



Industry Led. Community Focused.

DECEMBER 2025 E-NEWSLETTER

Workforce Development



JPMorgan Chase and HIRE360 Celebrate First Clean Energy Cohort

We celebrated a major achievement with [JPMorgan Chase](#) with the graduation of the first participants in the [Clean Energy Construction Trades Pathway Program](#), a launchpad for Chicago residents stepping into fast-growing fields like solar installation, energy efficient construction, and green building operations. More than training, this program connects participants to union partners, certifies them with OSHA-30 and GPRO credentials, and gives them the real-world experience needed to step onto jobs sites with confidence.

One of those new professionals is [Demeko Conley](#), who is already working on a construction site doing demolition and remodeling. Earlier this year, he left his previous job to take a chance on a clean-energy career. With sponsorship from [Walsh Construction Group](#), he successfully entered [LIUNA Local 1](#), marking another milestone in his journey. Demeko first joined HIRE360 through the [Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) in 2022, and he credits the organization with giving him the guidance, confidence, and consistency to keep moving forward. His story is a clear example that HIRE360's impact doesn't end at graduation.

Two other graduates from the cohort have also been accepted into the trades: Jose Huerta with [Sheet Metal Workers Local 73](#) and Justin Smart with [Pipefitters Local 597](#). And classmate Narachuluu Amarsanaa placed 3rd on the sheet metal test. Congratulations to all of them!

Lyft and HIRE360 Help Apprentices Get To Work and Stay on Track

Reliable transportation can be the difference between starting a job and keeping it. Through a new partnership with [Lyft](#), HIRE360 is providing ride codes to apprentices and pre-apprentices who need support getting to job sites, training sessions, and interviews. This assistance is especially important for early morning starts and when union sites are not easily accessible by public transit.

One of the first to benefit was Christian Ramirez, a first year carpentry apprentice with [Siteline Interior Carpentry](#). Christian lives in Belmont Cragin and is currently working on active job sites far from major transit routes, where shift times often start before sunrise. With Lyft ride codes, he has been consistently on time, something he says has helped him build trust and strengthen his reputation. "Transportation used to be stressful. Now I can just focus on doing the work and showing up ready," Christian said. More than a ride, Lyft ride shares are a practical tool that help candidates protect their job opportunities, build credibility, and focus on growing their careers.



Celebrating the Third Cook County Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Cohort

Congratulations to the third Cook County cohort of the [Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#)! Joined by [Illinois State Senator Celina Villanueva](#), members of the [Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus](#), and leaders from the [Illinois AFL-CIO](#) and [Chicago Federation of Labor](#), 12 participants celebrated the completion of the rigorous program. Beyond the core training credentials, graduates earned a Flagger's Certificate and accessed additional classes in Fall Protection, Excavation Safety Awareness and Scaffold Hazard Awareness. These graduates are living proof that we're creating real pathways to family-sustaining careers.

Business Development



Practitioners Panel: Real Conversations, Real Pathways into the Trades

Our Business Development team hosted From Vision to Reality: Community Developers Building Chicago's Neighborhoods, the first installment in our three-part Blueprints for Opportunities Practitioners Panel series. The event convened leaders who are actively shaping Chicago's housing, retail, and commercial corridors to explore how bold community visions become real projects on the ground.

[Commissioner Ciere Boatright](#) was an incredible moderator of dynamic discussion with panelists [Tonya Trice](#) from [South Shore Community Development Corporation](#), [Kareem Cousar](#) from [Illinois Facilities Fund](#), [Cecile De Mello](#) from [Teamwork Englewood](#), [Ja'Net Defell](#) from [Community Desk Chicago](#), [Deon Lucas](#) from [E.G. Woode / TRiNiTY CDC](#), and [J. Andrew Stables](#) from [DL3 Realty](#). Rather than showcasing completed projects, the panel created space for candid conversation about navigating financing, community engagement, and partnership building, as well as designing development that truly reflects local needs.

HIRE360 Talks Workforce, Business and Community Impact on WVON

HIRE360 joined WVON's The Acclivus Hour to discuss how workforce training and business support open real paths into union careers and business growth. Deborah Whitaker and Anthony Green shared firsthand insights on how guidance and resources can reshape both individual opportunities and community outcomes.

