Industry Led. Community Focused.

SEPTEMBER 2026 E-NEWSLETTER





State Senator Robert Peters Joins HIRE360 and ComEd to Celebrate 15 Take Charge EV Graduates

HIRE360 and ComEd celebrated 15 graduates of the Take Charge EV Pre-Apprenticeship Program, a nine-week program preparing participants for careers in electric vehicle infrastructure and the skilled trades. With support from industry partners including Operating Engineers Local 150 and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), graduates completed classroom and hands-on training in EV charging systems, career planning, site tours and networking opportunities while earning OSHA-30 and Electrical Safety Standards certifications. ComEd's investment in Take Charge EV continues to expand access to career opportunities in Illinois' growing clean energy industry.

The graduating class is already taking its next steps into the industry, including graduate speaker Tara Longobardi, who has been accepted to begin classes with IUOE Local 399. Illinois State Senator Robert Peters joined graduates, families and program partners, including representatives from Local 150 and CTA, for the ceremony. As we celebrate Workforce Development Month this September, we're proud to recognize these 15 graduates and the workforce partnerships helping prepare Illinoisans for careers in growing industries. Congratulations to all, and thank you to ComEd for helping make Take Charge EV possible!

Chicagoland Workforce





Marycarmen Diaz Rueda Represents HIRE360 at Standing Up for Workers Rally

Marycarmen Diaz Rueda, an apprentice with Carpenters Local 174, represented HIRE360 at Governor JB Pritzker's Standing Up for Workers rally alongside union members and labor leaders, including Carpenters Local 174 President Gary Perinar III. Marycarmen first became interested in the trades while taking welding classes at Joliet West High School before enrolling in HIRE360's Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program in Will County.

During the rally, Marycarmen shared how HIRE360 and the union trades helped put her on a path toward a stable career and spoke about her goal of earning her welding certification and becoming the first woman in her local to do so. She introduced Chicago Federation of Labor President Bob Reiter before Governor Pritzker addressed the crowd, where he highlighted HIRE360's Training and Business Development Center as part of Illinois' efforts to create pathways to good-paying union jobs. We're proud to celebrate Marycarmen's accomplishments as she continues building her career in the trades and working toward her welding certification.

Julian Ibarra Takes Next Step with IBEW Local 134



After five years selling construction technology to contractors, Chicago resident Julian Ibarra became interested in pursuing a career in the skilled trades. He entered HIRE360's Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program with his sights set on the electrical trade, completing his certifications before gaining hands-on industry experience through an electrical trainee internship with Gurtz Electric Co. in Arlington Heights.

That experience helped Julian continue working toward his goal, and he was later selected for the competitive IBEW Local 134 Electrical Trainee Program. "HIRE360 made a real difference for me. The classes were truly helpful, the instructors were supportive, and Yanet Flores, my CSA, was an incredible resource throughout the process," Julian said. Congratulations to Julian as he takes this next step toward becoming an electrician!





State Senator Willie Preston Joins HIRE360 to Celebrate 26 Illinois Works Graduates

26 participants in this year's second cohort of HIRE360's Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program in Cook County celebrated their graduation at HIRE360's Training and Business Development Center, joined by family, friends, staff and community supporters. Graduates marked the completion of the program and looked ahead to careers in the construction and building trades.

Illinois State Senator Willie Preston of the 16th District joined the celebration as guest speaker, sharing words of encouragement with the graduating class. As a former union Carpenter himself, his insightful remarks inspired the class. Graduate Darryl Draper also addressed attendees as the student speaker, reflecting on the cohort's experience and the journey ahead. Congratulations to all 26 graduates as they take the next steps in their careers!









Five Illinois Works Graduates Complete Finishing Trades Bootcamp

5 Illinois Works graduates advanced their construction skills through an intensive two-week Finishing Trades Bootcamp sponsored by HIRE360 and in partnership with Stephen Lefaver, Director of Apprenticeship & Training at the North Central Illinois Finishing Trades Institute, affiliated with Painters District Council No. 30. During the 80-hour program, participants gained hands-on experience in painting and finishing techniques, surface preparation, protective coatings, spray applications, scaffold erection and other industry skills. The training also included mock interview preparation and contractor interviews to help graduates prepare for apprenticeship opportunities in the finishing trades.

HIRE360 provided participant stipends and transportation assistance to help graduates fully participate in the training. “By investing in advanced training opportunities like the Painters Local 30 Bootcamp, we are helping graduates build their skills, strengthen their confidence, and position themselves for success as they pursue apprenticeship opportunities in the finishing trades,” said Ana Maria Montes de Oca-Rojas, HIRE360’s Director of Workforce Development.



