

# Belt Commends Over \$750,000 For Belleville, East St. Louis Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

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**EAST ST. LOUIS** – State Senator Christopher Belt announced that two organizations in his district have received funding through the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program.

“We must remain dedicated to promoting diversity in the trades, which is exactly what this funding will do,” said Belt (D-Swansea). “Expanding the reach our trades have will empower individuals with valuable skills while ensuring our workforce is inclusive and representative of our communities.”

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity awarded over \$18 million in grants to 36 recipients through the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program, including \$355,542 to Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville and \$440,000 to Teens Against Killing Everywhere in East St. Louis. The program creates a diverse pool of talented and qualified candidates in construction and building trades, and helps participants secure employment and establish a career in the field.

The Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program launched in 2021 with the goal of increasing diversity and access to apprenticeship programs. Pre-apprenticeship programs are comprehensive and help participants gain admission to apprenticeship programs, which provide a greater opportunity for obtaining employment in the construction trades and securing a lifelong career.

“This funding represents a critical investment in the future success of our communities,” said Belt. “We’re creating pathways for our residents to gain expertise and contribute to the workforce meaningfully, helping to create a stronger, more affluent society.”

To learn more about the grant funding and view the full list of recipients, visit [here](#).