



NEWS

JB Pritzker, Governor

Michael D. Kleinik, Director

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Contact:

Mike Matulis 217-785-1719

Michael.Matulis@illinois.gov

IDOL Alerts Local Officials on Hiring for Public Works Projects *State Law requires hiring Illinois workers during times of high unemployment*

SPRINGFIELD – Due to the high unemployment rate caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act will take effect beginning July 1st. The state law requires the workforce on all public works projects to be comprised of a minimum of 90% Illinois residents.

The Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) administers the Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act, which was enacted to alleviate unemployment in Illinois by ensuring that most workers on public works projects live in the state. The requirement to employ 90 percent Illinois workers applies to all labor on public works projects or improvements, including projects involving the clean-up and on-site disposal of hazardous waste.

The law comes into effect following two consecutive months of a state unemployment rate above 5 percent. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Illinois' unemployment rate during the COVID-19 pandemic increased from 4.2 percent in March, to 17.2 percent in April, and 15.2 percent in May. Given the unanticipated and large unemployment increase, IDOL wants to alert public bodies to the details of the law.

“As we all deal with the far-reaching impact of this pandemic, the Illinois Department of Labor wants to remind public officials and employers of the requirements of this law, which has not been triggered in recent years due to low unemployment,” said IDOL Director Michael Kleinik.

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul pledged to work with IDOL to enforce the law.

“As the nation faces record levels of unemployment, the people of Illinois should be assured that government is using all available tools to put Illinois residents back to work,” Attorney General Kwame Raoul said. “The Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act requires contractors on public works projects to prioritize Illinois workers, and my office stands ready to work with the Department of Labor to enforce the law and ensure that public works projects – which are funded by Illinois taxpayers – are completed using the best workforce in the country.”

The law is intended to ensure that projects funded using public dollars employ Illinois residents. That includes public works projects that are funded in whole or in part with state funds or funds administered by the state of Illinois. Any public works project financed in whole or in part by federal funds administered by the state of Illinois is covered under the provisions of this act to the extent permitted by applicable federal law or regulation.

More information about the Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act can be found here:

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=549&ChapterID=7>