

New law promotes diversity workforce on capital projects

By CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS
Dec. 13, 2019
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SPRINGFIELD – Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker signed Senate Bill 177 on Tuesday aimed at ensuring minority workers have access to jobs created through the state’s new \$45 billion capital improvements plan, as well as access to training for careers in construction and building trades.

The law establishes the Illinois Works Jobs Program, which makes \$25 million available to community-based organizations – including public colleges and universities – to recruit new apprentices to work on construction projects. It also provides that apprentices will make up 10% of the labor force on all projects costing \$500,000 or more. The money will come from the \$45 billion in capital plan funding.

The program will be overseen by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. It is also authorized to award “bid credits” – virtual dollars that can be used when bidding on future contracts – to encourage contractors to employ “historically underrepresented populations in the construction industry,” including minorities, women and veterans.

“Rebuild Illinois is the largest, most robust capital plan in state history,” Pritzker said at a bill signing ceremony in Chicago. “We’re working with our partners to make sure every community in the state benefits from these good jobs, especially those who’ve been left out and left behind for far too long.”

Language of the program was inserted into a Senate-passed bill in the House during the fall veto session.