



## Industry Led. Community Focused.

JUNE 2025 E-NEWSLETTER

### Workforce Development



#### Success Story: Wesley Jones

After working in broadcasting, real estate, and marketing, Wesley Jones Jr. was ready for a change and decided to pursue a more stable and rewarding career. Through HIRE360 and the [Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#), he gained the training, certifications, and support he needed to transition into the trades. With our help, he successfully prepared for and passed the entrance process for [Elevator Constructors Local 2](#) and just started as an apprentice.

Now, as an apprentice building elevators, Wesley is also helping others rise. His journey is inspiring friends and peers to take their own first steps toward union careers. "HIRE360 gave me the tools and the push I needed. That moment changed everything," he said.

#### Success Story: Jamal Devine

Jamal Devine spent years working in accounting roles, including at the American Medical Association, before deciding it was time for a change. He wanted something more fulfilling and hands-on, that search led him to HIRE360 and a new path in the electrical trades. With the support of our team, Jamal gained essential credentials, prepared for entrance exams, and officially began his journey as an [IBEW Local 134](#) apprentice.

He's proud to say he's on a path to a rewarding and stable career, one made possible through the preparation, resources, and support he received from HIRE360. From transportation assistance to study guides and mentorship, Jamal had what he needed to succeed. His advice? "It's a marathon, not a sprint. But with HIRE360, you're never alone."





## First 2025 Illinois Works Graduation at HIRE360

We celebrated our first [Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) Cohort Graduation at our Training and Business Development Center! Over the course of 9 weeks, 23 graduates from across Chicagoland gained paid hands-on experience, industry-recognized certifications, and the preparation needed to pursue careers through registered union apprenticeships. Nearly all of the graduates are considered Equity Eligible Persons under the [Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act](#), with half coming from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas.

We're grateful to everyone who helped make this milestone possible, including [Vice Mayor Alderman Burnett](#), Miguel D'Escoto, Senior Project Manager at [Chicago Community Builders Collective](#), Gerri Harris, and Edwin Sanchez Molina, Pre-Apprenticeship Grant Manager, [Illinois Works](#), and [Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity](#). Their support and the determination of our graduates are shaping the next generation of trades professionals. Together, we are building brighter futures, one graduate at a time!



## Training and Mentorship in Action

From electric vehicles to digital tools, our recent events have helped participants sharpen their skills and connect with industry leaders paving the way for the future of trades.

Take Charge: EV Charging Pre-Apprenticeship Program: In partnership with [ComEd](#), our



[Take Charge: EV Charging Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) gave participants a hands-on introduction to electric vehicle conversions during an immersive three-day training led by SELOC. From voltage systems to battery components, students explored the mechanics of clean transportation and watched a live demo of SELOC's own EV conversion. Thanks to ComEd and the [SELOC](#) team for sparking curiosity and creating access to sustainable career paths.

**Take Charge EV Careers Panel:** We also teamed up with [ComEd](#) to host a powerful EV Careers Panel, where participants heard directly from leaders shaping the future of electrical work and clean energy. Panelists included Elbert Walters III ([Powering Chicago](#)), Joseph Hernandez ([ComEd](#)), Joseph Kilcoyne ([IBEW Local 134](#)), and Tamara McCollough ([IUOE Local 150](#)). A special thank-you to Kristie Conklin of ComEd for serving as MC and keeping the conversation engaging and informative.

**Contractor Mentoring: Bluebeam Software Training:** As part of our contractor mentoring efforts, Jack Fischer led a hands-on Bluebeam software class in partnership with [Related Midwest](#). Participants learned critical digital tools to help streamline their work and grow their businesses. Thank you to Jack and the Related team for investing your time and expertise in helping others succeed.

With strong partners by our side, we're helping more people gain the tools, guidance, and connections they need to build lasting careers in the trades and clean energy sectors.



## Metropolitan Planning Council: A Vision for Water: Regional Collaboration, Local Impact

Our Training and Business Development Center recently hosted the [Metropolitan Planning Council](#) and [Current Water](#) for A Vision of Water: Regional Collaboration, Local Impact as part of Chicago Water Week. The event brought together government, business, and civic leaders to discuss regional water cooperation, workforce development, and strategies to strengthen community and Great Lakes resilience.

Thank you to the [U.S. Senator Dick Durbin](#), Metropolitan Planning Council, Current Water, [Climate Jobs IL](#), [Fehr-Graham](#), and all who joined us for this important conversation. Together, we're advancing collaborative solutions to meet today's water challenges and preparing the workforce that will help lead the way.

## Workshops

Introducing our New Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) Test Prep Class  
We're excited to announce that HIRE360 is now offering a Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) Test Prep class, your first step toward a career in commercial driving!

