

Fact Sheet: Powering Chicago in Brief

MISSION:

Powering Chicago is an electrical industry labor-management partnership between IBEW Local 134 and the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA) of Chicago and Cook County that invests in consistently better construction, better careers and better communities in Chicago and Cook County.

HISTORY:

Since 1900, the ECA and IBEW Local 134 have worked together through a labor-management partnership (LMCC) to encourage communication and cooperation, establish the highest standards of safety, training, reliability and expertise in the electrical industry, and to promote the union electrical industry in the Chicago metropolitan area. In 2019, the LMCC rebranded as Powering Chicago, which promotes the IBEW Local 134 and ECA workforce as the only choice for electrical construction in the Chicago metro area.

WHAT WE DO:

Employing the latest technology, Powering Chicago's members are elevating industry performance through their commitment to safety, level of experience and reliability, while also investing in the future of skilled labor through an innovative apprenticeship program.

In 2007, ECA Chicago and IBEW Local 134 opened the newly renovated IBEW/NECA Technical Institute, a state-of-the-art 120,000-square-foot building consisting of 12 large classrooms, eight extensive laboratories and a full-size residential and commercial mock-up in which apprentices learn the trade. The institute also features the first solar electricity training facility in Illinois, providing apprentices with the opportunity to learn the latest best practices related to renewable energy. Apprentices take part in a rigorous five-year program that prepares them to uphold Powering Chicago's commitment to the highest standards in electrical construction, while also securing lifelong career opportunities.

Powering Chicago takes part in more than 100 charitable activities each year and plays a major role in rebuilding Chicago neighborhoods and giving back to the communities in which its members live and work.

MEMBERSHIP:

Powering Chicago members include more than 500 licensed electrical contractors and 12,000 IBEW Local 134 journeypersons in the City of Chicago and suburban Cook County. We quickly staff any project, anytime with our strong membership of talented professionals

GOVERNANCE:

Powering Chicago employs one full-time staff and is governed by a committee composed of members from ECA and IBEW Local 134.

HOW TO FIND POWERING CHICAGO:

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**ASSETS:**

Powering Chicago logos are accessible [here](#).

Powering Chicago FAQs

What is Powering Chicago?

Powering Chicago is an electrical industry labor-management partnership between IBEW Local 134 and the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA) of Chicago and Cook County that invests in consistently better construction, better careers and better communities in Chicago and Cook County.

What does Powering Chicago do?

Powering Chicago works to encourage communication and cooperation between labor and management, establish the highest standards of safety, reliability and training in the electrical industry, and to promote the more than 600 union electrical contractors and 12,500 member-unionized electrical industry in Chicago and Cook County as the best choice for high-quality electrical work completed on-time and on-budget.

What are Powering Chicago's goals?

- Educate decision-makers about the value and advantages of hiring members of the unionized electrical industry
- Increases awareness of the sophisticated technology driving our industry
- Market the capabilities of members to build market opportunities for our industry, increase qualified membership for Local 134 and ECA, and attract talented candidates to the apprenticeship program.

Who are Powering Chicago's members?

Powering Chicago members include more than 600 licensed electrical contractors and 12,500 IBEW Local 134 journeypersons in the City of Chicago and suburban Cook County. We quickly staff any project, anytime with our strong membership of talented professionals.

What does Powering Chicago mean when it says 'better construction, better careers, better communities?'

Better Construction:

Members of the unionized electrical industry in Cook County bring an unmatched level of experience, reliability, safety and training to every job. Our workforce is composed of the most highly trained electrical workers in the country, which is a direct result of an intensive apprenticeship program and ongoing opportunities to develop skills throughout their careers.

When a project needs to be completed on time and on budget, with the highest possible quality, the unionized electrical industry delivers. That's what better construction means to us.

Better Careers:

Better careers reflects the limitless career pathways available to those who enter the unionized electrical industry. Few industries allow you to begin as an apprentice and have a realistic chance of owning your own company, and that's the exact path many in our industry have taken, but it's only one of many possibilities. Powering Chicago invests in continuous training and education opportunities for members to ensure they have the tools they need to find roles in the industry that suit their interests and skills, and to succeed in whatever career path they choose - whether working on job sites or in an office helping ensure better construction. That's better careers.

Better Communities:

Better communities is a reflection of our commitment to Cook County and its residents. Better communities matter to us because we don't just work here, we live here, too. That's why we participate in more than 100 philanthropic events each year and are always willing to go the extra mile to strengthen neighborhoods and communities across the City of Chicago and suburban Cook County. It's also why we invest in better careers for our members, many of whom play active roles as citizens and leaders in their local communities.

What differentiates Powering Chicago's partners from non-union competitors?

Choosing a unionized electrical contractor with IBEW Local 134 electricians means the project will be completed on time, within budget, and have the highest quality installation available in the market today. In large part, that's the result of our investment in training and education for our workforce. Powering Chicago's members invest in the future of the electrical industry by fully funding the apprenticeship program at the IBEW/NECA Technical Institute. The apprenticeship program builds a sophisticated workforce with limitless career potential, driving ongoing growth and innovation in the industry.

Powering Chicago's contracting partners have access to over 12,500 members and can draw on this expertise to quickly staff any size project, anytime, eliminating weeks it can take for competitors to identify contractors to staff a job.

How do Powering Chicago partners provide value to customers?

ECA Chicago electrical contractors and IBEW Local 134 electricians have been trained extensively in the latest techniques, bring invaluable experience to every job site, and adhere to the highest standards of safety, day after day and year after year. When a Powering Chicago partner completes a project, it will be on time and within budget, and will not need to be corrected later. For those making a choice between union and non-union, the question should be, "how much is it worth to me to know that my project will be completed the right way the first time, without delay."

Elbert Walters III

Executive Director, Powering Chicago



A former business representative for IBEW Local 134 and longtime member of the union, Elbert Walters III now serves as the executive director for Powering Chicago, leading the organization's 100+ philanthropic and community impact initiatives each year and playing a key role in its daily operations. Walters brings to the position a deep understanding of the unionized electrical industry's commitment to better construction, better careers and better communities.

In his previous role at IBEW Local 134, Walters worked with colleagues to represent the interests of more than 13,000 electricians in metro Chicago. A Local 134 electrician himself, Walters began his career in the trades as an electrical apprentice at the IBEW/NECA Technical Institute, where he received the Apprentice of the Year award during his final year in the program before becoming a journeyman electrician. While working in the field, Walters served as a journeyman wireman and foreman at several electrical contracting companies in metropolitan Chicago, including Meade Electric, Divane Brothers Electric and MZI Group, Inc.

Throughout his career, Walters has dedicated himself to strengthening communities. His achievements include establishing and hosting the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast and coordinating union electrical volunteers for the annual Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago day of service, which provides needed upgrades to disadvantaged communities throughout the Chicagoland area.

Within IBEW, Walters served as a member of the Electrical Joint Arbitration Board, member of Chicago Building Trades Council, member of the Illinois Prevailing Wage Council and served as Secretary of Labor Brothers United (LBU), a group of union officials dedicated to closing the gap between union labor and the community. Walters continues his work with the union and serves as the Commander and Adjutant for the American Legion Electrical Post 769 and board member of the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus Chicago Chapter.

Walters recently completed DePaul University's Labor Leadership Program, designed to help build the next generation of labor movement leaders. Prior to devoting his professional efforts fully to Chicagoland's unionized electrical industry, Walter served eight years in the Illinois Army National Guard and was honorably discharged in 1998.

Areas of expertise: Powering Chicago's business and philanthropic initiatives, Construction, Electrical industry, Union labor