

ComEd Expanding Opportunity for Local Minority Candidates

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CHICAGO--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

ComEd has brought together 31 construction industry companies, two local utilities, and seven social service agencies to help increase job opportunities for minorities in neighborhoods throughout Chicago and Northern Illinois. This week the CONSTRUCT partners kicked off the 2017 class of 90 participants who will go through the 9-week job training program that provides training and information needed to compete for entry-level jobs in construction-related fields.

New this year, the curriculum has been updated with courses focused on the growing fields of solar power and energy efficiency. The program also welcomes a new social service agency, SER Jobs for Progress. The Safer Foundation, a not-for-profit agency which helps people with criminal records secure and maintain jobs, joined the program this year as a referral agency.

In addition, CONSTRUCT welcomes a high rise construction sponsor, Constructing Bright Lives and its partners Heartland Alliance, Magellan Development Group, LLC and James McHugh Construction Company. D Construction Company based out of Coal City also joined the program this year.

“With the recent passage of the Future Energy Jobs Act, we’ve renewed our commitment to build the skills needed for the future in developing the energy workforce of the future, right here in our own neighborhoods,” said Anne Pramaggiore, president and CEO of ComEd.

“CONSTRUCT has evolved from offering an exclusively construction-based curriculum, to offering training on innovative technologies in solar and energy efficiency, some of the fastest growing areas in the economy. This impactful program brings utilities, labor, and community organizations together to build the skills needed for the future in our local workforce.”

ComEd launched the CONSTRUCT program in 2013. It began with 10 companies and three social service agencies and now has grown to include the three major utility companies in northern Illinois, 31 construction companies and seven social service agencies.

CONSTRUCT is intended to address the construction industry’s overall need to increase the pool of qualified minority candidates for construction jobs in Illinois. Through the program, participants receive career guidance, life skills training, and practical education about construction industry fields. There is the opportunity to job shadow, and to attend career awareness fairs to learn about a range of potential job opportunities in the industry.

To date, more than 220 students have participated in the CONSTRUCT program with 90 new participants this year, up 30% from 2016. The success and continued growth of this program is due in great measure to the construction industry companies that are looking to hire local, diverse candidates to join their workforce.

“Our participation in CONSTRUCT allows us to work with our partners to help develop and promote a robust talent pipeline that our companies and our industries need,” said Melvin D. Williams, president of Nicor Gas. “We need to continue working together to cultivate the next generation of our energy workforce.”

“CONSTRUCT produces skilled, diverse graduates ready to enter the workforce. Peoples Gas is excited to join our peer utilities and partners to expand the program and create new opportunities in the communities we serve,” said Charles Matthews, president of Peoples Gas.

CONSTRUCT is run in parallel at seven sites across the Chicagoland area by ASPIRA of Illinois, Austin Peoples Action Center, Chicago Urban League, National Latino Education Institute, Quad County Urban League, SER Jobs for Progress, and YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago and South Suburbs-Homewood. These agencies will help identify and train the program participants using various common eligibility and completion requirements, and are committed to working with each participant to provide job counseling and placement services.

Participating companies include:

ComEd, Nicor Gas, Peoples Gas, Aldridge Electric, Inc., Burling Builders, Inc., D Construction Company, F.H. Paschen S.N.Nielsen, Groundhog Utility Construction, Inc., Henkels & McCoy, Inc., Intren, Lindblad Construction Company of Joliet, Magellan Development, LLC, James McHugh Construction Company, Meade, MJ Electric, MZI Group, Nash Brothers Construction Company, NPL Construction, Osmose Utilities Services, PMI Energy Solutions, LLC, Primera Engineers, Trice Construction Company, The BarTech Group, David Mason & Associates, d’Escoto, Inc., HBK Engineering, Kairos Worldwide, LiveWire Electrical & Construction, Milhouse Engineering & Construction, , The Roderick Group, V3 Companies, as well as labor organizations - IBEW Locals 9, 15, 19, 134, 196 & the Chicago Area Laborers-Employers Cooperation & Education Trust (LECET) - provide the support.

For more information on CONSTRUCT, please visit ComEd.com/CONSTRUCT.