

# **Illinois**

# **2024 WIOA State Plan**

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## Introduction

### *Towards a more Equitable Workforce System*

Illinois' Workforce Development System has a key role to play in improving equity and accessibility in educational and economic opportunity. Illinois is committed to applying an equity lens to our workforce development strategies to help ensure that our most vulnerable populations gain skills and access good jobs. Key to that work is identifying inequitable outputs and outcomes in the workforce system, exploring the cause of those inequities, and implementing solutions to advance equity within the system.

To that end, Governor JB Pritzker formed the Commission on Workforce Equity & Access in 2021. The Commission was charged with creating a vision for an equitable, accessible, and effective state workforce system grounded in an understanding of user and stakeholder experience, including how racial, social, and geographic inequities inform experience and outcomes across Illinois' federally and state-funded workforce programs. Among its top priorities were finding ways to strengthen and diversify existing workforce training programs to address shortages, expand access to talent and to promote equity and inclusion across all industries.

The Commission released its final report in the Spring of 2023. Recommendations in the report focused on increasing the accessibility, inclusivity, and responsiveness of the Workforce Development System.

Additionally, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board created an Equity Task Force in October 2020 to address equity within the Illinois workforce system and ensure that all customers are on pathways to success. The task force issued its report in 2022 that included a framework of recommendations within Illinois' workforce and education system to establish goals and remove inequities for the populations the system is meant to support.

The vision, goals, strategies and activities outlined in this plan reflect the findings and recommendations of both the Governor's Commission and the IWIB's Equity Task Force.

Throughout the life of this plan Illinois will continue to refine its strategies and activities to ensure the vision becomes reality.

**Illinois' Vision Statement:** Illinois' workforce system will meet employers, jobseekers, and community members where they are, centering the customer experience in an interoperable, equitable, and accessible manner to ensure all customers achieve their goals. We will support employers by building diverse, quality career pathways and provide effective training, education, and economic opportunities for jobseekers and communities to thrive.

### **State Goals and Strategies:**

1. **Goal 1:** Illinois' Workforce Development System is an example of excellence in its approach to collaboration and customer service.
  - a. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System uses a customer-centered approach to service delivery.

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- b. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System advances diversity, equity, inclusion and access.
  - c. **Strategy:** WIOA partners and other workforce and education systems in Illinois enhance coordination and collaboration.
  - d. **Strategy:** Jobseekers and employers have a broader awareness of the Workforce Development System.
  - e. **Strategy:** The state enhances local service delivery through supporting development to frontline workers.
2. **Goal 2:** Illinois' Workforce Development System will enhance employers' abilities to hire and retain skilled workers that meet their emerging needs.
- a. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System supports, informs and enhances employers' talent strategies.
  - b. **Strategy:** The various partners in the Workforce Development System leverage their business services to provide more holistic support to employers.
  - c. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System will build out tools and practices that can help employers adopt a culture that promotes equity and accessibility.
3. **Goal 3:** Illinois' Workforce Development System will use customer-centered and data-informed practices to improve the quality of the jobseeker experience in pursuing fulfilling career pathways in a manner that is equitable and accessible.
- a. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System educates and supports jobseekers regarding how to navigate the labor market.
  - b. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System interacts with jobseekers in the places where they live and visit.
  - c. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System will use a data-informed approach to reduce barriers to services for jobseekers who have historically faced barriers to accessing services.

**Stakeholder Collaboration and Comment:** The IWIB is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and modification of the Illinois' WIOA State Plan and for convening all relevant programs, required partners and stakeholders. The State agencies responsible for the administration of the core and required programs have reviewed and commented on appropriate operational planning portions of WIOA State Plan.

Additionally, Illinois employed an extensive stakeholder engagement strategy. Webinars were held early in the fall of 2023 soliciting feedback from individuals, businesses, and workforce staff. Listening sessions were held in October and November of 2023 in each of the economic development regions.

Illinois' WIOA State Plan was released for public comment early in 2024 to allow interested stakeholders to participate in the development of the plan. During the public comment period, two public webinars were conducted to provide ample opportunity for public feedback and input.

## Strategic Elements

### Economic and Workforce Analysis

#### Economic Analysis

##### *Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations.*

Three of the most important economic benchmarks used by Illinois to understand our economic position and to evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts to improve that position are overall economic production, employment and earnings. Examining these three indicators across the past ten years provides an uncommonly stark description of Illinois' experience before, during and since the brief recession in 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main narrative told by the numbers in Table 1 is that Illinois has struggled to keep up with its neighboring states and the nation, both in terms of economic output and employment growth. Though the Great Lakes region (IL, IN, MI, OH and WI) has lagged the nation on both economic indicators, Illinois has been particularly challenged. Between 2012 and 2017, the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by 3.7 percent compared to the US GDP growth of 11.2 percent. The GDP in the Great Lakes Region was 6.5 percent for the same period. The story through 2022-- the latest year for which data are available--shows that even though GDP growth in Illinois picked up over the decade, it lagged both the Great Lakes Region and the nation. The last ten years have seen an increase in the state's GDP of nearly 10 percent, which is less than the region's growth of 14.0 percent and the nation's 23.1 percent growth.

A look at the employment data suggests a similar struggle: in the five years ending 2022, Illinois' employment contracted by 1.0 percent, reflecting the lingering impact of the pandemic on the labor market. In contrast, the Great Lakes region overall registered a slight contraction of -0.4%, while the U.S. experienced positive employment growth of 3.2 percent in these last five years.

Growth in earnings in Illinois presents a comparative bright spot: over the last five years, personal incomes among Illinoisans have increased almost as much as the region (47.4 percent vs 49.5 percent, respectively). However, earnings in the nation have surpassed both Illinois and the region, growing by 62.1 percent during that same time period.

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Table 1: Illinois vs. Benchmark States vs. US:

Change in GDP, Employment & Earnings over 10 years

	Gross Domestic Product			Employment			Earnings		
	2012	2017	2022	2012	2017	2022	2012	2017	2022
<b>ILLINOIS</b>	<b>726,399</b>	<b>753,027</b>	<b>797,969</b>	<b>5,989,454</b>	<b>6,237,933</b>	<b>6,176,876</b>	<b>314,743,600</b>	<b>368,130,900</b>	<b>463,838,300</b>
Great Lakes Region *	2,272,451	2,421,179	2,591,533	21,310,883	22,709,662	22,614,423	989,410,400	1,175,192,200	1,479,570,600
US	16,253,970	18,076,651	20,014,128	142,469,083	153,337,417	158,291,083	6,918,166,000	8,469,518,000	11,213,920,200

	Percent Change in Gross Domestic Product			Percent Change in Employment			Percent Change in Earnings		
	2012-2017	2017-2022	2012-2022	2012-2017	2017-2022	2012-2022	2012-2017	2017-2022	2012-2022
<b>ILLINOIS</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>26.0%</b>	<b>47.4%</b>
Great Lakes Region *	6.5%	7.0%	14.0%	6.6%	-0.4%	6.1%	18.8%	25.9%	49.5%
US	11.2%	10.7%	23.1%	7.6%	3.2%	11.1%	22.4%	32.4%	62.1%

The situation described by these numbers provides the setting for continuing implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The challenge for Illinois is to utilize WIOA and all of the partner programs to assist the state's businesses to increase productivity, employment and earnings throughout the state.

Table 2 shows projected employment demand through 2030 for major industry sectors across Illinois. It is expected that the largest number of job openings will be created within the leisure and hospitality, professional/business services and health care/social assistance sectors. Large percentage increases in employment are expected in these three sectors, as well as in transportation and warehousing and retail trade.

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Table 2: Illinois Employment by Major Industry Sector

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Title	Base Year Employment 2020	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment 2020	Projected Year Employment 2030	Net Change 2020-2030	Ten-Year Percent Change 2020- 2030	Location Quotient 2020
<b>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>6,315,758</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>6,809,830</b>	<b>494,072</b>	<b>7.82%</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Agricultural Production	71,639	1.13%	72,937	1,298	1.81%	0.37
Natural Resources and Mining*	6,794	0.11%	6,885	91	1.34%	0.35
Utilities	23,817	0.38%	24,547	730	3.07%	1.09
Construction	216,665	3.43%	238,373	21,708	10.02%	0.75
Manufacturing	554,523	8.78%	575,158	20,635	3.72%	1.15
Wholesale Trade	281,714	4.46%	289,569	7,855	2.79%	1.25
Retail Trade	556,348	8.81%	592,583	36,235	6.51%	0.94
Transportation and Warehousing	324,853	5.14%	378,324	53,471	16.46%	1.26
Information	87,444	1.38%	88,124	680	0.78%	0.81
Financial Activities*	404,583	6.41%	421,118	16,535	4.09%	1.15
Professional and Business Services*	890,779	14.10%	971,653	80,874	9.08%	1.10
Educational Services, Private and Public	533,943	8.45%	550,625	16,682	3.12%	1.04
Health Care and Social Assistance	789,002	12.49%	855,247	66,245	8.40%	0.96
Leisure and Hospitality*	458,858	7.27%	612,602	153,744	33.51%	0.90
Personal and Other Services	230,494	3.65%	252,722	22,228	9.64%	1.17
Government**	331,873	5.25%	348,013	16,140	4.86%	0.88
Self Employed, Unpaid Family Workers and Others n.e.c.***	278,423	4.41%	261,424	-16,999	-6.11%	*

Note: LQ Sources by NAICS code, unless otherwise noted

\*LQ Source: BLS QCEW, 2020 Annual Averages, State of Illinois and U.S., Combined Industry Code

\*\*LQ Source: BLS QCEW, 2020 Annual Averages, State of Illinois and U.S., Government Ownership, all industries

\*\*\*No LQ Source Available

Projections Source: IL Department of Employment Security Statewide Long-Term Employment Projections

The location quotient for selected major industries in each county and EDR is provided on the accompanying maps (see below). These maps indicate where each industry has a comparative advantage versus the rest of the United States, based on private-sector employment. A value of 1.0 indicates the industry is at the national level, values greater than 1.0 indicate the industry has a comparative advantage versus the nation, and values less than 1.0 indicate the industry has a comparative disadvantage versus the nation. The degree of comparative advantage or disadvantage increases as the value deviates from 1.0.

Regions with a comparative advantage in a particular sector will be encouraged and supported in efforts to leverage their situation. Regions without a comparative advantage in a sector will be encouraged and supported in efforts to understand the root causes and use this information to target resources at sectors where the outcomes look most promising.

The following table provides a ranking of sectors by LQ and by the Percent Change in Employment depicted on the prior maps.



**Table 3: Ranking of Sectors by Location Quotient**

Sector	LQ	Percent Change in Employment, Dec '20 - Dec '22	Sector	LQ	Percent Change in Employment, Dec '20 - Dec '22
All Industries, Private	1.02	8.1%	All Industries, Private	1.02	8.1%
<b>Sorted by LQ Rank</b>			<b>Sorted by Percent Change Rank</b>		
Manufacturing	1.15	4.3%	Leisure & Hospitality	0.9	41.9%
Financial Activities	1.15	1.1%	Information	0.81	13.0%
Professional & Business Services	1.1	6.4%	Natural Resources & Mining	0.35	7.5%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	1.08	3.9%	Professional & Business Services	1.1	6.4%
Education & Health	0.99	5.4%	Construction	0.75	5.6%
Leisure & Hospitality	0.9	41.9%	Education & Health	0.99	5.4%
Information	0.81	13.0%	Manufacturing	1.15	4.3%
Construction	0.75	5.6%	Trade, Transportation & Utilities	1.08	3.9%
Natural Resources & Mining	0.35	7.5%	Financial Activities	1.15	1.1%

Four sectors, Manufacturing, Financial Activities, Professional & Business Services and Trade, Transportation & Utilities have an LQ indicating a comparative advantage for Illinois. Two sectors, Education and Health and Leisure & Hospitality have an LQ at or greater than 0.90, which indicates they are near the national level. Information and Construction are the next level at 0.81 and 0.75, respectively. The one true outlier is Natural Resources and Mining, with an LQ of 0.35.

Note that the Leisure & Hospitality sector increased by nearly 42 percent in employment during the two-year timeframe, a rate more than triple that of the next highest sector. This unusually high increase is a direct reflection of the recapture of the thousands of jobs lost during the early months of the pandemic. It should be noted that at this point in the economic recovery since the pandemic, this sector has regained x% of its workers.

The analysis of Location Quotients and Change in Employment is merely the first step in identifying priority sectors. The next section of the Unified State Plan covers how industries are categorized as Leading, Emerging or Maturing and how that information is used to help determine priority sectors.

Table 4 shows projected employment demand through 2030 for major occupational sectors throughout Illinois. The largest numbers of new jobs are expected to be created within occupational categories of food preparation and service, transportation and material moving, management occupations, and business and financial operations occupations. Large numbers of job openings (including replacement jobs) are expected in those occupations, as well as healthcare support occupations and sales and related occupations. Regardless of overall employment change, significant numbers of job openings are still expected annually due to replacements of existing workers who will transfer or exit from the labor force.

**Table 4: Illinois Employment by Major Occupational Sector**

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Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Title	Base Year Employment 2020	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment 2020	Projection Year Employment 2030	Net Employment Change 2020-2030		Average Annual Job Openings due to			
				Number	Percent	Exits	Transfer	Growth	Total
<b>TOTAL, ALL OCCUPATIONS</b>	6,044,269	100.00%	6,542,650	498,381	8.25%	265,312	410,839	49,838	725,989
Management Occupations	500,219	8.28%	546,414	46,195	9.23%	13,916	28,114	4,620	46,650
Business & Financial Operations Occupations	374,508	6.20%	405,807	31,299	8.36%	10,196	22,887	3,130	36,213
Computer & Mathematical Occupations	194,823	3.22%	214,158	19,335	9.92%	4,240	10,082	1,934	16,256
Architecture & Engineering Occupations	81,317	1.35%	87,201	5,884	7.24%	2,000	4,020	588	6,608
Life, Physical & Social Science Occupations	44,222	0.73%	47,544	3,322	7.51%	943	3,152	332	4,427
Community & Social Services Occupations	113,433	1.88%	122,965	9,532	8.40%	4,103	7,532	953	12,588
Legal Occupations	54,159	0.90%	60,120	5,961	11.01%	1,526	2,127	596	4,249
Education, Training & Library Occupations	354,738	5.87%	374,715	19,977	5.63%	15,082	16,805	1,998	33,885
Arts/Design/Entertainment, Sports/Media Occs	93,451	1.55%	100,920	7,469	7.99%	3,686	6,110	747	10,543
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occs	368,095	6.09%	394,118	26,023	7.07%	9,602	11,432	2,602	23,636
Healthcare Support Occupations	222,763	3.69%	251,261	28,498	12.79%	13,952	14,537	2,850	31,339
Protective Service Occupations	136,197	2.25%	147,256	11,059	8.12%	6,579	8,950	1,106	16,635
Food Preparation & Serving Occupations	408,273	6.75%	511,900	103,627	25.38%	35,034	46,719	10,363	92,116
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maint. Occs	184,947	3.06%	199,734	14,787	8.00%	11,010	13,971	1,479	26,460
Personal Care & Service Occupations	127,540	2.11%	155,256	27,716	21.73%	8,754	11,148	2,772	22,674
Sales & Related Occupations	570,010	9.43%	598,825	28,815	5.06%	28,911	45,641	2,882	77,434
Office & Administrative Support Occupations	776,594	12.85%	759,009	- 17,585	-2.26%	36,809	47,644	- 1,758	82,695
Farming, Fishing & Forestry Occupations	14,917	0.25%	15,082	165	1.11%	632	1,700	16	2,348
Construction & Extraction Occupations	204,432	3.38%	221,556	17,124	8.38%	6,293	14,370	1,712	22,375
Installation, Maintenance & Repair Occs	213,317	3.53%	232,112	18,795	8.81%	7,084	13,992	1,880	22,956
Production Occupations	410,389	6.79%	418,815	8,426	2.05%	15,637	29,630	843	46,110
Transportation & Material Moving Occupations	595,925	9.86%	677,882	81,957	13.75%	29,324	50,276	8,196	87,796

## Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations.

