



# NEWS

**JB Pritzker, Governor**

**Michael D. Kleinik, Director**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **State of Illinois Celebrates National Apprenticeship Week** *Pritzker Administration Increasing Access to Apprenticeship Opportunities Throughout Illinois*

**SPRINGFIELD** – In honor of the seventh annual National Apprenticeship Week, Governor JB Pritzker issued a proclamation highlighting the importance of apprenticeships in expanding career opportunities for Illinoisans of all backgrounds and ages. The Pritzker administration has prioritized expanding access to apprenticeship programs, making critical investments in legislation and programming to reduce barriers to high-wage jobs.

“Apprenticeships provide Illinois workers the skills they need to learn on the job while still earning a salary. They also pave the path for long-term success and well-paying jobs for thousands of workers across the state,” **said Illinois Department of Labor Director Michael Kleinik.**

Earlier this year, the administration launched the new Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Training program, made possible through \$10 million in State funding. The program will provide additional training opportunities with the goal of expanding the talent pipeline while boosting diversity specifically within the construction industry and building trades. The program is managed by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) which housing the Illinois Works Office.

“Illinois is proud to boast one of the most skilled workforces in the nation - and our continued investments in apprenticeship training programs are a critical part of our economic future. Under Governor Pritzker’s leadership, expanding workforce training is a central focus of our 5-year plan - including creating equitable access to apprenticeship training programs aligned to the needs our employers have today and to keep our communities competitive for the future,” **said Sylvia Garcia, Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.**

DCEO is focused on establishing a strong network of providers across the state to recruit, prescreen, and provide pre-apprenticeship training so more individuals can take advantage of apprenticeship opportunities.

“This apprenticeship was something I’ve wanted for a while,” said **Kianna Pittman, a graduate of the Woodruff Career and Technical Center pre-apprenticeship program in Peoria.** “Now that I’m finally here being a part of it, it feels great. Woodruff made sure I was Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 30 Certified, CPR certified, forklift certified. They made sure I knew all the names for common tools, basic safety regulations, and even gave me my own set of steel-toe boots and tool bag for my internship senior year.”

In addition to the \$10 million commitment in pre-apprenticeship programs, the Pritzker administration has taken several other steps to increase access to apprenticeship opportunities throughout Illinois – a priority outlined in the state’s 5-year economic plan. Key investments so far include the passage of bipartisan legislation to create the Illinois apprenticeship tax credit, funding additional workforce training partners and sites statewide, and creation of a new apprenticeship navigators model focused on increasing equity in apprenticeship positions funded in Illinois across all industries.

In addition to Governor Pritzker’s National Apprenticeship Proclamation, there are nine city-wide proclamations and more than a dozen building and trades proclamations. More than 40 events are taking place both in-person and virtually during National Apprenticeship Week 2021. More information about NAW2021 events can be found here: [National Apprenticeship Week](#).