HIRE360 Launches Building a Better Future Mentoring Series

Apprentices and journey workers from across Chicagoland came together for networking, meaningful conversation, food and fellowship at HIRE360’s backyard barbecue mentorship event this August. The barbecue marked the launch of Building a Better Future, a new mentoring series focused on helping participants start or better navigate the process of wealth building. Participants discussed financial stability, creating long-term wealth and developing strategies to leave a lasting legacy for their families and communities. Attendees also connected with one another, shared experiences from the field and strengthened relationships within the union trades community.

HIRE360’s Industry Representative team was also on site providing real-time updates on job opportunities, current workforce needs, upcoming projects and potential pathways to employment across Chicagoland. Participants interested in upcoming sessions can contact their Candidate Support Advisor to sign up.



CCBC Construction Resource Fair Connects Industry and Workforce

Join us on September 10 from 10 am to 2 pm for the Chicago Community Builders Collective (CCBC)'s Construction Resource Fair at HIRE360's Training and Business Development Center. Project managers, developers and contractors from major Chicago projects will come together with union representatives, training providers and workforce partners to connect with attendees and share opportunities across the construction industry.

Whether you're looking to explore career pathways, connect with industry leaders or learn about upcoming construction opportunities, the fair is a chance to make connections and access resources all in one place.

Register today at this link!

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.

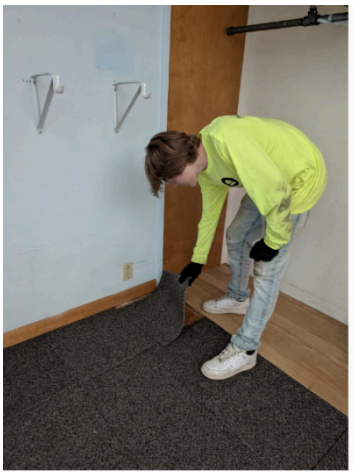




Noah Mihaly Begins Career with Ironworkers Local 380

Just months after graduating from HIRE360's Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program in partnership with East Central Illinois Building Trades and Construction Council in Savoy, Noah Mihaly is already putting his training to work on a major renewable energy project. Noah joined Ironworkers Local 380 in Urbana and is now working for White Construction, Inc on the Coles Wind Project, a major wind energy development in Coles County, Illinois.

During the pre-apprenticeship program, Noah discovered strengths in teamwork, mathematics and technical skills and set a clear goal of entering an ironworker apprenticeship. As an Equity Eligible Person under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA), he was able to access the training and support offered through Climate Works as he worked toward that goal. He described wanting "a mentally and physically stimulating pathway to something great," and that goal quickly became a reality. Today, he is putting those skills into action as an ironworker helping build renewable energy infrastructure in Illinois. Congratulations to Noah on this exciting start to his career!







Goodwill Belvidere Participants Take on Midway Village Renovation

A hands-on renovation project at Midway Village brought participants in HIRE360's Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program, delivered in partnership with Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois, out of the classroom and into a real-world project. Participants helped prepare a new home for the museum's maintenance staff, learning how to remove old carpet and install new carpeting while putting their construction skills into practice.

Participants also connected with retired union members to learn more about the trades, observed minor electrical work, and received tool safety instruction from Midway Village's director of maintenance. After completing the project, participants had the opportunity to explore Midway Village Museum and learn more about the site. Now that the cohort has graduated, participants have been invited back to continue volunteering on the property, including exterior painting, plumbing-related work and other renovation projects. Thank you to Midway Village for giving participants the opportunity to strengthen both their technical and soft skills while contributing to the renovation.



SWIC Climate Works Participants Build Porch for Local Veteran

Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) students participating in HIRE360's Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program gained hands-on construction experience while building a new front porch for Vietnam War veteran Dave Stout and his wife, Mona, at their Meadowbrook home. Led by SWIC instructor Jason Thompson, the project gave participants their first opportunity to apply their skills to a real construction project.

Read more here!

Inside Climate Works with WIS and Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 137

What does it take to prepare the next generation of skilled trades professionals? Workforce Investment Solutions Executive Director Rocki Wilkerson sat down with Joshua Prasun, Business Agent with UA Local 137 Plumbers & Steamfitters, to discuss how their partnership through HIRE360's CEJA-funded Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program is preparing participants for opportunities in the skilled trades. From strengthening math and reading skills to providing transportation and childcare support, the program helps participants build the foundation they need to succeed.

Joshua also shared how that preparation is translating into real careers, with former participants now working as apprentices in the field. With a $1.2 billion power plant project

expected to require more than 400 pipefitters, partnerships like this are helping prepare workers to meet growing industry demand.

Watch the full conversation at this link!

Business & Supply Chain



Constellation Brings Locker Room to HIRE360

More than 100 sourcing categories are open to businesses looking to work with Constellation, and HIRE360 recently gave local suppliers a closer look at how to compete for those opportunities. During Constellation's Locker Room: The Live Playbook Edition at HIRE360's Training and Business Development Center, Director of Supplier Development & Engagement Towanda R. Livingston shared what the company looks for in prospective suppliers, from demonstrating capabilities and navigating procurement processes to meeting safety requirements and submitting competitive proposals.