The State Plan must contain an assessment of sectors and industries that are leading, emerging and maturing across the state as a whole, as well as in the sub-state regions. To start this analysis, the Interagency State Data Team used the standard grouping of Sectors & Industries from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, show in the following table:

Bureau of Labor Statistics Sectors/Industries Available for Review		
Agricultural Production	Information	Professional & Business Services
Construction	Leisure & Hospitality	Retail Trade
Educational Services (Private+ Public)	Manufacturing	Transportation & Warehousing
Financial Activities	Natural Resources & Mining	Utilities
Health Care & Social Assistance	Personal & Other Services	Wholesale Trade

For each of these Sectors' Industries, the team looked at the following data points:

- Number of workers
- % share of all Illinois workers
- 12-year projected net change
- Location Quotient (Illinois activity vs U.S.)

Location Quotient is a calculation comparing the concentration of sector activity (number of workers, number of establishments, etc.) of a given region compared to a larger region. A value above 1.0 indicates activity is more concentrated than in the larger area, and a value below 1.0

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indicates activity is less concentrated. The farther away from 1.0, the greater the difference. For example, a location quotient of 5.0 indicates a much higher concentration of activity than a value of 1.5. For the statewide analysis, sectors compared activity in Illinois to the national totals.

Based on these factors, each sector was categorized as one of the following:

Category	Number of Workers	Projected Change	Location Quotient
LEADING	High/Medium	Net Growth	Above 1.0
EMERGING	Medium/Low	Net Growth	Below 1.0
MATURING	High/Medium	Net Loss	Below 1.0

LEADING industries are identified as those that are expected to grow during the projection period and which are important within the state (i.e., have a location quotient greater than 1.0).

EMERGING industries are identified as those that are not strongly represented in the current economy (i.e., have a location quotient that is less than 1.0) but are expected to grow during the projection period.

MATURING industries are identified as those that are important within the state but are not expected to grow during the projection period.

Each of these categories is significant for the economy, job growth and availability and are therefore important for the planning of WIOA and partner programs during the period of this Unified State Plan. In summary, LEADING industries are those that will likely provide the largest numbers of job openings due to their combination of size and growth; EMERGING industries are those that are currently small but are quickly gaining in economic importance and job creation; and MATURING industries are those which have slower job growth but still have hefty presences in the economy and will continue to create significant job openings, if only through attrition (e.g., accelerating retirements).

Tables 5, 6 and 7 display the results of categorizing (according to this methodology) the major industries from Table 3. Major industry categories that are not included in one of these three categories are now dropped from the analysis.

Table 5: LEADING Major Industry Sectors Statewide

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Title	Base Year Employment 2022	Projected Year Employment 2030	Net Change 2022-2030	Location Quotient 2022
<b>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>6,362,775</b>	<b>6,542,650</b>	<b>179,875</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Transportation and Warehousing	350,646	378,324	27,678	1.25
Financial Activities	403,166	421,118	17,952	1.15
Manufacturing	571,391	575,158	3,767	1.15
Professional and Business Services	970,812	971,653	841	1.11
Utilities	23,852	24,547	695	1.09

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Table 6: EMERGING Major Industry Sectors Statewide

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Title	Base Year Employment 2022	Projected Year Employment 2030	Net Change 2022-2030	Location Quotient 2022
<b>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>6,362,775</b>	<b>6,542,650</b>	<b>179,875</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Health Care and Social Assistance	816,218	855,247	39,029	0.98
Retail Trade	571,311	592,583	21,272	0.95
Agricultural Production*	71,639	72,937	1,298	0.95
Leisure and Hospitality	558,857	612,602	53,745	0.91
Government**	324,434	348,013	23,579	0.82
Construction	230,263	238,373	8,110	0.77

Table 7: MATURING Major Industry Sectors Statewide

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Title	Base Year Employment 2022	Projected Year Employment 2030	Net Change 2022-2030	Location Quotient 2022
<b>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>6,460,465</b>	<b>6,809,830</b>	<b>349,365</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Wholesale Trade	294,854	289,569	-5,285	1.28
Personal and Other Services	262,278	252,722	-9,556	1.07
Educational Services, Private and Public	558,016	550,625	-7,391	1.03

The regional planning process utilizes the same analytics steps to assist regional teams to identify leading, emerging and maturing industries within each region. The regional planning process includes the development of crosswalks between the detailed (3-digit) industries and the occupational pathway for each region. The results of this crosswalk pinpoint occupations related to the detailed industries identified statewide as leading, emerging, and maturing. These are considered starting points for conversations with employers regarding critical occupations within their industries during the complete regional planning process.

Table 8 below summarizes the leading, emerging and maturing sectors preliminarily identified for each of the statewide Economic Development Regions based on these current and projected employment data, along with a brief comment on each region.

Table 8: LEADING, EMERGING and MATURING Industry Sectors Identified by Economic Development

Region	Leading Sectors	Emerging Sectors	Maturing Sectors	Comments
Central	Agricultural Production, Manufacturing, Utilities, Health Care & Social Assistance, Other Services	Natural Resources & Mining, Transportation & Warehousing, Professional & Business Services, Educational Services, Leisure & Hospitality	Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, Government	Modest job losses are projected in the maturing Wholesale and Retail Trade sectors during the forecast period. Agriculture and Utilities sectors are the most significantly concentrated industries in the Central region, although the Health Care & Social Assistance and Other Services sectors also maintain industry concentrations above the national average.
East Central	Agricultural Production, Manufacturing	Retail Trade, Utilities, Transportation & Warehousing, Leisure & Hospitality, Other Services, Government	Wholesale Trade, Educational Services, Health Care & Social Assistance	Agriculture and Educational Services are the sectors of greatest employment concentration in this region. Over the next decade, moderate job growth is projected in the region's Leisure & Hospitality and Government sectors. The Information, Financial Activities, and Professional & Business Services sectors are projected to reduce payroll employment in EDR 2 by 2030.
North Central	Agricultural Production, Retail Trade, Utilities, Financial Activities, Educational Services, Health Care & Social Assistance	Natural Resources & Mining, Construction, Transportation & Warehousing, Leisure & Hospitality	Manufacturing	Agriculture and Utilities are the most highly-concentrated industries in the region, while Information and Government are among the least-concentrated industries. Manufacturing is the only sector classified as maturing in the region, where job losses will offset some job growth in Leisure & Hospitality and Transportation & Warehousing.
Northeast	Manufacturing, Transportation & Warehousing, Financial Activities, Other Services	Agricultural Production, Natural Resources & Mining, Construction, Retail Trade, Utilities, Health Care & Social Assistance, Leisure & Hospitality, Government	Wholesale Trade, Professional & Business Services	Though currently the state's most concentrated market for Professional & Business Services, hiring in the upcoming years will be led by Leisure & Hospitality and Health Care & Social Assistance. Job growth will also continue in Financial Activities and Government. Payroll employment in Wholesale Trade is estimated to diminish slightly as those sectors continue their maturation.
Northern Stateline	Agricultural Production, Manufacturing, Other Services	Natural Resources & Mining, Construction, Financial Activities, Professional & Business Services, Leisure & Hospitality	Retail Trade, Utilities, Transportation & Warehousing, Health Care & Social Assistance	The state's most highly-concentrated Manufacturing workforce, the region is anticipated to add jobs in this industry looking out to 2030, coinciding with robust job growth in Leisure & Hospitality. The Health Care & Social Assistance sector will shed a minimal number of jobs, while the Government labor footprint is estimated to continue its contraction in EDR 5.

Region	Leading Sectors	Emerging Sectors	Maturing Sectors	Comments
Northwest	Agricultural Production, Retail Trade, Utilities, Transportation & Warehousing, Other Services, Government	Construction, Professional & Business Services, Health Care & Social Assistance	Natural Resources & Mining, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade	Agricultural Production and Utilities are both highly concentrated sectors in this region. Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade are classified as maturing sectors in this region, as job growth faces challenges on both the supply and demand side. Transportation & Warehousing is a leading sector and is anticipated to continue job growth. The Professional & Business Services sector has the highest job creation projection in the forecast period.
Southeast	Agricultural Production, Manufacturing, Utilities, Transportation & Warehousing, Other Services	Construction, Wholesale Trade, Information, Financial Activities, Professional & Business Services	Natural Resources & Mining, Retail Trade, Health Care & Social Assistance, Government	Agriculture and Manufacturing are both highly concentrated sectors with anticipated job openings in this region. Over this projection's time frame, the number of jobs in Leisure & Hospitality is expected to shrink and the job pool in Financial Activities and Manufacturing will expand.
Southern	Agricultural Production, Manufacturing, Utilities, Health Care & Social Assistance	Professional & Business Services, Leisure & Hospitality, Other Services	Natural Resources & Mining, Retail Trade, Educational Services, Government	Agriculture and Natural Resources & Mining are prevalent sectors as compared with the state's other regions. Professional & Business Services and Health Care & Social Assistance entities are expected to create employment growth over this projection period, with the number of jobs in Government and Educational Services is anticipated to decline.
Southwest	Agricultural Production, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Utilities, Transportation & Warehousing, Other Services, Government	Professional & Business Services, Health Care & Social Assistance	Construction, Educational Services, Leisure & Hospitality	Transportation & Warehousing and the Leisure & Hospitality sectors are both more highly concentrated in this region than in any other region of the state. Agriculture and Utilities are also highly concentrated sectors in this region. Of these four sectors, Transportation & Warehousing is projected to add the most jobs. The Health Care & Social Assistance and Other Services sectors will both create significant employment in this region over the coming decade.
West Central	Agricultural Production, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, Other Services, Government	Construction, Utilities, Transportation & Warehousing, Information, Financial Activities, Professional & Business Services	Natural Resources & Mining, Educational Services, Health Care & Social Assistance	Agricultural Production, Government, Manufacturing, and Wholesale Trade are the sectors of greatest employment concentration in this region. Based on current projections, employers in twelve of the forecast's sixteen sectors in EDR 10 are anticipated to add jobs in the coming decade.

As mentioned in the analysis of existing demand industries, the selection of priority sectors considered if the data indicated a sector was LEADING, EMERGING or MATURING. In addition, we looked at the status of all sectors in each of our ten regions. Giving greater weight to LEADING and EMERGING sectors, those with a larger geographic spread were rated higher than those less widespread across the state.

The following table displays the LEADING and EMERGING statewide sectors ranked following the application of geographic weighting.

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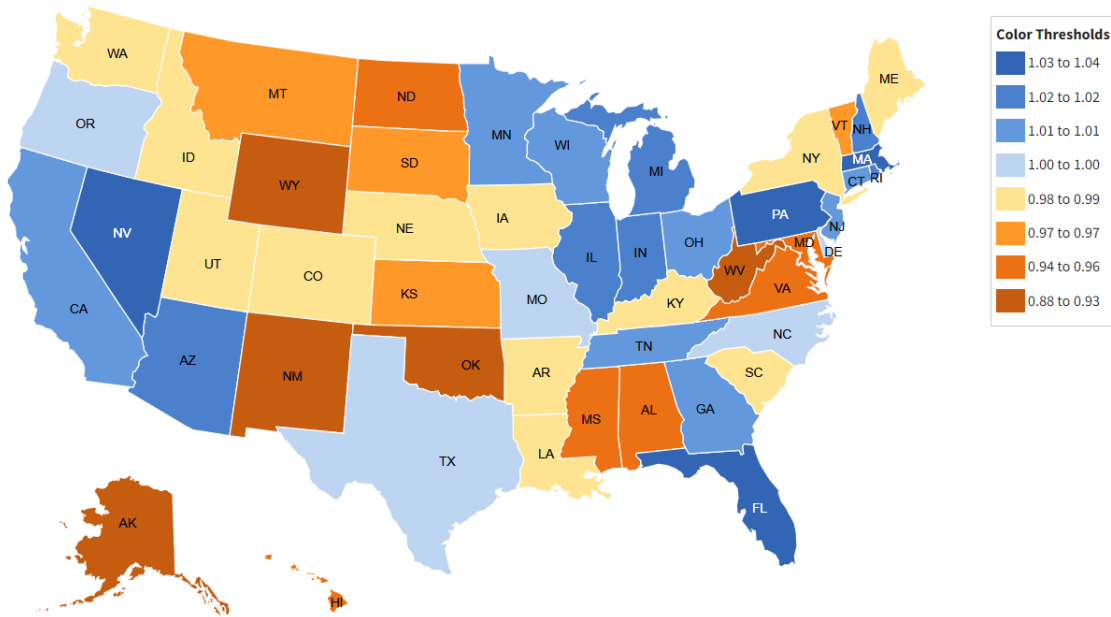
Table 9: Sector Ranking with Regional Weighting

RANKED WITH REGIONAL WEIGHTING		WEIGHTING			
		3	2	1	
2022 Base Year					
Sector/Industry	State Status	Leading Regions	Emerging Regions	Maturing Regions	TOTAL:
Agriculture	Emerging	27	2	0	29
Other Services	Maturing	24	4	0	28
Manufacturing	Leading	24	0	2	26
Transportation and Warehousing	Leading	12	8	2	22
Utilities	Leading	12	6	3	21
Retail Trade	Emerging	12	4	4	20
Health Care & Social Assistance	Emerging	9	6	4	19
Professional and Business Services	Leading	0	14	1	15
Construction	Emerging	0	12	1	13
Leisure and Hospitality	Emerging	0	12	1	13
Financial Activities	Leading	6	6	0	12
Wholesale Trade	Maturing	3	2	4	9
Educational Services, Private & Public	Maturing	3	2	4	9

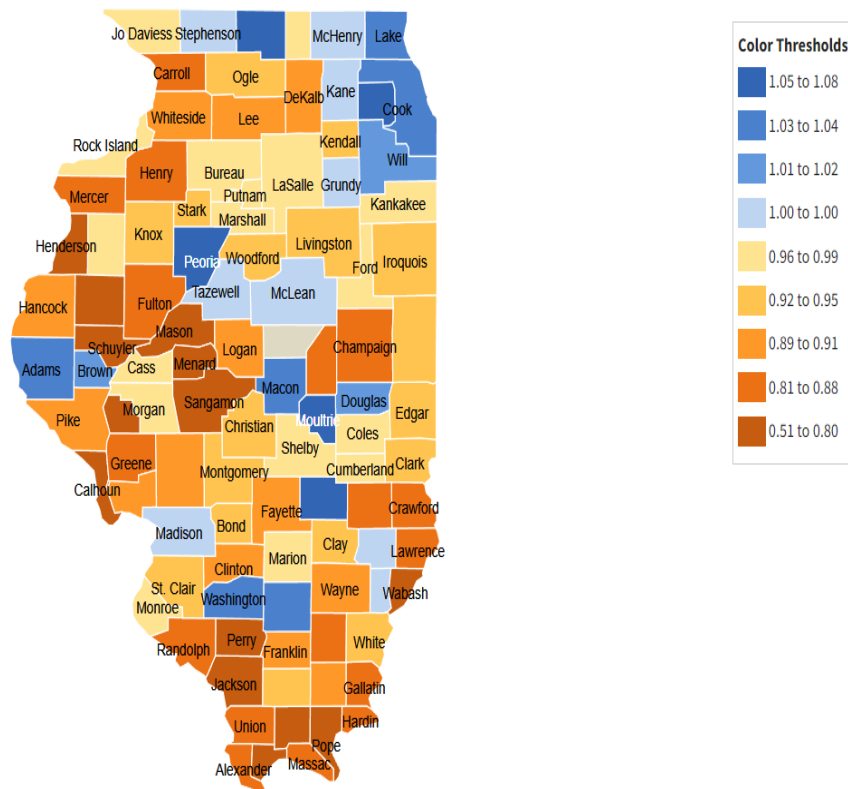


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Location quotient, Total, All Industries Private Dec 2022 (p)



