

MEMORANDUM

Date: Monday, January 12, 2026
To: Finance and Personnel Committee
From: Owen Carter, Deputy Director of Program Operations
Re: Approval of Weatherization Training Program with Awaken Foundation

Community Services Division is seeking City Council approval to enter into an agreement with Awaken Foundation for the purpose of creating a training program with qualified participants from Awaken's Pre-Apprenticeship Program. The Awaken Foundation operates a pre-apprenticeship training program designed to prepare participants for careers in the skilled trades. Graduates of this program require hands-on, real-world experience to further develop their skills and successfully transition into long-term employment.

The City's Weatherization Program provides an appropriate setting for on-the-job training (OJT), offering practical experience in residential energy efficiency and weatherization activities under the supervision of experienced City staff.

Under the proposed agreement:

- Graduates of Awaken Foundation's pre-apprenticeship program will participate in an on-the-job training program alongside City staff within the Weatherization Program.
- Participants will gain practical, supervised experience performing weatherization-related tasks and learning City standards, safety procedures, and best practices.
- Awaken will ensure all participants complete foundational certifications, monitor progress, and supply case management and transitional services during participant placement.
- The City agrees to permit participants to shadow and receive hands-on training from City employees in our Weatherization program.

There is no fiscal impact to the City. Participant wages are paid entirely by Awaken Foundation using grant funds. The City's contribution is limited to staff supervision and integration of trainees into existing weatherization activities.

This partnership supports workforce development, strengthens the local talent pipeline, and aligns with the City's commitment to economic opportunity and job readiness. It also enhances the Weatherization Program by increasing capacity while providing meaningful training opportunities to program graduates.



AGREEMENT

Between

AWAKEN FOUNDATION L3C

And

CITY OF ROCKFORD

THIS AGREEMENT (this "Agreement") is made and entered into by and between AWAKEN FOUNDATION L3C, an Illinois Limited Liability Company ("Awaken") and the CITY OF ROCKFORD, an Illinois municipal corporation (the "City"). This Agreement establishes the terms and conditions under which the City will provide on-the-job training to participants of Awaken.

WHEREAS, the Illinois Home Weatherization Program (IHWAP) helps low-income residents and households conserve fuel and reduce energy costs by making their homes and apartments more energy efficient and providing many health and safety upgrades; and

WHEREAS, the City operates a Weatherization Program in Winnebago and Boone County that provides income-eligible households with free energy audits and upgrades to increase the energy efficiency of their homes while reducing energy costs; and

WHEREAS, Awaken has received grant funding through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) for the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program which prioritizes pre-apprenticeship training for individuals from historically underrepresented backgrounds in the trades; and

WHEREAS, Awaken desires to have its participants who have successfully completed its Pre-Apprenticeship Program in Weatherization and Clean Energy obtain Work Experience (WEX) and On-the-Job Training (OJT) as part of the City's Weatherization Program; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to provide work experience and on-the-job training to Awaken's qualified participants ("Participants"); and

WHEREAS, this initiative supports workforce development under the Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA).

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing and the mutual covenants herein, the Parties agree as follows:



1. TERM

This Agreement shall be in effect from February 1, 2026, until June 30, 2027, unless terminated earlier as provided herein. The Agreement may be extended by mutual written agreement of both Parties. The City will commit to this program/process for as long as funding allows or is available.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF AWAKEN

Awaken agrees that Participants will comply with all applicable City rules, regulations, policies and procedures while receiving the training or on City property and acknowledges that the City may terminate this Agreement immediately for noncompliance by Participants.

Awaken further agrees that as a condition of being permitted to participate in the training on City property, Participants will execute a waiver of liability to be provided by the City.

Awaken agrees to:

- Recruit, train, and certify Participants through its Weatherization Pre-Apprenticeship Program using the **NCCER Curriculum**.
- Ensure all Participants complete foundational certifications, including **OSHA 10, CPR/First Aid, Building Science**, and other CEJA-aligned modules.
- Provide the City with a roster of Participants eligible for WEX and OJT placement.
- Supply case management and transition services during Participant placement.
- Provide regular communication with the City's Weatherization staff to ensure maximum feasible participation.
- Cover Participant wages under WEX/OJT via approved CEJA grant funding.
- Monitor attendance, performance, and progress of Participants.
- Provide any and all documents requested by the City that are required to be submitted for the purpose of grant reporting.
- Submit required documentation for reimbursement and reporting.
- Provide two (2) four-gas meters and one (1) Testo device to be shared among all participants. All equipment shall be stored in a lockable binder bin located at the City of Rockford. Ownership of the equipment shall remain with Awaken at all times. Upon termination or expiration of this Agreement, all equipment shall be returned to Awaken in good condition, reasonable wear and tear accepted.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITY

City agrees to permit Participants to shadow and receive hands on training from the City's employees. Participants will not be employees of the City and will not replace or displace any employee of the City. Participants will only be permitted to observe and perform work under the supervision or direction of City employees. Participants will not be permitted to operate any City vehicles and will not be given independent access to City facilities.



