

LABOR DAY REPORT 2025



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Each year on Labor Day, the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) reaffirms its commitment to upholding the rights of workers in our state. This 2025 Labor Day Report highlights just some of the important work we've done this year to fulfill our mission of protecting and advancing workplace rights and safety.

From enforcing Illinois' \$15 minimum wage to safeguarding young workers from hazardous jobs, IDOL strives to ensure that workers are paid what they're owed, afforded required breaks and leave from work, and able to do their jobs safely. Last year, IDOL received nearly 9,000 complaints of violations of Illinois wage and hour laws and collected millions of dollars in back wages and penalties for workers. At a time when federal labor enforcement has diminished and workers' rights face new threats, this work has never been more vital.

IDOL's small but mighty staff continues to focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our enforcement. For example, in partnership with other agencies and non-profit service providers, we've recently launched a new cross-agency collaboration to better detect and respond to labor trafficking and severe labor exploitation with trauma-informed services and coordinated enforcement.

In Illinois we're focused on not just enforcing existing workplace rights; we are also on the forefront of advancing them. This year IDOL implemented a new pay transparency law that requires employers to include anticipated pay and benefits in all job postings and advertisements -- an important step toward closing pay gaps and increasing fairness in hiring. Yet workplace rights are only meaningful when people know about and exercise them. That's why IDOL is engaged in ongoing education and outreach throughout the year. From taking to Facebook Live to talk about the right to paid leave, to holding compliance assistance webinars for public works and clean energy contractors, to engaging with worker advocates in community roundtable meetings, IDOL is continually working to build awareness of the laws we enforce.

As I reflect on the past year and look ahead to the next, I am filled with appreciation for Illinois' working people and our many public, private, community, union, and nonprofit partners whose feedback, input, and collaboration make our work possible.

Sincerely,



JANE FLANAGAN
DIRECTOR

MISSION

The mission of the Illinois Department of Labor is to protect and promote the wages, welfare, working conditions, and safety of Illinois workers by enforcing State labor and employment laws, providing compliance assistance to employers, and increasing public awareness of workplace protections. Through enforcement, education, and community partnerships, the Department works to ensure that workers are paid what they are owed and that employers who follow the law remain competitive.

VALUES

Justice

Empathy

Teamwork

Knowledge

Adaptability

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Every year, IDOL works to enforce new laws and changes to existing laws made by the General Assembly, and to help businesses come into compliance.

\$15 MINIMUM WAGE

The minimum wage in Illinois increased to \$15 an hour, effective January 1, 2025. The minimum wage for tipped workers is \$9 per hour and youth workers (under 18) working fewer than 650 hours per calendar year are being paid \$13 per hour. This was the seventh and final increase in the state's minimum wage that was included in legislation signed by Gov. Pritzker in 2019.

PAY STUB REQUIREMENT

Employers in Illinois are required to provide pay stubs to employees each pay period. That's part of a new law that took effect January 1, 2025. The pay stubs must include information on hours worked, pay rates, overtime pay, and deductions from wages. Employers must also keep a copy of an employee's pay stub for a period of three years from the date of payment, regardless of whether that person remains employed at the business. An employee or former employee may request copies of their paystubs at least twice in a 12-month period.