They left listeners with a powerful reminder: when people have the support to enter union careers and grow their businesses, they build futures. Thanks to WVON and Acclivus for helping share this message.



Connecting Contractors to Opportunity at the CCBC Construction Resource Fair

The [Chicago Community Builders Collective \(CCBC\)](#) hosted a Construction Resource Fair, bringing together contractors, workforce talent, training providers, compliance resources, and support services.



At the event, HIRE360's Director of Business Development and Supply Chain, Deborah Whitaker, joined an *Access to Capital* panel with Chris Johnson from [Allies for Community Business](#) and Alex Felton from [Pursuit Lending](#), offering guidance on how local firms can leverage financing to grow, scale, and prepare for larger contracting opportunities. She also met individually with business owners to support procurement, certifications, and capital strategy. Thank you to CCBC and all partners for creating meaningful spaces that drive collaboration and local business growth.

Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program Highlights

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.](#)



Sharing Pathways to Union Careers on The Awaken Podcast

HIRE360 was recently featured on [The Awaken Foundation](#) Podcast, hosted by a non-profit organization dedicated to expanding access to workforce training. Our Executive Director Jay Rowell discussed how we connect Illinois residents to union careers through hands-on training, test preparation, and long-term guidance through programs like [Climate Works](#) and [Illinois Works](#). The episode also showcased HIRE360's role as a workforce intermediary linking candidates, contractors, unions, and community partners to create pathways into the skilled trades and clean energy careers.

Watch [here](#).



Job Shadowing on Active Construction Sites

We hosted a Job Shadowing Program with [Allied Power](#) where seven [Illinois Works Will County](#) candidates spent the day inside [Constellation's](#) Dresden Nuclear Plant, shadowing skilled union journeymen during active outage work. They observed real-time operations, learned jobsite expectations, and asked direct questions about joining and working on a union crew. Thank you to Allied Power and Constellation for opening doors and supporting their next step into the trades!



Correction: An earlier version of this newsletter misstated the Youth Engagement section. We apologize for the error; the correct information is provided below.

In 2024, the [Plumbers Local 130](#) Joint Apprenticeship Committee launched its Bridge Program to give high school students hands-on training and a window into the life and work of a Local 130 apprentice. Students learn directly from Local 130 JAC instructors and current apprentices and experience first-hand what it takes to succeed in apprentice school. The Bridge Program helps high school seniors prepare for apprenticeship opportunities and learn about bright future that is possible for all Local 130 members. The Local 130 JAC launched the Bridge Program in 2024 at its Chicago Training Center with students from Chicago Public Schools and Riverside Brookfield School District. In 2025, the Local 130 JAC expanded the program at its Chicago Training Center to include students from Niles Township High School District and St. Patrick's High School, and launched the Bridge Program at its Volo Training Center for students from Lake County high schools. Future expansion is planned for high school students in Will County at the Local 130 JAC's Joliet Training Center.



Our Mission is to Expand Employment Opportunities

Recruitment

Apprenticeship Opportunities – Apply Today!

HIRE360 is proud to partner with leading trade unions across Chicagoland to offer apprenticeship opportunities in the skilled trades. If you're ready to launch a career in construction, now is the time to apply.

Trades Currently Accepting Applications:

