



# *The* MOLINE FOUNDATION

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## **Black Hawk Region Pathways Accepted as a Leadership Community**

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Moline, IL: December 6, 2021

The Black Hawk Region Pathways joins the Illinois 60 x 2025 Network as a leadership community helping students prepare for careers. Black Hawk Region Pathways [BHRP] will work to expand community-wide systems that assist all students in career exploration & post-secondary options and champions businesses/agencies needs to benefit regional economic development.

“The Black Hawk Region Pathways Partnership will play a key role in establishing a cost-efficient, sustainable talent pipeline to meet future workforce needs. The intent of this compact is to provide incredible opportunities for our students, and in doing so, have a positive impact on our local economy,” states David Ottavianelli, Workforce Project Manager at John Deere.

The Illinois 60 by 2025 Network is an alliance of communities committed to the goal of ensuring that 60% of all adults have a college or career credential by 2025. “The Illinois 60 by 25 Network Organizers are thrilled to welcome Black Hawk Region Pathways as an Illinois 60 by 25 Network Leadership Community. The region is an excellent example of how diverse stakeholders can come together to ensure young people have the support they need to succeed. Black Hawk Pathways joins 17 other Illinois communities to be formally recognized as a Leadership Community, in recognition of their drive towards meaningful and equitable postsecondary attainment,” said Edith Njuguna, Director, Illinois 60 by 2025 Network

Today, all high school graduates need some postsecondary education and/or training if they are to have options and opportunities in the job market. “Given the importance of some type of post-secondary education, Black Hawk College is excited about the opportunity to participate in the 60 x 2025 Network to assist in advancing the social mobility of quad citizens. The variety of career options available to student at Black Hawk including short term certificates and degrees will ensure individuals are ready to meet our workforce needs.” affirms Dr. Amy Maxeiner, Vice President for Instruction and Student Service of Black Hawk College.

In Illinois, 8 of 10 employers say they need employees with some postsecondary education; yet only 54% of Illinois residents have a college or post-secondary career credential. Mark Lohman, Executive Director, Workforce Development Board, American Job Center® comments that “Training for demand occupations provides opportunities for job seekers, as well as innovation for businesses. Career Pathways programs facilitate individuals building skills and progressing along a continuum of education and training and advancing in employment.”

In addition to Equity for All and development process for working with employers who provide work-based learning opportunities in the region, Black Hawk Region Pathways [BHRP] has two other main goals. To increase student access to work-based learning opportunities, a pilot Intermediary Center at Black Hawk College has been established that will offer these activities in conjunction with The Moline Foundation and United Way of the QC. Intermediaries are liaisons between employers and educators/students that find opportunities such as classroom/career fair speakers, job shadows, tours, etc. Participating in the pilot are Moline Coal Valley, United Township and Rock Island-Milan schools.

In January of 2022, work will begin to develop a customized Postsecondary and Career Expectation (PaCE) Framework for the region’s schools. PaCE lays out a path for what students will accomplish in eighth grade up to twelfth in career exploration. For instance, most eighth graders do an interest assessment whereas seniors are more likely to do job shadows or an internship. Interested school districts in the three-county area of Rock Island, Henry, and Mercer Counties, will be invited to collaboratively develop a customized PaCE in conjunction with the Quad City Career and Technical Education Consortium.

“BHRP will concentrate on the Industry Clusters of Health Science, Information Technology, Logistics, Advance Manufacturing, and Corporate Operations and Support Services as they are industries the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce and IowaWORKS chose as key to economic success in the Quad Cities Region,” mentions Susan Zelnio, Workforce Development Director at The Moline Foundation.

The members of the Leadership Community include Black Hawk College, City of Moline, John Deere, Moline-Coal Valley School District, Quad City Career and Technical Education Consortium [QCC TEC] and Area Career Center, Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce, Rock Island County Regional Office of Education, The Moline Foundation, Sedona Technologies, and Workforce Development Board, American Job Center.

“With the competitive nature of the labor market, programs like 60 X 2025 Network are vital to developing in demand skillsets for the local economy. As a company based around supplying total workforce solutions, we are excited about this opportunity,” explains Brendan John, Program Manager at Sedona Technologies.

Becoming a leadership community has led to a grant to develop an Illinois State Board of Education certified Educational Pathway in the Moline Coal Valley and Rock Island Milan School Districts through Scaling Education Pathways in Illinois. And the Moline Coal Valley and Rock Island Milan School Districts with the Area Career Center were invited to participate in an application to develop a

Manufacturing Pathway through Scaling Transformative Advance Manufacturing Pathways in partnership with the Illinois Manufacturers' Association. Both grant opportunities are with the support of the Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University.

Currently, BHRP is working to recruit employers to help prepare students for the workforce. "As the leadership organization for this collaboration, The Moline Foundation is focused on increasing opportunities for students to explore options before they start post-secondary education or careers." concludes Paul Plagenz, CEO and President of The Moline Foundation

### About The Moline Foundation

The Moline Foundation, founded in 1953, is a community foundation which provides grants to health, human services, education, community development, the arts and other charitable organizations which benefit the citizens of Moline and the surrounding area. The Moline Foundation receives and administers charitable gifts for all citizens in a seven-county region including Rock Island, Henry, Mercer, Warren, Henderson and McDonough Counties in Illinois and Scott County in Iowa.

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#### Media Contact:

Name: Paul Plagenz

Title: President / CEO

Phone: (309) 581-2972

Email address: [pplagenz@molinefoundation.org](mailto:pplagenz@molinefoundation.org)

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