



Industry Led. Community Focused.

FEBRUARY 2026 E-NEWSLETTER



PGC Doors Grand Opening

We kicked off the new year by celebrating the grand opening of [Powell Group Corporation \(PGC\) Doors](#) at HIRE360's Training and Business Development Center in Bronzeville, a major milestone for the Powell family and a powerful moment for Chicago's construction community. The new 4,000 square-foot warehouse, provided rent-free by HIRE360, will serve as PGC's central hub for doors and doorframe distribution across Chicagoland.

[With the launch of PGC Doors](#), the company is expanding into commercial doors, frames, and hardware. It is the only minority-certified supplier of its kind in Chicago, creating new opportunities to work with government contractors and major developers. [Related Midwest](#) announced several major orders at the opening ceremony to help kickstart the business. We're proud to celebrate this milestone and look forward to seeing PGC Doors continue to grow and make an impact across the city!

Business Development



Blueprints for Opportunity: Adaptive Reuse in Action

We brought together construction and development leaders for Blueprints for Opportunity: Adaptive Reuse – A New Future for Vacant Spaces, spotlighting how vacant and underutilized buildings can be transformed into new housing and commercial spaces across Chicago. The conversation highlighted the [City's LaSalle Reimagined initiative](#), including the \$250 million development of 135 S. LaSalle, and the first city-subsidized office-to-residential conversion project at [79 W. Monroe](#).

Moderated by [Alderman Bill Conway \(34th Ward\)](#), panelists shared insights on project planning, financing, and the opportunities these major developments create for local contractors and suppliers. Huge thanks to Cornelius Griggs, President/CEO of [GMA Construction Group](#); Damian Eallonardo, Regional President of [W.E. O'Neil](#); Tyler Lamkey, Executive Vice President of [Riverside Investment & Development](#); and Gary Stoltz, Chief Design/Development Officer of [R2](#), for sharing their expertise. Hosted at our Training and Business Development Center and co-presented with industry partners, the event highlighted what's ahead, with construction drawings and bid opportunities for these downtown developments expected to roll out in early 2026.

MWRD Shares Major 2026 Project Opportunities with HIRE360 Businesses



We recently welcomed the [Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago \(MWRD\)](#) for a community outreach info session highlighting major project opportunities coming in 2026. With more than \$645 million in proposed construction work on the horizon, MWRD shared how businesses can prepare to compete for upcoming bids across engineering, construction, professional services, and maintenance projects.

Thank you to the MWRD team and [Commissioner Patricia Theresa Flynn](#) for partnering with us to connect businesses to critical project information and resources.



Blueprints for Opportunity: Fueling Community Growth

Join us on **February 19** for Part 2 of our Community Development Series, Fueling Community Growth: Access to Loans & Technical Support. This interactive conversation, moderated by [Jonathan Trey Scott](#), Director of Real Estate Development at [The South Shore Community Development Corporation](#), is designed for developers, small businesses, and community-based organizations looking to strengthen their projects and prepare for future investment opportunities. The panel will feature Chicago-area community development lenders, including Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and mission-aligned financing partners, who will share insights on funding options, how underwriting decisions are made, and practical steps borrowers can take now to become finance-ready in 2026.

[Register here to save your spot!](#)

Workforce Development

Sponsored by **HIRE 360** and **ILLINOIS WORKS**

PAID Construction Pre-Apprenticeship Training in Kane County

Are you interested in joining HIRE360's Illinois Works **paid 9-week pre-apprenticeship training program** in Kane County to prepare for a career in the Building Trades?

The HIRE360 Pre-Apprenticeship Program is partially funded by the Illinois Works Jobs Program Act, which was established through Governor Pritzker's historic \$45 billion capital plan to promote equity in Illinois' construction workforce.

Program Offers

- Industry-recognized curriculum
- Credentials such as FA/CPR & OSHA 10
- Fall Protection Awareness Certification
- Apprenticeship Site Tours
- Test Preparation Classes
- Stipend

Eligibility Requirements

- Minimum age of 18 years old
- Illinois Resident
- High School Diploma/GED/HSET

This program is held in Aurora. Sign up TODAY!

Register for a virtual information session at HIRE360Partners.org/kane_county_ill_works/

Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program Launches in Kane County

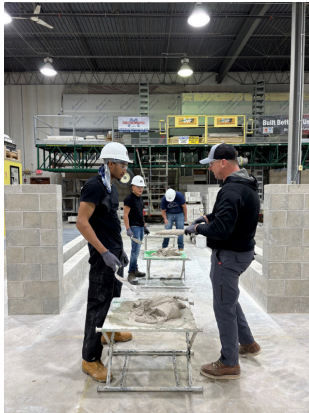
HIRE360 is expanding access to careers in the trades with the launch of the [Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) in Kane County on April 7. In partnership with [Painters District Council No. 30](#) and the [Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity \(DCEO\)](#), the nine-week program prepares participants for entry into registered union apprenticeship programs through hands-on training and industry-recognized credentials, including OSHA-10, First Aid/CPR, and Fall Protection Awareness. Participants will also take part in apprenticeship site visits, receive entry assessment preparation, and earn a stipend during training.

Recruitment will primarily focus on residents of Kane, Kendall, and DeKalb counties, with additional outreach in DuPage County and surrounding areas. The training program will be based in Aurora and is now accepting applications from eligible Illinois residents.

