



**CHICAGO AREA  
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# HIRE360 BARRIER REDUCTION FUND PROCESS & PROCEDURES 2026



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## Overview

The HIRE360 Barrier Reduction Fund (Fund), was developed by HIRE360 in partnership with United Way of Metro Chicago, the Chicago Workforce Funders Alliance, and the Obama Family Foundation. The goal of the Fund is to increase access to high-wage union construction careers with a focus on underrepresented Chicago communities. The Fund reduces financial barriers associated with the application process of union construction apprenticeships and other related costs.

## Purpose

The Fund is used to reimburse HIRE360 candidates, and the candidates served by HIRE360 Partners for *Approved Costs* outlined below. HIRE360 and its funders believe the Fund will positively impact members of underrepresented Chicago communities by removing financial barriers in a competitive industry and lead to a skilled, well-paying construction career.

The Fund will be administered by HIRE360 and will offer financial assistance to active program candidates to be used for discretionary payments for union application fees, work boots, transportation, tools, work clothing, and union initiation fees. Other construction-related expenses may be considered if they prevent eligible candidates from progressing in their trade careers.

**All requests for financial assistance are based on the availability of funding and documented barriers. HIRE360 has limited resources and strives to provide as much assistance as possible to as many candidates as possible. As a result, these processes and procedures serve as guidelines and HIRE360 reserves the right to depart from them whenever appropriate and necessary. All decisions regarding reimbursement are made at HIRE360's sole discretion and are not appealable.**

## Fund Eligibility

The Fund eligibility will be based on the following requirements:

- 1) There must be available funding.
- 2) Candidate must be registered with HIRE360.
- 3) Candidate must be active in program activities.
- 4) Candidate must report their barrier to their assigned Candidate Support Advisor (CSA)
- 5) Candidate must have prior approval for the reimbursement request from their assigned Candidate Support Advisor (CSA).
- 6) Candidate must provide required documentation to process the reimbursement request.

## Reimbursement Process

BRF Requests are due on Thursdays at 12PM. Payments may take a few weeks to get processed.



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Should there be a delay in obtaining documentation, ensure that at the time of entering the request, all documentation is updated (ex: pay stubs).

Requests should be submitted within 90 days of date on receipt unless there is prior approval from the Director of Workforce Development.

**Individual candidates are eligible for a lifetime maximum of \$1,200 of reimbursable costs, excluding stipend payments. Expenses exceeding this amount for an individual candidate shall not be reimbursable.** You will receive an e-mail confirmation with your request which includes the amount candidate has received in funds. If the amount on your confirmation email exceeds the \$1,200 maximum, it will be denied, unless there is prior approval by the Director of Workforce Development.

**Candidates must be active in their trade and in good standing to receive assistance.**

## Approved Costs

- Apprenticeship Application Fee
- Study Guide
- Apprenticeship Textbooks
- Apprenticeship Training Supplies
- Drug Test Fee
- Physical Exam Fee
- Stipends
- CTA Pass (Transportation)
- Gas Card (Transportation)
- Taxi and Rideshare (Transportation)
- Metra Tickets (Transportation)
- Non-Tool Work Supplies
- Tools
- Other Work Gear
- Union Initiation Fees
- Union Dues
- Work Boots
- Work Clothing
- Indirect Costs



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## Detailed Explanation of Costs and Required Documentation

### Apprenticeship Application Fee (from a recognized construction trade)

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must provide receipt of application fee. (See Acceptable Receipt section)
- 4) Must take the Aptitude Test before reimbursement is requested, unless the candidate is participating in a cohort.
- 5) Must have completed APA. (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).

### Study Guide (from a recognized trade)

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must provide receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section)
- 4) Must have completed APA. (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).

### Apprenticeship Textbooks

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must have Acceptance Letter from Local
- 4) Must have letter from local (on letterhead) stating the need and cost of required books.
- 5) Must have a Closed Won APA (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).
- 6) Must provide receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section)

### Apprenticeship Training Supplies

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must have Acceptance Letter from Local
- 4) Must have letter from local (on letterhead) stating the need and cost of supplies.
- 5) Must have a Closed Won APA (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).
- 6) Must provide receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section)



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## Drug Test Fees

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must provide receipt of drug test fee. (See Acceptable Receipt section).
- 4) Must have completed APA. (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).

## Physical Exam Fees

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must provide receipt of physical exam fee. (See Acceptable Receipt section).
- 4) Must have completed APA. (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).