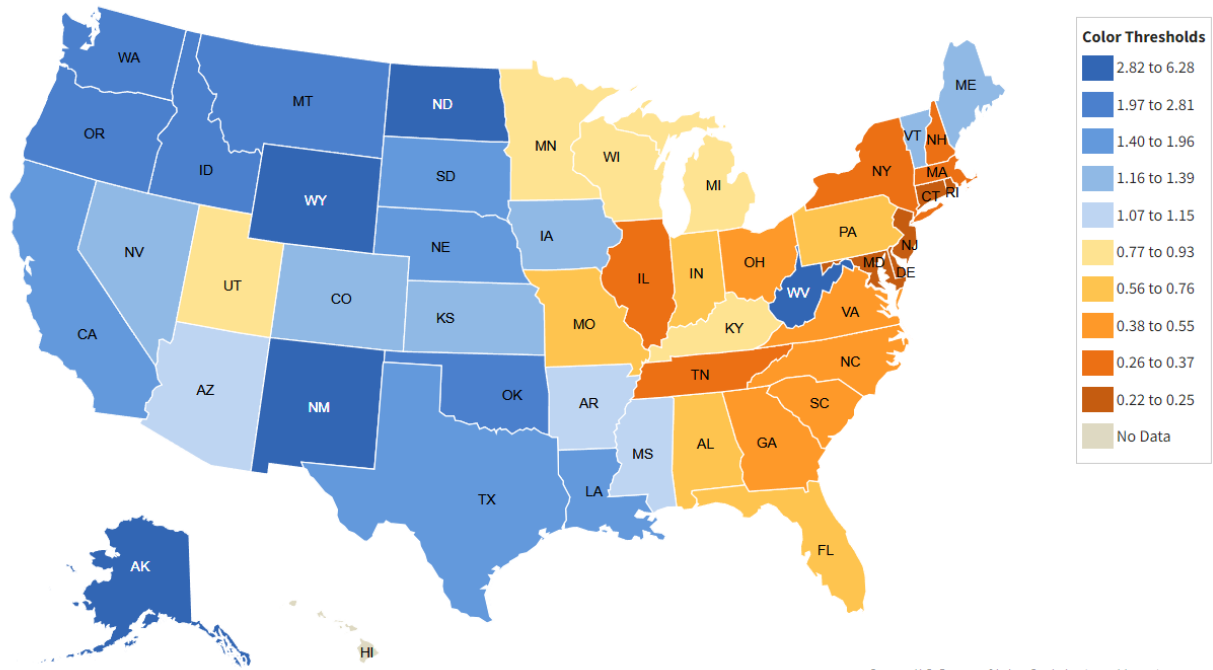
Location quotient, Total, All Industries Private Dec 2022 (p)



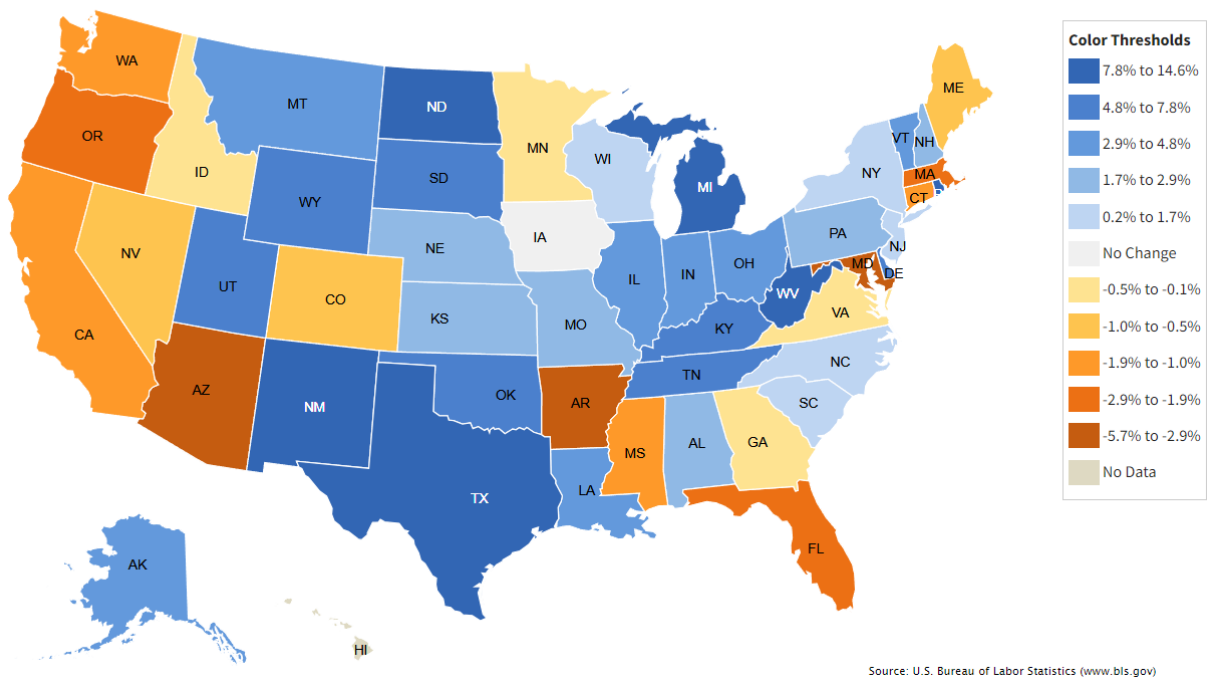


# DRAFT

Location quotient, Natural Resources and Mining Private Dec 2022 (p)

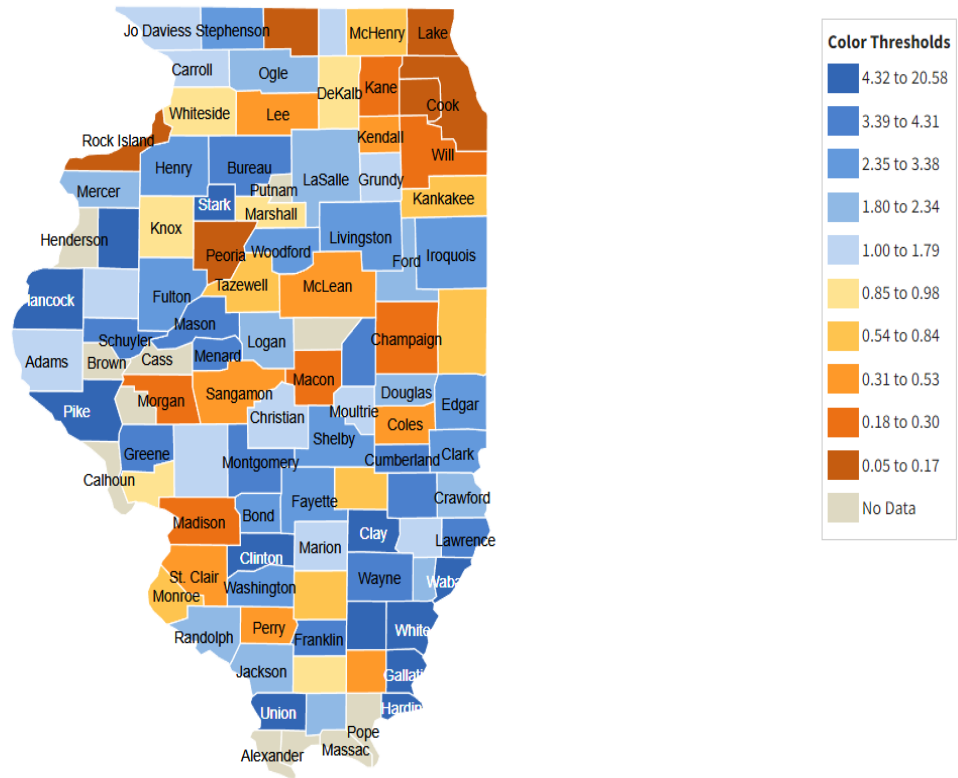


12 month percent change in employment, Natural Resources and Mining Private Dec 2021-Dec 2022 (p)



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Location quotient, Natural Resources and Mining Private Dec 2022 (p)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov))

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## Employers' Employment Needs

To identify some recurring employer needs in the major employment sectors, we examine job postings analytics from Lightcast (formerly Emsi-Burning Glass). Lightcast analyzes online job postings from multiple platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, Indeed, Monster) and identifies skills and certifications frequently mentioned by type of employer or type of job opening. The data includes separate distinctions for general, common skills such as communications, and more occupation-specific, specialized skills. Care must be taken when viewing job postings analytics, given that some sectors do not typically recruit candidates via a public job ad, e.g., hiring via recruiters. Further, some skills frequently appear in job postings for general screening purposes. Finally, given the varied staffing needs and fragmented nature of skills required within a sector, the most prevalent specialized skills and certifications do not necessarily translate to the most frequent occupational titles. For example, CPA certification appears frequently regardless of sector, because most industries require accountants.

Sector	Example Occupations	Common Skills	Specialized Skills	Certifications
Transportation & Warehousing	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Laborers and Freight/Stock/Material Movers, Customer Service Representatives	Communications, Customer Service, Operations	Warehousing, Truck Driving, Forklift Truck	CDL, Tanker Endorsement, Hazmat Endorsement
Utilities	Electrical/Electronics Technician, Business/Management Analyst, Project Manager	Communications, Management, Operations	Project Management, Auditing, Computer Science	MBA, Professional Engineer License, Project Management Certification
Professional & Business Services	Software Developers, Sales representatives of Wholesale and Manufacturing products, All Other Computer Occupations	Communications, Management, Leadership	Project Management, Accounting, Marketing	MBA, Project Management Professional Certification, CPA
Health Care & Social Assistance	Registered Nurses, Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Nursing Assistant	Communications, Customer Service, Management	Nursing, medical records, nursing care, CPR	RN, Basic Life Support, CPR

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Other Services	Hairdressers & Cosmetologists, Childcare Workers, Customer Service Representatives	Communications, Customer Service, Management	Marketing, Cosmetology, Project Management, Housekeeping	Barber License, CPR, Automotive Service Excellence
Government	Police Officers, Registered Nurses, Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	Communications, Management, Operations	Law enforcement, rehabilitation, international laws	Certified Loss Control Specialist, RN, Airline Transport Pilot License
Construction	Construction Managers, Construction Laborers, Janitors and Cleaners	Communications, Customer Service, Management	Project Management, Subcontracting, HVAC	CDL, CPR/First Aid, 30-hour OSHA General Industry Card
Manufacturing	Software Developers, Production Workers, Managers	Communications, Management, Leadership	Auditing, New Product Development, Process Improvement	MBA, Project Management Professional Certification, Forklift Certification
Wholesale Trade	Laborers and Material Movers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Software Developers	Communications, Sales, Customer Service	Warehousing, Marketing, Merchandising	CDL, MBA, Forklift Certification
Leisure & Hospitality	Fast Food and Counter Workers, Food Service Managers, Waiters and Waitresses	Customer Service, Communications, Management	Restaurant Operation, Food Safety and Sanitation, Cash Handling	ServSafe Certification, Food Handler's Card, CPR
Retail Trade	Retail Salespersons, First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers, Stockers and Order Fillers	Customer Service, Sales, Communications	Merchandising, Selling Techniques, Cash Register	Valid Driver's License, Certified Pharmacy Technician, Registered Pharmacist
Financial Activities	Software Developers, Securities/Commodities/Financial Services	Communications, Management, Customer Service	Marketing, Financial Services,	MBA, FINRA Series 7 for General Securities

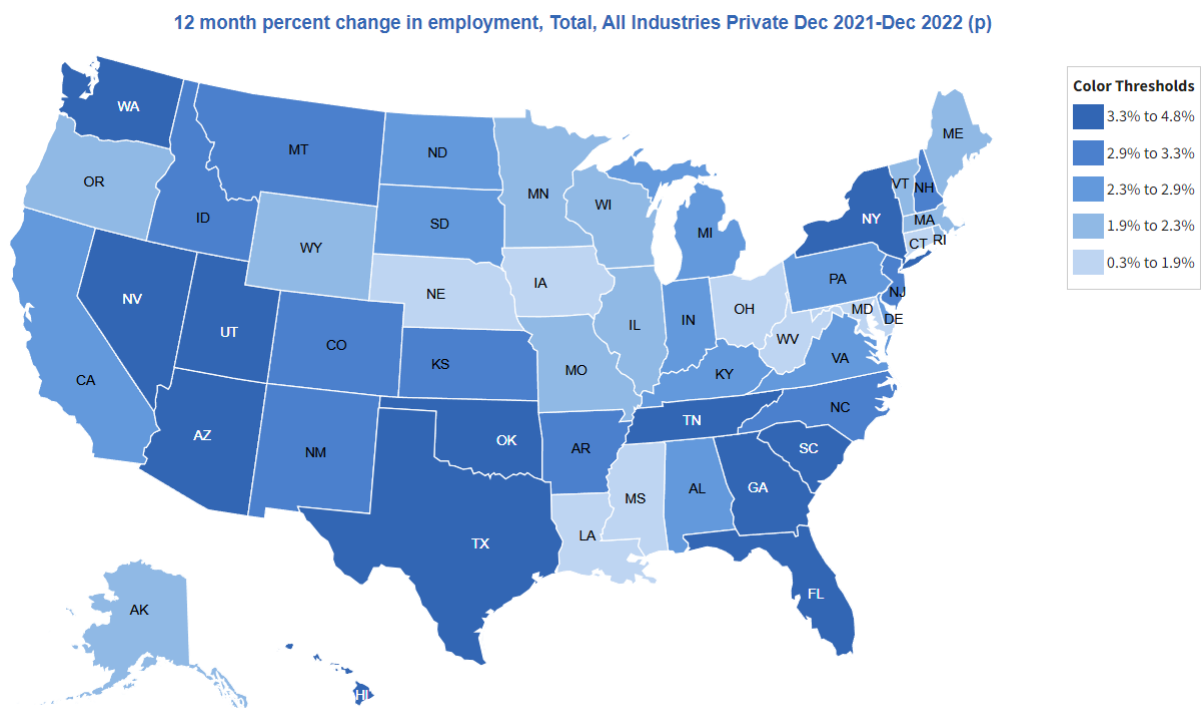
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	Sales Agents, Customer Service Representatives		Project Management	Representative, CPA
Educational Services	Postsecondary Teachers, Registered Nurses, Postsecondary Education Administrators	Communications, Teaching, Research	Marketing, Project Management, Student Services	Teaching Certificate, Board Certification, First Aid/CPR/AED/basic life support
Information	Retail Salespersons, Sales Representatives, Software Developers	Communications, Sales, Customer Service	Marketing, Project Management, Selling Techniques	BMBA, Project Management Professional, Certified Information Systems Security Professional

Source: Lightcast, job postings analytics by industry supersector, July 2022-July 2023.

