

University of Illinois  
Economic Development  
Opportunity Program  
Introducing a new entrepreneurial training  
program for people interested in starting  
and sustaining a small business!



**Are you ready to be an  
entrepreneur?**

Register by  
August 20,  
2010!



# University of Illinois Economic Development Opportunity Program

University of Illinois Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, in collaboration with the Land of Lincoln Assistance Foundation, Inc., is introducing a new entrepreneurial training program for minorities and members of underrepresented groups interested in starting and sustaining a small business in Champaign County and the surrounding area.

## Learn how to:

- evaluate your business idea and make a plan
- identify financial resources or repair your credit
- cultivate your leadership and management skills

## For more information:

Otis Noble III  
Email: [oeoa@illinois.edu](mailto:oeoa@illinois.edu)  
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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Office of Equal Opportunity and Access  
100 Swanlund Administration Building  
601 E. John Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

If you are interested in learning more about this program, please fill out the form below!

## Yes, I'm interested!

Please send me more information about the Economic Development Opportunity Program (EDOP).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please email us if you are interested, or fill out this form and send it back by fax or mail!***

Attention: Otis Noble III  
Email: [oeoa@illinois.edu](mailto:oeoa@illinois.edu)  
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ILLINOIS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



University of Illinois  
Economic Development Opportunity Program  
Starting Thursday, September 16, 2010

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Office of Equal Opportunity and Access

OEOA

University of Illinois

LAND OF LINCOLN  
LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION, INCORPORATED



## **The Construction Trades Opportunity Program Summary** **July 12, 2010**

### **Introduction**

The Equal Opportunity Grant Program (EOGP) from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) was pursued and acquired by The University of Illinois' Business Innovation Services (BIS) unit. This unit partnered with The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Facilities and Services (F&S) unit because of their downstate relationship with the East Central Illinois Building and Construction Trades Council. The participating unions included:

- Bricklayers
- Carpenters
- Electricians
- Pipefitters
- Plumbers
- Painters
- Laborers
  - Other Unions were also encouraged to participate.

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Access (OEOA) was asked to coordinate the program's recruitment and outreach, interviewing, orientation, and downstate program management. All instructors and the program's curriculum were provided by BIS. BIS also managed the financial responsibilities for the program. F&S played a major role in providing the space for the Construction Trades Opportunity Program (CTOP) sessions, and also committed initially to helping some participants gain Building Services Worker positions with the University.

### **EOGP Goal of Program**

The EOGP goal was to expand the number of individuals in historically underrepresented populations who enter and complete building trades apprenticeship programs and achieve journey-level status within building trades unions.

### **Program Overview**

The objective of this program was to provide Champaign County underrepresented (Minorities and Females) residents the opportunity to prepare for and gain access to the construction industry. The program ran from September – March providing 20 weeks of academic instruction and construction training. Participants attended trainings at the Physical Plant Services Building on Saturdays from 7:00am – 3:00pm, with 2.5 hours devoted to three class sections:

- Job Attainment and Retention Skills
- Introduction to Shop Work
- Math / Measurement / Trade Orientation

All that signed up had to meet three program requirements:

- Valid Drivers License
- High School Diploma or G.E.D
- Pass a 10-panel Drug Screen Test

Management of the signees was done by OEOA. Of the 228 individuals who expressed interest, contact was subsequently initiated with 213. Each person was scheduled for an in-person interview, and 92 people were determined to have met the preliminary requirements and were invited to attend an orientation meeting on August 1, 2009.

During the orientation, Senator Michael Frerichs welcomed the participants and enthusiastically endorsed the program. Ms. Deveda Francois represented DCEO and spoke regarding the grant program objectives. Finally, two of the training program instructors from BIS presented the training program outline. There were also representatives from three unions: Bricklayers, IBEW, and Plumbing and Pipefitters. The requirements for entry into the union were discussed, as well as the apprenticeship program and journeyman level status. Attendees were given directions regarding where and when to report for drug screening. An additional orientation meeting was held for 11 individuals (who were unable to attend on August 1) on August 7, 2009. Drug screening was conducted after the Orientation, and letters were sent to the participants letting them know of their acceptance into the program.

### **CTOP Sessions**

The official start of the training was on September 19, 2009, with fifty-six participants. The program ended with forty-six participants actively involved. The attrition was due to a variety of personal reasons, including illness, work schedule conflicts, etc. Scheduled training dates were all Saturdays, with each session lasting 8 hours. Each group of approximately 18 to 19 individuals rotated between three training topics each day.

Community members accepted into CTOP were initially tested to gauge their levels of Reading and Math skills. Based on the high reading assessment scores, the core skills curriculum was revised to include higher level training topics, rather than basic reading and writing. The new core skills curriculum focused on communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and teamwork skills, in addition to resume writing and job search skills.

The math assessments showed that not all the participants were at the basic level. Because of this assessment, participants were grouped to best suit their individual math needs. The math/measurement/ trade orientation course examined the application of mathematics for practical problem solving. Measurement techniques using a tape were introduced, and an orientation to trade work was also provided. The major concepts presented were 1) Adding and subtracting fractional dimensions; 2) Dividing distance and locating centers; 3) Orientation (perpendicularity, parallelism, etc.); 4) Reading a fractional rule; 5) Apprenticeship; 6) Carpentry as an occupation; 7) Electrical worker as an occupation; 8) Bricklaying as an occupation; 9) Plumbing & Pipefitting as an occupation; 10) Masonry as an occupation; 11) Iron work as an occupation; 12) Laboring as an occupation; 13) Roofing as an occupation; and 14) Sheet metal work as an occupation.