EQUAL PAY ACT SALARY TRANSPARENCY

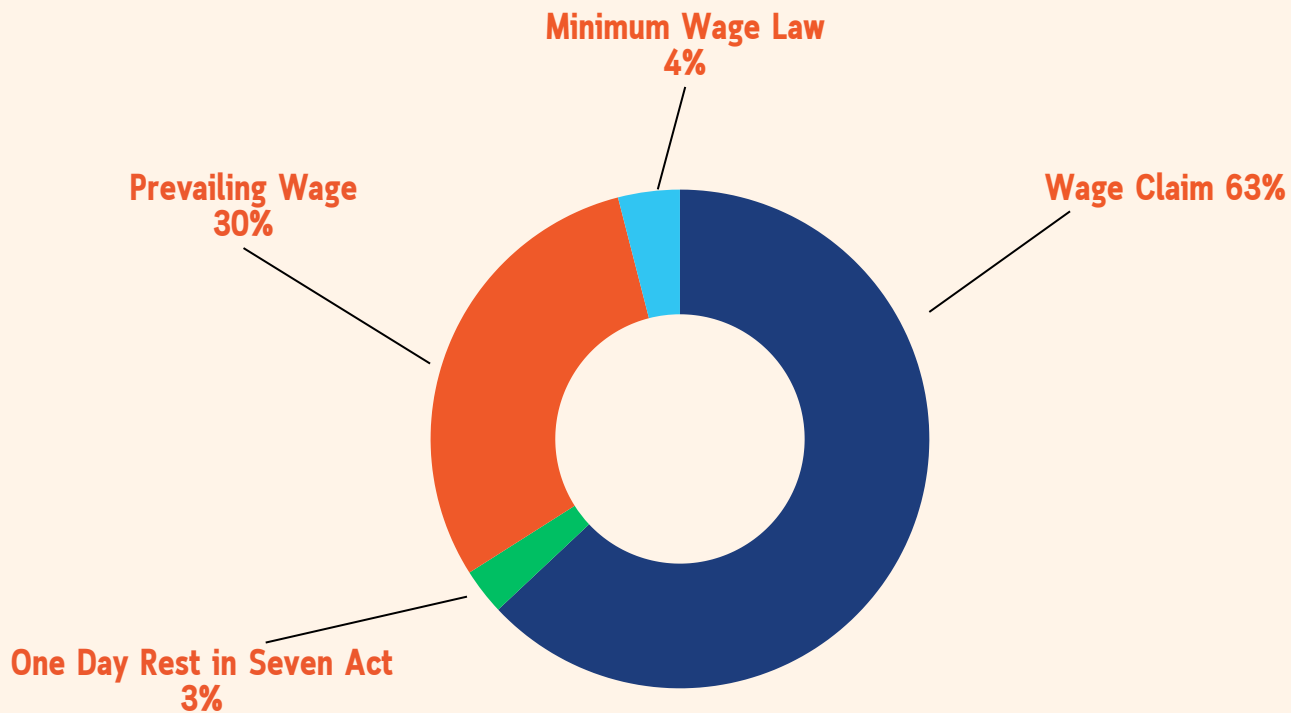
As of January 1, 2025, jobseekers have a novel tool for avoiding pay disparities due to sex or race, because now job postings must include a position's pay scale and benefits if the employer has 15+ employees and the posting is for work to be performed (or reporting to someone) in Illinois. When such a job posting is public, the employer must promptly let its employees know. Jobseekers are thrilled about increasing transparency in position pay, benefits, and opportunity, and they are letting IDOL know: in the first seven months of 2025, IDOL received over 1100 complaints about job postings! IDOL staff work with employers to informally resolve complaints whenever possible, with investigation, determinations, and penalties used as needed.

CHILD LABOR LAW OF 2024

The Child Labor Law of 2024, which took effect January 1, 2025, is intended to provide a structure for minors to engage in safe, age-appropriate work, while protecting their health and access to education. The bill sets standards for working conditions for children aged 15 and younger, including limiting hours of work and updating the list of jobs that minors cannot hold. The Illinois Child Labor Law has long required school officials to review a minor's work opportunity and, with the permission of the minor's parent or guardian, issue an employment certificate to the minor before they can lawfully work.

PROTECTING WORKERS

BACK WAGES COLLECTED BY LABOR LAW



\$2.9M

Back wages and other compensation collected on behalf of workers.

\$4.9M

Penalties collected from employers for violations of labor laws.

CASE STUDY: CHILD LABOR LAW

On December 4, 2024, Hearthside Food Solutions, LLC entered into a \$4.5 million dollar settlement with the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) and the Office of the Illinois Attorney General (OAG) to resolve an investigation into Hearthside's compliance with the Illinois Child Labor Law. The IDOL and OAG conducted a joint investigation into allegations of minors under the age of 16 working in hazardous and dangerous working conditions at Hearthside facilities in Illinois.

The settlement contained assurances that Hearthside will implement mechanisms to ensure compliance with the Child Labor Law, such as establishing a Complaint Hotline and Complaint Email for employees to report alleged violations. Additionally, Hearthside is required to internally investigate allegations of child labor law violations at its facilities and will designate an employee (or employees) who will provide child labor law compliance training and review existing policies and procedures for compliance.

Up to half of the settlement amount will be available to individuals who may have worked at a Hearthside facility in Illinois while under the age of 16 between March 1, 2020, and December 4, 2024. A settlement administrator has established an approval process for individuals to make claims. The settlement will remain in effect for two years from the effective date of the agreement, and impacted workers may submit claims during this time.