Participants work under the general supervision of the assigned Weatherization Specialist. While shadowing the assigned Weatherization Specialist, Participants will learn Weatherization Program basics and may assist with the following:

- Set up, operate, and break down a blower door and other related equipment.
- Perform energy audits to determine eligibility and feasibility of weatherization projects.
- Estimate labor and materials for projects involving heating, structural, and renovation improvements.
- Develop work orders by utilizing the State Weatherization database.
- Maintain and update required records and reports

While assigned, the City of Rockford Health & Human Services – Community Services Division – Weatherization Program will:

- Provide direct supervision to all Participants, whether in the office or in field operations.
- Provide Participants with structured work experience in accordance with IHWAP guidelines, processes, and procedures.
- Maintain records of completed on-the-job training (OJT) as well as daily attendance and participation. This information may be shared with WEX administrators.
- Ensure that Participants are not required to perform duties that require proper certification(s) without appropriate supervision.
- Ensure that Participants are not exposed to tasks involving health/safety risks beyond their level of training/certification(s).
- Provide feedback and assist in final job-readiness evaluations.

The City may, in its absolute discretion, remove a Participant from participation in the Weatherization Program if the Participant violates the rules, regulation, policies or procedures of the City or the Participant's conduct in the Program is deemed to be unacceptable.

4. RELATIONSHIP OF THE PARTIES

Participants shall not be employees of the City. Awaken shall be responsible for Participants' compensation and benefits and Participants shall not be entitled to any compensation or benefits from the City, including worker's compensation benefits. Nothing contained herein or done pursuant to this Agreement shall be construed as creating a partnership, agency, joint employer or joint venture relationship between Awaken and the City. Except as other expressly provided in this Agreement, no party shall become bound, with respect to third parties, by any representation, act or omission of the other party. Nothing contained in this Agreement shall be construed as creating an employment relationship between the Awaken or Participants and the City.

5. INDEMNIFICATION

To the extent authorized by law, Awaken shall indemnify and hold harmless the City, its employees and agents against any and all liabilities, claims, damages, losses and expenses, including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees, arising out of Awaken's or Participants' performance under this Agreement.



6. INSURANCE

For the term of this Agreement, Awaken shall maintain such types and amounts of liability insurance as may be required to cover Awaken's liabilities under this Agreement, including, but not limited to, commercial general liability insurance of at least \$1 million per occurrence and \$2 million general aggregate. Awaken shall also maintain worker's compensation insurance as required under Illinois law. Awaken shall upon request provide to the City evidence of such insurance coverage.

7. FUNDING AND PAYMENT

- This program is fully funded under the CEJA grant.
- Participant wages during WEX/OJT will be paid by Awaken Foundation through CEJA allocations.
- No direct cost will be incurred by the City for Participant wages.

8. REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE

- Both parties shall comply with all CEJA, state, and local reporting requirements.
- Awaken will submit monthly reports outlining Participant progress, hours worked, and completion metrics.

9. TERMINATION

Either Party may terminate this Agreement at any time and for any reason upon written notice to the other Party. Except as provided herein, termination shall not affect Participants already in placement, who will be supported through completion.

10. ASSIGNMENT

Neither party may assign any rights or duties under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the other party.

11. AMENDMENTS

This Agreement may only be amended in writing, signed by authorized representatives of both Parties.

12. GOVERNING LAW

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Illinois. Venue for any disputes shall be the Circuit Court of the 17th Judicial Circuit, Winnebago County.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have executed, or caused to be executed by their duly authorized officials, this Agreement as of the respective dates indicated below.

CITY OF ROCKFORD, a Municipal Corporation

By: _____

Name:

Title:

Date: _____

Awaken Foundation L3C, an Illinois Limited Liability Company

By: _____

Name: Jurea Crudup

Title:

Date: _____

Rockford, Illinois

Date: January 12, 2026

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:

Council Members:

The Committee on Finance and Personnel having received a request hereby begs leave to report recommending **approval** of the Agreement between the City of Rockford and Awaken Foundation L3C for participation in a Weatherization Program on-the-job training initiative. The Legal Director shall prepare the appropriate ordinance.

Kevin Frost (Chair)

Jonathan Logemann (Vice chair)

Frank Beach

Dawn Granath

Chad Tuneberg

Committee Action Taken:

Frost:	Ayes: <input type="text"/>	Nays: <input type="text"/>	Absent: <input type="text"/>
Logemann:	Ayes: <input type="text"/>	Nays: <input type="text"/>	Absent: <input type="text"/>
Beach:	Ayes: <input type="text"/>	Nays: <input type="text"/>	Absent: <input type="text"/>
Granath:	Ayes: <input type="text"/>	Nays: <input type="text"/>	Absent: <input type="text"/>
Tuneberg:	Ayes: <input type="text"/>	Nays: <input type="text"/>	Absent: <input type="text"/>