### Workforce Analysis

#### Employment and Unemployment

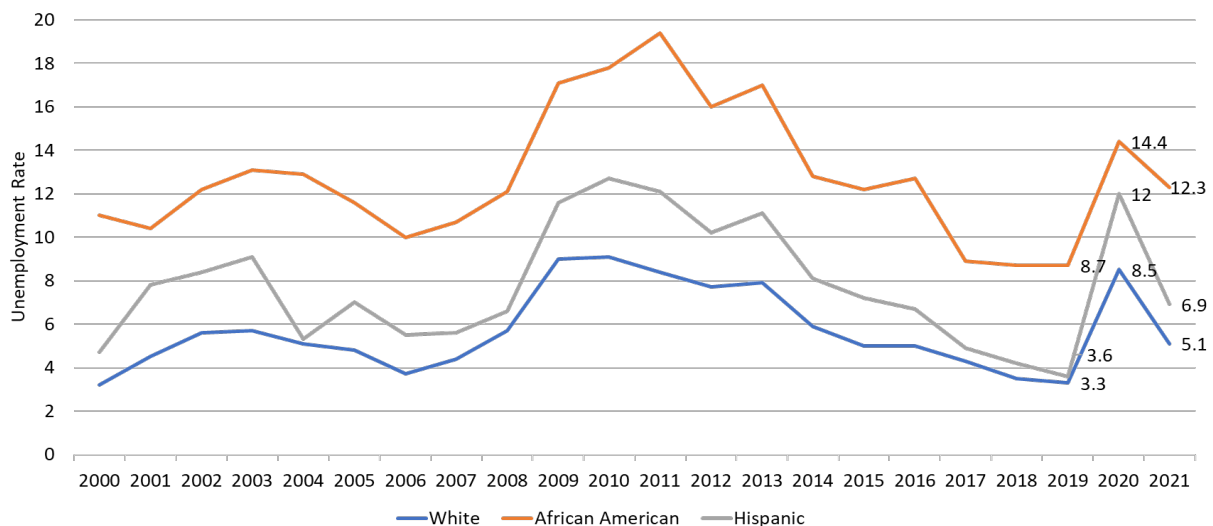


In recent years, Illinois had a somewhat higher unemployment rate than the nation. The gap widened at the height of the pandemic in April 2020, but it narrowed in 2021. As of June 2023, the Illinois unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) was 4.0% and the national unemployment rate was 3.6%.

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Unemployment varies by race and gender, with white workers typically having a lower unemployment rate than Hispanic and African American workers. In both Illinois and the nation, the group with the lowest unemployment rate is white women and the group with the highest unemployment rate is African American men. In both Illinois and the nation, Hispanic workers (men and women) have an unemployment rate between white workers and African Americans.

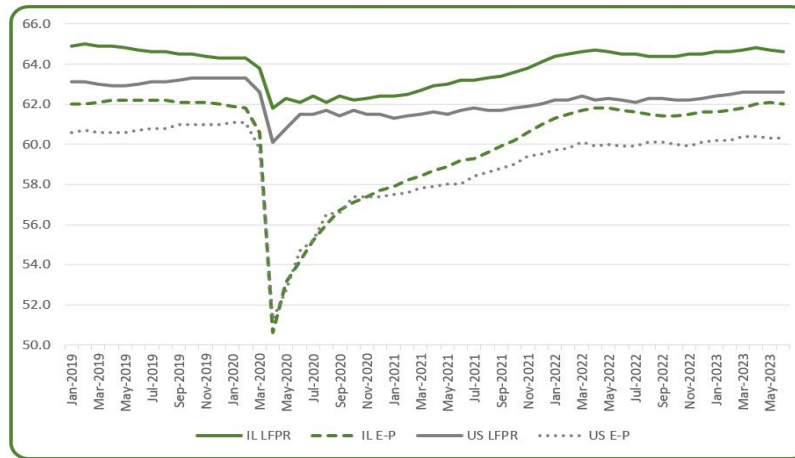
Unemployment gaps for Hispanic and African American workers have persisted since 2000. In 2019, pre-pandemic, the African American unemployment rate was 8.7 and the Hispanic unemployment rate was 3.6, compared to a white unemployment rate of 3.3.



Source: BLS, Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, Tables 12 (2000-2002) & 14 (2003-2021), respective years.

Although Illinois has a somewhat higher unemployment rate than the nation, there is also a higher labor force participation rate. In both geographies, the labor force participation rate remains lower in 2023 than it was in January 2019. Labor force participation fell in April 2020 due to the pandemic, but it gradually recovered through 2021. By January 2022, labor force participation had nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels and has remained relatively stable in 2023.

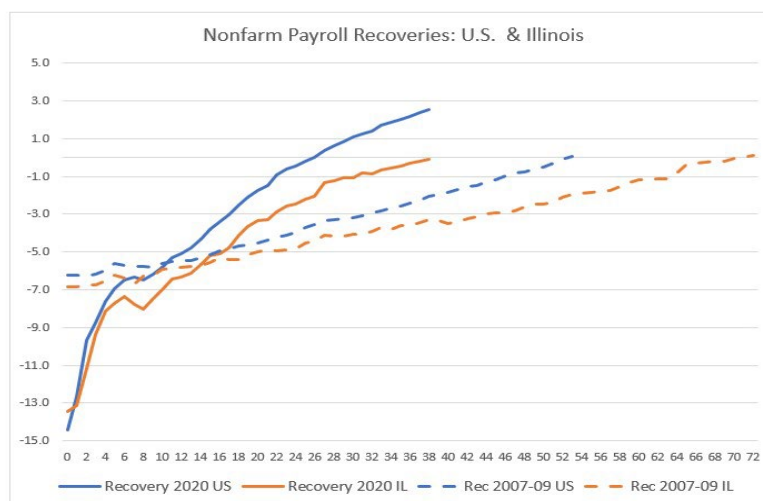
## Labor Force Participation Rate and Employment-to-Population Ratio: U.S. & Illinois



These data are seasonally adjusted, reflecting January 2019 - June 2023

In both the pandemic downturn and the 2007-2009 recession, payroll recovery in Illinois lagged behind the nation. It took 38 months for Illinois payrolls to return to pre-pandemic levels, while recovery at the national level took 26 months. Recovery from the COVID downturn was significantly faster than recovery from the Great Recession. Illinois payrolls recovered from the great recession in 72 months, and national payrolls recovered in 54 months.

## Two Business Cycle Recoveries: U.S. & Illinois, Seasonally Adjusted

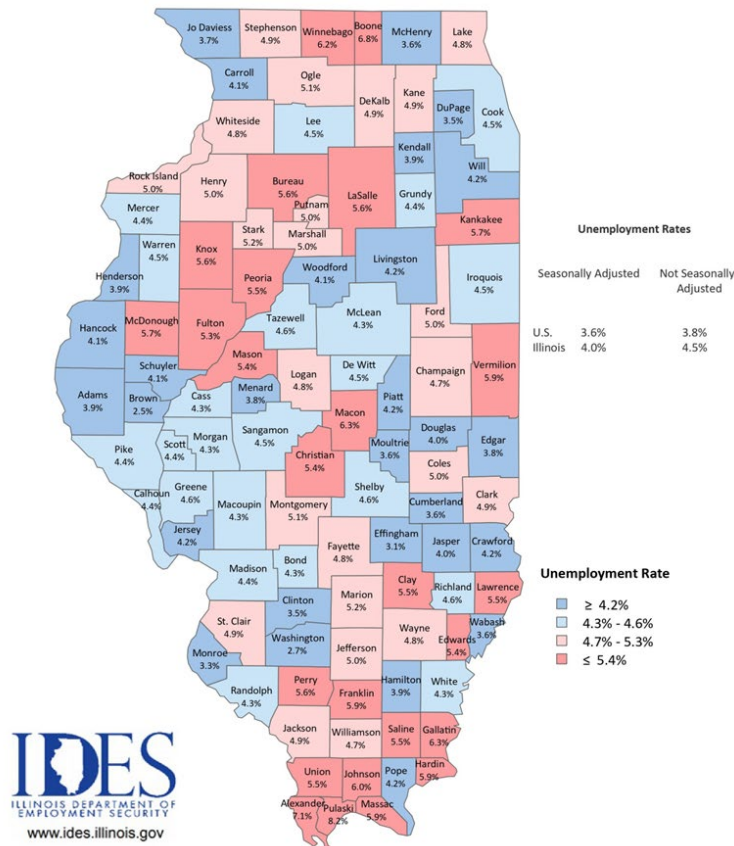


It took nearly two additional years for Illinois to recover from the Great Recession of 2007-09 than the nation, as measured by nonfarm payroll employment. In June 2023, Illinois is just shy of reaching its prior peak 38 months after the trough of 2020.

Unemployment varies considerably within Illinois, by region and by county. The region with the highest unemployment rate is the Northern Stateline, with a not-seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate of 6.0% compared to 4.5% statewide. Three regions tied for the lowest unemployment rate, at 4.4%: Northeastern, Southeastern, and Southwestern. However,

unemployment is not consistent within EDRs. For example, the Southern region has a 5.1% unemployment rate, but the rate is higher than 7% in the counties of Alexander and Pulaski.

## Unemployment by County, June 2023, Not Seasonally Adjusted



## Labor Market Trends

### Key Labor Market Trends

### Artificial Intelligence and Workforce

No single technology in modern memory has caused mass job loss among highly educated workers. Will generative AI really be an exception? No one can answer this question, given how new the technology is and given how slowly employment can adjust in response to technological change. But AI really is different, technology experts told me—a range of tasks that up until now were impossible to automate are becoming automatable.

Some technologies clearly improve productivity and reduce the need for labor. Automated machine tools, for instance, depress manufacturing employment while lifting output and productivity, as do many of the forms of machinery invented and employed since the Industrial Revolution. But other technologies—even amazing ones—show surprisingly muted effects.



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As a rule, when companies can substitute machines for people, they will. AI can do work currently done by paralegals, copywriters, digital-content producers, executive assistants, entry-level computer programmers, and, yes, some journalists.<sup>1</sup>

- If generative AI delivers on its promised capabilities, the labor market could face significant disruption. Using data on occupational tasks in both the US and Europe, we find that roughly two-thirds of current jobs are exposed to some degree of AI automation, and that generative AI could substitute up to one-fourth of current work. Extrapolating our estimates globally suggests that generative AI could expose the equivalent of 300mn full-time jobs to automation.

The good news is that worker displacement from automation has historically been offset by creation of new jobs, and the emergence of new occupations following technological innovations accounts for the vast majority of long-run employment growth. The combination of significant labor cost savings, new job creation, and higher productivity for non-displaced workers raises the possibility of a productivity boom that raises economic growth substantially, although the timing of such a boom is hard to predict.<sup>2</sup>

- One complicating factor is that technology tends to automate tasks, not entire occupations. In 2016, for instance, the artificial intelligence pioneer Geoffrey Hinton considered new “deep learning” technology capable of reading medical images. He concluded that “if you work as a radiologist, you are like the coyote that’s already over the edge of the cliff but hasn’t yet looked down.”

He gave it five years, maybe ten, before algorithms would “do better” than humans. What he probably overlooked was that reading the images is just one of many tasks (30 of them, according to the U.S. government) that radiologists do. They also do things like “confer with medical professionals” and “provide counseling.” Today, some in the field worry about an impending shortage of radiologists. And Mr. Hinton has since become a vocal public critic of the same technology he helped create.

In some scenarios, A.I. has essentially created a tool, not a full job replacement. You’re now a digger who can use an excavator instead of a shovel. Or a nurse practitioner with access to better information for diagnosing a patient. It’s possible that you should charge more per hour, because you’re going to get a lot more done.

In other scenarios, the technology is replacing your labor rather complementing it. Or turning your job from one that requires special skills to one that doesn’t. That is not likely to go well for you.<sup>3</sup>

- Around 40% of all working hours could be impacted by AI large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT-4, says a report from Accenture.

Many clerical or secretarial roles are seen as likely to decline quickly because of AI, according to the World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report 2023*.

But roles for AI and machine learning specialists, data analysts and scientists, and digital transformation specialists are expected to grow rapidly, the report adds.

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Reskilling people to use AI effectively will be the key to companies being able to use the technology successfully, says Accenture.<sup>4</sup>

- Artificial intelligence (AI)—defined broadly to include machine learning and algorithmic management—is playing an increasingly large role within the corporate context. The widespread use of AI is already displacing workers through automation, augmenting human performance at work, and creating new job categories.

What's more, AI is enabling, driving, and accelerating the emergence of workforce ecosystems. Workforce ecosystems are incorporating human-AI collaboration on both physical and cognitive tasks and introducing new dependencies among managers, employees, contingent workers, other service providers, and AI.

Clearly, policy needs to consider how AI-based automation will affect workers and the labor market more broadly. However, focusing only on the effects of automation without considering the impact of AI on organizational and governance structures understates the extent to which AI is already influencing work, workers, and the practice of management.

Despite the clear need for policy to consider implications arising from the use of AI to automate jobs and displace workers, it is insufficient to focus policy discussions only on automation and not fully consider changes in which human work is augmented by AI and in which humans and AI collaborate.<sup>5</sup>

- While tech workers are dealing with pay stagnation, layoffs, and generally less demand for their skills than they'd enjoyed for the past decade, the artificial intelligence specialist has become the new "it" girl in Silicon Valley.

While tech companies and investors pull back seemingly everywhere else in tech, money is still flowing into AI, which the industry sees as the next big thing. That's meant outsize demand, pay, and perks for people who can facilitate that kind of work. This situation is incredibly attractive to people who've recently been laid off in tech or who worry that their tech jobs don't have the upward mobility they used to. To capitalize on this, people in adjacent tech careers are attempting to reposition themselves where the good jobs are. Short of getting another degree, many are hoping to do so with on-the-job training, boot camps, and self-education.

Even those who studied AI as part of an advanced degree are always working to stay abreast of the tech.<sup>6</sup>

- According to a [ResumeBuilder.com survey](#) of 1,000 business leaders who use or plan to use ChatGPT, 49 percent of their companies are using the chatbot in some capacity. And of those companies, 48 percent say they've already replaced workers at their company with AI.

So far, 66 percent of the companies employing ChatGPT use it to write code, 58 percent for copywriting and content creation, 57 percent for customer support, and 52 percent for summarizing meetings and documents, the survey found.

Regardless of the overwhelming hype surrounding ChatGPT and other generative AI, it's clear that the chatbot can't be relied on to be factually accurate. Even OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has

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admitted ChatGPT is a "horrible product" and that it shouldn't be relied on "for anything important."

But if this latest survey is anything to go by, it doesn't necessarily matter to business leaders if ChatGPT isn't that smart or reliable — only that the cost savings are worth the drop in quality.<sup>7</sup>

- AI learns by finding patterns in enormous quantities of data, but first that data has to be sorted and tagged by people, a vast workforce mostly hidden behind the machines.

Much of the public response to language models like OpenAI's ChatGPT has focused on all the jobs they appear poised to automate. But behind even the most impressive AI system are people — huge numbers of people labeling data to train it and clarifying data when it gets confused. Only the companies that can afford to buy this data can compete, and those that get it are highly motivated to keep it secret. The result is that, with few exceptions, little is known about the information shaping these systems' behavior, and even less is known about the people doing the shaping.