- [Plumbers Local 130](#)
 - Application window: November 17, 2025 - February 13, 2026, or until 2,000 applications are received.
 - [Apply Online](#).
- [Bricklayers Local 21 \(Chicago\)](#)
 - Applications accepted: year-round, Monday–Thursday, 8:00 AM–2:00 PM
 - More Info: <https://www.bac2school.org>
- [Roofers and Waterproofers Local 11](#)
 - Applications accepted: Monday–Friday, 7:30 AM–2:00 PM
 - Program Info: [Chicago Roofers Apprenticeship](#)
- [Operating Engineers Local 150](#)
 - Programs offered: Heavy Equipment Operator, Repair Technician, Geothermal Driller, Construction Inspector
 - Applications accepted: rolling basis
 - More Info: [ASIP Local 150\[4\]](#)
- [Heat and Frost Insulators](#)
 - Programs offered: Insulation Installer, Firestopping Specialist, Hazardous Material Handler, Soundproofing Technician
 - Applications accepted: Rolling basis
 - More Info: [Insulators Apprenticeship](#)
- [Auto Mechanics Local 701](#)
 - Programs offered: Automotive Technology, Diesel/Heavy Truck Repair, Equipment Technician
 - Training locations: Aurora and Carol Stream
 - [Apply online](#).
 - Program overview: [IAMAW Mechanics Union Local 701\[5\]](#)
- [Sheet Metal Workers - Local 265](#)
 - Programs offered: HVAC Fabricator/Installer, Metal Roofing Specialist, Architectural Sheet Metal Worker, Siding Installer, Suburban Work
 - More info: [SMART Local 265 Apprenticeship](#)
- [Laborers - Chicago Laborers District Council](#)
 - Programs offered: Construction Laborer, Concrete Specialist, Pipe Layer, Hazardous Materials Handler, Road and Bridge Laborer
 - Applications accepted: Year-round with contractor sponsorship via Training Fund website.
 - More info: [Chicago Laborers Apprenticeship Program](#)
 - Perform tasks like road and bridge construction, concrete work, pipe laying, and hazardous material cleanup
 - Work across Boone, Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties.

Each trade has its own application process and deadlines. Your HIRE360 Case Manager can help you navigate the steps, prepare for testing, and strengthen your application.

[Reach out](#) for a letter of recommendation and test prep support.

Are You Taking Your Aptitude Test Soon? HIRE360 Is Here to Help You Prepare

Aptitude testing is a key step toward building your future in the trades, and HIRE360 is here to support you every step of the way.

Our Aptitude Test Prep Program includes:

- Access to practice materials
- Expert guidance
- One-on-one tutoring with a [Chicago Teacher's Union Foundation](#) (CTUF) tutor

Whether you're just getting started or need extra support, we'll help you sharpen your skills and improve your performance.

Get started today:

- Register for our next test prep session now
- Request personalized one-on-one tutoring with a CTUF tutor

HIRE360 Chicago CLP Program

The HIRE360 Chicago CLP Program helps future commercial drivers prepare for the Illinois Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) test through an engaging, hands-on approach.

Participants take part in interactive lessons, group study sessions, daily quizzes, and practical exercises that make learning easier and more effective. Instructors provide ongoing support to track progress and ensure every participant is ready to succeed.

For more information, contact your case manager or email info@hire360chicago.com.

Click "View Entire Message" to see more below!

In The News



NEWS CULTURE MUSIC PODCASTS & SHOWS SEARCH

ENERGY

Illinois pushes ahead on clean energy jobs after Trump disrupts predecessor's plans

NOVEMBER 18, 2025 - 5:01 AM ET

HEARD ON MORNING EDITION

Andrea Hsu

4-Minute Listen PLAYLIST TRANSCRIPT

President Trump scrambled his predecessor's plans to lift up American workers by generating clean energy jobs. Despite major policy shifts, Illinois is still trying to make that happen.

Featured Story:

NPR's Morning Edition recently spotlighted HIRE360 Illinois Works participant Asante McKinney in a feature on Illinois' clean energy workforce efforts. The story follows Asante's journey from working as a dental assistant to pursuing her long-held goal of entering the skilled trades. She shared how discovering HIRE360 gave her a pathway into the industry, connecting her passion for hands-on work with real opportunities in the clean energy sector. The piece demonstrates how programs like Climate Works are helping residents turn ambition into access and open doors to careers in the trades.

Listen [here!](#)

Business Spotlight

KD Enterprise

KD Enterprise, LLLP, led by CEO Karen Dumapias, brings more than two decades of ironworking experience to projects across Chicagoland. A certified DBE, WBE, and a union signatory with Ironworkers Local 63, the firm specializes in architectural glazing, curtain walls, structural steel work, and OSHA-compliant site safety.

Through HIRE360's business support services, Karen received guidance on certification, procurement, and business development, helping position KD Enterprise for larger public and private projects, including an opportunity to work on the new Bally's Casino in downtown Chicago. Today, her firm stands as a compelling example of how local talent, paired with the right mentorship and strategic support, can scale to meet new opportunities.



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