

Employment Opportunities Grant Program (EOGP)

The Employment Opportunities Grant Program (EOGP) was originally authorized in 2006 (20 ILCS 605-812) with the goal of increasing the number of historically underrepresented populations who enroll in and complete building trades apprenticeship programs and attain journey-level status in trade unions. Typically building trade occupations have higher wages, better medical benefits, and opportunities for career growth. By increasing the diversity of workers in the building construction trades, EOGP strengthens the workforce and the industry itself and increases self-sufficiency in minority families. Further, EOGP was enacted in an attempt to link and integrate the goals of job seekers and employers. It is administered by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

EOGP funds assist those who have been historically underrepresented in the building trades: women and African-Americans, Hispanics, and African-American and Hispanic youth.

Funding and Administration

EOGP is a state program funded through the state general revenue fund. DCEO administers the program and awards contracts to community-based organizations and educational institutions to provide services. Thirteen organizations were funded in FY10 with just over \$2.9 million. The success of EOGP depends on the partnership of all stakeholders. Government agencies, building trades unions, construction contractors, and training providers are encouraged to work together to ensure the success of EOGP participants. Ideally, government agencies provide leadership, building unions provide apprenticeship opportunities, contractors provide employment, and training providers prepare individuals for entry into the trades.

Program Components

EOGP funds can be used for a broad range of activities that help these populations succeed in entering the building trades. In addition to construction skills training, grantees can provide the following services:

- Career exploration and assessment
- Recruitment and outreach
- Literacy and math training
- Life skills and workplace readiness training
- Mentoring and case management
- Drug/Alcohol Testing (all participants must be drug tested at enrollment and upon exit from the program)
- Stipends, childcare expenses, transportation, tools, and work clothes.

EOGP depends on partnership. Government agencies, building trade unions, construction contractors, and training providers work together to ensure the success of EOGP participants.

During the training portion of the program, individuals are paid stipends or wages by the training provider. Apprentices and journey-level workers are expected to enter into paid, union employment. Organizations receiving grants are required to partner with a joint labor-management-sponsored apprenticeship program in order to assist in job placement of program graduates and improve the quality of skills training they provide.

Populations Served

EOGP prioritizes serving those who have been historically underrepresented in the building trades: women, African-Americans, Hispanics, and African-American and Hispanic youth. Historically difficult to serve populations, such as homeless, long-term unemployed, those with a history of substance abuse, youth aging out of the foster care system, veterans and ex-offenders are also eligible to receive services.

Organizational Eligibility

Educational institutions and community-based organizations with previous experience and proven expertise in serving the priority populations are eligible to apply for funds. Expertise must be displayed through success in job placement, especially in the construction industry. Also required is a clear knowledge of building trades.

Visit [DCEO's website \(http://www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/Bureaus/Technology/Technology+Grants+Programs/\)](http://www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/Bureaus/Technology/Technology+Grants+Programs/) for more information about EOGP and other programs.

For more information contact the Chicago Jobs Council at (312) 252-0460 or visit us at <http://www.cjc.net>