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AUGUST 2026 E-NEWSLETTER

Donetta Thomas Becomes HIRE360's First Female Roofer with Local 11

Donetta Thomas is the first female HIRE360 and Illinois Works participant to become an apprentice with Roofers Local 11. Donetta entered the construction industry with no prior experience and enrolled in [HIRE360's Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) to prepare for a career in the trades. Through HIRE360, she received transportation assistance that helped her get to training, along with test preparation and support from instructors and case managers as she worked toward an apprenticeship. She was accepted into [Roofers Local 11](#) and is now working as a first-year apprentice, building a rewarding career in the skilled trades. "HIRE360 changed my life," Donetta said.



As a mother of three, Donetta hopes her journey inspires her sons to face challenges with confidence. Although she's still afraid of heights, she pushes herself every day on the job and plans to become a foreman before eventually owning her own business. Congratulations to Donetta on this incredible achievement! We look forward to seeing all she accomplishes throughout her career.

Chicagoland Workforce



David Castrejon Shares His Journey at the Illinois AFL-CIO Convention

HIRE360 was honored to participate in the [Illinois AFL-CIO's](#) 47th Constitutional Convention, where Executive Director Jay Rowell spoke about HIRE360's partnership with organized labor and the organization's work preparing Illinois residents for careers in the union construction trades and expanding pathways into the industry. Joining Jay on stage was David Castrejon, one of the first candidates HIRE360 helped place into [IBEW Local 134](#). Now a fifth-year apprentice and just months away from becoming a journeyman electrician, David shared how HIRE360 helped him as he entered the trade, including helping cover registration, tools, and other expenses as he began his apprenticeship.

Today, David is proud to mentor new apprentices and help others pursue the same opportunities that changed his life. Thank you to the Illinois AFL-CIO for the opportunity to share HIRE360's mission and David's inspiring journey. We appreciate the organization's continued partnership and the leadership of President Tim Drea, Secretary-Treasurer Pat Devaney, Equity Director at Climate Jobs Illinois Chynna Hampton, and the entire AFL-CIO team in strengthening the union construction workforce across Illinois.



HIRE360 and Pivot Energy Celebrate First Solar Boot Camp Graduating Cohort

The first Pivot Solar Boot Camp cohort has officially graduated, marking an important milestone in HIRE360 and [Pivot Energy's](#) partnership to prepare Illinois residents for careers in the growing clean energy industry. Through Pivot Energy's investment and support, participants completed a 240-hour Solar Workforce Boot Camp featuring a NABTU-approved pre-apprenticeship curriculum and hands-on solar training, designed to prepare participants for opportunities in the skilled trades.

One graduate has already been accepted into [Pipefitters Local 597](#), and several others are interviewing with contractors for sponsorship. Thank you to Pivot Energy for investing in this program, and to Liz Reddington, Vice President of Project Development at Pivot Energy, for joining HIRE360 in celebrating this milestone. Congratulations to all of the graduates as they begin their careers in the skilled trades!



HIRE360 Joins Deloitte's WNBA Economic Empowerment Panel

During WNBA All-Star Weekend, HIRE360 Executive Director Jay Rowell joined [Deloitte's](#) Economic Empowerment Impact Lab for a conversation on how the sports industry can expand career and business opportunities across Chicago. Jay joined Awvee Storey, Executive Director of the [Chicago Sky Foundation](#), and Amy Mummery, Chicago City Director for [Laureus Sport for Good](#), to discuss expanding career pathways and economic opportunity.

During the panel, Jay shared HIRE360's approach to workforce development, highlighting the importance of strong partnerships, barrier reduction support, and creating opportunities that help people build long-term careers, including business ownership. The conversation around HIRE360's work continued into the next panel, where [After School Matters](#) also spoke about the program. Thank you to Deloitte and The Huddle for bringing together leaders from business, government, and the nonprofit sector for these important conversations.

Central and Southern Illinois Workforce

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.](#)

Corey Holmes Builds a Career in Carpentry

Although Corey Holmes grew up around construction, it wasn't until he purchased his own home that he realized he wanted to learn the trade for himself. Looking for an opportunity to build those skills, he enrolled in [HIRE360's Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) through [Lewis and Clark Community College](#), where hands-on training gave him the confidence to pursue a career in carpentry.

Today, Corey is a union carpenter apprentice and framer with [Carpenters Local 664](#), working on projects throughout the St. Louis region. Along the way, HIRE360 helped remove barriers by providing boots, a tool belt, assistance purchasing the tools required for the job, transportation support, and other resources. Congratulations to Corey as he continues building his career in the skilled trades.



