

Illinois Works Apprenticeship Program Guidance

Version 1, as of April 9, 2026

The Illinois Works Apprenticeship program ensures qualified construction and building trades apprentices participate in state-funded projects to gain experience which prepares them to enter into full-time careers in the construction and building trades industry.

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Illinois Works Participation

Grant-funded capital projects for the construction of infrastructure within Illinois may be required to use apprentices from established sources. Project dollar amount thresholds impact requirements:

- **Projects >\$500,000:** Illinois Works participation is required for projects where the award and match totals more than \$500,000.
- **Projects >\$500,000 with >50% match:** Projects that exceed \$500,000 with a match of more than 50% of the project total will have a reduced Illinois Works' goal.
- **Projects <\$500,000:** Projects under \$500,000 are not subject to Illinois Works requirements.

Goal Determination

Once the grant agreement is executed by both parties, the grantee has 90 days to submit the Illinois Works Budget Supplement to the IOB. The grantee's assigned grant manager will send the Budget Supplement form to the grantee to complete with information regarding the project workforce. The Budget Supplement establishes:

- The [Prevailing Wage job classification](#) titles involved in the project; and
- The number of hours of work estimated for the project.

The apprentice goal is set at 10% of the hours projected to complete the project for each job classification. Meaning, the grantee must ensure that 10% of the hours worked for each job classification are completed by apprentices from U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)-certified apprenticeship programs.



There are a variety of paths to hire qualified apprentices for the project. Workers must be hired from approved apprenticeship programs to count towards this goal. Approved programs include:

- **Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Programs** - Illinois Works has established a network of community-based, nonprofit organizations throughout Illinois to provide services free of charge to recruit, pre-screen and provide pre-apprenticeship skills training.
- **Union Programs** - Local unions commonly establish apprenticeship programs. These must meet the USDOL criteria for a certified program.
- **Non-Union Programs** - Trade associations may establish apprenticeship programs. These must meet the USDOL criteria for a certified program.
- **Grantee-Sponsored Programs** - A grantee may establish an apprenticeship program and obtain certification through USDOL, then hire apprentices directly for work on the project.

The grantee must ensure that for each prevailing wage classification title, 10% of the hours worked are completed by an apprentice. Of this 10%:

- A minimum of 5% **must** come from graduates of an Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program.
- The remaining 5% can come from **any** of the approved program options listed above.

Illinois Works Goal Waiver

There are certain scenarios in which a grantee may request an Illinois Works waiver. All waiver requests will receive a determination from the Office of Illinois Works. As applicable, IOB grants managers will provide grantees with the necessary forms and guidance to request a waiver.

Types of Waivers:

1. *Waiver of the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program* - In the event there are insufficient graduates from these programs to meet the 5% minimum required for the overall 10% goal, grantees may request a waiver.
 - **Instructions:** Submit a letter from a USDOL-registered apprenticeship program documenting the lack of available graduates for each wage classification, or a letter from the Illinois Works Career Services Team documenting the lack of graduates in a particular region of the state.
 - If approved, the 5% minimum requirement to source hours from an Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program no longer applies, but the 10% goal continues to apply. *The 10% goal must be met by the alternative programs listed above.*
2. *Full or Partial Waiver of the 10% goal* – In the event there are insufficient graduates from any program to meet the 10% goal, grantees may request a waiver.
 - **Instructions:** Provide the following documentation from the contractor hired to build the project:
 - Union-affiliated contractors must:
 - Provide written confirmation from the local union that no apprentices are available during the time of the project build.
 - Provide list of additional steps taken to obtain apprentices (i.e. contact with other local unions, contact with non-union sponsored apprenticeship programs, etc.).

- Non-Union affiliated contractors must:
 - Provide written confirmation from non-union contractor/trade association that provides apprentices that none are available.
 - Provide list of additional steps taken to obtain apprentices (i.e. contact with other local unions, contact with non-union sponsored apprenticeship programs, etc.).
 - Provide an explanation why sponsoring an apprenticeship program is not feasible.

Grantee Obligation

The Illinois Works program will require thorough documentation throughout the project, including completion of the following IOB-provided templates:

- **Budget Supplement** - Establishes the projected work hours for each classification title along with the apprenticeship goals. May be modified if projections change.
- **Periodic Report** - Reports quarterly hours worked on the project for each classification title. Reviewed by IOB and Illinois Works to determine if the project is on track to meet the goals.
- **Certification to Close Out Project** - Submit when the apprenticeship goals have been met for all classification titles. Once this is approved, a grantee has completed the Illinois Works requirement.

Consequences for Noncompliance

A Noncompliance Action Plan must be filled out for each project that is determined to close without being Illinois Works-compliant.

The Office of Illinois Works publishes project compliance data for the Apprenticeship Initiative on their [website](#) every quarter. Data includes the following for each county where project work takes place:

- Project location by county
- Number of individuals graduated from an IL Works Pre-Apprenticeship program within the county
- Five IL Works Pre-Apprenticeship programs closest to the county
- Whether the project met Illinois Works goals (both the full Illinois Works apprentice 10% goal and the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program 5% goal)
- Whether there were waivers or reductions to either the full Illinois Works apprentice requirement or the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program requirement (will indicate granted and/or denied, along with reasoning for each)

Applicable Illinois Works Guidance

- Rules that pertain to Illinois Works regulations: [Admin Rules Title 44 Part 30](#)
- IOB document and guidance of Illinois works as it pertains to BEAD: [BEAD Benefit of the Bargain Round Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#)
- Illinois Works website: [Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program - Illinois Works](#)