

CONTEXT

Illinois is at a crossroads. We are becoming a leader in apprenticeships as the state articulates their vision and plan for reaching scale. Yet, Illinois' apprenticeships have failed to reach women and people of color, meaning this pathway with long-term financial benefits is leaving key communities behind. We provide recommendations for creating equitable apprenticeships based on a review of state and local strategies for scaling apprenticeships that serve women and people of color. We also vetted our findings with 45 young adults in five apprenticeship programs in Illinois, ensuring our recommendations drew from their direct experience with these programs.

ILLINOIS LANDSCAPE

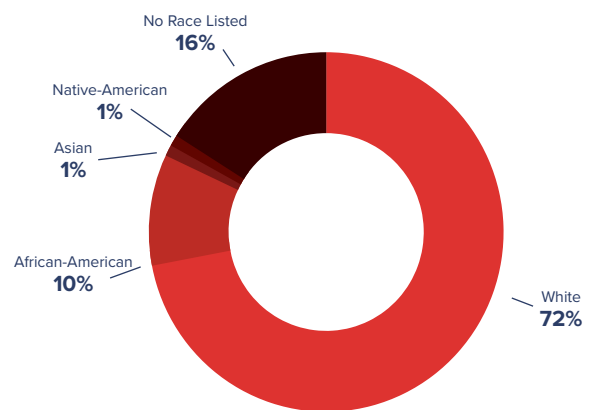
Illinois has the 11th highest number of registered apprenticeships in the country with over 15,000 registered apprentices. Despite their broad reach, Illinois' apprenticeships employ disproportionately low numbers of women and people of color. Only four percent of registered apprentices are women and only 28 percent are people of color (39 percent of Illinoisans are people of color).

VISION FOR ILLINOIS

Based on rapid gender and racial diversity gains in other states and apprenticeships programs, it is clear that Illinois can and should:

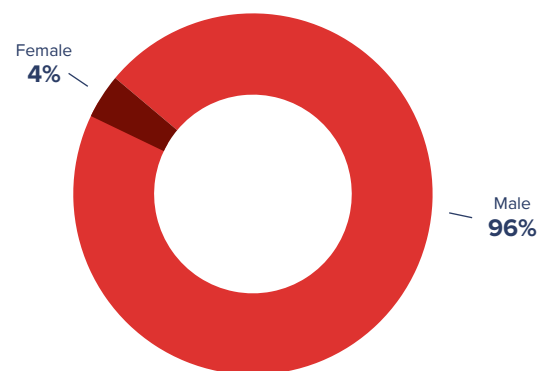
- Set gender and racial inclusion targets, achieving racial equity in a decade and gender equity in two decades
- Develop apprenticeships in fields that pay well and traditionally reach women and people of color like health care and finance, while simultaneously improving apprenticeship diversity in the building and construction trades
- Track progress towards the targets by releasing disaggregated data annually
- Incentivize reaching women and people of color by reserving public funds for programs targeting those populations

Illinois Apprenticeships by Race, 2017



Source: The Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Management Data System (RAPIDS)

Illinois Apprenticeships by Gender, 2017



Source: The Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Management Data System (RAPIDS)

EQUITABLE GROWTH

The legislature, agencies, employers, and education systems should take actions that drive growth and spur greater inclusion.

Legislature

The legislature could increase the number of apprenticeships by a total of 14,000 positions in ten years with a \$20 million annual budget. The budget would support:

- *Apprenticeship consultants* who provide employers with the information and support they need to sponsor an apprenticeship program. Cost: \$1 million
- *Tax credits* that not only encourage employers to launch apprenticeships, but also to reach underserved populations (e.g. disconnected youth, veterans, those living in poverty). Cost: \$18 million
- *Barrier reduction fund* that provides supportive services that are critical to thriving on the job and in the classroom (e.g. counseling) and remove barriers that will prevent apprentices from remaining in the programs (e.g. worksite gear and childcare). Cost: \$1 million

Agencies

Illinois agencies can create a pipeline for apprenticeship expansion that ensures growth in key sectors and provides employers the tools they need to create inclusive workplaces where apprentices who are women and people of color can succeed. Key actions include:

- *Apprenticeship pipeline*: Illinois agencies should identify fields well-positioned to support diverse and equitable apprenticeship growth and funnel resources into developing positions in these fields.
- *Bridge programming*: Illinois must create articulation agreements between youth apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships and postsecondary programs to create a seamless transition into employment. The state should also create pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs to ensure women and people of color are ready to step into registered apprenticeships.
- *Inclusive worksites*: Illinois should set all programs up to attract and retain women and people of color, training them on best practices in recruiting and supporting apprentices.

Employers

Given the critical role employers play in apprenticeships, the private sector should also commit to creating a diverse talent pool by marketing positions to women and people of color. Industry intermediaries can support recruitment efforts and create spaces for peer support for people who face isolation on the job or struggle to secure equitable training and advancement opportunities.

Education Systems

High schools and colleges have a unique ability to guide students towards the best education and workforce options available. We recommend these systems:

- *Act as intermediaries* that make it easy for employers to launch apprenticeships and for students to access them.
- *Provide wraparound supports* such as career exploration, counseling, and childcare that enable all high school and college students to access apprenticeship programs.