Kevin Partee Joins Roofers Local 11

Before joining [HIRE360's Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) through [Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois](#), Kevin Partee worked a series of warehouse, manufacturing, and retail jobs while searching for a stable career that would provide a better future for his three sons. He remained committed to that goal even when challenges arose during the program. When Kevin struggled with math, HIRE360 connected him with a tutor, and after a car accident left him without a vehicle for two months, the team helped him get to class so he could stay on track and complete his training.

Today, Kevin is a union roofer apprentice with [Roofers Local 11](#), working for [Sterling Commercial Roofing](#). He credits the program with giving him the confidence to pursue a career in the skilled trades and the support he needed to succeed. Congratulations to Kevin as he continues building a brighter future for himself and his family.



Instructor Spotlight: Troy Lewis Inspires the Next Generation of Skilled Trades Professionals

Growing up, Troy Lewis never knew the union trades were a career option. Today, as an instructor for [HIRE360's Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) in partnership with the [East Central Illinois Building & Construction Trades Council](#), he's introducing participants to the opportunities he wishes he had known about sooner.

For Troy, that experience shapes the way he approaches his role as an instructor. Many participants enter the program with little or no experience in the trades, and he gets to watch them build their skills and confidence through hands-on projects, visits to job sites and training facilities, and exposure to local unions. One of the most rewarding parts of his work is seeing participants leave the program excited about their future and prepared to take the next step toward a union career.

Q: If you could give every participant one piece of advice before entering the trades, what would it be?

Troy: "Your reputation precedes you. Your name and the reputation attached to it, whether good or bad, often reach a contractor before you do. Because of that, it is important to demonstrate a strong work ethic, maintain a positive attitude, and represent your local



union to the best of your ability. Your reputation can be one of your greatest assets throughout your career.”

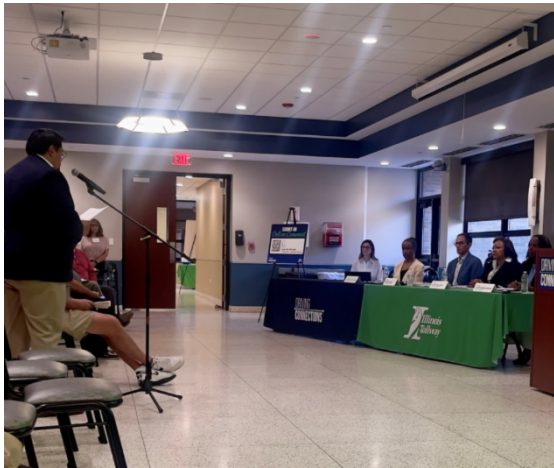
Business & Supply Chain

JPMorgan Chase Highlights HIRE360's Impact in New Chicago Video

[JPMorgan Chase](#) recently featured HIRE360 in its new Chicago Anthem video, highlighting the organization's work supporting minority- and women-owned businesses and expanding access to economic opportunity across Chicago. The video premiered during a Chicago reception with Tim Berry, JPMorganChase's Global Head of Corporate Responsibility, where civic, business, and community leaders gathered to discuss economic growth and workforce development.

As a valued funding partner, JPMorganChase supports HIRE360's business development work. Its funding through [Allies for Community Business](#) helps power HIRE360's Loan Pool Program, providing working capital to minority- and women-owned businesses as they grow and compete for new opportunities.

[Watch the Chicago Anthem video and learn more about JPMorganChase's impact in Chicago.](#)



HIRE360 Supports Illinois Tollway's Driving Connections Program

HIRE360 recently voiced its support for the [Illinois Tollway's proposed Driving Connections program](#), a \$26.5 billion, 15-year capital plan designed to expand regional access, promote economic growth, and create jobs across northern Illinois. As a member of the Illinois Tollway's Diversity Advisory Council, HIRE360 Business Development Manager Dave Thomas spoke in support of the proposal during a public hearing in Will County.

HIRE360 is committed to partnerships that create pathways into good careers and business opportunities. The Illinois Tollway's Driving Connections program is an important step toward that goal. To learn more about the proposed capital plan and toll rate update, visit www.IllinoisTollway.com/DrivingConnections.

Grow Your Business with the Cook County Small Business Source

If you're looking to start, grow, or expand your business, the [Cook County Small Business Source](#) is here to help. As Cook County's trusted network for small business support, it connects entrepreneurs with expert guidance, personalized business advising, and valuable resources—all at no cost.

Whether you need help developing a business plan, strengthening your marketing, preparing for funding opportunities, or navigating procurement opportunities, the Cook County Small Business Source's network of trusted advisors can support your business's growth.