- These AI jobs are the bizarro twin of work that should be automated but for reasons of bureaucracy or status or inertia is not: work that people want to automate, and often think is already automated, yet still requires a human stand-in. The jobs have a purpose; it's just that workers often have no idea what it is.

Annotation remains a foundational part of making AI, but there is often a sense among engineers that it's a passing, inconvenient prerequisite to the more glamorous work of building models. You collect as much labeled data as you can get as cheaply as possible to train your model, and if it works, at least in theory, you no longer need the annotators. Annotation is never really finished. But it's infrastructure for AI. Human intelligence is the basis of artificial intelligence, and we need to be valuing these as real jobs in the AI economy that are going to be here for a while.

There are no granular estimates of the number of people who work in annotation, but it is a lot, and it is growing. A recent Google Research paper gave an order-of-magnitude figure of "millions" with the potential to become "billions."

Worries about AI-driven disruption are often countered with the argument that AI automates tasks, not jobs, and that these tasks will be the dull ones, leaving people to pursue more fulfilling and human work. But just as likely, the rise of AI will look like past labor-saving technologies, maybe like the telephone or typewriter, which vanquished the drudgery of message delivering and handwriting but generated so much new correspondence, commerce, and paperwork that new offices staffed by new types of workers — clerks, accountants, typists — were required to manage it. When AI comes for your job, you may not lose it, but it might become more alien, more isolating, more tedious.

The job of the annotator often involves putting human understanding aside and following instructions very, *very* literally — to think, as one annotator said, like a robot.<sup>8</sup>

- The youngest generation entering the workforce may be the most prepared to champion and use generative artificial intelligence at work.

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For months, many of these up-and-comers have been exploring the technology's capabilities, sharpening their skills and learning how to best apply it to their tasks. And while some are cautious about AI's potential harms, many are more fascinated with than worried about the technology.

Since they were tykes, Zoomers have been exposed to digital devices and services — the oldest of the bunch were about a year old when Google launched. As a result, they tend to be open to exploring new technologies, said Shaun Pichler, professor of management at the College of Business and Economics at California State University at Fullerton.

But the tech isn't just helping Zoomers with writing prose. Daniel Osorno Villamil, a May computer science graduate from Georgia Tech, said he has used ChatGPT to double-check his math and review code. He once fed it 300 lines of code and asked it to find the problem, which it did. Generative AI also has helped him with his finances, finding areas in which to reduce costs, he said. He said he's excited to see how he can leverage it at his new software engineering job at Microsoft in the fall.

While some coders have worried about being replaced by AI, Edith Llontop, who graduated in May with a degree in electrical engineering and computer sciences from the University of California at Berkeley, said she expects to work alongside it rather than be displaced by it.

But the explosion of AI has changed some young people's paths. Rona Wang, who recently graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with degrees in math and computer science, turned down a tech job she thinks could be subject to automation. Instead, she opted to pursue a master's degree in programming that is closer to the hardware. "Absolutely it's about staying ahead of the curve," she said. "A good rule of thumb is looking for jobs and skills that require [judgment] or research in some way."<sup>9</sup>

- Outside of tech, the head of AI position was mostly nonexistent a few years ago, but now people are taking on that title — or at least its duties — at everywhere from [Amazon](#) to Visa to Coca-Cola. In the US, the number of people in AI leadership roles has grown threefold in the past five years, according to data from [LinkedIn](#), bucking the downward trend in tech hiring overall. And while the head of AI job description varies widely by company, the hope is that those who end up with this new responsibility will do everything from incorporating AI into businesses' products to getting employees up to speed on how to use AI in their jobs. Companies want the new role to keep them at the forefront of their industries amid AI disruption, or at least keep them from being left behind.

Like anything new in tech, the AI revolution can take on a bit of a gold-rush quality. AI is one of the few areas where companies are actively spending money since they see it as the inevitable future and as a way to improve their bottom line. At the same time, the parameters of the head of AI job — and even AI itself — aren't very clear, and the pivot to the position can seem opportunistic.

And because AI is supposed to be more transformational and more readily profitable than tech fads like Web3, experts think the head of AI is also going to stick.

Just what any given head of AI does varies, especially depending on the type of company. Generally, that breaks down into heads of AI at digital companies working to incorporate the

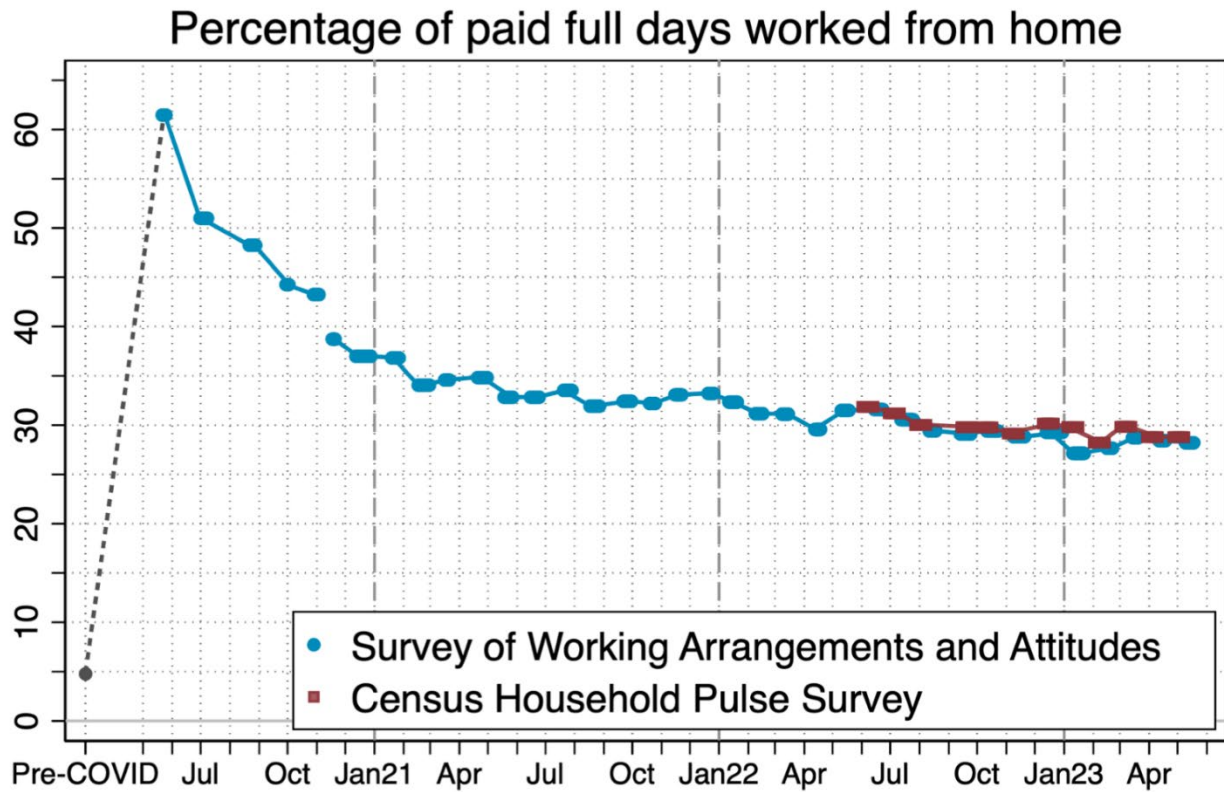
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technology into their products, while at non-technology companies that means figuring out where and how to use existing AI technology to improve their business models.<sup>10</sup>

- By 2030, activities that account for up to 30 percent of hours currently worked across the US economy could be automated—a trend accelerated by generative AI. However, we see generative AI enhancing the way STEM, creative, and business and legal professionals work rather than eliminating a significant number of jobs outright. Automation’s biggest effects are likely to hit other job categories. Office support, customer service, and food service employment could continue to decline.
- Federal investment to address climate and infrastructure, as well as structural shifts, will also alter labor demand. The net-zero transition will shift employment away from oil, gas, and automotive manufacturing and into green industries for a modest net gain in employment. Infrastructure projects will increase demand in construction, which is already short almost 400,000 workers today. We also see increased demand for healthcare workers as the population ages, plus gains in transportation services due to e-commerce.
- An additional 12 million occupational transitions may be needed by 2030. As people leave shrinking occupations, the economy could reweight toward higher-wage jobs. Workers in lower-wage jobs are up to 14 times more likely to need to change occupations than those in highest-wage positions, and most will need additional skills to do so successfully. Women are 1.5 times more likely to need to move into new occupations than men.
- The United States will need workforce development on a far larger scale as well as more expansive hiring approaches from employers. Employers will need to hire for skills and competencies rather than credentials, recruit from overlooked populations (such as rural workers and people with disabilities), and deliver training that keeps pace with their evolving needs.<sup>11</sup>

## Working Arrangements

### Days Worked from Home Are Near 28% In the First Half of 2023

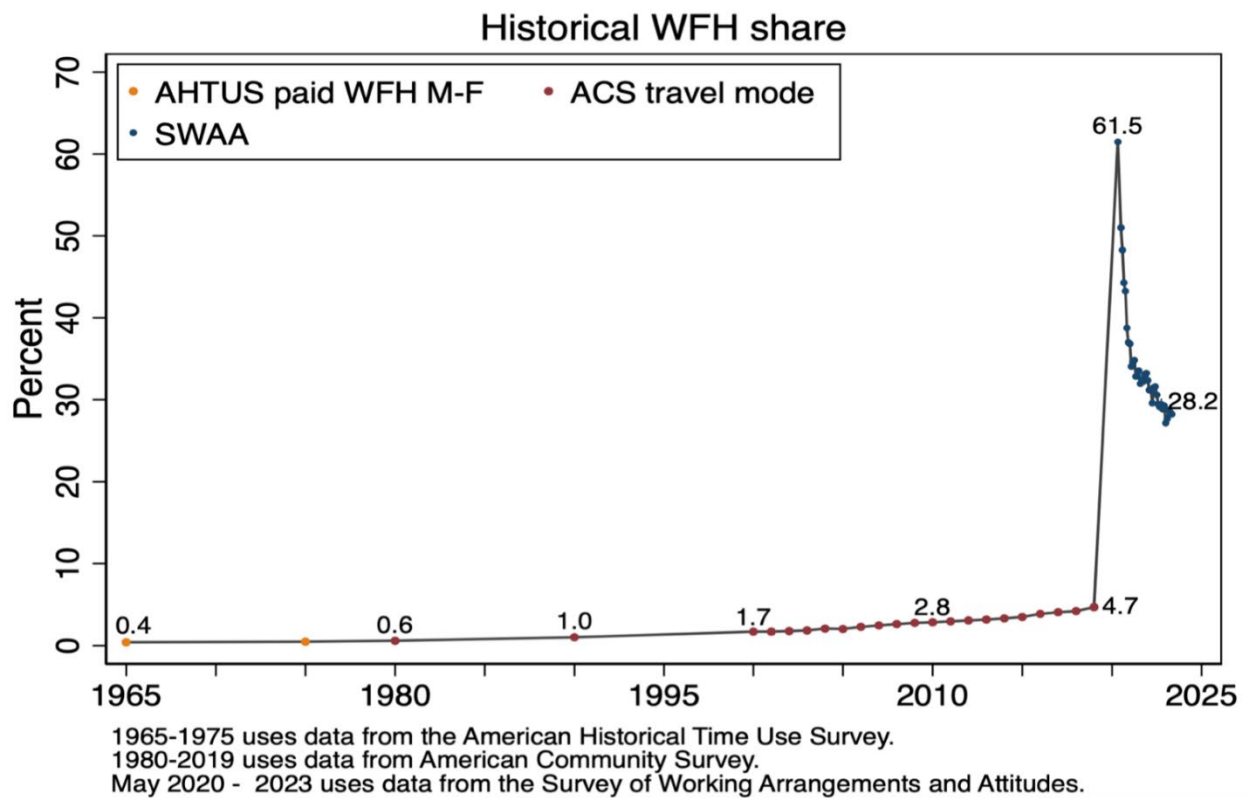


\*Pre-COVID estimate taken from the 2017-2018 American Time Use Survey

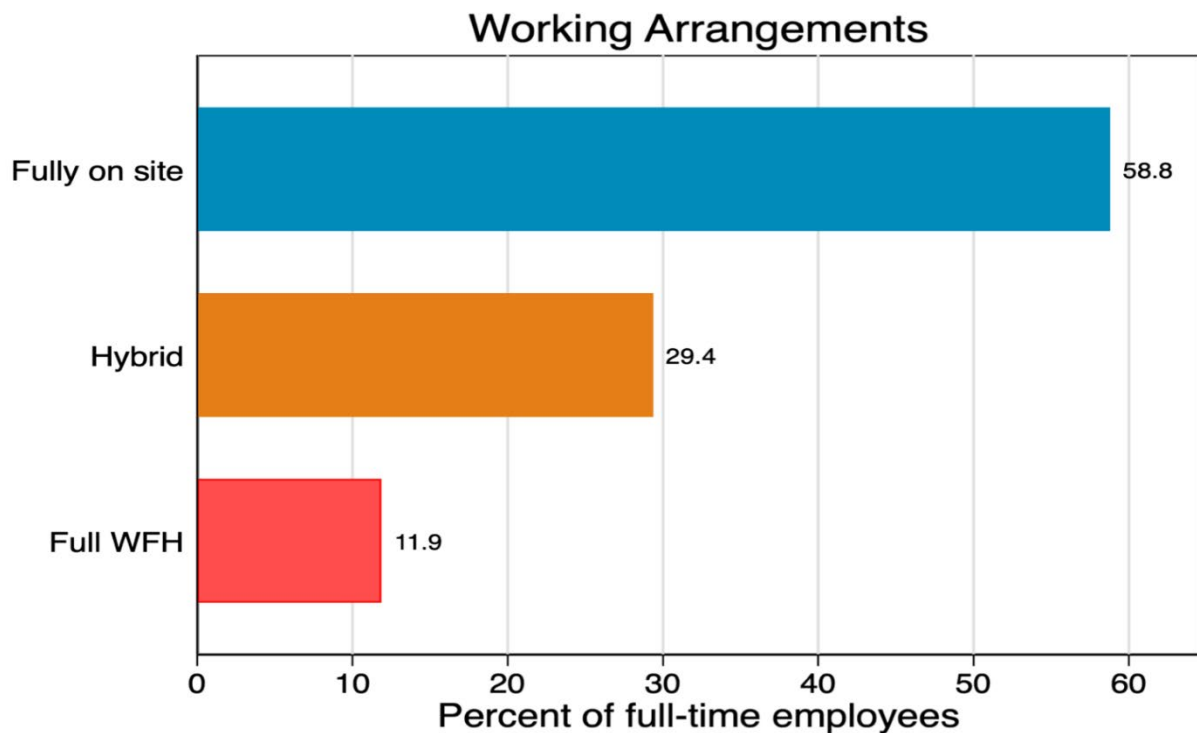
\*The break in the series in November 2020 reflects a change in the survey question.

