrano Becerra's previous workplace closed, she found herself looking for a new direction. She joined HIRE360's Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program to explore the trades and prepare for a union career. Through the program, Diana gained confidence, built industry connections and learned what it takes to work on a jobsite.

Today, she is gaining paid field experience as an IBEW Local 134 trainee with Freeman Electric LLC at McCormick Place while preparing for her apprenticeship entrance tests. Her goal is to officially begin a union apprenticeship and build a long-term career as an electrician. This Hispanic Heritage Month, HIRE360 is proud to celebrate Diana's progress and the next chapter of her career in the trades.









Will County Illinois Works Cohort Explores the Trades Through Industry Visits

HIRE360's Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship cohort in Will County explored different career paths through visits to the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers District Council Training Center, IBEW Local 701 and the Monee Solar West Community Project.At the Bricklayers Training Center, candidates practiced working with mortar and brick, observed other specialized craftwork and learned more about union apprenticeship training, while a visit to IBEW Local 701 gave them a closer look at careers and training pathways in the electrical trades.

At Monee Solar West, candidates walked through an active renewable energy construction site, spoke with industry professionals and saw how multiple trades contribute to a large-scale solar project. HIRE360's relationship with Pepper Construction helped connect the cohort with Pepper Energy and the project team for the site visit. Thank you to the Bricklayers District Council Training Center, IBEW Local 701, Pepper Energy and the Monee Solar West project team for giving candidates a closer look at careers across the trades and clean energy.





Mentorship Helps Apprentices Explore Business Ownership

Apprentices and journeyworkers came together for Building More Than a Career, a mentorship discussion focused on entrepreneurship and business ownership. HIRE360 Director of Business Development Deborah Whitaker drew from her experience as an entrepreneur and mentor to share lessons from her career, what it takes to transition from employee to owner and how entrepreneurship can help build a legacy for future generations. The discussion also covered growth in the clean energy sector, with attendees connecting with Deborah to talk about their own entrepreneurial journeys and what next steps could look like.



HIRE360 Discusses Building a Future-Ready Workforce at Executives' Club Summit

Ryan Brown, HIRE360 Industry Representative, joined workforce leaders at The Executives' Club of Chicago's Workforce Summit for the panel, "Future-Ready Actions: Partnerships That Build Tomorrow's Workforce." He took the stage alongside Ruben Abarca of Discovery Partners Institute, Laticia Holbert of ComEd and Michaela McGill of the Civic Committee of The Commercial Club of Chicago for a conversation on preparing people for the jobs of tomorrow.

Ryan shared HIRE360's perspective on recruiting, preparing and connecting underrepresented individuals with careers in the construction trades, and discussed the partnerships that help make those pathways possible. The discussion also touched on changing industry needs, barriers to entering the workforce and opportunities in construction, infrastructure and clean energy. Thank you to The Executives' Club of Chicago for bringing workforce leaders together and including HIRE360 in the conversation!

Keep up with HIRE360!

Want to see more from HIRE360's workforce programs? Follow us on LinkedIn | Instagram | Facebook | X for candidate success stories, apprenticeship updates, upcoming training opportunities, events and more.

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.







13 Climate Works Participants Graduate from Workforce Investment Solutions

Thirteen participants graduated from HIRE360's Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program with Workforce Investment Solutions in Decatur, with all 13 applying to one or more registered apprenticeship programs. Among them, Leslie Teter received her acceptance into BAC Local 8's registered apprenticeship program just hours before the graduation ceremony.

Before graduating, the cohort also visited the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council Apprentice Training Program in Pekin to learn more about careers in the trades. Decatur Building & Construction Trades Council President Josh Prasun attended the event as guest speaker, along with Decatur City Councilman Dennis Cooper. Cooper previously spent many years as a special assistant to the director of the Illinois Department of Corrections, bringing experience connected to reentry and workforce opportunities. Congratulations to Leslie and the entire graduating class as they continue working toward careers in the union construction trades.



Five Climate Works Graduates Complete Training at Illinois Central College

Congratulations to five participants who graduated from the HIRE360 Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program at Illinois Central College! Three graduates have already interviewed with the Carpenters Union and are awaiting next steps as they continue working toward careers in the union construction trades.



State Senator Paul Faraci Joins Contractors for Bid Credit Meeting

Contractors, organized labor and workforce partners came together in Savoy for a Contractors Bid Credit Meeting hosted in partnership with HIRE360, Climate Jobs Illinois and the East Central Illinois Building & Construction Trades Council. The discussion covered bid credit opportunities, partnerships and ways to connect contractors with qualified pre-apprenticeship graduates and local workforce pipelines. Illinois State Senator Paul Faraci also joined the event to speak about the construction workforce across the region. Thank you to East Central Illinois Building & Construction Trades Council for hosting the event and to Climate Jobs Illinois for organizing the outreach.

Business & Supply Chain



CCBC Construction Resource Fair Connects Job Seekers with Industry Resources

The Chicago Community Builders Collective (CCBC) hosted a construction resource fair at HIRE360, bringing together Bally's Chicago Casino project managers, construction business owners, training providers and workforce partners. HIRE360 Director of Business Development Deborah Whitaker opened the event and spoke about HIRE360's partnership with CCBC and their shared work to connect local talent and diverse businesses with opportunities in the construction industry.

