

The Highway Construction Careers Training Program typically is a 13-week program from Day 1 to Graduation Day.



Highway construction grads Komivi Nekou, Maveric Hedrick, Marcus Teague and Barak Rowell

But in 2020, nothing is typical.

What began as a 13-week class on March 2 instead took 21 weeks to complete because of the pandemic.

“We had a couple of starts and stops, as well as several weeks of online distance learning,” said Paul Fessler, HCCTP program manager.

“The students displayed a lot of patience and perseverance,” he said.

“It took a little longer than usual but it was good,” said grad Maveric Hedrick of Davenport. “I’m ready to go out there and find a good trade.”

“It’s been a long year,” said grad Barak Rowell of Moline. “(But) the last couple of weeks kind of flew by. It was pretty great.”

The 450-hour program is funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation and aims to increase the number of minorities, women and disadvantaged individuals working on IDOT highway construction projects.



Highway construction grads Marcus Teague, Maveric Hedrick, Barak Rowell and Komivi Nekou

The intensive training prepares students for apprenticeships in the construction trades. They get classroom and hands-on training, learning skills for highway and other types of construction.

Each class tackles several projects around the area. Normally, that means 10-15 people sharing the work. But because of the pandemic, the 2020 class went from 13 to four students.

“Being a smaller group, the four graduates worked extra hard to complete our hands-on projects,” Fessler said.

“We work on concrete projects and carpentry projects ... plus maybe some plumbing, little bit of sheet metal. It depends on what projects we have lined up,” he said.



Highway construction students learn how to finish cement as part of their training.

The class finished the new accessible concrete parking spaces at Illiniwek Forest Preserve and built a large awning for a barn at the Rock Island County Fairgrounds. The students also replaced deteriorated parking lot sections at Saukie Golf Course in Rock Island and at the college’s Quad-Cities Campus in Moline.

“Something that looks easy is probably not easy,” said grad Marcus Teague of Davenport. Students need to “be ready to work. Expect the unexpected.”

“It feels like a great achievement to be a graduate of this program,” said grad Komivi Nekou of Moline.

“We kept going. I think hard work and determination, it can be a key for success,” he said.

View photos from the program on [Facebook](#).

Share this:

- [Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#)
- [Click to share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#)
- [Click to email a link to a friend \(Opens in new window\)](#)
- [Click to print \(Opens in new window\)](#)
- [More](#)