Opportunities span construction materials, facilities maintenance, workforce development, technology, professional services and more, with potential roles for both prime suppliers and subcontractors. Constellation's Dwayne Pickett, Vice President of State Government Affairs and Regulatory Advocacy and a HIRE360 Board member, also provided opening remarks. Thank you to Towanda, Dwayne and the Constellation team for connecting businesses with the information and tools they need to pursue future opportunities.



UIC Hosts Pathways to Procurement Forum

Local entrepreneurs, contractors and vendors came together at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) Forum for the Pathways to Procurement: Business Opportunity Forum, hosted by the University of Illinois System in partnership with Congressman Danny K. Davis. The event gave businesses a chance to learn how to compete for public contracts, navigate procurement requirements and prepare for upcoming opportunities, from registration and certification to compliance and capacity.

HIRE360's Christopher Williams and Dave Thomas connected directly with business owners seeking guidance on certification, bidding opportunities, back-office systems, mentorship and relationships with larger contractors. Thank you to the University of Illinois System and Congressman Davis for bringing businesses and partners together.



Coming This Month: IMPACT Small Business Summit

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) will host its annual IMPACT Small Business Summit on September 24 from 8 am to 2 pm at Malcolm X College. The free event will connect diverse business owners with public agencies, prime contractors and business development resources through matchmaking sessions, informative panel discussions and more than 40 exhibitors.

HIRE360 is proud to serve as a Summit Success Ambassador for this year's event. Interested in attending? Learn more and register here.

For questions about the event, contact Dave Thomas at dthomas@hire360chicago.com or (312) 217-9723.

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



Groundbreakers Students Explore the Trades with Related Midwest and After School Matters

Twenty rising high school juniors and seniors from Chicago's 7th and 10th Wards participated in Quantum Shore Groundbreakers, a five-week, hands-on youth program led by Related Midwest in partnership with After School Matters that introduces teens to careers in the building industry. Through mentorship and real-world learning, students explored how projects are developed, designed, financed, engineered and built while working directly with industry professionals.

Ahead of the program's final capstone showcase, Rashaan Meador, HIRE360's Manager of Youth Engagement, spoke with students about life in the skilled trades and what they can expect from a career in the industry. Students then presented their capstone projects, putting what they learned throughout the program into practice. Thank you to Related Midwest and After School Matters for inviting Rashaan to connect with the Groundbreakers students and share his experience in the trades.

In The News

Featured Story— Citizen Newspaper Highlights Take Charge EV Program Graduates

This month, Citizen Newspaper highlighted HIRE360 and ComEd's Take Charge EV Pre-Apprenticeship Program, celebrating 15 graduates who completed nine weeks of classroom and hands-on training in EV charging systems and infrastructure. The story highlights the career preparation, industry certifications and experiences participants gained through the program, as well as the next steps graduates are taking into the skilled trades, including graduate speaker Tara Longobardi's acceptance to begin classes with IUOE Local 399.

Read the full story here!



HIRE360 also appeared in the news:

'It makes me really proud': Urbana man's hard work opens opportunity for others to take the same path | **WCIA-TV**

Governor JB Pritzker Delivers Remarks At Standing Up For Workers Rally | **River Bender**

Business Spotlight

MOTR GRAFX

MOTR GRAFX is a minority- and women-owned printing, graphics and marketing production company based in Wheeling, Illinois. With more than 25 years of experience, the company provides end-to-end creative production services, including design, commercial and large-format printing, signage, packaging, direct mail, promotional products, vehicle wraps, installation and fulfillment. Its portfolio ranges from small-scale campaigns to large-scale initiatives and construction site signage for clients including Aon, Rivers Casino and Hard Rock Café.

MOTR GRAFX
MINORITY/WOMEN OWNED BUSINESS

HIRE360 is working with MOTR GRAFX to identify new business opportunities, including connecting the company with prime general contractors and partners in the utility sector that may need signage for buildings and construction sites. Building on MOTR GRAFX's current work providing signage for Bally's Chicago Casino, HIRE360 is helping identify similar opportunities while also working with the company as it explores securing a larger line of credit to support its growth.

To learn more about MOTR GRAFX, visit www.motrgrafx.com or contact the team at (847) 600-5656.



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 Masons 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
- IAM Mechanics' Local 701 Automotive & Diesel Training Program (Aurora): Serving Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and McHenry Counties. Now accepting applications for Spring 2027.

Elevator Constructors
- NEIEP/IUEC Local 2: Applications open October 5, 2026, at 9:00 am CST. Recruitment is limited to 600 applications and closes once that limit is reached or October 12 at 5:00 pm CST, whichever comes first. Final applications are due October 13 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:
- Phone: (312) 575-2500
- Email: info@HIRE360Chicago.com

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.

HIRE360

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