Learn more and [connect with a business advisor today!](#)

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At the Cook County Small Business Source, you can connect with a supportive small business advisor who will guide you through every phase of your business, offering expert assistance to address all your needs — at no cost! Our business advisors can help you:

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Youth Engagement



Next Builders Students Build Skills and Explore New Careers

HIRE360's Next Builders Intro to Construction Trades program wrapped up this summer, with students completing six weeks of hands-on learning and career exploration in partnership with [After School Matters \(ASM\)](#), [Related Midwest](#), and [Related Affordable Foundation](#). Participants earned OSHA 10-Hour and CPR/First Aid certifications and built on their exposure to the construction industry through a visit to [Power Construction's](#) five-building data center job site in Hoffman Estates.

The program also included six weekly workshops with [Greencorps Chicago](#) focused on maintaining green spaces and related careers. Students put that learning into practice by building garden beds and planting herbs and other plants on South Wabash Avenue. They also learned road rules for biking in the city from the [Chicago Department of Transportation](#) and received bicycles and protective gear. Students researched green jobs using the REACH Pathways AI tool developed by REACH and HIRE360 before capping off the program by presenting what they learned at the ASM Showcase. Thank you to our partners for helping make these experiences possible!

In The News

Featured Story— HIRE360 and Pivot Energy Celebrate First Solar Boot Camp Graduating Cohort

This month, [Citizen Newspaper Group](#) highlighted HIRE360 and Pivot Energy's first Solar Boot Camp graduating cohort, showcasing the partnership's commitment to preparing participants for careers in the growing clean energy workforce. The story highlights the program's hands-on training, industry partnerships, and the graduates who are taking the next step toward careers in the skilled trades.

[Read the full story here](#)



HIRE360 AND PIVOT ENERGY CELEBRATED PIVOT SOLAR BOOT CAMP GRADUATION CEREMONY



HIRE360 also appeared in the news:

[Roofers Local 11's Donetta Thomas on Finding Her Path Through HIRE360 | America's Workforce Union Podcast](#)

[WGBO-TV \(Chicago, IL\) - Noticias Univision Chicago 5pm | Univision Chicago](#)

[HIRE360 and Pivot Energy Celebrate Pivot Solar Boot Camp Graduation Ceremony in Chicago | The Herald News](#)

[HIRE360, Pivot Energy Celebrate Pivot Solar Boot Camp Graduation Ceremony | Lawndale News](#)

- Also published in [Spanish](#)

Business Spotlight

RT Materials

Founded in 2009 and rebranded as [RT Materials](#) in 2023, RT Materials is a full-service building materials distributor serving contractors throughout the Chicagoland region. The company supplies a wide range of construction essentials, including drywall, lumber, metal framing, insulation, acoustical ceilings, fasteners, and other building materials for commercial, institutional, healthcare, residential, and public-sector projects.

Working with HIRE360, RT Materials is strengthening its business through introductions to major general contractors and support pursuing access to capital for future growth. The company is MBE, WBE, and DBE certified and is known for its dependable service and timely job-site delivery, helping keep projects on schedule.

To learn more about RT Materials, visit www.rtmaterials.com or contact the team at (312) 810-8808.





Our Mission is to Expand Employment Opportunities

Recruitment

Apprenticeship Openings

The following apprenticeship programs are **open now**:

Electrical

- [IBEW Local 134 \(Cook County – Alsip\)](#)
- [IBEW Local 176 \(Will County – Joliet\)](#)
- [IBEW Local 701 \(Cook & DuPage Counties – Westchester\)](#)

Pipefitters

- [UA Pipefitters Local 597 \(Cook County – Chicago\)](#)

Sheet Metal

- [Sheet Metal Workers Local 265](#)

Iron and Structural

- [Iron Workers Locals 63, 444, and 498](#)

Concrete and Laborers

- [Cement Masons Local 502 \(Cook County – Bellwood\)](#)
- [Chicagoland Laborers District Council](#)
- [Bricklayers District Council Training Center \(DuPage County – Addison\)](#)

Roofing, Finishing, and Glass

- [Roofers Local 11 \(Cook County – La Grange\)](#)
- [Finishing Trades Institute – DC 14 \(Cook County – Berkeley\)](#)
- [Glaziers Local 27 \(Cook County – Lyons\)](#)

Heavy Equipment

- [Operating Engineers Local 150 \(Wilmington - Will County\)](#)

Need Help Applying?

Our team is here to support you with apprenticeship test preparation, resume updates, recommendation letters, and understanding application requirements.

Contact your Candidate Support Advisor (formerly Case Manager):

- Phone: [\(312\) 575-2500](tel:(312)575-2500)
- Email: info@HIRE360Chicago.com

If you are serious about building a career, not just finding a job, now is the time to apply! We are proud to support pathways into union, family-sustaining careers.

HIRE360

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