

548 Foundation Celebrates 548th Graduate on October 10, 2026

This Achievement Expands Chicago's Clean-Energy Workforce Pipeline and Continues 548 Foundation's Mission To Empower Communities Through Education

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, July 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [548 Foundation](#) is celebrating a milestone two years in the making: the graduation of the organization's 548th workforce training participant.

The moment carries special significance. While the number reflects the Foundation's name, it also represents something far greater: 548 individuals who have taken meaningful steps toward family-sustaining careers, greater economic mobility, and long-term financial stability through workforce development.



As demand for skilled workers continues to grow across the clean energy, construction, and infrastructure sectors, 548 Foundation has built a model that connects untapped talent with employers seeking qualified workers. Through free, hands-on training, industry certifications, career coaching, and comprehensive support services, 548 Foundation prepares participants not only to secure employment but to build lasting careers.

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A.J. Patton

"Celebrating our 548th graduate reflects the hard work and determination of our staff and students," said Fred

Navarre, Executive Director of 548 Foundation. "Our model is working, and the outcomes we're

producing reflect a healthy, sustainable program."

548 Foundation's flagship workforce training program is an intensive 13-week experience that combines technical instruction with personalized support to prepare participants for careers in renewable energy, construction, and the skilled trades.

Participants receive:

- Hands-on technical training
- Industry-recognized certifications
- Career readiness and professional development
- Individualized case management
- Job placement assistance and employer introductions
- Ongoing support beyond graduation



"A thriving green economy depends on creating pathways for everyone to succeed," said Angela Tovar, Chicago's Chief Sustainability Officer and Department of Environment Commissioner. "We commend 548 Foundation for its work to build a diverse, highly skilled workforce by equitably connecting underrepresented communities to training, support, and careers that advance our clean energy future."

Recognizing that successful workforce development extends beyond the classroom, the Foundation also helps participants overcome barriers such as transportation, childcare, financial hardship, and other challenges that often prevent individuals from completing training or securing employment.

For 548 Foundation, graduation is only the beginning. The organization measures success by helping participants launch careers that provide long-term stability, increased earning potential, and opportunities for advancement.

To date, 548 Foundation has:

- Graduated nearly 550 workforce participants
- Connected graduates with leading employers throughout the Chicago region
- Helped participants secure positions earning an average starting wage of \$26 per hour
- Built partnerships with employers seeking skilled, diverse talent
- Created pathways into one of the nation's fastest-growing industries

"Jobs. It's all about jobs," said [A.J. Patton](#), CEO of the 548 Foundation. "Our training gets graduates employed in meaningful careers, and that spurs the critically needed economic mobility within the communities we serve."

While celebrating its 548th graduate is an important milestone, Foundation leaders see it as the beginning of a much larger vision.

The organization is expanding employer partnerships, increasing training capacity, and developing new programs designed to meet the growing demand for skilled workers across the clean energy economy.

The Foundation is also advancing plans for a [permanent Clean Energy Hub](#) that will allow it to train more students, deepen employer engagement, support entrepreneurship, and serve as a regional center for workforce and community development.

"Reaching our 548th graduate is a powerful reminder of what's possible when opportunity, education, and community come together," said Navarre. "Each graduate represents a family whose future has changed, an employer who has gained a skilled worker, and another step toward building a more equitable economy."

For 548 Foundation, the milestone is not simply about a number. It represents hundreds of stories of resilience, hundreds of careers launched, and hundreds of reasons to believe that investing in people remains one of the most effective ways to strengthen communities.

About 548 Foundation

548 Foundation is a Chicago-based nonprofit creating pathways to economic mobility through workforce development, clean energy education, and community investment. By providing free training in solar installation, climate-focused and electrical pre- apprenticeships, the Foundation equips individuals with the skills, support, and employer connections needed to build meaningful careers.

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