



February 2026 BCP Newsletter

Connect with Career Services to Find a Bid Credit Eligible Apprentice

If you are a contractor looking for qualified talent for your company, **Illinois Works is here to support you.** The [Illinois Works Career Services](#) team is available to quickly connect you with Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program graduates located throughout the State of Illinois. All Illinois Works graduates have been thoroughly vetted and are ready and able to make a career in construction and the trades. They have all earned nationally-recognized construction certifications, including NCCER, MC3, or ICCB, OSHA-10, and First Aid/CPR.



Simply complete the [Illinois Works Job Order Request](#) online to submit job orders to the Career Services team. This immediately triggers a job matching process that produces a list of graduates that meet the criteria you specify. The list provided to you includes the graduates' contact information, updated resumes, construction trade interest and experience, availability and earned certifications. From this list you can identify and directly contact graduates who are available for employment and sponsorship into a Department of Labor (DOL) Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP).

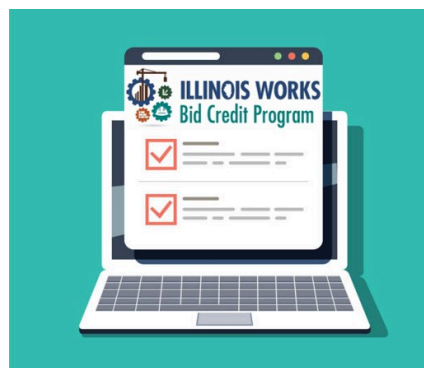
You can also submit a [Graduate List Request](#) if you are interested in obtaining a customized list of Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship graduates based on location (county, distance from a job site) or trade interests, among others.

All Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program graduates are trained, ready, willing, and able to begin working on your job site today! These graduates also carry with them compliance credits for the Illinois Works Apprenticeship Initiative and are eligible to earn large amounts of bid credits through the Bid Credit Program for contractors or subcontractors that hire them.

If you need additional information about Career Services or are interested in getting connected with an Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program graduate, you can email Victor Castillo at Victor.Castillo2@illinois.gov or CEO.ILWCareerServices@illinois.gov.

**Need Help Navigating
the IL Works Bid Credit
Program?**

We're Here to Help!



Join our Technical Assistance open office hours, held **EVERY Thursday from 10am-11am**. No RSVP is required!! Drop in anytime between 10am - 11am for individualized, one-on-one assistance with technological tools or just general questions about IL Works Bid Credit Program. We can even help get you registered with the Bid Credit Program, complete an Apprentice Report (to request bid credits), or direct you to Career Services so you can find your next Qualified Apprentice.

Join the Webex link below:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m91f9558125f6f6179e96d9c10a962208>

You can also email us directly at CEO.BidCreditProgram@illinois.gov. We look forward to hearing from you!

HIRE360 - Jesse Freeman, Plumbers Local 130 UA Apprentice

Jesse Freeman, a proud Chicago native, husband, and father of two, grew up in Bronzeville and on the West-Side. Determined to build a stable future for his family, including a high school senior and a young son with autism, he worked in maintenance, metalwork, janitorial services, and property management before pursuing a career in the trades.



Through HIRE360, Jesse gained the resources, mentorship, and guidance to take that next step forward. With the support of his case managers, he is now thriving as an apprentice with Plumbers Local 130 UA.

Jesse's journey reflects the resilience, hard work, and commitment that define HIRE360 participants and showcases the impact of providing pathways to long-term success in the trades.



How Can You Start Earning Bid Credits?

FIRST, in order for you to earn Bid Credits, your employee/apprentice **MUST** be a **Qualified Apprentice**. What exactly is a Qualified Apprentice? A Qualified Apprentice is an employee who meets **ALL** of the following criteria:

- has graduated from an **Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program**
- is actively enrolled in a USDOL-Registered Apprenticeship Program in the construction trades
- is 6 years or less from the date enrolled in the USDOL- Registered Apprenticeship Program

If you have hired a **Qualified Apprentice**, here is an example of how much you **could** earn in a year (Using the highest and lowest paid trades according to IDOL):

Trade Title	Mean Prevailing Wage Effective 1/30/2026	Bid Credit Earnings for 1 Year (2,080 hours)	Bid Credit Earnings for 6 Years (12,480 hours)

Electric Power Lineman	\$65.47	\$68,088.80	\$408,532.80
Painter Over 30 Ft.	\$34.61	\$35,994.40	\$215,966.40

(Bid Credits can be calculated by taking the hours your Qualified Apprentice worked X the mean prevailing wage for the trade worked X \$0.50)

Find out how much your trade can earn!