HIRE360 also offers Illinois Works Paid Pre Apprenticeship Programs in Cook and Will Counties. Choose the cohort closest to your home for easier access to training and support services, and register for a virtual information session on the program webpage.

Apply by Location:

- [Cook County Program](#)
- [Will County Program](#)
- [Kane County Program](#)



Two Illinois Works Bricklayers Candidates Take the Next Step

We're excited to share that Balieux Robinson and Hugo Arellano have successfully completed the [International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 21 Program!](#) They are both moving forward to the next pre-training class.

We're grateful to the [BAC District Council Training Center](#) for their partnership and continued support in helping make this program possible. Congratulations to Balieux and Hugo on this achievement, we look forward to seeing what's ahead as they continue building their futures in the trades.

CCBC and UCAN Host Construction Careers Pathway Session

[Chicago Community Builders Collective \(CCBC\)](#) and [UCAN Chicago](#) hosted an engaging informational session focused on opening doors to careers in the construction trades. It was exciting to connect with future candidates and introduce them to training pathways and major projects, such as [Bally's Chicago Casino](#). We appreciate this collaboration and look forward to more events where we teach job seekers what it takes to build a career in the trades.



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.](#)



100+ Goodwill Climate Works Graduate Step Into Their Future Careers

More than 100 [Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) graduates came together in Rockford to celebrate a major milestone alongside our partners at [Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois](#). The regional ceremony recognized candidates who completed OSHA-10, First Aid/CPR, and the MC3 curriculum, officially launching their next steps toward union careers in clean energy and construction.

A big thank you to Goodwill for the continued partnership, and congratulations to all graduates on this exciting achievement!



Danville Climate Works Program Participants Earn Credentials

Congratulations to the [Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) class in Danville, supported by our partners at the [East Building Construction Trades Council](#). Participants completed training and earned industry-recognized credentials as they prepare for careers in clean energy and the building trades. We're excited to see this group take the next step in their careers!



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.

Open or Upcoming Apprenticeship Programs:

- [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](#)
- [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](#)
- [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](#)
- [IBEW Local 134 - Electrical Workers](#)
 - Programs offered: Inside Wireman, Communications Technician
 - Applications Accepted: Year-round
 - [More info/Apply](#)
- [Glaziers Union - District Council 14](#)
 - Programs offered: Architectural glass installation, curtain wall systems, storefronts, glazing fabrication
 - Applications Accepted: Rolling basis
 - [More info](#)

Need Help Navigating These Opportunities? Your HIRE360 Career Support Advisors (Case Manager/Recruiter) can help you:

- Understand application requirements
- Prepare for aptitude testing
- Strengthen interviews and trade readiness
- Receive letters of recommendation
- Connect with test prep and tutoring

Reach out for a letter of recommendations 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

Connect with your HIRE360 Case Manager or contact us at: info@HIRE360Chicago.com

HIRE360 Chicago CLP Program

The HIRE360 Chicago Commercial Learner's Permit program prepares future commercial drivers for the Illinois CLP exam through:

- Classroom lessons
- Group study sessions
- Daily quizzes
- Hands-on learning activities

With training materials provided by [Secretary of State Alexander Giannoulas](#), instructors offer ongoing support to ensure each participant is ready to succeed.

Want to start your career behind the wheel? Don't wait. Connect with your case manager or email info@hire360chicago.com to enroll!

Click "View Entire Message" to see more below!

In The News

Featured Story:



PGC Doors Celebrates Grand Opening



The Citizen Newspaper highlighted the launch of PGC Doors, Chicago's first certified minority-owned door, frame, and hardware supplier now operating from the Training and Business Development Center. With rent-free support, the company is scaling operations, expanding into manufacturing, and creating quality local jobs.

Read more [here!](#)

HIRE360 in the News

- [*Fleurish Brings Flowers To Bronzeville, A South Loop Cafe And More Near South Business News*](#) | Block Club Chicago
- [*First Minority-Owned Door Supplier In Chicago Launches At Hire360 Training Center*](#) | Citizen Newspaper
- [*HIRE360, Constellation, And Vehicles For Change Award Three Vehicles To Local Workforce Development Graduates*](#) | Libertyville Living Magazine
- [*City to partner with trades council on pre-apprenticeship for at-risk individuals*](#) | The News-Gazette
- [*Pivot Energy and Tapestry, Inc. Announce Completion of Three Illinois Community Solar Projects*](#) | Associated Press
- [*Three vehicles awarded to workforce development graduates*](#) | Shaw Local News

Business Spotlight

EXO Fabrication

Founded in 2014 by Leslie Smiling and Jonathan Yu, [EXO Fabrication, Inc.](#) is a full-service metal fabrication company bringing more than 60 years of combined fabrication and engineering experience to projects across construction, manufacturing, and agriculture. Based in West Chicago, the DBE-certified firm specializes in turnkey fabrications, assemblies, and weldments, with in-house welding, machining, and fabrication capabilities that allow for tight quality control and efficient project delivery. EXO has supported major clients including [Chicago Transportation Authority](#), [F.H. Paschen](#), and [Nike](#).



Through HIRE360's Business Development services, EXO Fabrication received support on certification guidance, networking, access to capital, and navigating the union process. This partnership has helped strengthen the company's operations and position its team for continued growth across public and private sector projects.



HIRE360 | 2540 S State Street | Chicago, IL 60616 US

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