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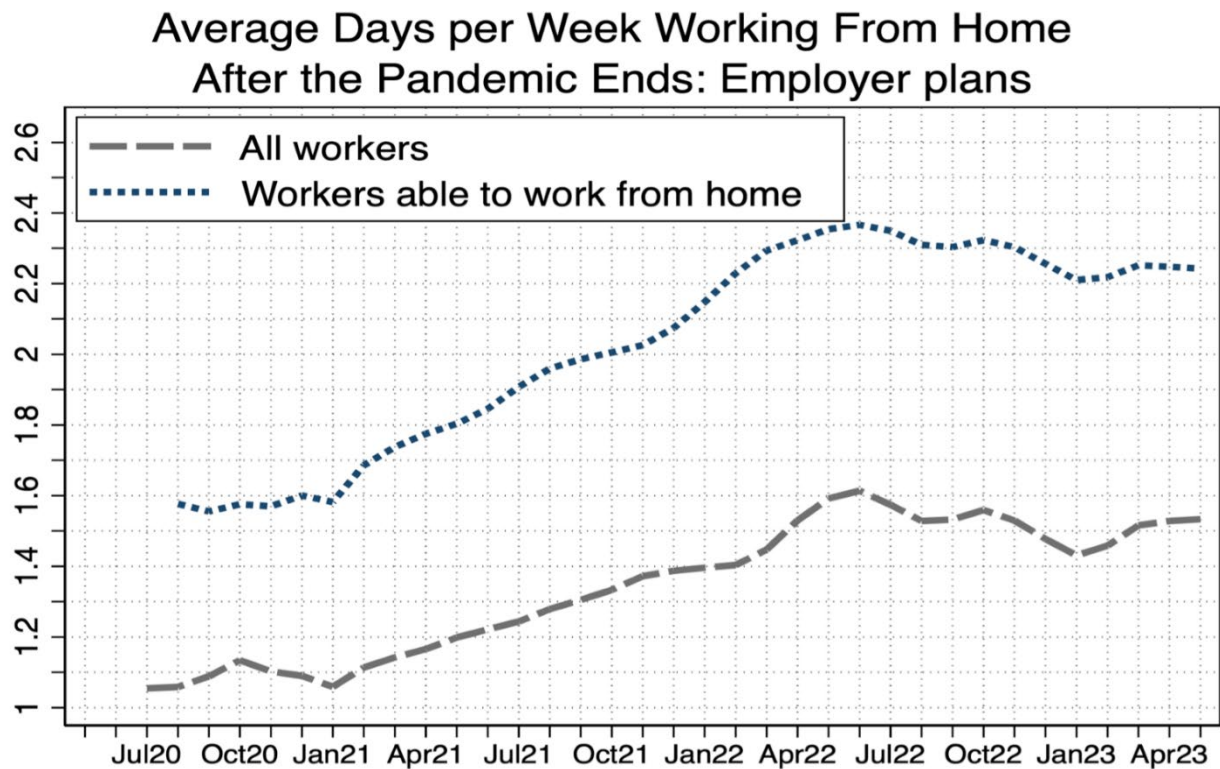
The Pandemic Permanently Increased WFH, Equivalent to Almost 40 Years of Pre-Pandemic Growth



By May'23: 12% of Full-Time Employees Were Fully Remote, 59% Were Full-Time on Site, and 29% Were in a Hybrid Arrangement



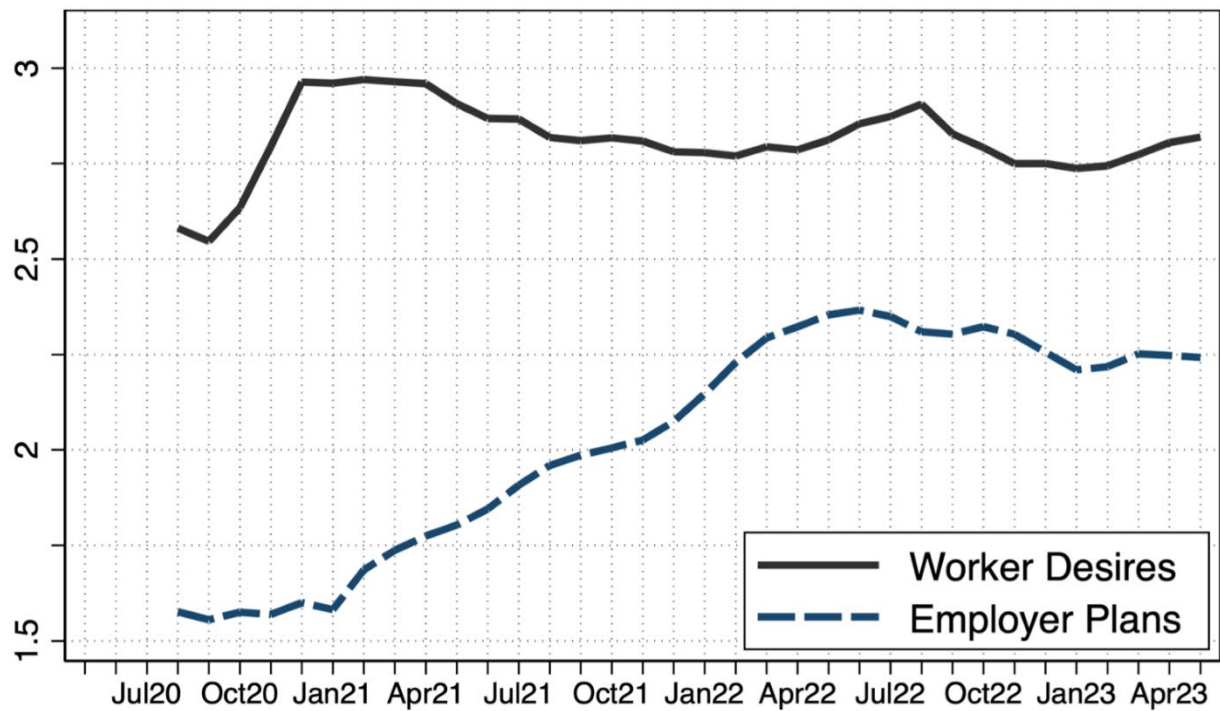
Employer Plans for WFH Trend Near 2.2 Days per Week for Persons Able to Work From Home



The Gap Between How Much Employees Want to Work from Home and Employer Plans Is Stable at About 0.5 Days

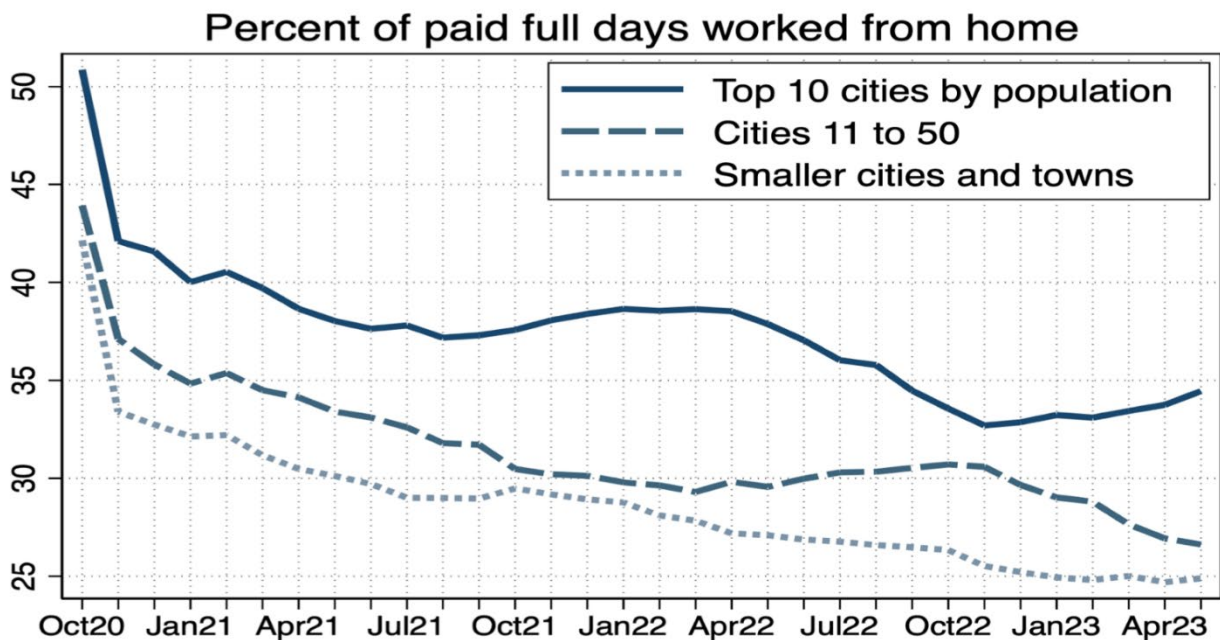


## Average Days per Week Working From Home After the Pandemic Ends: Workers Able to WFH



Sample: Workers able to work from home

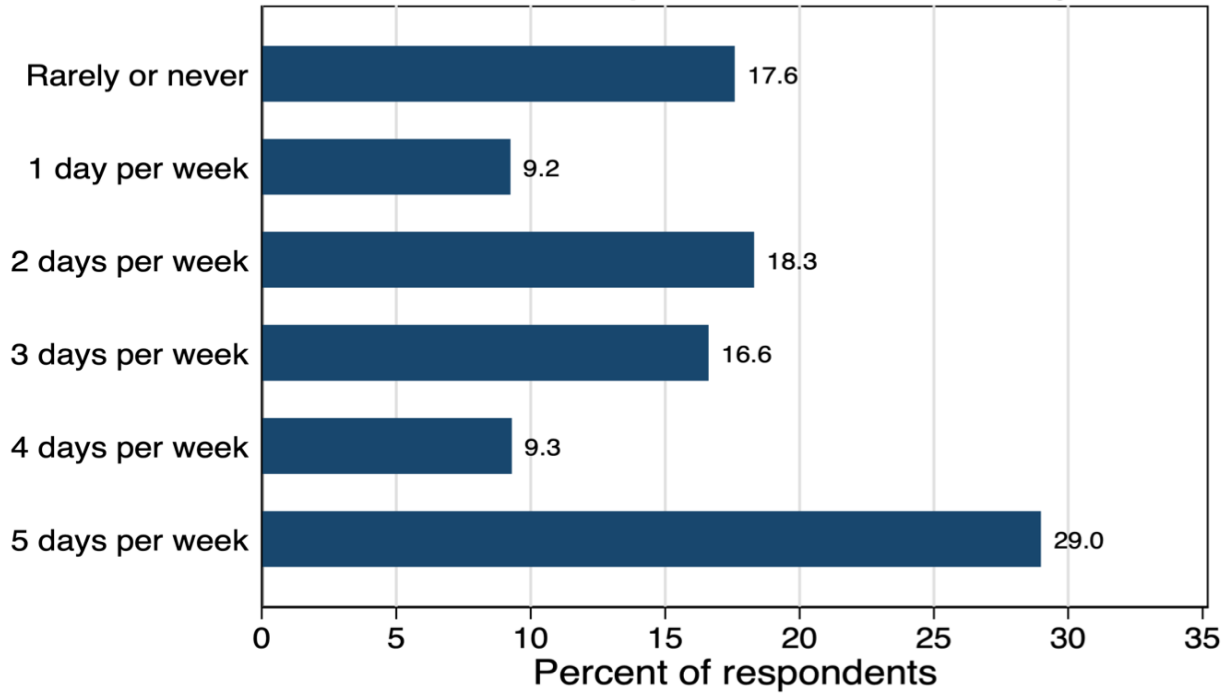
## Working From Home is More Common in Major Cities than in Smaller Cities and Towns



\*We define cities using Combined Statistical Areas and use the location of the respondent's current job.

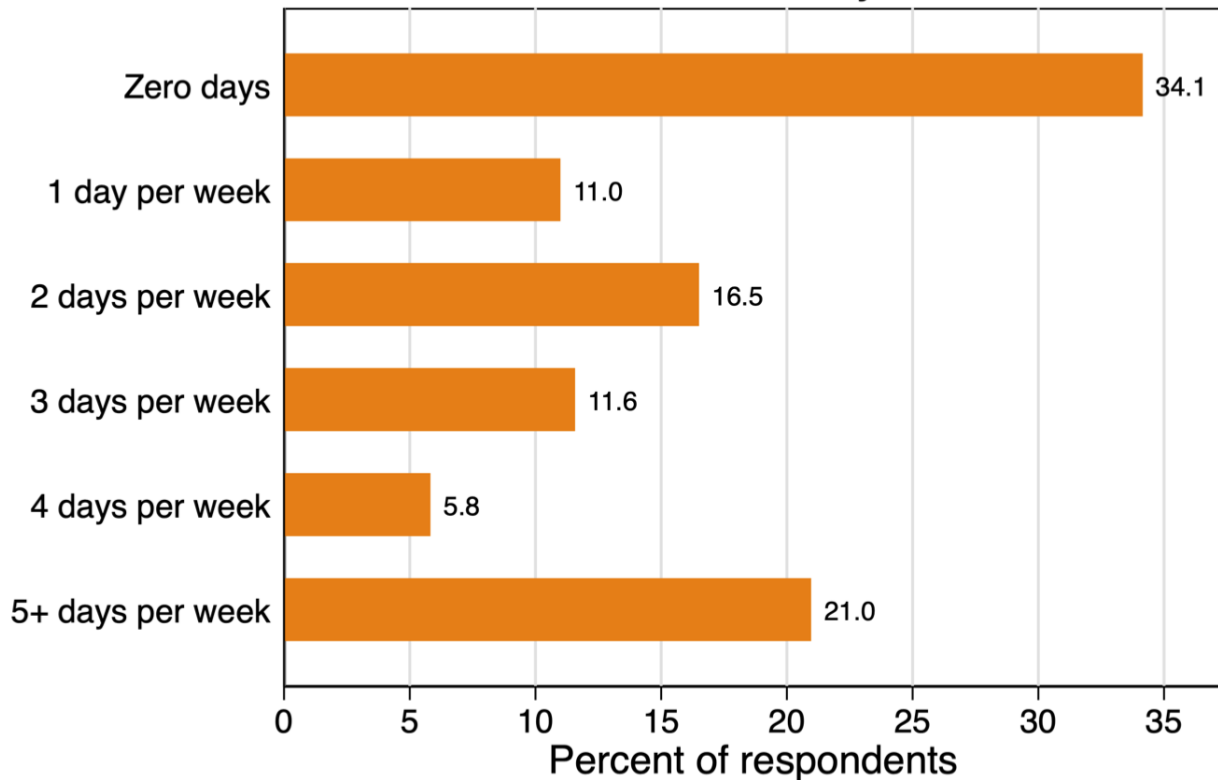
## Employers Offer Fewer Fully Remote Jobs and More Fully Onsite Jobs Than Employees Want