[Click Here!](#)

2026 IL Works Pre-apprenticeship Grantee Onboarding Meeting



(Pictured above: Victor Castillo, ILW Program Analyst, facilitating the *Career Pathway Management Platform and Demo / Job & Career (101ABC) Transition Services Coordinators ILW Technologies* session.)

The Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (ILWPP) held the 2026 ILWPP Grantee Onboarding Meeting at the NIU Conference Center in Naperville on January 28. Participants included both new and renewing grantee award recipients (2025 NOFO), as well as returning grantees, selected to facilitate an ILW Construction Pre-apprenticeship Training Program through as a partner organization. The IL Works Team, along with the NIU Professional Development Team, hosted nearly 40 grantee organizations with over 120 total participants in attendance.

Are you already a Registered Bid Credit Program Contractor looking to start earning bid credits? The next step is to hire your next *Qualified Apprentice* who graduated from an ILW Pre-apprenticeship Program! Just complete the [Illinois Works Job Order Request](#) for a full list of ILWPP Grantees available through our [Career Services Team](#) to get started!

[Read More Here!](#)

Newsletter Highlight & ILWPP Graduate Success Stories

We love graduate success stories! We also would love a chance to feature your company/organization/graduate in our newsletter!

Do you have an ILWPP graduate/apprentice that you would like to recognize for their remarkable achievement or for overcoming a significant challenge?

If so, please submit the following [form](#) and someone from the BCP team will be in touch with you.

BCP Newsletter Highlight Form

January 2026 New Contractor Shoutout!

- Conference Technologies, Inc.
- Day 1 Heating and Cooling



Bid Credit Launch Q&A

Click on each box for the answer!

How Much Can I Earn?

Is My Apprenticeship Bid Credit Eligible?

Bid Credit Submission Tips?

Illinois Works In the News

- [Illinois Ranks #1 for Workforce Development in Midwest, Climbs to #3 in the Nation](#)
- [Illinois pre-apprenticeship programs boost tradesworker diversity](#)
- [Illinois leads Midwest in workforce development](#)
- [HIRE360 To Celebrate First Graduating Class Of Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program In Will County](#)



Upcoming Bid Credit Program Events

Association of Subcontractors and Affiliates (ASA) [Construction Expo & Safety Conference 2026](#)

March 3, 2026
9 am - 4 pm
Oakbrook Terrace, IL

Illinois [Transportation and Highway Engineering \(T.H.E.\) Conference](#)

March 4, 2026
7 am - 12 pm
Champaign, IL

If you have an upcoming meeting or event where you think the BCP Team could outreach the advantages of the program to your organization, email us at CEO.BidCreditProgram@illinois.gov.

Upcoming Bid Credit Program Webinars

Advantages of the Bid Credit Program Webinar

Effectively Earning Bid Credits Webinar

This **UPDATED** informational webinar will provide updates from the administrative rules that have been approved.

This **NEW** webinar will provide instructions on how to use our Bid Credit platform and how to earn Bid Credits.

Please check our [website](#) for upcoming dates and times for both webinars! Keep an eye out for another email from us with webinar dates and times, as well as registration links!

Timeline to Launch

Are you prepared now that the BCP has launched? Please follow the steps below to ensure your company is ready:

1. [Register](#) for your own BCP Account Number
2. Bookmark the [BCP Webpage](#)
3. [Request](#) an ILWPP graduate
4. Review the [Contractor Registry](#) for networking opportunities
5. Begin requesting Bid Credits for a qualified apprentice using the [Bid Credit Apprentice Report](#)



Learn more about the Bid Credit Program

[Illinois Works Bid Credit Program](#)

[Illinois Works Graduate Request](#)

[Contractor Registration Form](#)

[Bid Credit Apprentice Report](#)

[Bid Credit Certificate Request](#)



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