This course is designed to help you review and prepare for the CLP exam with confidence. To participate, you must first attend a virtual information session where you'll receive full details about the class.

#### Information Session Schedule

*(Only need to attend one session)*

**Dates:** June 11, 18

**Time:** 11:00 AM

#### Event Highlights:

- Permit process overview
- Eligibility criteria
- Q&A with experts

[Click Here](#) to register for the Commercial Learner's Permit Test Prep Information Session.

#### Requirements to Participate:

- Age: Must be 18 or older for intrastate operation; 21 or older for interstate commerce or passenger transport
- Proof of Citizenship: Required
- Driving Record: Must provide motor vehicle records showing a clear driving history

Thank you to Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias for providing the training material.

## Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program Highlights



### Southwestern Illinois College Graduation

The [Southwestern Illinois College](#) graduates its second cohort of the [Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#). Ten graduates received their certificates of completion at the ceremony from William (Bill) Reany. Instructors Jason Thompson and Charles Byers, along with Career Services Coordinator John Suarez, offered words of encouragement and wisdom to take every opportunity and not be fearful of outcomes.

We're so proud of this group and the work they put into their careers!



## Belvidere Pre-Apprenticeship Class

Students in our [Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) with [Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois](#) in Belvidere had the opportunity to tour the [Sheet Metal Workers Local 219](#) training center, where they explored career pathways, got hands-on training, and even built their own toolboxes. Thank you to Local 219 for opening your doors and continuing to support the next generation of skilled trades professionals.

## Recruitment

### Trade Openings!

HIRE360 is excited to announce our trade partners are accepting applications for their apprenticeship programs:

#### Operating Engineers Local 150:

- Operate heavy equipment Local 150's ASIP is a premier training program designed for today's construction professionals—including heavy equipment operators, technicians, drillers, and construction material inspectors. Work on job sites like highways, tunnels, and power plants, this union produce rock, sand, and gravel for construction. **Applications are accepted online through their official website.**

#### Heat and Frost Insulators Local 17:

- The vital work of the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers has saved energy, saved money, and saved lives. Heat and Frost Insulators Local 17 offers an excellent five-year apprenticeship program that is now open for online applications. **Deadline to apply is June 29.**

#### Pipefitters Local 597:

- Are you interested in becoming a Pipefitter? This union is now accepting applications for a 5-year programs with two tracks: Building Trades Pipefitter or HVAC Service Technician. Contact your HIRE360 case manager for application details and a letter of recommendation.

#### Roofers Local 11. Roofing and Waterproofing:

- If you enjoy working outdoors and often at heights, consider becoming a roofer and waterproofer. They perform various jobs, including applying hot and cold built-up roofing, single-ply roofing systems, shingle, tile, and slate roofs, waterproofing foundations, plaza decks, and traffic coatings, lining ponds and tanks, and installing environmentally friendly green roofing systems.

#### Electricians IBEW Local Union 701 (DuPage County):

- Work with this union to install and maintain electrical systems in buildings. There is



no residency requirement but most of the work is in DuPage County. There are two training programs available: commercial electrician & telecommunications electrician.

#### Painters and Drywall Finishers:

- This paint work includes applying paint, varnish, and coatings to surfaces. The drywall work includes installing wall coverings and performing drywall taping and finishing.

For those individuals interested in applying and needing a letter of recommendation, please contact your HIRE360 Case Manager today or email us at [info@HIRE360Chicago.com](mailto:info@HIRE360Chicago.com).



### **Get Ready for Open Trades Testing with Our Test Prep!**

Are you gearing up for the upcoming open trades testing? We've got you covered! Our comprehensive test prep program is designed to help you succeed and achieve your goals.

With expert guidance, practice materials, and valuable tips, you'll be well-prepared to tackle the test with confidence. Don't miss this opportunity to boost your skills and increase your chances of success.

Reach out to your case manager today to learn more about our test prep program and get started on the path to a brighter future in the trades!

## **Business Development**

### **Allies for Community Business Expands Support for Small Businesses Through HIRE360 Partnership**

Allies for Community Business (A4CB) is deepening its impact in Chicago's construction sector by expanding its partnership with HIRE360, thanks to new funding from Wells Fargo's \$20 million Open for Business

Growth initiative. A4CB, a nonprofit that provides capital, coaching, and connections to small business owners, was selected as the first recipient of the national program with a \$2.5 million grant.

The funding will allow A4CB to enhance its specialized construction loan program in collaboration with HIRE360. The initiative combines flexible financing with business advisory services and mentoring—tailored specifically for small and diverse contractors looking to scale.

“Through our work with HIRE360, we’ve seen firsthand how targeted capital and coaching can accelerate growth for construction entrepreneurs,” said Brad McConnell, CEO of A4CB. “This grant enables us to reach even more businesses that are ready to grow but aren’t quite ready for traditional bank financing.”