### ➤ **Miscellaneous Fees**

Tuition costs for classes, certification programs, licensure or other costs required by an apprenticeship program to advance in their program.

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must provide letter from local or employer with the required activity and cost.
- 4) Must provide receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section).
- 5) Must have completed APA. (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).

## Stipends

### ➤ **Stipend** – Mentorship (\$100)

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must upload attendance form or certificate. (**only** file format acceptable for uploads is, .pdf and jpg .or .png.)

### ➤ **Stipend – Pre-apprenticeship** (\$300/week, 20 weeks max) – recognized construction trade.

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.



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- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must have a Closed Won APA (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).
- 4) Must provide Acceptance letter from local.
- 5) Must provide Proof of length of required training, e.g., a training schedule or letter on union or JATC letterhead stating the duration of training
- 6) Must provide weekly attendance form signed by apprenticeship administrator. Form is provided by HIRE360.
- 7) Attendance form must be legible and completed correctly with required signatures.
- 8) Candidate must be in good standing throughout the pre-apprenticeship to receive stipend.

➤ **Stipend** – Cohorts

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) BRF forms must be uploaded in candidate's Salesforce account.

**Note:** *A candidate is eligible for stipend payment for one apprenticeship program per lifetime. Candidates who complete an eligible apprenticeship training program who were provided a stipend will not be eligible for stipends for similar training for another apprenticeship. A candidate that takes a break from the pre-apprenticeship will not receive a stipend until they return to class and maintain good standing.*

## Transportation

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must provide proof of trade-related activity, such as e-mail confirmations or attendance form.
- 4) If employed, must have employment placement in Salesforce.
- 5) If employed, must have Letter of Intent to Hire or check stub.
- 6) Must provide receipt.
  - CTA Bus Card - \$ 20.50 week max
  - Gas Card - \$25/week, 4-week max for new employment
  - Metra Card
  - Taxi, Rideshare - \$30 one-way



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### COVERED COSTS

- Transportation to an in-person apprenticeship application site.
- Transportation to in-person meetings related to apprenticeship application process (i.e., interview, scheduled test date, a physical exam, etc.)
- Transportation to and from the HIRE360 Training Center for unpaid events.
- Transportation to and from an apprentice-related work site for up to two weeks OR until the candidate receives their first apprentice-related paycheck.
- Transportation to get to/from union employment.

### Non-Tool Work Supplies

Other costs associated with the ability to adequately perform the required duties of the candidate's new occupation.

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must have a Closed Won APA, if applicable (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).
- 4) Must provide letter from local or employer with list of required tools.
- 5) Must provide copy of union card.
- 6) Must provide receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section).

### Tools (\$200 max)

Tools explicitly required by employer.

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must have a Closed Won APA, if applicable (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).
- 4) Must provide letter from local or employer with list of required tools.
- 5) Must provide copy of union card.
- 6) Must provide receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section).

### Other Work Gear

Additional work gear explicitly required by the employer or required for safe and effective completion of apprentice work responsibilities.



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- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must have a Closed Won APA, if applicable (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).
- 4) Must provide copy of receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section).
- 5) Must provide copy of union card.
- 6) Must provide a copy of most recent check stub or Letter of Intent to Hire.
- 7) Must have employment placement in Salesforce.

#### Union Initiation Fees – recognized construction trade

Union dues owed at the commencement of an apprenticeship program, or within 3 months of the commencement of an apprenticeship program.

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must provide copy of Acceptance Letter.
- 4) Must have a Closed Won APA (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).
- 5) Must provide copy of union card, if obtained.
- 6) Must provide copy of receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section).
- 7) Must have employment placement in Salesforce.

#### Union Dues (only if in arrears)

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must have a Closed Won APA, if applicable (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).
- 4) Must provide letter from local or employer on respective letterhead with amount owed dated within 30 days of receipt of payment.
- 5) Must provide copy of union card if obtained.
- 6) Must provide receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section).
- 7) Must have employment placement in Salesforce.
- 8) Proof of employment or employment eligibility within the relevant trade.



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### Work Boots – 1 pair per year (\$340 max)

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must have a Closed Won APA, if applicable (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).
- 4) Must provide copy of receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section).
- 5) Must provide copy of union card.
- 6) Must provide a copy of most recent check stub or Letter of Intent to Hire.
- 7) Must have employment placement in Salesforce.

