



IWIB/BEC BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT RETREAT SUMMARY

On the afternoon of February 23, 2021, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) held virtual retreat to hear and discuss a set of initial key findings developed by its Business Engagement Committee (BEC). These findings, five in all, bring forward a set of problems identified within Illinois workforce development system. They reflect the focuses of the BEC in its first year, and included an examination of key supporting points and a set of action steps for the IWIB to begin to respond to those findings. Those findings and the BEC's suggested responses were:

1. ***The lack of common messaging by Illinois' workforce development system reduces business use of the system.*** This limits delivery of important economic services to the business community. Illinois needs to create perception in business community that the Illinois Workforce System is a powerful partner, easy to access and use that aids businesses' success. The BEC will ask the IWIB for authority to identify all entities needed to form a core group WIOA partners to craft a path toward a unified messaging solution, building upon the existing branding work in Illinois
2. ***The lack of an effective and consistent two-way communication between the IWIB and the LWIBs creates a lack of efficiency and synergy in the workforce system.*** Increasing communication between the two levels of workforce development leadership regarding their goals, activities and initiatives will serve to better coordinate the provision of workforce development services to businesses and individuals across the state. In response, The IWIB is requested to intensify its efforts to create and disseminate a quarterly IWIB electronic newsletter to communicate specifically with LWIB members (as well as others), and to invite the Illinois Workforce Partnership to work with the BEC to examine and develop mechanisms that will serve to better inform the IWIBs own goal and initiative development processes.
3. ***A top priority of Illinois' workforce development system is the need to specifically target small businesses for workforce support.*** Illinois' small businesses employ nearly 60% of all workers in the state. By specifically focusing outreach and support to this target group of businesses we can better utilize the limited resources available to help recruit, hire, train, retrain and retain a skilled workforce in Illinois. The BEC's suggested response is for the workforce system to identify, communicate and update available resources for Illinois' small businesses.
4. ***An opportunity exists to leverage existing sector champions across the state to implement industry partnership strategies more effectively.*** Throughout Illinois, industry partnerships have successfully developed an end-to-end process to address local workforce challenges. Business associations can support expanding industrial collaborations across the state to communicate specific workforce challenges in building a talent supply chain. In response, IWIB members should receive deeper training on the concepts and implementation of sector strategies in general, and Talent Pipeline



Management in particular, the workforce system should identify and recruit business champions for each region along with new and emerging business partnerships, and should develop a plan of action to provide training support for new partnerships using an end-to-end talent pipeline management process.

5. ***No standardized recruitment, onboarding and retention guidance exists for the IWIB's membership.*** The BEC, through its Board Recruitment Work Group, has created both initial and detailed orientation materials, for use in onboarding all new members. The BEC is asking that the IWIB review these materials in order begin a process to have them available for use in the onboarding of new IWIB members during 2021. In addition to developing these materials for IWIB use, the BEC intends for these materials to be available for LWIBs that wish to use or amend them for use in their LWIB onboarding processes.