

ComEd wins national Community Partner Award for pioneering workforce development

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ComEd has received the Center for Energy Workforce Development's (CEWD) 2025 Community Partner Award, recognising its leadership in building community-driven workforce programmes that deliver strong outcomes for local jobseekers. The award highlights organisations in the energy sector that collaborate meaningfully with communities and help create a workforce that reflects the populations they serve.

The recognition centres on ComEd's role in launching *Power Up Academy*, a coalition-led training initiative designed to address the shortage of technical talent needed to support Illinois' evolving energy system. The programme aligns with the clean energy ambitions outlined in ComEd's new Long-Range Strategy and aims to equip local residents with the skills required for future grid demands.

Melissa Y. Washington, SVP of Governmental, Regulatory and External Affairs at ComEd, said: "Power Up Academy is more than a training program, it's an investment in people and our communities. With the needs of the energy grid poised for major growth in the years ahead, our collaboration with a network of local employers, education leaders, and community based agencies will remain key to our work as we aim to build a workforce that reflects our communities and drives the clean energy transition forward."

A new route into technical energy careers

Launched in 2023, Power Up Academy provides a 14-week pathway into entry-level roles such as design technicians and project coordinators, without requiring candidates to hold a college degree. Training covers AutoCAD, electrical concepts and project management, delivered through hands-on learning and employer-led modules. The programme is operated with Revolution Workshop, a Chicago-based nonprofit

specialising in trades training.

Manny Rodriguez, Executive Director of Revolution Workshop, said: “In collaboration with ComEd, local engineering firms and the Revolution Workshop, we are proud to have supported the launch of Power Up Academy, the only program of its kind in Chicago to provide a pathway for individuals into entry level design and construction management positions within the utility sector without a college degree. Our mission to assist underserved people obtain true economic mobility is not possible without employer partners like ComEd.”

The programme is growing steadily, with 10 engineering firms now sponsoring delivery and new pathways emerging through local educational partners. Notably, ComEd has worked with City Colleges of Chicago to secure accreditation, enabling participants to earn up to 13 college credit hours through the training.

Dr. Webb Walker, president of Kennedy-King College, said: “Our partnership with ComEd is impacting lives by creating a clear career path that leads to a family sustaining wage. In-line with our equity goals, The Power Up Academy and Professional Pathways initiative is giving our talented students the access and the ability to earn a degree in a high demand field, one that leads to success in work and in life.”

A wider investment in local talent

Power Up Academy sits within a broader portfolio of ComEd workforce initiatives delivered with community organisations, the trades, educational institutions and local workforce agencies. Collectively, these youth and adult programmes support around 1,000 job seekers each year, building skills across construction, trades, solar, and energy efficiency.

More information about Power Up Academy and ComEd’s workforce development programmes is available at www.comed.com/workforce.