### Worker desired amount of post-COVID WFH days



Sample: Full-time wage and salary employees who are able to WFH. N = 12253

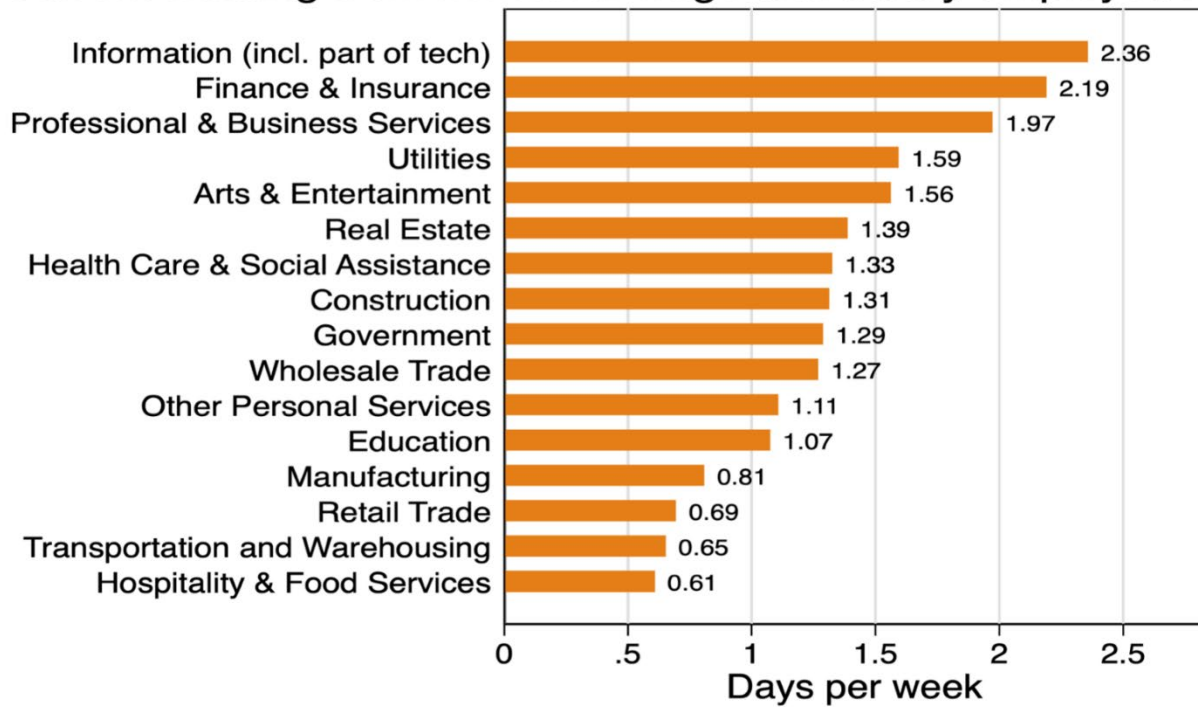
### Current amount of WFH days



Sample: Full-time wage and salary employees who are able to WFH. N = 11820

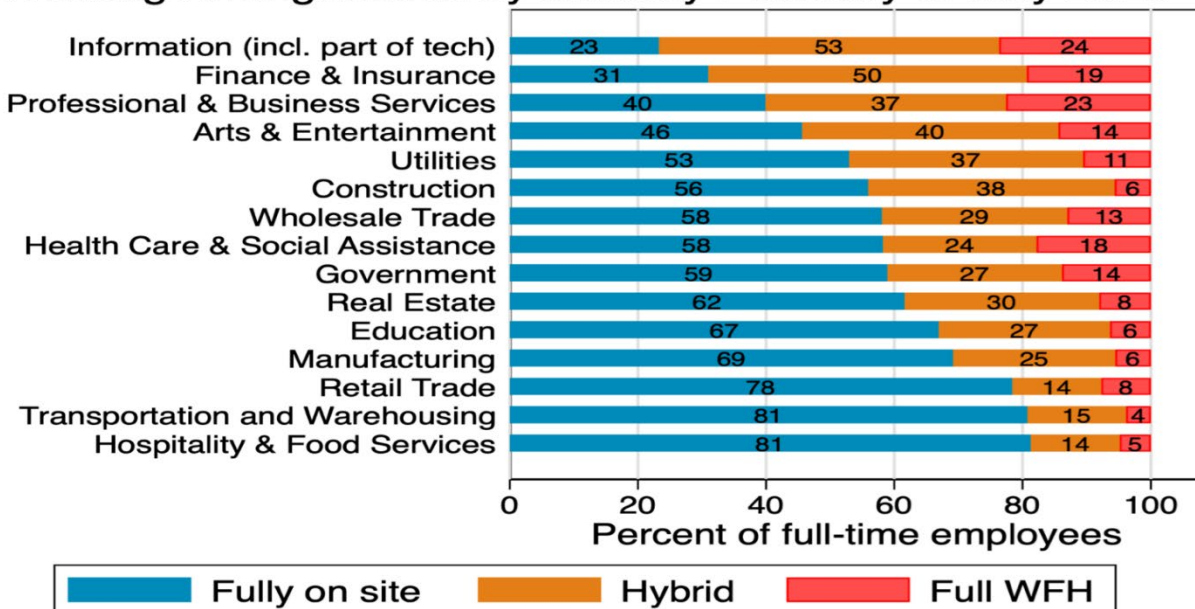
**Working from Home is Most Prevalent in the Tech, Finance, and Professional and Business Services Sectors**

## Current working from home: All wage and salary employees



Information, Finance & Insurance, and Prof. & Business Services Have The Largest Share of Hybrid and Remote Workers<sup>12</sup>

## Working Arrangements by Industry February to May 2023



Remote work surged in the pandemic era — but this trend, borne of necessity for public health, has now become a fixture of the U.S. job market, one that's likely to remain entrenched, according to labor experts.

Working from home wasn't solely a pandemic-era phenomenon — the share of remote workers had been doubling every 15 years prior to 2020, according to data compiled by Jose

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Maria Barrero, Nicholas Bloom, Shelby Buckman and Steven Davis, economists who have studied remote work. But the subsequent increase during the pandemic amounted to 30 years of prepandemic growth, they said.

Workers cite time savings as among the most significant factors in favor of remote work — it means they have no commute, more flexible work schedules and less time getting ready for work.

That said, most jobs in the U.S. economy can't be done remotely. About 37% of jobs in the U.S. can plausibly be done entirely at home, according to a 2020 study by Jonathan Dingel and Brent Neiman, economists at the University of Chicago.

Those who can't work from home are disproportionately lower-income, lack a college degree and are people of color, Dingel and Neiman said.<sup>13</sup>

## **10 Remote Work Trends That Will Define 2023**

### **1. Focus on enhancing company culture**

To attract and retain the top talent in an increasingly competitive jobs market, companies are increasingly placing more importance on enhancing company culture.

### **2. More flexibility**

Flexible working hours are increasingly popular among remote work teams, as companies acknowledge that many workers would like to be able to fetch kids from school, visit the gym, or run errands during the work day.

### **3. Increased cybersecurity protection and awareness**

Organizations are realizing the risks and vulnerabilities of having remote and hybrid workforces, and the need to implement more secure cybersecurity measures (including awareness training).

Many remote employees work from home using their own devices, which may also be connected to other internet of things (IoT) devices in the home. These may pose significant cybersecurity risks if not managed properly.

### **4. More asynchronous communication**

As remote and hybrid teams get more experienced in working together, there's increasing recognition of the need for asynchronous communication.

### **5. A move towards more cloud-based computing**

Companies with flexible work environments are increasingly adopting cloud computing. That's because of its many benefits which include scalability, security and affordability.

### **6. Focus on work-life balance, mental health, and wellness**

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Companies are increasingly aware of the effects of an unhealthy and unbalanced work-life situation. It can result in severe stress, illness, mental health issues and affects overall wellness of staff.

That's why many companies are putting work-life balance, wellness and mental health at the center of their efforts to create a positive working environment for all staff.

## **7. Emphasis on diversity in recruitment**

Another growing trend in the remote work space is an increasing emphasis on diversity in recruitment and hiring practices.

Remote work opens up many more opportunities to hire the top talent from anywhere in the world. But it's important to recognize and be aware of how to actually reach out to diverse talents through modified job descriptions, hiring practices, and onboarding processes.

Diversity goes hand in hand with inclusion and companies are also increasingly recognizing the need for inclusive work policies and practices to help attract and retain the best talents from around the world.

## **8. Better perks and benefits**

Remote staff have different priorities when it comes to perks and benefits that will attract them to working for a company.

That's why companies are responding by creating remote-friendly perks and benefits to help them attract and retain the most talented staff from around the globe. This includes flexible work hours, parental leave days, wellness days, IT stipends, remote health insurance, bonuses etc.

## **9. Increase in robust remote work policies**

Remote work policies are now seen as critical to minimizing risks and ensuring expectations are set. A remote work policy can help guide all employees – answering many questions that they may have and saving the company lots of time when it comes to onboarding new staff.

## **10. Rise in remote work health insurance**

In some countries, citizens are able to access medical care for free. But in other countries, the norm may be to use private health care where the state healthcare is very poor or where you're mandated to pay for healthcare.<sup>14</sup>

## **Skills and Reskilling**

Nearly seven in 10 human resource professionals believe their organization has a skills gap, according to Wiley's Closing the Skills Gap report. And those concerns are growing. In 2021, for example, only about 55% of HR and recruiting employees surveyed reported this issue. Among C-suite executives, 68% admit their organizations have a skills gap, up from 60% in 2021. Unsurprisingly, about 69% of managers—typically those on the front lines of the recruiting and

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retention challenges—say they’re regularly dealing with a workforce that doesn’t have the skills they need.

More organizations are struggling with this problem due, in large part, to the ongoing churn seen throughout the labor force. Even though the rate of workers quitting peaked in the U.S. in December 2021, there were still 4.2 million workers quitting as of November. The high rate of turnover means that companies are having an increasingly difficult time filling key positions. Wiley’s survey found 40% report struggling to retain workers, while 26% can’t hire enough qualified employees—and an additional 32% report they struggle to do either.

Unfortunately, Wiley’s findings show that most organizations are not equipped to handle this pervasive skills gap. Indeed, 40% of companies report they don’t have the resources to reskill or train their employees. Moreover, about a third believe their company’s compensation packages aren’t competitive enough in the current recruiting environment.

While organizations are struggling, it does create opportunities for workers. Most hiring managers are looking for a combination of both hard and soft-skills, something that’s shifted more since the pandemic. In fact, about 50% of HR professionals surveyed believe jobs require more soft skills now.

When asked what the most in-demand hard and technical skills were, HR professionals cited strategic thinking and analytics, digital communication, and project management.

As for soft skills, managers said they were looking for candidates who showcased problem-solving and time management skills, as well as the ability to adapt to change and leadership abilities.

But it’s worth noting that there is a big challenge for workers who are looking to gain and highlight these skills—they have a shelf life, which means that Americans may need to take advantage of continuing education opportunities to keep skills up-to-date. It’s not a one-and-done situation.

Nearly half of those surveyed by Wiley (47%) reported that hard and technical skills only last about two years. Less than one in five (18%) believed they were useful for five or more years. The value of soft skills starts to deteriorate within two years, according to 43% of survey respondents. That said, a wider cohort, 27% consider soft skills slightly more stable, predicting that they will last up to five years.

The lesson here? Workers should take advantage of upskilling and training opportunities if and when they’re provided by a current employer, but they may also need to look at outside resources to keep their skill set sharp.<sup>15</sup>

- The over 10 million open jobs in the U.S. right now are spread across all industries and occupations. Entry level jobs have more job openings, but also more available individuals who have the skills to fill these jobs. For job openings in more highly technical industries and occupations, there is a much smaller available talent pool with the skills needed to do these jobs.

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Nearly 40% of all unemployed individuals in October 2022 previously worked in service and sales and office occupations. A quarter worked in the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality sectors.

These occupations and industries encompass many entry-level jobs that require minimal training and education. Individuals who previously worked in these occupations can quickly move between other entry level occupations in varied industries.

Right now, [nearly all industries](#), no matter the skill level needed, are experiencing a worker shortage. However, occupations and industries that require specialized skills and training are experiencing even more severe labor shortages.

The financial activities, information technology, and transportation industries often require a labor force with specialized skills and training. Only a combined 10% of the unemployed population has experience in these three industries, meaning there are not enough individuals in the labor market with the skills required to fill these jobs.

However, the degrees undergraduate and graduate students are pursuing are not necessarily aligned with the projected jobs that will be available over the next ten years.

A master's in business administration was the most conferred Master's degree over the last decade. Yet, none of the top projected jobs over the next ten years will require an MBA.

In addition to relevant education and experience, a competitive workforce must acquire hard and soft skills that are often learned on the job. A recent report from World Economic Forum identified the most in-demand skills that employers are looking for—and whether those employers have programs in place to teach those skills to current employees.

Analytical and critical thinking, and active learning strategies, were among the top skills across both lists. Emotional intelligence skills were also identified as valuable, in-demand skills. Specifically, companies want employees that can demonstrate resilience, stress tolerance, and flexibility as well as leadership and social influence.

Employers can consider reskilling or upskilling any person in their workforce despite experience, age, or education level. Workers in higher risk jobs like those in the service industries are the most inclined to reskill, but even those in historically safe jobs, like law, social work, and health care, are willing to reskill or upskill.<sup>16</sup>

### **MIT Sloan experts weigh in on five traits of the emerging workforce:**

#### **1. They're data-literate.**

Data-driven companies enjoy increased revenue, improved customer service, best-in-class operating efficiencies, and improved profitability.

"In a world of more data, the companies with more data-literate people are the ones that are going to win," said MIT Sloan senior lecturer who teaches courses on communicating and persuading with data.

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Leveraging that data requires collaboration, said Cindi Howson, chief data strategy officer at analytics platform provider ThoughtSpot. Some companies will need to reorganize around data and analytics, Howson said in a presentation at an MIT data symposium last August. This might mean combining business people with technical employees and coders.

The most successful firms have data and analytics embedded inside every business unit, with some degree of centralization, Howson said.

## **2. They're comfortable working with artificial intelligence, machine learning, and robots.**

Most experts agree the future of artificial intelligence is the future of work. And robotic technology is expected to keep expanding, with the global robotics market worth \$260 billion by 2030, according to one estimate.

While there have been concerns over AI replacing humans in factories and warehouses, savvy employers will deploy artificial intelligence where it can complement humans instead of replacing them — in areas like education, health care, and training.

In manufacturing, collaborative robots, or cobots, are poised to augment human labor. With cobots, human workers can offload easier tasks to robots and focus on more ambiguous, challenging work, thereby improving productivity and worker well-being, according to MIT professor and roboticist Julie Shah.

In all cases, employers should deploy intelligent technologies with care, keeping in mind there may be friction between tech-savvy junior employees and senior staff that upsets traditional power hierarchies. One way to address this challenge is to create a peer-training program that rotates both senior and junior employees through the role of trainer, suggested MIT Sloan work and organization studies professor

## **3. They're empowered.**

According to research by MIT Sloan professor director of the MIT Institute for Work and Employment Research, workers report experiencing a sizable “voice gap” at work — that is, a gap between how much say or influence they feel they ought to have and how much they actually have — on topics such as wages, working conditions, and fair treatment.

This won't last: Nationwide, low-wage workers are finding their voice and finding purpose, and employers ignore them at their own risk, said MIT Sloan professor of human resources and management

## **4. They respect, expect, and understand the value of “good jobs.”**

Today's employees have standards: This means good pay and benefits, a stable and predictable schedule, a career path, security and safety, and a fair and equitable work environment.

As such, employers need to go beyond offering job training or higher wages for low-wage jobs. It's also important for firms to improve the quality of the jobs they provide, an issue that affects roughly one-quarter of American adults, Osterman said.



If not? Underinvestment in people leads to operational and customer service problems, which lead to lower sales, which lead to shrinking budgets

## **5. They're committed to advances in equity and the environment.**

According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 83% of tech executives are white. At Apple, 6% of the tech workforce last year was Black. At Google, just under one-quarter of interns were Black and Latinx, and 5.5% of new hires were Black.