WORKING FOR YOU

ENSURING WORKERS RECEIVE PAID LEAVE

An Illinois township failed to provide its part-time workers with the opportunity to earn paid leave, as required under the Paid Leave for All Workers Act. IDOL was able to reach an agreement with the township, collecting \$5,000 in penalties and ensuring that the township's part-time employees also accrued paid leave.

ENFORCING THE PREVAILING WAGE ACT

IDOL resolved multiple complaints that workers on a public works project were not paid prevailing wages and distributed more than \$483,000 to affected workers. The payments are part of a settlement agreement reached that also provided for \$85,000 in civil penalties.

ENSURING WORKERS RECEIVE OVERTIME PAY

A restaurant worker reported that they were being paid below the State's minimum wage. IDOL conducted a minimum wage compliance audit which confirmed underpayments to multiple workers. IDOL issued a notice of violations pursuant to the Illinois Minimum Wage/Overtime Law. As a result, IDOL recovered over \$20,000 for 30 affected restaurant workers.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION UNIT

A claimant who worked for a snow removal service alleged that he did not receive his final check. The Informal Resolution and Mediation Unit diligently tracked down the former employer by locating a flyer for the business, including a phone number. After being contacted by IDOL, the employer paid the claimant his final check and provided an offer of reemployment.

COLLECTING UNPAID WAGES

An employee in the manufacturing industry was laid off with an expectation of being brought back to work when the employer had finances in place. The worker was never called back to work or paid his wages, earned vacation, and other promised compensation. After filing a wage claim with IDOL, a hearing was held and the employer was ordered to pay final compensation and penalties totaling over \$30,000.

PREVAILING WAGE & CLEAN ENERGY

The landmark Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) ensured that new clean energy construction jobs are also quality high-wage jobs by requiring that contractors pay local prevailing wages for workers in all crafts and trades on projects receiving renewable energy credits through the Illinois Power Agency. For example, this year IDOL recovered more than \$85,000 in unpaid wages and \$17,000 in civil penalties from a solar contractor who had not met prevailing wage requirements.

EQUAL PAY ACT IN ACTION

A security firm employee alleged that her firm had violated the Equal Pay Act when it paid more to an employee of a different sex for doing the same or substantially similar work. After investigating, IDOL found that the employer had violated the law and ordered it to pay the employee back wages and a penalty. The case resolved in a settlement that provided a \$10,000 wage payment for the employee and a \$2,500 payment to IDOL's Equal Pay Fund.

CLAIM RESOLUTION

Administrative Hearings

Many of the claims IDOL receives are resolved at an administrative hearing where a worker and an employer present or defend their case before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). Before a hearing, IDOL staff communicates with both the worker and employer to identify the allegations, collect documents, and explain the process. At the hearing, both parties have an opportunity to present their perspective to an ALJ. After the hearing, an ALJ will issue a Decision and Order ruling on the merits of the case.

This past year was a busy time for the Administrative Hearings unit. ALJs presided over 2800 wage claim hearings and issued over 1320 Decisions and Orders. Additionally, ALJs participated numerous trainings included one hosted by the Cook County Department of Administrative hearings and led by the National Judicial College.

Informal Resolution and Mediation Unit (IRMU) Overview

In October 2024, the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) launched a new Informal Resolution and Mediation Unit (IRMU). The goal of the unit was to provide workers and employers an alternative method of resolving complaints instead of going through the expense and lengthy process of litigation. Beginning October 2024, the IRMU contacted claimants regarding more than 575 wage claims. The unit is led by a Mediation Attorney and is supported by an Administrative Assistant.

460+

IRMU cases closed

\$47,500+

Wages recovered

Wage Claim Proactive Resolution

IRMU attempts to proactively resolve small wage claims (for amounts under \$500). IRMU contacts both the worker and employer regarding the complaint and attempts to informally resolve the issue between both parties. The entire process is voluntary, and claimant has the right to go to an administrative hearing. The goals are to speed up the resolution of low dollar claims, get money to workers faster, and help employers save the time and resources of litigation. Overall, the IRMU closed or resolved more than three of every four claims handled. The remaining claims were referred to back to the wage claim process where they may be heard by an Administrative Law Judge. The IRMU collected nearly \$50,000 on over 575 small wage claims where the worker alleged that he or she was owed \$500 or less. So far, IRMU has been positively received by workers.

