



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS WELCOMES CPS STUDENTS TO THE 2023 SKILLED TRADES CAREER FAIR

Thousands of CPS students explore careers in architecture, STEM, engineering, construction trades, and related fields

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Pedro Martinez launched a three-day, in-person Skilled Trades Career Fair today to give CPS students an up-close look at postsecondary opportunities within the skilled trades. An anticipated 3,000 CPS middle school and high school students will have the opportunity to network and learn from hundreds of experts in the field over the course of the fair taking place at McCormick Place, March 1 through 3.

"CPS, City Colleges of Chicago, and our countless educational and youth enrichment partners are working around the clock to nurture our young people and empower their families," said Mayor Lightfoot. "By working together to provide a diverse array of programs and activities, I know that we can and we will continue to give students access to the tools they need to achieve success both within and outside of the classroom."

The event brings students together with government institutions, community-based organizations, and companies offering potential employment, training, and internship opportunities to young adults ages 16-24. Applications for [One Summer Chicago](#), the City's summer youth employment and internship program, will be available on-site. One Summer Chicago builds on the success of the Chicago-bility Program which offers opportunities to young adults, ages 14 to 25.

"Exposing our students to opportunities in the skilled trades is just as important as preparing them for college, and events like the Skilled Trades Career Fair show that students can take advantage of great opportunities right here in their own backyard," said CPS CEO Pedro Martinez. "We want every child, in every neighborhood, to dream about career possibilities and use the resources available to achieve those dreams and build fulfilling and meaningful lives."



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The District aims to provide every student with the tools they need to propel them toward a successful career. CPS currently offers more than 50 [Career and Technical Education](#) (CTE) pathways at over 80 high schools across the city, including 12 programs in construction trades, five in carpentry, three in electricity, three in welding, and one HVAC program. The District's CTE programs allow students to gain work experience for in-demand careers as well as provide opportunities to earn early college credit and industry-recognized certifications and skills training at 12 CPS high schools. During the Skilled Trades Career Fair, current CTE students will have the opportunity to showcase their work and make connections with training programs and employers. Students will also have the opportunity to enhance their [Learn.Plan.Succeed.](#) post-secondary plan, a requirement for all high school seniors.

CPS has also developed a strong partnership with City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) through the [Chicago Roadmap](#), which aims to support students along a seamless path to and through post-secondary training on their way to their chosen careers. This alignment between CCC and CPS works to address achievement gaps and to improve communication across systems to better prepare students for success in high school and beyond. The Skilled Trades Career Fair will highlight this network of supportive and aligned government and community partner services that allow students to explore careers and connect them to opportunities that will make them competitive for high-demand occupations.

“There are many good paying careers that students are not aware of,” said Chancellor Juan Salgado, City Colleges of Chicago. “City Colleges is working closely with Chicago Public Schools to ensure Chicago students know about the exciting opportunities in fields like advanced manufacturing, IT, transportation, the construction trades, and more — and know that they can prepare for a high-demand career at City Colleges of Chicago.”

This career fair, open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day, is not just an opportunity for students to learn about current employment needs, but will also inform them of future workforce needs and the steps they can take to make themselves competitive in those spaces.

“A [new study](#) found that the transition to clean energy could create a net increase of more than 40,000 jobs in Illinois by 2030, and ComEd is committed to building a qualified and diverse pipeline of talent to power that transition right here in Chicago,” said ComEd CEO Gil Quiniones. “Through our collaboration with CPS, CCC, and local agencies, ComEd is working to create equitable pathways to good-paying careers to help ensure that more women and people of color from our communities benefit from the growth of the dynamic energy industry.”



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ComEd serves thousands of Chicago students every year with education programs that prepare a strong and diverse local workforce to take on new jobs in the transition to a clean energy economy. As one example, ComEd supports [Chicago Builds](#), a unique, two-year off-campus program that provides technical training in electricity and other skilled trades to CPS juniors and seniors. For more on Chicago Builds, as well as its workforce training and scholarship programs, please visit [ComEd's website](#).

“The skilled trades offer a multitude of robust career pathways of which all young adults should be aware, especially young women and all those in communities that have been historically underrepresented in these sectors,” said Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership Interim CEO Patrick Combs. “The careers offer family-sustaining wages with stability and long-term potential but all require training. For that reason, it’s imperative that our young people are aware of the skills and credentials needed to connect with skilled trade employers or become successful entrepreneurs throughout their careers.”

The Skilled Trades Career Fair builds on the [District's commitment](#) to equitable, student-centered education that prepares students socially, emotionally, and academically to enter the workplace, a training program, or higher education.

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About Chicago Public Schools

Chicago Public Schools serves more than 322,000 students in 635 schools. It is the nation’s fourth-largest school district.

About The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership) is the non-profit umbrella organization that operates the largest public workforce system in the country. As the designated administrator of federal workforce development funding for the City of Chicago and Cook County, The Partnership oversees a network of more than 90 community-based organizations, American Job Centers, satellite sites, and sector-driven centers as well as approximately a dozen other workforce-related initiatives funded by public and private funds.

About City Colleges of Chicago

CCC is one of the largest community college systems in Illinois, with more than 3,800 faculty and staff serving 54,000 students annually at seven colleges and five satellite sites. City Colleges’ vision is to be recognized as the city’s most accessible higher education engine of socioeconomic mobility and racial equity — empowering



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all Chicagoans to take part in building a stronger and more just city. Learn more about City Colleges of Chicago at www.ccc.edu

About Chicago Roadmap

By providing access to high-quality programs, advising and supports, career exploration, and preparedness, the Chicago Roadmap strives to dramatically and equitably increase student outcomes in college enrollment, college degree attainment, and employment.

The Roadmap is made possible thanks in part to generous philanthropic contributions made to the Children First Fund: the Chicago Public Schools Foundation (CFF) and the City Colleges of Chicago Foundation (CCCF). Children First Fund serves as a fiscal sponsor for the Chicago Roadmap and works in close partnership with CCCF to support the advancement of the Chicago Roadmap.