

A young woman with dark hair wearing a black hijab and a grey and white checkered face mask. She is holding a smartphone in her left hand and a small electronic device with a red wire in her right hand. The background is dark and out of focus.

ILLUMINATING ENERGY PATHWAYS PROGRAM

With more than half of the energy workforce expected to retire in the next 5-10 years, the workers necessary to power tomorrow's economy and ignite future innovation in the field are today's learners. Yet, too few young people—especially young people of color or in underserved communities—are aware of or have access to education and workforce opportunities within science, technology, engineering, and math. With that challenge in front of us, The Chicago Learning Exchange, with support from ISIEF and partners, developed a six-week summer earn-and-learn program for youth to participate in work-based learning.

**Chicago Learning
Exchange**

WORK—BASED LEARNING

This work-based learning program aims to promote awareness of energy sector career pathways in Chicago neighborhood high schools. CLX partnered with Chicago Public Schools Career and Technical Education Department, Dawson Technical Institute at the City Colleges of Chicago for targeted recruitment from schools in the west-northwest Chicago area, including Austin and Belmont Cragin, to recruit students for a six-week summer earn-and-learn opportunity.

Over the six weeks, youth learned about the array of career opportunities available in the energy sector, with an emphasis on careers in overhead line work, the solar energy field, and environmentally conscious construction.

To create an environment of peer mentorship, our partners helped us recruit students who were both demographically and economically diverse, as well as diverse on the basis of their skills and interests.

AN EXPERIENTIAL BRIDGE IN THE PATHWAY



Running through the summer, the program represents an option for students looking to take on a summer job. CLX aims to enrich this experience by providing youth the opportunity to learn new skills while earning an income. For this, students practice regular exercises and routines like they would be expected to perform at a job.

The program serves as a node in their pathways that enriches their experience as they begin their journey into the workforce. The curriculum and mentors should be reactive to learners, bringing out their curiosities and brilliance at a transitional time by simultaneously asking the participant to bring structure to their work ethic with reflective and social-emotional exercises.

CAREER READINESS

The energy sector is rapidly changing. The movement into renewable resources and energy efficiency is driving the development of many new careers and is in constant need to support local and nationwide infrastructure.

In partnerships with CPS, our curriculums are aligned with industry standards. Youth explore the current industry, historical practices, and the industry's projected growth. There are engineering exercises, conversations with field experts, circuit building, and other field-specific exercises such as pole inspections and workplace safety protocols, with space for speculative concepts and student-led discussion.

MENTORSHIP MATTERS

For an effective out-of-school summer program, students need to feel comfortable to be themselves. Youth want an environment that does not aim to assess them on the basis of tests but rather on their own victories. For this reason, it is important that the instructor is ready to also serve as mentors beyond the topic areas.



MODULAR CURRICULUMS

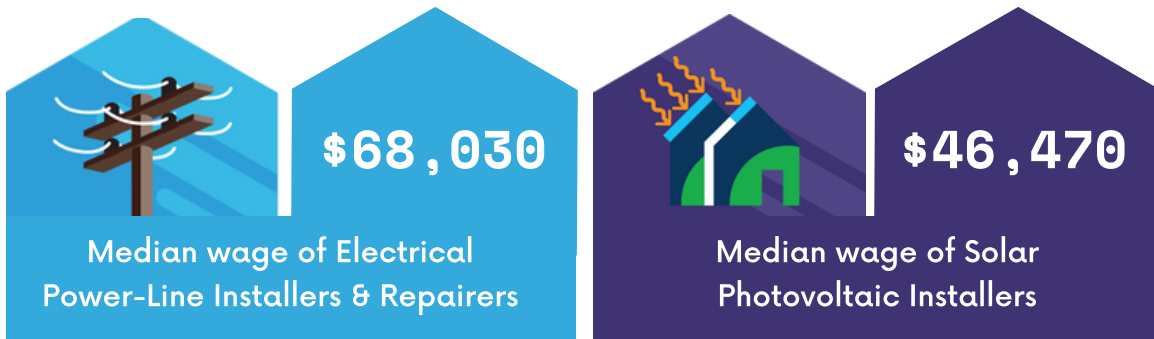
The program is modular, it can run in a large group setting with exercises that break out into smaller teams. It can also work in a small class environment or even a hybrid model with weeks split between in-person and virtual days.

Below is a look at two ways to implement standard and hybrid models.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
NEW CONCEPTS + EXPLORATION	INDUSTRY PRACTICES	CAPSTONE PROJECT	TEAM BUILDING + REFLECTIONS
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
IN PERSON — NEW CONCEPTS & REFLECTIONS	IN PERSON — TEAM BUILDING OR CAPSTONE	REMOTE — TEAM BUILDING OR CAPSTONE	REMOTE — CAREER EXPLORATION

EMPOWERING CAREERS



According to the US Department of Labor, Electrical Power-Line Installers & Repairers are projected to remain in demand at a consistent rate. Demand for Solar Photovoltaic Installers is set to increase by a minimum of 52% in ten years! CLX's Illuminate Energy Pathway Program serves as a launchpad to these careers with a curriculum focused on electrical line work and another on the solar industry and careers in construction.

LEVERAGING DIGITAL BADGES

The program was built using open badging, making it adaptable across a variety of learning management systems such as LRNG or Chicago's very own MyCHI. MyFuture. To explore what each of the 20 badges signify, visit: bit.ly/iepp-badges



COST CONSIDERATIONS

- Instructors
- Participant stipends
- Curriculum Development
- Learning materials and printing
- Insurance
- Daily lunch
- Transit for participants
- Field expert visits

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