Worker Testimonial

"I wanted to take a moment to thank you. I saw an email confirming the success of my claim and I am very grateful for your efforts. Thank you so very much. I believe this new office for smaller claims will be very successful and beneficial with your capable, diligent work."

PROMOTING WORKPLACE SAFETY

IDOL's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (IL OSHA) ensures safe and healthy working conditions for Illinois workers by inspecting public sector workplaces. The On-Site Safety and Health Consultation Program (On-Site) offers free and confidential safety and health consultations at small- and medium-sized private workplaces.

PUBLIC SECTOR SAFETY

FIREFIGHTER SAFETY RESOURCE

IL OSHA, along with partners in the firefighting community, developed a sample incident command, accountability, and mayday standard operating guideline (SOG) for structure fires.

PUBLIC WORKS EDUCATIONAL REPORT

The Illinois Department of Labor's (IDOL) Division of Occupational Safety and Health (IL OSHA) has released an incident report following an inspection and investigation of the drowning of a public works employee.



COMPANION TRAINING VIDEO

The municipality was required to produce the video on confined space safety for water departments.





On-Site helps Illinois businesses meet the Federal OSHA health and safety regulations. The free consultation process is completely voluntary and primarily targeted for small to medium-sized businesses.

CASE STUDY: SHARP DESIGNATION

Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP)

SHARP recognizes small business employers who operate an exemplary injury and illness prevention program. Acceptance of a worksite into SHARP is an achievement of status that singles out a worksite among its peers as a model for worksite safety and health.

Based in Aurora, Diamond Envelope Corp. - which manufactures custom envelopes - began the SHARP certification process with On-Site in 2015. Flexible scheduling and investments in safety technologies helped integrate safety into daily operations. The company also enforced strict policies, including a zero-tolerance rule for working alone in the Maintenance Department and reinforcing that safety would not be compromised, even in difficult decisions. The family-owned business achieved full SHARP certification in July 2024.



"We believe in the health and safety of our people," said Diamond Envelope Corp. CEO Susan Foley. "Safety is not only a top priority but also a composition of policies, practices, and behaviors. We believe partnering with IDOL through the On-Site Consultation program is a best practice that should exist in every manufacturing safety program."

CASE STUDY: CONSTRUCTION SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

On-Site joined the Chicago South Area Office of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Pepper Construction Company, and the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council in June to celebrate the successful completion of the Hollywood Casino Joliet construction project and the impact of their OSHA Strategic Partnership.



Launched in mid-2024, the partnership was designed to reduce the risk of injuries and illnesses during the construction of the new casino. The collaborative effort focused on worker training, routine site inspections, safety walkthroughs, and hazard mitigation strategies - ensuring a safety-focused culture on the job site.

"This partnership created an engaged group of leaders from the DOL, OSHA, Pepper and most of all, our trade partners," said Pepper Construction Vice President, Safety Dan Ruane. "Getting the 'Voice of the Worker' is a critical step when creating a healthy safety culture."

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Empowering Workers & Employers Through Education

IDOL continues to educate workers and employers about labor rights in Illinois. Outreach strategy includes both rural and urban communities, acknowledging that all workers face unique challenges and deserve equal access to information.

IDOL uses multiple forms of engagement to maximize reach and effectiveness, including "Know Your Labor Rights" workshops for community organizations and employer groups, and maintaining a visible presence through tabling and presenting at consulates, community fairs, and local events. Presentations address minimum wage, wage protections, wage theft, and child labor law. IDOL also emphasizes anti-retaliation protections, leave protections and the process of reporting violations. Presentation and events are tailored to the specific needs and interests of the audience.



Workers' rights informational event Fall 2024



SIOSH SafetyCon Winter 2025



ISBE bilingual parents summit Spring 2025

Over the course of the year, over 100 workshops and presentations were delivered by the department. These outreach events help to build relationships with diverse audiences across the state, covering topics such as workforce opportunities from the Climate and Equitable Job Act (CEJA). For the second year in a row, IDOL partnered with the Illinois State Board of Education to inform educators, parents and families about the Child Labor Law.



Workers' Memorial Day. Spring 2025

This strategic outreach strengthened relationships with the communities IDOL serves, established new partnerships with workplaces and community organizations.

Listening Session, Tradeswomen Take Over Springfield Spring 2025 (right)





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