The Introduction to Shop Work course introduced the tools, methods and skills that are common among the construction trades. Safe work practices were stressed, and hands-on activities reinforced the concepts presented. The major concepts presented in this course were 1) Safe work practices, 2) Hand and power tool familiarization, 3) Materials of the construction trades, 4) Layout techniques, 5) Fabricating methods, and 6) Project construction. The participants in this course constructed small bird houses. There was also a special Friday tutoring program for participants who need additional assistance.

During the course of the 20-week sessions, about sixty participants received information from local union representatives. They were informed about benefits and salaries, apprenticeship expectations, career opportunities, and the requirements to enter an apprenticeship with their

union. F&S, OEOA, Staff Human Resources, and the local union also participated in a monthly meeting to talk about issues related to unions, contractors, and the University.

The CTOP program manager, Otis Noble III, scheduled time with all seven local unions to provide hands-on training projects and information specific to the participating unions. For example, the Training Director and Apprenticeship Students from U.A. Local 149 JAC spent the day with the CTOP program students showing them a typical project and answering their questions about the trade.

The CTOP program instructors offered additional tutoring sessions outside the regularly scheduled program dates. The purpose of these tutoring sessions was to assist participants individually with any questions they may have, to provide additional training they may need to attain and maintain the same level of knowledge or skills as the rest of the group, or to help participants on an individual basis with resume writing or job search skills. CTOP participants were encouraged to sign up for tutoring sessions which were usually held on Friday afternoons or Saturday afternoons after the regular training program ends. However, the instructors were also available for any participants who choose to drop in without first signing up.

### **The Graduation Ceremony**

A graduation ceremony was held on Saturday, March 6, 2010, for the CTOP participants. Invitations were sent to each participant, as well as to the local union leaders, community members, and program affiliates. Everyone was invited to bring two guests. The guest speaker was Dr. William Patterson, and Dr. Pratt-Clarke also addressed the assembly. 64 community members met the requirements for CTOP; and 46 received certification of completion on March 6, 2010. Each participant who completed the CTOP program was given a certificate of completion.

### **Results**

Because of the current economic climate in the country and in Illinois, in particular, CTOP was significantly impacted. The University has historically employed large numbers of union members and has provided construction opportunities to contractors. The University, in January, anticipated that there would be very little new construction as it engaged in layoffs, furloughs, and other cost-reduction initiatives. With the state of the University, all of the expected Building Service Worker opportunities were no longer an option.

Six participants tested with the electrical (IBEW), and did well enough on the test that they were invited to a panel interview with that Union. Each of the participants got the chance to interview with the union, yet they were not granted a spot in this local's apprenticeship. Other participants have signed up with other Unions, and were either told that the apprenticeship was closed for the year or that because of the economy they would have to find any opportunity with a contractor before they would be allowed to join an apprenticeship.

Despite these barriers, the expectation is that as the economy slowly turns around and as there are more retirements in the unions, the unions will need new members and those who have been exposed to unions through CTOP will be a qualified pool when the opportunities are available. In addition, participants were encouraged to consider attending Parkland College for the different number of educational opportunities provided. Also, participants were encouraged to register with Staff Human Resources at the University of Illinois.

OEOA has formed strong working relationships with the East Central Illinois Building and Construction Trades Council, and the union representatives from the participating unions. As

evidence of their commitment, the Trades Council authored two letters of support for a recent Request for Application (RFA) that OEOA submitted to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for Fiscal Year 2010. Although OEOA was not reward the grant, they were encouraged to re-apply in 2011 or the next time RFA's are requested.

The current employment status for those who received certification with CTOP:

Total Participants certified:	46
Total Employed:	36

Employed by the University:	07
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Total Unemployed:	10
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The number by participant sex:

Total Women:	09
Total Men:	37

<b><i>Topic/ Location</i></b>	<b><i>Date (Thursdays)</i></b>	<b><i>Presenter Topics</i></b>	<b><i>Suggestions</i></b>	<b><i>Presenter</i></b>
Credit Repair Counseling	September 16, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit Repair</li> <li>• Resources to Clean-up your Credit</li> <li>• Financial Resources</li> </ul>		ShirleyAnn Robertson Shawn Sorsby
Finance & Accounting	September 23, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financing a Start-up</li> <li>• Buying a Business/ Franchising</li> <li>• Are you an Entrepreneur?</li> </ul>		Dave Seiler Joe Murphy
Business Planning	September 30, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining your Business</li> <li>• Viability of your Idea</li> <li>• Creating your Product</li> </ul>		Lori Gold Patterson Al Luchetti
Starting A Business	October 7, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Business Insurance</li> <li>• Licenses, Regulations, and Permits</li> <li>• Business Structure</li> </ul>		Shayla Maatuka Joe Stovall
Marketing & Advertising	October 14, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing Plan/ Selling Product</li> <li>• Refining your Marketing Plan</li> <li>• Modifying your Product and Creating a New</li> </ul>		Hayden Noel
Small Business Loan Discussion	October 21, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Business Loans</li> <li>• Financial Resources</li> <li>• On-line Resources</li> </ul>		Donald J. Schlorff
Local Resources	October 28, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where to find Local Assistance</li> <li>• City Resources (Urbana and Champaign)</li> <li>• University Resources</li> </ul>		Joan Wall Todd Rent University of Illinois
Graduation / Reception	November 4, 2010			