Job seekers met with hiring contractors, training organizations and apprenticeship representatives, while HIRE360's Business Development and Workforce teams shared resumes for consideration for immediate opportunities. Contractors and vendors also

connected with project teams to learn about ways to get involved in current and future work. Thank you to CCBC and all participating partners for bringing these resources and connections directly to the HIRE360 community.





Deborah Whitaker Receives BCOE Impact & Advocacy Award

HIRE360 Director of Business Development and Supply Chain Deborah Whitaker received the Impact & Advocacy Award from Black Contractors Owners and Executives (BCOE) during the organization's 4th Annual Summer Social. The award recognized Deborah's continued support and advocacy aimed at creating greater opportunities for diverse contractors and businesses across the construction industry. The accolade also reflects HIRE360's ongoing partnership with BCOE to support diverse firms across the construction industry. Congratulations to Deborah on this recognition!

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





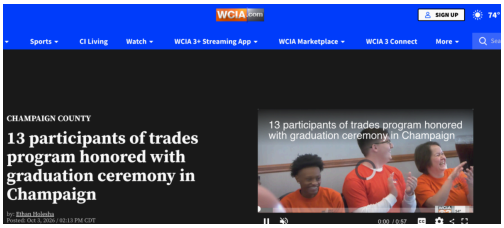
Next Builders Youth Showcase Skills at After School Matters Annual Gala

The “Next Builders: Intro to Construction” summer youth program was one of eight programs selected to participate in After School Matters’ Annual Gala at the Obama Presidential Center, out of hundreds of programs that served more than 20,000 teens this summer. Next Builders participants demonstrated their skills and shared their experiences with more than 500 attendees.

HIRE360 works with After School Matters and Related Affordable Foundation to provide Next Builders participants with hands-on experience and exposure to careers in the construction trades. Thank you to both organizations for their continued partnership and support of HIRE360’s youth development work.

In The News

Featured Story: WCIA Highlights HIRE360 East Central Illinois Pre-Apprenticeship Graduation



This month, WCIA highlighted the HIRE360 Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program in partnership with East Central Illinois Building Trades & Construction Council, celebrating 13 participants who completed the program and were recognized during a graduation ceremony in Champaign. The story highlights the graduates’ preparation for careers in the skilled trades and the program’s work to connect participants with pathways into the construction industry.

Read the full story here!

HIRE360 also appeared in the news:

- 3 News at 10 **| WCIA-TV**
- Graduation for tradesmen marks successful partnership of pre-apprenticeship program, gun-violence prevention efforts **| News Gazette**

Business Spotlight

Akan Mechanical Builds on 55 Years of Combined Industry Experience

Chicago-based MBE/DBE contractor Akan Mechanical, Inc. provides HVAC, piping and mechanical services for projects ranging from hospitals and data centers to airports, schools and high-rises. Founded in 2021 by Christopher Williams and Howard H. Hall Jr., the company brings more than 55 years of combined experience and is a signatory contractor with Pipefitters Local Union 597.

As Akan Mechanical continues to grow, HIRE360 is working with the company to strengthen the business and position it for new opportunities. HIRE360 is helping Akan access working capital, pursue Equity Eligible Contractor certification and connect with back-office resources to support its operations.



Our Mission is to Expand Employment Opportunities

Recruitment

Apprenticeship Openings

The following apprenticeship programs are **open now**:

Electrical
- IBEW Local 134 (Cook County – Alsip)
- IBEW Local 176 (Will County – Joliet)
- IBEW Local 701 (Cook & DuPage Counties – Westchester)

Pipefitters
- UA Pipefitters Local 597 (Cook County – Chicago)

Sheet Metal
- Sheet Metal Workers Local 265

Iron and Structural
- Iron Workers Locals 63, 444, and 498

Concrete and Laborers
- Cement Mason Local 502 (Cook County – Bellwood)
- Chicagoland Laborers District Council
- Bricklayers District Council Training Center (DuPage County – Addison)

Roofing, Finishing, and Glass
- Roofers Local 11 (Cook County – La Grange)
- Finishing Trades Institute – DC 14 (Cook County – Berkeley)
- Glaziers Local 27 (Cook County – Lyons)

Heavy Equipment

- Operating Engineers Local 150 (Wilmington - Will County)

Automotive & Diesel Technicians

- IAM Mechanics' Local 701 Automotive & Diesel Training Program: The IAM Mechanics' Local 701 Automotive & Diesel Technician Training Program is accepting applications for the upcoming Spring 2027 enrollment cycle. Serving Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and McHenry Counties. Paid apprenticeship pathway in the automotive and diesel technician trades. Industry-leading training and hands-on experience.

Elevator Constructors

- NEIEP/IUEC Local 2: Applications open October 5, 2026, at 9:00 AM CST. Recruitment limited to 600 applications. Requests close when 600 applications are reached or October 12, 2026, at 5:00 PM CST, whichever comes first. Final applications due October 13, 2026, at 5:00 PM CST. $25 non-refundable application fee required.

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 (formerly Case Manager):

- 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.

Prepare for Your Union Apprenticeship Entrance Exam

Getting ready to take a union apprenticeship entrance exam? HIRE360's Union Trades Test Prep Program from October 5-8 can help you prepare. The program offers guided instruction and practice in key areas commonly covered on apprenticeship tests, including math fundamentals, reading comprehension, paper folding and spatial reasoning, and mechanical reasoning, as well as test-taking strategies.

Whether you're testing for the first time or looking for a refresher, build your skills and get ready for exam day with HIRE360. Email info@hire360partners.org to learn more and sign up!

HIRE360

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