



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Date: August 3, 2022

DCEO Contact:

DCEO.media@illinois.gov

EDA Contact

John Atwood

JAtwood@eda.gov

Critical Illinois Workforce Programs Receive \$33 Million in Highly-Competitive American Rescue Plan Good Jobs Challenge Grants

American Rescue Plan Good Jobs Challenge funding will support innovative workforce programs in Chicago and East Peoria

CHICAGO – The U.S. Department of Commerce today announced that the Department’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding \$33 million in American Rescue Plan Good Jobs Challenge grants to fund two critical workforce programs in Illinois. The investment includes \$18.5 million for the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, which will create sustainable pipelines to good-paying jobs, and \$14.7 million to Illinois Central College in East Peoria which will create an IT training program in partnership with local companies.

“President Biden is committed to expanding career opportunities for more Americans to secure good-paying jobs,” **said Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo**. “This EDA investment supports ready-to-scale projects that will significantly expand training opportunities to strengthen the pipeline in key industries in East Peoria and Chicago.”

The program is awarding grants to [32 worker-centered, industry-led workforce training partnerships](#) across the country from a competitive pool of [509 applicants](#). The \$500 million program is expanding opportunities for more Americans to access and secure good-paying jobs by investing in innovative approaches to advance worker-centered, industry-led workforce training partnerships.

“A strong workforce pipeline with integrated support along the way is essential for giving all Illinoisans a pathway to success,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “As industries across Illinois are rapidly growing, it’s important that our workforce not only expand, but also learn new skills for the jobs of the future. This funding will give local organizations the tools to educate workers and build a stronger future for our state.

The Illinoisans served by these programs want to grow and succeed, and I'm thrilled that President Biden's administration is partnering with our state to ensure they have the opportunity to do so."

"Our communities are made stronger when the federal government invests in the workforce. With this funding, innovative programs in Chicago and East Peoria will be able to provide valuable job training and placement," **said Senator Dick Durbin**. "I look forward to seeing more Illinoisans thrive economically through this federally-supported programming."

"It's long overdue that we make sure residents in East Peoria and Chicago's South and West sides get the support they need to provide more opportunities for good-paying, local jobs," **said Senator Tammy Duckworth**. "When we use the American Rescue Plan to empower working families of color and share tools for economic development, we are building a more diverse, equitable and resilient Illinois."

"These Federal Good Jobs Challenge Grants build on the important work Illinois is doing to grow our top talent and make sure the Illinois economy works for everyone," **said DCEO Director Sylvia I. Garcia**. "By investing in innovative, worker-centric training programs designed to support historically underserved communities we're growing our Illinois economy, supporting key industries, and providing skills and career paths for folks that need it most."

The \$18.5 million grant for the Good Jobs Chicago project awarded to the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership creates a pipeline for good-paying jobs with a focus on underrepresented communities on Chicago's South and West Sides. The project will partner with local organizations to train and place individuals in four sectors critical to Chicago's economy, healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, distribution, and logistics and information technology.

"In its notice that our proposal had been chosen, the EDA stated that it stood out for 'its ability to create good job opportunities for Americans to help local industries and economies develop the skilled workforce needed to innovate and compete globally,'" **says Partnership Interim CEO Patrick Combs**. "We are thrilled to have been chosen in such a competitive process and look forward to investing these funds to foster employer-led workforce training in high-demand, high-growth sectors, to reach underserved communities with career-pathway job opportunities."

The \$14.7 million grant to Illinois Central College in East Peoria will train low-income residents in information technology. The program will leverage partnerships with employers who have committed to providing wraparound services to trainees and eventually hiring trainees. With a focus on equity, Illinois Central College will also partner with several community-based organizations to support and train workers.

"We could not be more excited about what the Good Jobs grant will mean to Central Illinois. This nearly \$15 million in resources will allow us to credential 1,000+ IT professionals who will be placed into or retained in quality jobs through a collaborative effort across higher education, businesses and community and economic developed organizations throughout the greater Peoria region." **Dr. Sheila Quirk-Bailey, President of Illinois Central College**.

In Illinois and throughout the country, these projects provide opportunities and security for workers, focusing on serving and supporting a broad range of underserved communities and connecting workers

with the training, skills, and support services needed to successfully secure a good job. For more information on the program awards nationally, please visit EDA's [fact sheet](#). (PDF)

The Good Jobs Challenge is part of a suite of American Rescue Plan programs developed by EDA to equitably distribute its \$3 billion allocation to assist communities nationwide in their efforts to build a better America by accelerating economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and building local economies that will be more resilient to future economic shocks.

About the U.S. Economic Development Administration (www.eda.gov)

The mission of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing the nation's regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA invests in communities and supports regional collaboration in order to create jobs for U.S. workers, promote American innovation, and accelerate long-term sustainable economic growth.

###