



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity

OFFICE OF URBAN ASSISTANCE
Bruce Rauner, Governor

December 31, 2016

Dear Governor and Members of the General Assembly:

The Employment Opportunities Grant Program (EOGP) (20 ILCS 605/605-812) requires the Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (Department) to administer a grant program designed to expand employment opportunities for targeted populations in eligible grant areas in Illinois, and report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the activities undertaken by awardees. For your review, below please find a program summary for 2016.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The goal of EOGP is to prepare targeted populations – minorities, women, homeless, the long-term unemployed, veterans, youth aging out of foster care, and ex-offenders – to enter and complete building trades pre-apprenticeship programs, apprenticeship programs, and/or obtain employment in the building trades industry.

After addressing challenges from the last several fiscal years and with improved program standards, in fiscal year (FY) 2014 EOGP released a competitive Request for Application (RFA) with a \$1,250,000 appropriation, awarding 14 grants. Appropriation for EOGP was not included in the budgets for Fiscal Years (FY) 2016 or 2017. Calendar year 2016 has been dedicated to review and close-out of the FY14 EOGP grants to ensure adherence to fiscal and programmatic guidelines. Currently, there are no active EOGP grants.

PROGRAM MODEL

The EOGP program model continues to focus on the core fundamentals of the building trades industry by providing program participants with exposure to the technical skills, basic soft skills and on-the-job training deemed necessary to be successful in the construction industry. This knowledge and understanding of the industry will enable many program participants to become self-employed entrepreneurs, continue their education and pursue careers in the building trades and/or construction industry.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Cumulative EOGP performance metrics for most recent grant period, 5/1/14-12/31/15

# of individuals accepted into a program	723		
# of individuals who completed a program	507		
# of program completers accepted into apprenticeship program	110	22%	Percentage of program completers
# of program completers placed in building trades employment (union and/or non-union)	164	32%	
# of program completers entering non-union non-building trades employment*	84	17%	
# program completers becoming self-employed entrepreneurs	24	4%	
# of program completers continuing education	150	30%	

**While the goal of EOGP is to provide building trades employment opportunities, construction jobs are still limited following the most recent recession. The Department now asks grantees to track non-building trades employment obtained by its participants, recognizing that EOGP participants gain job and life skills that are applicable in other fields of work.*

Qualitative Results

Program participants who successfully complete their EOGP-funded training program are armed with the skills necessary to enter a building trades apprenticeship program or building trades employment, and ultimately have increased opportunities in jobs where they can earn a living wage. In turn, this impacts the Illinois economy by creating a stronger pipeline of trained workers who are able to obtain and keep jobs in the building trades industry. Opening these doors increases diversity within the industry and prepares more individuals for careers in a vital field, which will help keep the workforce strong and competitive and provide better opportunities for Illinois’ working families.

GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS & SUCCESS STORIES

Community College District No 508 – Dawson Technical Institute

Through the program implemented by Community College Dawson Technical Institute 508 there were 71 program completers:

- 27 completed the overhead lineman program, 9 of which are now employed by ComEd.
- 14 participants completed the plumbing program; 1 participant was hired by an independent plumbing contractor; 1 participant passed the apprenticeship test at Local 130 Chicago Journeymen Plumbers Union; and 1 participant has been hired as an apprentice with the City of Chicago. For students who haven’t been hired, they are recommended to the parent college (Kennedy-King) to continue plumbing training in piping so they can move into HVAC work.
- 22 participants completed the construction carpentry program. To date, one participant has been accepted into the carpentry apprenticeship school and another who just passed the test. Another student was hired as a construction manager and another was hired as an engineer for Walmart.
- 8 participants completed the concrete masonry program and several participants have continued with additional courses in the construction field and welding at Dawson.

Homework Hangout Club, Inc

Decatur’s Homework Hangout Club, Inc. (HHC) collaborated with the Painters District Council #58 to provide 240 hours of pre-apprenticeship training to participants. Twenty five individuals graduated from this

Transitional Trade Services Program. They were instructed in drywall and painting along with tools, material handling, and project budgeting and planning for both of these trades. Each class utilized hands-on training including 120 hours of practice drywall hanging and painting on 8 foot-high, 10 foot-by-10-ft room mockups that were constructed by the participants, the Painters, and with the assistance of other local trade unions. As a result of EOGP, HHC began an extended working relationship with the Carpenters, Plumbers/Pipefitters, and Laborers unions, along with the Painters, to begin developing future pre-apprenticeship programs to increase the number of minorities and women in the trade unions. Of the 25 graduates:

- 24 participants have obtained and retained employment; 1 participant has become an independent contractor.
- 15 participants have obtained and retained employment within the building trades.
- 9 participants have been placed within union apprenticeships (6 Painters, 2 Operators, 1 Laborer) as a result of also obtaining employment with union contractors. Other participants are waiting on placement with the Painters union pending employment with union contractors.
- 1 participant has also entered post-secondary education concurrent with her union employment.

Illinois Central College

Illinois Central College received funding the Department as well as the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council, the City of Peoria, and Peoria County to implement their Employment Opportunities Grant Program. Additional support for the program was provided by area Union Construction Contractors and Apprenticeship Schools.

Of ICC's 38 program completers, 55 applications for apprenticeship were submitted, with some participants applying to multiple trades. Many of these applicants are on the "eligible" list for Laborers and are in the process of improving their ranking. Other applicants are awaiting testing dates and/or interviews. Please note that several apprenticeships have not opened their application periods yet and only open once per year or once every two years. One completer is currently employed as a member of Laborers Local 165; two completers have been invited to the next Steamfitters Apprenticeship class beginning in January; two completers were employed as Operating Engineers while on permit; and one completer is employed as a Roofers Apprentice.

KEY ISSUES/NOTES

- In the future, the Department may pursue inter-agency networking to strengthen EOGP. Developing relationships with the Capital Development Board, Public Building Commission, Department of Transportation, Department of Labor Apprenticeship Program, Chicago and Cook County Building and Construction Trades Council, and large contractors would be a stepping stone to ensuring that program completers have a pipeline for entry into a building trades apprenticeship and/or building trades employment.
- If the program is fully funded, the Department may seek to establish an EOGP consortium to maximize the partnership among grantees, construction contractors and organized labor to address historical under-representation. This collaboration would be vital to the development of a customized curriculum which would ensure program participants are armed with the skill sets to be successful in building trades apprenticeship or employment.
- The Department modified all FY14 grant agreements to include verbiage requiring grantees to provide information on former participants' building trades progression on a semi-annual basis for four years

following the end of the grant term due to the time it takes to enter a building trades apprenticeship and attain journey-level status within a building trades union.

The Department has implemented a number of changes that have strengthened EOGP. These changes include implementation of fiscal and programmatic guidelines, revised reporting forms, introduction of a quarterly report review form, and increased monitoring and communication with grantees to ensure fiscal and programmatic compliance. Our primary objective remains increasing building trades employment opportunities for targeted populations. We will continue working to improve outcomes for EOGP participants.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean McCarthy
Acting Director