### Work Clothing

Additional clothing explicitly required by the employer or required for safe and effective completion of apprentice work responsibilities.

- 1) Must be a HIRE360 Candidate.
- 2) Must complete and submit reimbursement forms: Participant Agreement, ACH Form, and W9 (Signatures are required on all forms)
- 3) Must have a Closed Won APA, if applicable (follow the proper steps for each stage of the APA).
- 4) Must provide copy of receipt. (See Acceptable Receipt section).
- 5) Must provide copy of union card.
- 6) Must provide a copy of most recent check stub or Letter of Intent to Hire.
- 7) Must have employment placement in Salesforce.

Need and cost for all expenses must be documented satisfactorily to be eligible for payment.

### Indirect Costs

While the Fund's primary focus is to alleviate direct costs, other costs or circumstances which indirectly affect an apprentice's ability to gain or retain an apprenticeship will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Reimbursable indirect costs must be a one-time extraordinary cost or a one-time payment to avoid consequences of overdue bills for basic living expenses.

Reimbursement for a specific type of indirect cost will be limited to one reimbursement per twelve-month period. Indirect cost payouts are subject to a maximum of \$1,200 per candidate per lifetime.

**Costs not properly documented may not be reimbursable.**



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Examples of indirect costs that may be considered for reimbursement include, but are not limited to:

- Utility bills – one-month utility assistance (gas, electric, and/or water), up to \$500 for past due bills or to re-institute service following shut-off.
- Mortgage assistance (principal and interest only) – one-month up to \$1,200 when payment is past due
- Rent assistance – first month rent for a formerly un-housed person or family or one-month rent when payment is past due and renter is facing eviction, up to \$1,000
- Vehicle repair – costs to repair a safety-related condition which prevents safe, legal operation of a vehicle required for employment or apprenticeship training, up to \$800
- Other vehicle fees and costs required for employment or apprenticeship training such as a driver's license renewal fee, state vehicle registration or other fee. *This shall not include tickets, fines, or other punitive assessments owed by a candidate*
- Emergency care for a child or other family member – Cost for substitute day care when regular care is unavailable, up to two days not to exceed \$250

In order to be eligible for reimbursement of indirect Costs, a candidate is required to demonstrate financial need. This could come in the form of:

- Proof of enrollment in a WIOA Program.
- Proof of receipt of public benefits, such as SNAP, Unemployment Insurance, etc.
- Proof of personal income at or below the poverty line.
- Proof of loss of income, i.e., a layoff notice, notice of reduction of hours, etc.
- Proof of residency in a disadvantaged zip code or community area as defined by U.S. Census Bureau.

Eligible candidates must produce the following documentation to be considered for Indirect Cost reimbursement:

- A statement of how the cost or situation prevents the candidate from obtaining or retaining an apprenticeship
- Proof of payment
- Proof of costs for the specific need. Examples could include:
  - Housing and utilities – copy of past due notice or rental agreement for formerly unhoused person
  - Child or family member care – proof of need for emergency care
  - Vehicle repair – copy of invoice showing work performed to resolve safety condition
- Proof of participation in HIRE360 program or partner agency program
- Proof of active participation in an apprenticeship training program or apprentice job



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- Union card
- Apprentice training program sign-in sheet, etc.

## Acceptable Receipts

In order to process reimbursements, a candidate must submit a valid receipt. Acceptable receipts will display the following information:

### Receipts for Apprenticeship Application Fees:

- 1) Name of Trade
- 2) Name of Candidate
- 3) Date application was submitted.
- 4) The amount that was paid.

### Receipts for Store Purchases:

- 1) Items must be clearly visible
- 2) There should be no personal items listed on the receipt
- 3) The date must be visible
- 4) The total amount must be visible

### Receipts for Online Purchases:

- 1) Items must be clearly visible
- 2) Candidate's name must be attached to the purchase
- 3) The total amount must be clearly visible
- 4) The date must be clearly visible
- 5) Totals must match the items listed

### Acceptable Receipts:

- 1) Receipts provided from the local
- 2) Confirmation emails containing required information and local/store logos.
- 3) Screenshots of a full receipt with required information.

### Unacceptable Receipts:

- 1) Partial screenshots of a receipt.
- 2) Receipts with missing information
- 3) Bank statements
- 4) Money Order Receipts – does not confirm an apprenticeship application was submitted.
- 5) Any receipt dated before 7/01, of the current year.