



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

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DCEO Announces Apprenticeship PLUS Program Pilot Locations

Program offers workforce training to disadvantaged youth

SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced the locations of the initial Apprenticeship PLUS pilots under the Governor's Cabinet for Children and Youth. The pilots specifically target both in-school and-out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and 24, and provide them with specific career education, a chance to earn industry-recognized credentials and do on-the-job training.

"One of our main goals at DCEO is to train and cultivate the best workforce in the country," said DCEO Director Sean McCarthy. "A well-trained workforce is the greatest asset a company can have. By investing in apprenticeship programs and the future of hard working Illinoisans, especially our young people, we are creating an Illinois that offers an attractive environment for job creators and unlimited opportunities for workers."

In fall 2016, DCEO was awarded two U.S. Department of Labor grants totaling \$1.5 million to support Illinois' apprenticeship expansion efforts. Julio Rodriguez, Deputy Director of DCEO's Office of Employment & Training, is overseeing the implementation of these programs with the guidance of the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB).

"Apprenticeships have long been misunderstood as something only useful to certain fields, but the reality is that our workforce can benefit from apprenticeships in every sector," Rodriguez said. "They offer a hands-on approach that takes young people beyond the typical classroom experience and equips them with the tools they need for a successful career. By focusing on both in-school and-out-of-school youth, we hope these programs will highlight the true value of apprenticeships and how they can meet the needs of both businesses and workers."

The pilot locations are spread across three targeted economic development regions: Northeast, North Central and Southern, and encompass four identified industries: healthcare, IT, construction and manufacturing.

YouthBuild, Normal

Industry: Construction, Health and IT

Youth Served: 85

DCEO Funding: \$250,000

Description: This project will provide participants with training in construction, healthcare and information technology. Participants will attend academic and vocational training to increase skills, complete secondary school and obtain industry recognized credentials.

Methodist College, Peoria

Industry: Health

Youth Served: 8

DCEO Funding: \$250,000

Description: This project will give youth with a GED or high school diploma training to earn a Certified Nursing Assistant credential and a Certified Medical Assistant credential, while working for project partner Unity Health and accumulating college credit to apply to a bachelor's in nursing degree.

Peoria Public Schools

Industry: Health and IT

Youth Served: 50

DCEO Funding: \$245,000

Description: High school juniors and seniors will have the option to participate in a pre-apprenticeship program in either healthcare or information technology to earn industry credentials and/or post-secondary certificates.

City of Peoria

Industry: Construction

Youth Served: 20

DCEO Funding: \$205,000

Description: Recent GED graduates will be provided work-readiness and skills training in preparation of an apprenticeship in the construction trades. In addition to work-based learning, youth participants will receive financial literacy training, work stipends and supportive services.

Man-Tra-Con, Marion

Industry: Manufacturing

Youth Served: 20

DCEO Funding: \$291,500

Description: Youth from Franklin, Jackson, Williamson, Jefferson and Perry counties will obtain the Manufacturing Skills Standards Certification (MSCC) Certified

Production Technician (CPT) credential. Participants will also be given opportunities to work toward their GED, receive industry credentials and college credit toward an AAS degree from project partners John Logan Community College or Rend Lake Community College.

Prairie State College, Chicago Heights

Industry: IT

Youth Served: 30

DCEO Funding: \$276,500

Description: Youth from five high schools in Chicago's Southland will receive both classroom instruction and hands-on training toward credentials as a Cisco Network Associate. In addition, participants will earn 22 college credits, and, at the end of the program, will continue college or enter an IT apprenticeship program.

Opportunity Advancement Innovation (OAI Inc.), Chicago

Industry: Manufacturing

Youth Served: 16

DCEO Funding: \$285,000

Description: This project partners experienced organizations in Chicago's Southland to provide academic and technical training in advanced manufacturing to participating youth. They will receive college credit and industry recognized credentials such as National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) certificates.

Phalanx Family Services, Chicago

Industry: Construction

Youth Served: 25

DCEO Funding: \$250,000

Description: This project offers youth in Calumet and Thornton townships the opportunity to participate in 88-hour core training and then choose between two follow-up training tracks in either construction technology or weatherization/HVAC. Participants earn National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) credentials as well as community college credit.

Manufacturing Renaissance, Chicago

Industry: Manufacturing

Youth Served: 50

DCEO Funding: \$235,000

Description: In partnership with Youth Guidance and Bowen High School, low-income youth in Chicago's Southland will receive manufacturing training through a new, specifically designed facility as well as professional skill development workshops.

Each pilot will run for a year before being evaluated to learn how to further expand apprenticeship programs throughout the state.

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