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**GOVERNOR JB PRITZKER AND MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON JOIN HIRE360 TO UNVEIL
TRANSFORMATIVE TRAINING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER, REVOLUTIONIZING DIVERSITY IN
CHICAGO'S TRADES**

*Groundbreaking Facility Opens Doors to Careers and Business Opportunities for Underrepresented
Communities in the Trades, Clean Energy, and More*

CHICAGO—HIRE360, joined by Governor JB Pritzker, Mayor Brandon Johnson, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, and other local leaders, today launched its groundbreaking Training and Business Development Center, a state-of-the-art facility designed to reshape workforce diversity in Chicago's construction and trades industries. The center offers unparalleled access to hands-on training, union apprenticeships, mentorship, and business development resources, empowering a new generation of diverse professionals and businesses to thrive in the construction sector.

"This center is more than just a building—it's a gateway to real, sustainable careers for Illinois workers," said **Governor JB Pritzker**. "By making history with the implementation of groundbreaking clean energy policies, we are ensuring that the future of clean energy is equitable in every facet. Organizations like HIRE360 are essential for developing an inclusive workforce that meets the demands of the growing clean energy sector while also creating lasting opportunities for underrepresented communities. This center is a key part of that vision, bridging the gap between economic growth and workforce diversity across our state."

Located at 2540 South State Street, the HIRE360 Training and Business Development Center has repurposed and transformed a former moving and storage warehouse into a dynamic hub for skill-building and innovation. The center features a retail space dedicated to diverse suppliers, a playroom, and a parent center to support working professionals and their families, all while equipping and empowering underrepresented communities by creating pathways to success and high-quality jobs.

"The HIRE360 Training and Business Development Center is a vital resource for achieving equity in Chicago's workforce," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "By bringing together training, mentorship, and access to union jobs, we are creating real opportunities for Chicago's residents—especially those from historically marginalized communities—to secure well-paying jobs and build careers that will drive the city's long-term growth. This center reflects our commitment to making Chicago a place where every resident can thrive, contribute, and benefit from the economic opportunities being created." The HIRE360 Training and Business Development Center will offer robust pre-apprenticeship programs that equip participants with the skills needed for high-demand careers in construction and clean energy. Also, through the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL) Workforce and Community Initiative, participants have direct access to the Federal workforce systems and provide state incentives to encourage contractors to hire new apprentices. The center is also home to over **190 diverse contractors**, offering

essential workspace, storage solutions, and business development support to help them thrive in a competitive industry.

“The Training and Business Development Center offers practical solutions to long-standing challenges faced by underrepresented communities in the trades,” said **Jay Rowell, Executive Director of HIRE360**. “It created direct pathways to high-quality jobs and we are committed to building an inclusive workforce that benefits from the diversity of Chicago’s communities.”

At the center, the **Illinois IBEW Renewable Energy Fund (REF)** leads a community-based solar training program that prepares workers for Chicago’s expanding solar sector. As part of these efforts, solar panels will be installed on the roof of the HIRE360 Training and Business Development Center, enhancing the building’s energy efficiency. In the coming months, additional partners will begin constructing industry-specific training areas.

“I’m proud to have secured federal funding to partially fund HIRE360’s new state-of-the-art facility,” said **Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-08)**. “This center will be critical in ensuring workers are trained and equipped for 21st-century jobs here in Illinois, and I look forward to seeing its programs in action. I applaud Governor JB Pritzker and Mayor Johnson for their leadership, and I also thank the leaders in organized labor, as well as the partnering Chicagoland businesses who are invested in bolstering our local workforce.”

The HIRE360 Training and Business Development Center was made possible through the generous contributions of philanthropic and corporate partners, including donations from MacKenzie Scott, Governor JB Pritzker, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Related Midwest, and the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. The center received donations of materials from suppliers and the volunteer efforts of general contractors—LR Contracting, Power, Pepper, W.E. O’Neil, Lendlease, and McHugh—who contributed their time to the construction. The Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council, Painters District Council 14, and Chicagoland Laborers’ District Council Training and Apprenticeship Fund also provided essential labor.

“As we open HIRE360’s flagship center today, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to its mission of expanding employment and advancement opportunities, especially for the next generation of talent, including local youth who might not have considered or believed careers in construction were accessible to them,” said **Don Biernacki, Board Chair of HIRE360 and Executive Vice President of Construction at Related Midwest**. “From the outset, we understood that transforming this industry would require unprecedented collaboration among all stakeholders—developers, contractors, labor unions, financial organizations, and elected officials—to create a holistic approach that addresses community outreach, job creation, investment and empowerment. We are deeply grateful to be part of this visionary group that had the foresight and conviction to tackle these challenges head-on.”

The HIRE360 Training and Business Development Center sets a new standard for workforce diversity and inclusion in Chicago’s trades. The center empowers underrepresented communities to build successful careers and create lasting change in the city’s construction industry by providing access to training, mentorship, and business resources.

For more information, visit www.HIRE360Chicago.com.

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About HIRE360

Launched in January 2020, HIRE360 is an industry-led, community-focused nonprofit ensuring that our city's future is inspired by all the communities that call Chicago home. Our "demand" driven approach to workforce development allows a direct connection with employers and unions to develop workforce recruitment and training programs that meet the specific and timely employment needs of the hospitality and construction sectors. As a workforce intermediary, we identify, recruit, skill up and help community members navigate the apprenticeship process. Our business development program creates wealth and career opportunities in Chicago's communities by investing capital, time and mentorship to help Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises start, grow and thrive. Learn more at www.HIRE360Chicago.com.