



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Illinois Central College Hosts Largest-Ever Apprenticeship Signing and Recognition Day

East Peoria, IL (04/30/26) – Illinois Central College (ICC) hosted its largest Apprenticeship Signing and Recognition Day to date on Thursday, April 30, at the East Peoria Campus Performing Arts Center, bringing together students, employer partners, and community leaders to highlight the continued expansion of apprenticeship pathways across Central Illinois and their impact on the regional workforce.

A total of 68 students beginning registered apprenticeships signed agreements with employer partners, marking a significant step toward careers in high-demand fields. Nineteen students who completed their apprenticeships were also recognized. Employer partners in attendance included Carle Health, Caterpillar, Eaton, Heartland Health Services, Liberty Steel, OSF HealthCare, Quad Plus, Quality Metal Products, and Sam Leman.

Stephen Lefaver, co-chair of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Committee and director of apprenticeships and training for the North Central Finishing Trades Institute, presented a proclamation on behalf of Governor J.B. Pritzker in recognition of National Apprenticeship Week.

Since 2019, ICC has facilitated 214 apprenticeships with 40 unique employer partners, reflecting 30 percent average annual cohort growth. ICC apprentices have achieved a 77 percent completion rate, increasing to 86 percent when including students currently on track to complete.

Apprenticeship programs span advanced manufacturing and maintenance, information technology and cybersecurity, healthcare, and automotive. ICC offers 13 U.S. Department of Labor registered apprenticeship programs, with additional programs launching in 2026, including the General Motors Automotive Service Educational Program, Diesel Powered Equipment Technology, and Certified Medical Assistant. Expansion into healthcare continues to be a strategic focus to meet the needs of local healthcare providers, with programs including Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, Radiology Technician, Surgical Technologist, and Certified Nursing Assistant.

"Apprenticeships deliver definite outcomes for our students, our employers, and our region," said Bruce Budde, Interim President of Illinois Central College. "Students gain skills and experience while earning a wage to help them support their families, and employers build a strong pipeline of talent. Apprenticeships are a direct investment in the economic strength of Central Illinois."

The event was held as part of the U.S. Department of Labor's 12th annual National Apprenticeship Week, which highlights the role of apprenticeships in expanding access to high-quality careers, supporting employers, and strengthening local economies.

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Illinois Central College is a two-year community college with campuses in East Peoria, Peoria and Pekin, Illinois, providing a high-quality, affordable education to prepare students to enter the workforce or to transfer to a four-year institution. ICC is the 2020 awardee of the National Community College Charles Kennedy Equity Award from ACCT, a 2022 EDA Good Job Challenge Institution, and the Lead College for the state of Illinois' Workforce Equity Initiative. ICC also conducts original research in agricultural fields, including water quality and soil conservation. For more information, visit icc.edu.