



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

JB Pritzker, Governor

August 1, 2020

The Illinois General Assembly
Illinois State Complex
Springfield, IL 62706

**Re: Report on the Evaluation of the Apprenticeship Initiative and
Preapprenticeship Program**

Dear General Assembly Members:

Per 30 ILCS 559/20-25(e), the Illinois Works Review Panel (the “Panel”) is required to report to the General Assembly on its evaluation of the Illinois Works Apprenticeship Initiative (the “Apprenticeship Initiative”) and the Illinois Works Preapprenticeship Program (the “Preapprenticeship Program”). These programs were established in the Illinois Works Jobs Program Act (PA 101-0031), which was signed into law on June 28, 2019 and amended on December 10, 2019 (PA 101-0601). The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (“DCEO”) is responsible for administering these programs but did not receive funding to administer the statutory requirements until FY 21.

Apprenticeship Initiative

The Apprenticeship Initiative sets a statutory goal for contractors, subcontractors and grantees on public works projects to use apprentices for 10% of hours worked in each prevailing wage classification.

The Act as amended during the 2019 veto session clarified that the 10% apprentice goal applies to contracts and grants for appropriated capital public works projects estimated to cost \$500,000 or more. After the passage of the amendment, DCEO worked with the thirteen state agencies impacted by the Apprenticeship Initiative to develop emergency rules that would allow them to forward with implementation.

DCEO pre-filed the emergency rules with the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) on February 11 and JCAR returned comments on March 4, 2020. DCEO revised the emergency rules to address JCAR’s comments and was preparing to file the emergency rules when the Governor’s Stay at Home order resulted in a temporary shift of DCEO’s available resources to pandemic management. The emergency rules were still filed on May 8, 2020.

Impacted agencies have recently incorporated the Apprenticeship Initiative requirements into all of their contracts and grant agreements. As a result, the Panel does not yet have information to report on the use of apprentices under the Apprenticeship Initiative.

Preapprenticeship Program

The Preapprenticeship Program is designed to create a network of community-based organizations throughout the State. That network will recruit, prescreen, and provide preapprenticeship skills training for which participants may attend free of charge and receive a stipend. One of the primary goals of the program is to create a qualified, diverse pipeline of workers who are prepared for careers in the construction and building trades. Upon completion of the Illinois Works Preapprenticeship Program, the candidates will be skilled and work-ready to enter USDOL-certified Apprenticeship programs.

The Preapprenticeship Program will be funded by a \$25,000,000 appropriation from the Illinois Works Fund. However, the Preapprenticeship grant funding will be provided via an appropriation from the Rebuild Illinois Projects Fund, which is dependent on initial licensing fees related to gaming expansion that have not yet been received.

DCEO is moving forward with necessary steps to implement the Preapprenticeship Program once the funding is in place. DCEO is in the process of creating a Notice of Funding Opportunity (the “NOFO”) for the Preapprenticeship Program. On July 20, 2020, the Panel met and discussed ways to ensure that the NOFO can be designed and tailored to achieve the goals of the program. The Panel will continue to work with DCEO on the NOFO design so that it will be timely issued once DCEO receives funding.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christian Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a vertical line to the left of the name.

DCEO Designee to the Illinois Works Review Panel