Together, A4CB and HIRE360 are helping build stronger, more inclusive local economies by empowering underrepresented business owners with the tools they need to succeed.



The graphic features a blue and white color scheme. At the top, there are logos for 'MAGNOLIA TAX SERVICES' and 'HIRE 360'. Below these, the words 'TAX SMART' are written in large, bold, blue letters, followed by 'ENTREPRENEURSHIP' in white letters on a dark blue background. A white banner with blue text reads 'KNOW YOUR NUMBERS, GROW YOUR BUSINESS'. Below this, a blue circle with a white camera icon is next to the text 'JUNE 16 TH , 10AM CST'.

HIRE360 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
PRESENTS  
**“TAX SMART ENTREPRENEURSHIP”**

Please join us for a presentation from Eugene Marshall, Founder & CEO of Magnolia Tax Services. He will provide valuable knowledge and information that all business owners should have to support the positive growth of your business.

Microsoft Teams: [Join the meeting now](#)

For more information contact Dave Thomas at (312) 217-9723 or [dthomas@hire360chicago.com](mailto:dthomas@hire360chicago.com)

RSVP to [dthomas@HIRE360Chicago.com](mailto:dthomas@HIRE360Chicago.com).

## Youth Engagement





## Englewood STEM High School Career Fair

HIRE360 and vendors from across industries joined the Career Fair at [Englewood STEM High School](#), where juniors and seniors explored careers in the unionized construction trades. Students asked great questions about getting started and pay scales. We're excited to keep working with [CPS](#), charter, private, and Catholic schools to build the next generation of skilled trades professionals.



## Trade Collective and Evanston Township High School Event

We recently partnered with [The Trade Collective](#) and [Evanston Township High School](#) to host a hands-on trades expo, introducing over 100 students and families to career opportunities in fields like HVAC, solar energy, and manufacturing. Students engaged with industry professionals, explored mobile training labs, and learned about the certification and pathways available in the skilled trades. This initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to connect youth with meaningful, long-term career options beyond traditional college routes. Thank you to everyone who helped bring this impactful event to life.





## Our Mission is to Expand Employment Opportunities

### IN THE NEWS

*Will County launches new construction career program* | Construction Owners Club

The [Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) officially is coming to Will County, as covered in Construction Owners Club. Developed in partnership with the [Will County Executive Office](#) and [Will and Grundy Building Trades Council](#), this program led by HIRE360 is set to give more residents the chance to step into rewarding careers in the union trades.

With training beginning this month, we're looking forward to seeing what this next group of future tradespeople will accomplish.

Read more [here](#).



*Commentary: Cook County's quantum future is taking shape* | Crain's Chicago Business

We're excited to share this piece from Crain's Chicago Business spotlighting how Cook County is laying the groundwork for a major economic shift, turning the former South Works steel site into a hub for innovation and long-term job growth.

In partnership with [City Colleges of Chicago](#), [United Way, P33](#), and [Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle](#), we're focused on building real opportunities, for training, growth, and lasting careers. Together, we're helping lay the foundation for a strong pipeline of skilled talent, while supporting the conditions that make meaningful progress possible.

Read more [here](#).



We're proud to share this thoughtful piece from Crain's Chicago Business exploring the real impact of raising the minimum wage and what it means for workers, businesses, and the broader economy. As we continue creating pathways to strong, stable careers, insights like these help shape the conversation around what fair, sustainable employment looks like.

Read more [here](#).

Elevate

**What happens when employers have to pay a higher minimum wage**

By Eric Gwinn



## **KSR Construction**

KSR Construction is a general contractor and project manager for residential and small commercial construction projects. KSR Construction's owner, Keith Robinson, has over 20 years of project management and construction experience. Founded in 2020, the company leverages its extensive residential and small commercial renovation experience. KSR Construction has successfully completed numerous local renovation projects, including total gut rehabs and cosmetic renovations for residential and small commercial real estate, as well as several new construction projects.

KSR Construction operates under NAICS codes 236115 and 236118. They became a client of HIRE360 Business Development in March of 2025 seeking access to capital assistance and business advising.

### **General Contractor Services**

- Project Management
- Renovations
- Demolitions
- Conversions
- Concrete
- Carpentry

### **Our Clients**

- Fannie Mae
- Urban Renewal
- ACG Real Estate
- Chicago Housing Authority

### **Differentiators**

KSR Construction comprises a team of licensed electricians, plumbers, carpenters, and HVAC contractors known for providing quality services. The company also boasts a diverse crew of city residents when working on local construction projects.



KSR Construction is located at 8122 S. Sacramento Avenue, in Chicago, Illinois 60652.  
To learn more, you can call them at (312) 978-7360.

# HIRE360

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