



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND CTA PRESIDENT CLAYPOOL ANNOUNCE LAUNCH OF  
EXPANDED EX-OFFENDER APPRENTICE PROGRAM**

*'Second-Chance' will Provide for up to 265 Rail and Bus Apprenticeships for Hard-to-Place Job Seekers*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CTA President Forrest Claypool today announced that the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) will kick-off an expansion of its largest ex-offender apprentice program ever – quadrupling the current number of apprentice opportunities on bus and rail to as many as 265. The CTA Apprenticeship Program will provide valuable job skills and training to ex-offenders, increasing self-sufficiency for hard-to-employ individuals while providing CTA with additional resources to enhance the customer experience with cleaner buses and trains.

“This strategy will have multiple benefits for the City of Chicago,” said Mayor Emanuel. “By getting ex-offenders into the workforce, we’ll lower unemployment, increase self-sufficiency and reducing recidivism – all key priorities that will have long-term, valuable impacts on Chicago.”

In coordination with community partners and sister city agencies, CTA will offer new, full-time bus apprenticeships in addition to its current rail apprentice opportunities for ex-offenders who face significant barriers to employment and to long-term self-sufficiency.

“Unfortunately, many public and private entities have written policies which state that they do not hire individuals who have been convicted of crime; therefore, I take this opportunity to commend Mayor Rahm Emanuel, CTA Chairman Terry Peterson, and CTA President Forrest Claypool for the development and implementation of this program which can result in the hiring of 200 ex-offenders to clean buses owned and operated by CTA,” said U.S. Congressman Danny Davis (D-IL), who has a long track record of promoting employment of ex-offenders. “I also commend the Amalgamated Transit Workers Unions for their contract agreement which concur in the development of this program. Chicago is demonstrating that it believes in providing ex-offenders with a second chance.”

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Under the expanded program, CTA will provide bus apprenticeship assignments that will be up to one year in length; rail apprentice assignments are nine months in length.

“CTA’s apprentice program is considered one of the largest transitional programs in the country, providing as much as a year’s worth of valuable work experience for individuals who face significant hurdles to employment versus the average 12 weeks for comparable apprenticeships,” said CTA President Forrest Claypool. “This life-changing program gives ex-offenders a second chance at building successful lives, while also bringing value to our customers with cleaner, more comfortable commutes.”

Apprentices who perform exceptionally during their assignments will be eligible to apply for full-time CTA positions. If no full-time relevant positions are immediately available, apprentices who have successfully completed one apprenticeship can apply to participate in the other apprentice program – for up to a combined 21 months of continued employment. Positions in both apprenticeships pay \$9.50 an hour. CTA will have 65 rail apprentice positions available and as many as 200 bus apprenticeship slots. Apprentices will be members of the Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents bus (Local 241) and rail (Local 308) workers.

Pre-screened, qualified individuals who are selected for apprenticeships will be assigned to duties that will include platform servicing, bus and rail yard sweeping, rail car shop cleaning and general interior cleaning and detailed exterior cleaning of buses and trains. Thorough background checks will be completed as part of the apprenticeship screening process. Job candidates that will be considered are individuals who have been convicted of non-sexual, non-violent and non-domestic violence-related criminal offenses.

“This initiative represents the type of forward-thinking that is required to address challenging problems associated with successful reintegration,” said Illinois State Senator Patricia Van Pelt (D-5<sup>th</sup>). “I applaud Mayor Rahm Emanuel for taking this important step.”

The CTA Apprenticeship Program has already changed lives, including that of Michael Russell, a rail-car servicer who is now vying to become a CTA bus operator in April. Mr. Russell, 38, began his career at CTA as a rail apprentice in 2010 after three jail sentences for drug-related crimes. Russell’s exemplary performance cleaning rail cars at the O’Hare rail station made him eligible to apply for permanent CTA positions, which he is pursuing.

“The apprentice opportunity has not only changed my life, it has changed my kids’ lives,” said Mr. Russell. “Now I never have to worry about going back to jail. I can take care of my family now.”

Candidates can apply for apprenticeships through Westside Health Authority or Teamwork Englewood. Once applications are received, candidates are referred to one of eight non-profit agencies currently partnered with CTA for job readiness instruction. Those eight

agencies include the CARA Program, Career Advancement Network, Haymarket Center, Phalanx Family Services, North Lawndale Employment Network, St. Leonard's Ministries, Safer Foundation and the Westside Health Authority.

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