

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 28, 2025

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HIRE360 AND WILL COUNTY LAUNCH ILLINOIS WORKS PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM TO EXPAND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TRADES

Nine-Week Training Program Offers Industry Credentials and Access to Career Pathways into Union Apprenticeships for Will County Residents

CHICAGO – [HIRE360](#), in partnership with the Will County Executive Office, has launched the first [Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) in Will County, set to begin on May 5. Funded through the [Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity \(DCEO\)](#), the nine-week program is designed to strengthen the construction workforce pipeline by preparing individuals for entry into registered union apprenticeship programs.

As part of the program, participants will complete structured training and receive industry-recognized credentials, including OSHA-10 and CPR. They will also take part in site visits to registered apprenticeship programs and preparation for entry assessments, with a stipend provided for the duration of the training. Individuals who successfully complete the program will have the opportunity to obtain additional free certifications. HIRE360's goal is to improve their skills and careers by providing them with useful credentials at no extra cost.

"This program creates real, lasting pathways into the construction industry," **said Jay Rowell, Executive Director of HIRE360**. "By combining classroom instruction, hands-on experience, and direct access to union apprenticeships, we're not just preparing people for jobs, we're setting them on a path to lifelong careers. Through industry-recognized certifications, skill-building, and strong relationships with contractors and mentors, participants leave this program ready to succeed."

"This training program reflects the core mission of the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program, expanding access to construction training, while diversifying and strengthening the state's workforce," **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards**. "DCEO is thrilled to congratulate HIRE360 on their funding award and we are committed to supporting their continued efforts to increase access to good-paying jobs in the construction trades."

"This initiative creates new opportunities for local residents and is a win for local economy," **said Doc Gregory, President of Will & Grundy Counties Building Trades Council**. "We're proud

to collaborate with HIRE360 to prepare individuals for union careers by equipping them with practical skills and valuable certifications.”

“This innovative partnership will increase local access to training and pre-apprenticeship programs that will empower long-term career success in the construction industry,” **said Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant**. “We will be creating a pipeline to well-paying career opportunities for Will County residents.”

Administered by DCEO, the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program was established after the passage of the Illinois Works Job Program Act. The goal of the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program is to create a talent pipeline of skilled and diverse candidates to fill new job opportunities created by the \$45 billion Rebuild Illinois capital plan. Since launching in 2021, the program has enrolled more than 2,000 individuals across Illinois. According to DCEO, approximately 80 percent of participants complete the program, and over half advance into registered apprenticeships.

The HIRE360 Illinois Works Will County Pre-Apprenticeship Program is accepting applications. Eligible applicants must be Illinois residents, 18 years or older, with a high school diploma, GED, or HiSET. The program provides access to construction training and prepares participants for future workforce demands.

For more information or to register for a virtual information session, visit:

www.hire360chicago.com/will_county_il_works.

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HIRE360 Boilerplate

Launched in January 2020, HIRE360 is an industry-led, community-focused nonprofit ensuring that our future is built by all the communities that call Illinois home. As a workforce intermediary, we identify, recruit, skill up, and help community members navigate the union apprenticeship process. Our approach fosters a direct connection between employers and unions to develop workforce recruitment and training programs that meet the specific and timely employment needs of the construction industry. Our construction industry business development program creates wealth and contracting opportunities in Illinois’s communities by investing capital, time, and mentorship to help neighborhood businesses grow and thrive. Learn more at

www.HIRE360Partners.org.