To close the tech gap, it's essential to cultivate diversity in the workforce, according to a former Berkshire Bank executive vice president and current MIT Sloan lecturer who focuses on inclusion in the innovation economy. Actions include exposing all kids to STEM at an early age; making higher education more affordable and more equitable; hiring based on skill set rather than degree; and assessing and diversifying professional networks.<sup>17</sup>

### **Clean Energy Workforce**

- President Biden nominated Julie Su to be the next labor secretary after Marty Walsh announced his resignation from the role to lead the National Hockey League's players union. If confirmed by the Senate, Su would face a major challenge: a shortage of workers in the clean-energy industry that threatens to derail the administration's ambitious climate agenda.

"There is definitely a labor shortage," Chynna Hampton, equity director for Climate Jobs Illinois, told The Climate 202. "It's really hard to get out there and find those talented folks." Climate Jobs Illinois, an affiliate of the Climate Jobs National Resource Center, is a coalition of labor organizations advocating for well-paying union jobs in the clean-energy sector, including wind turbine technicians, solar panel installers and nuclear plant engineers.

But with the U.S. unemployment rate at a historic low of 3.4 percent, many construction and manufacturing companies worry they won't be able to hire enough clean-energy workers to make batteries and build wind or solar farms.

The U.S. construction industry was short 413,000 workers as of December, while the manufacturing sector was short 764,000, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The bureau also estimates that there will be about 80,000 job openings for electricians every year until 2031, as environmentalists push to electrify everything — from vehicles to home appliances — to combat climate change.

One big challenge to recruitment: While the Biden administration has promised that new green-energy jobs will be well-paying union jobs, wages in the renewables sector haven't kept up with those in the fossil fuel industry.

"In traditional energy sectors, say in fossil fuels, they are very highly paid jobs, where people had years in an industry where they could sustain their families and have predictability and economic security," Liz Shuler, president of the AFL-CIO, the nation's largest federation of unions, told The Climate 202. "That isn't the case in the renewables sector," Shuler said. "And if this clean-energy transition is going to go well, we have to ensure that those jobs are good jobs. So we would say that there's not a shortage of clean-energy workers as much as there's a shortage of good, highly paid jobs."

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“With the Inflation Reduction Act and other laws, the federal government has invested trillions of dollars in a whole bunch of stuff,” he added. “But a lot of this investment will flow into sectors where employers can’t actually find workers to make and build this stuff. And if we don’t address this, it will have serious economic and climate consequences.”<sup>18</sup>

- President Joe Biden has been traveling the country to tout the job creation boom his billions of dollars in clean energy spending will bring. But the cutting-edge companies he’s promoting face a struggle: hiring enough people to fill those jobs.

The same booming labor market that has given Biden the lowest unemployment rate since the 1960s is also creating a hiring bottleneck for the same construction and manufacturing companies that are central to his climate agenda. Democrats’ policies rely on those companies to make batteries, build solar panels and accelerate next-generation technology that aims to remove planet-warming carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

“Having the technicians and the engineers and skilled mechanics, that is going to be a challenge in the United States,” Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, a prominent Democratic clean energy proponent whose own 2020 presidential platform helped shape some of Biden’s policies, said in an interview.

Democrats’ Inflation Reduction Act includes \$369 billion in clean energy incentives that are meant to send a signal to U.S. businesses — encouraging them to build and deploy electric cars, carbon-free energy sources and less-wasteful appliances. And it appears to be working: More than 100,000 clean-energy job openings have sprung up across the U.S. since Biden signed the climate law six months ago, according to Climate Power, a coalition of environmental groups.

But another report cast a more ominous outlook: The U.S. construction industry was short 413,000 workers as of December, while 764,000 manufacturing sector jobs remained open, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And the consulting firm McKinsey & Co, expects 550,000 new energy transition jobs will become available by 2030, about 10 percent of which may be filled by people leaving the oil and gas industry.

Companies in the clean energy sector have raised alarms about labor shortages, said Dawn Lippert, CEO of Honolulu-based Elemental Excelsior, a group that helps clean energy start-ups.

The climate law recognized the gap. It included incentives, such as more lucrative tax credits, for partnering with registered apprentice programs and broad funding that could be used for workforce development to train people to maintain clean heavy-duty vehicles and heat pumps and to install clean energy projects. Biden underscored the point by visiting a labor union training facility in Wisconsin, his first stop on a manufacturing tour after his State of the Union, where he called the law “a blue-collar blueprint to rebuild America.”

Anu Khan, director of science and innovation at Carbon180, an advocacy firm that supports carbon removal, said to avoid a labor crunch in the future, cleantech industries must already begin informing workers with comparable skills in other industries about the opportunities available in clean energy. She said the industry needs trade union members’ skills, such as fitting pipelines to move carbon dioxide, drilling wells to store carbon dioxide and doing the engineering to build and operate machinery.

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"We haven't immediately fully run up against that challenge yet, but it's on the horizon," she said of the workforce gap.

While it's unclear how many jobs the carbon removal industry could generate, climate researchers have projected potentially major gains from one segment known as direct air capture. (This early-stage technology would pull greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, as opposed to a specific power plant or factory.)

For every megaton of carbon dioxide that a direct air plant can remove per year, the technology will create about 1,500 temporary jobs and then 500 permanent jobs for ongoing operations, climate research firm Rhodium Group estimated. That could translate to 1.5 million construction and 500,000 operation jobs for every gigaton. Direct-air capture at 0.5 gigaton of carbon dioxide removal annually would support a more modest 139,000 operations jobs, environmental non-profit World Resources Institute suggested.<sup>19</sup>

The low-carbon energy growth envisioned in Democrats' climate bill will come with a big challenge: finding enough trained workers to support it.

The plan would finance more renewable power, clean energy equipment manufacturing, installation of home heat pumps and efficiency upgrades, electric vehicles, hydrogen development and much more.

This kind of scale-up would boost demand for workers in industries that would receive new or expanded tax subsidies and other support.

The Princeton-led REPEAT Project, in their analysis of new projects the bill would spur, cautions that the ability to hire and train a clean energy workforce is among the various "difficult to model" constraints that may limit growth rates.

Philip Jordan of BW Research, a firm that studies workforce trends, said labor shortages are already a problem in clean energy industries.

Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) president Abigail Ross Hopper said the group sees the solar and energy storage workforce quadrupling from its current level of slightly over 250,000.

"In this tight labor market, that's a challenge — figuring out where do we get these employees? How do we train them, ensuring that they reflect the diversity of our nation?" she said on a call with reporters Monday.

The clean energy research firm Energy Innovation [estimates](#) that jobs related to the bill would grow a lot in coming years, reaching 1.5 million created in 2030.

University of Massachusetts researchers [estimate](#) the bill's mix of tax credits, grants, and loans — and the private sector capital they enable — will create an average of over 900,000 jobs annually over 10 years.

Their study was commissioned by the BlueGreen Alliance, a coalition of unions and environmental groups.

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Jordan, of BW Research, said the largest job gains will come in construction and installation of equipment like wind turbines, energy efficiency upgrades, transmission, battery storage, solar panels, and other areas.

"A lot of those are going to be unionized. And labor unions are actually quite good at rapidly meeting needs and expanding," said Jordan, a VP with the firm that studies energy workforce trends.

But he cautions: "We are going to be creating a challenge when there's lots of activity happening across lots of different types of infrastructure that need lots of the same types of workers."

Hopper said one important provision in the bill is the larger tax credits available for projects that meet certain apprenticeship requirements.

She said they would give project developers incentives to train new workers.

The bill also contains workforce development provisions, such as funding for state programs to train home energy efficiency and electrification contractors.

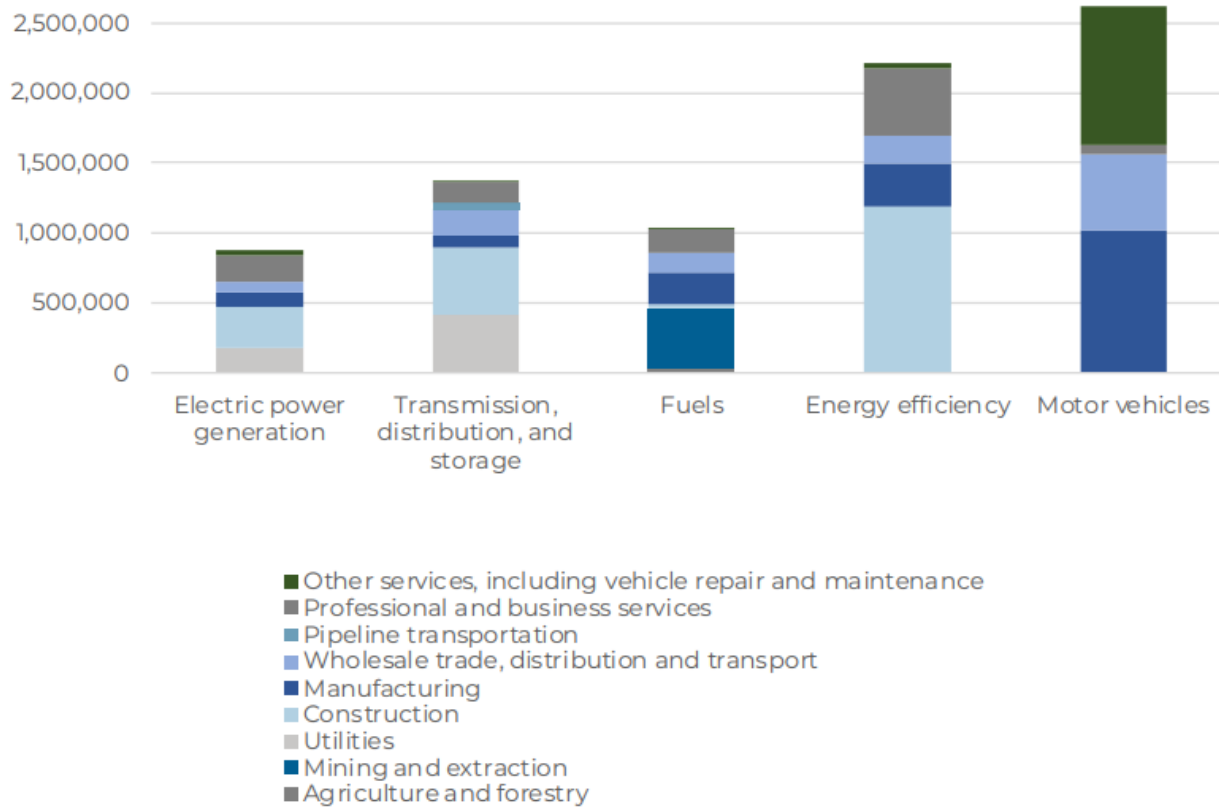
"There's going to need to be investments to make sure that we're not only creating the workforce that we need, but we're also really targeting investments in disadvantaged communities to make sure that opportunities are available," Jordan said.

The bill contains several provisions to address "environmental justice" — a term for addressing the greater environmental burdens that poor people and communities of color often face.

One of the provisions would create tax credits aimed specifically at solar projects located in low-income communities.

The bottom line: "I'm cautiously optimistic that that the federal government and states and municipalities will plan accordingly for what's coming," Jordan said.<sup>20</sup>

- The energy sector added almost 300,000 jobs last year, about a 3.8% growth rate from 2021 to 2022, according to an annual study released by the U.S. Department of Energy. Every state saw an increase in clean energy jobs according to the 2023 U.S. Energy and Employment Report. Overall U.S. employment grew 3.1% across the same period.

**Figure 2. Energy Employment by Technology Category and Industry, 2022**

(2023). Retrieved from U.S. Department of Energy.

Solar and wind are the largest employment sectors among power generation technologies, DOE said. Solar gained more than 12,000 workers, growing 3.7%. Onshore wind added more than 5,000 workers, growing 4.4%. Offshore wind grew the fastest, at 20.3%, though it added a small number of jobs (less than 200) relative to other renewables.

Clean energy electricity technologies accounted for almost 87% of net new jobs in the power generation sector.

Energy efficiency jobs grew 2.3%, adding about 50,000 jobs between 2021 and 2022. But employers also report they expect about 6.4% growth in the efficiency sector this year.

The most rapid growth was in battery electric vehicle jobs, DOE said, which added more than 28,000 jobs and grew 27%. "This is almost as many added jobs as in the gasoline and diesel vehicle sector, but at a growth rate that was 17 times faster," according to the report.

But the growth in clean energy jobs has not been easy, employers report.

"When asked about their experience 'finding qualified workers,' more than four out of five employers across energy technologies reported at least 'some difficulty,'" DOE said. Employers in the motor vehicles and energy efficiency sectors reported the highest difficulty in finding workers.

## Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

The most recent completer data for the statewide community college system indicates over 21,400, or one-third, of graduates completed an Associate level award designed to transfer into baccalaureate programs of study. Additionally, over 7,300 were awarded a General Education Core Curriculum credential reflecting the work completed at the community college that meets the requirements toward an Associate in Arts degree and addresses the general education requirements toward transfer.

Of the nearly 36,000 awards that are designed for individuals to enter the workforce directly, the top five career clusters are: 1) Health Science; 2) Manufacturing; 3) Transportation, Distribution and Logistics; 4) Business, Management and Administration; and 5) Information Technology. A complete breakout is provided in the table below.

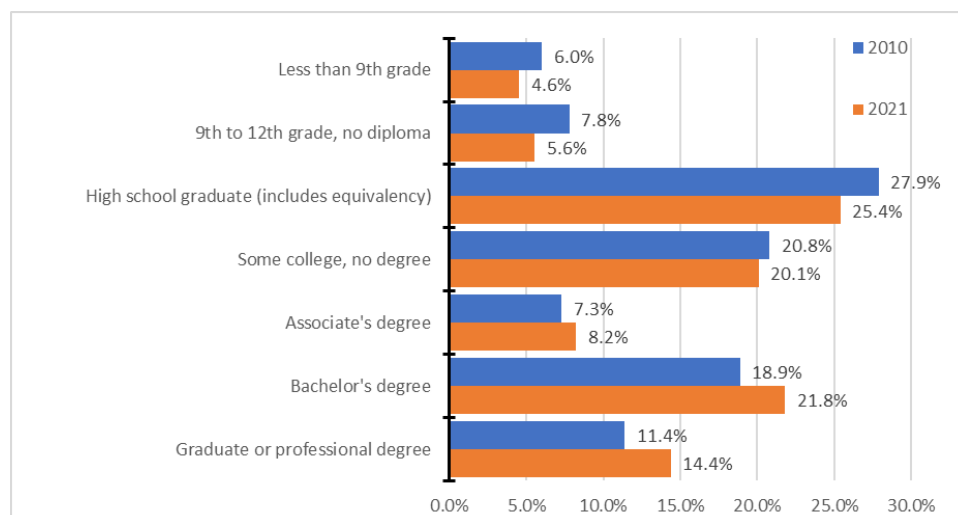
Fiscal Year 2022 Summary of Graduates by Career Cluster

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources	Architecture and Construction	Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications	Business, Management and Administration	Education and Training	Finance	Government and Public Administration	Health Science	Hospitality and Tourism	Human Services	Information Technology	Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security	Manufacturing	Marketing	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics	Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics	Associate - Transfer	General Education Core Curriculum Credential	Total
951	2,285	694	2,575	312	685	0	14,246	695	1,904	2,424	1,726	3,830	207	121	3,323	21,458	7,361	64,797

Source: ICCB Centralized Data System

Baccalaureate completers, per the Illinois Board of Higher Education,

Over the past 20 years, educational attainment has generally improved, with a smaller share of adults (ages 25+) having a high school diploma or less, and more adults with an associate's degree or higher. The share of residents with a bachelor's degree increased from 18.9% and 21.8% and the share of residents with a graduate or professional degree increased from 11.4% to 14.4%.

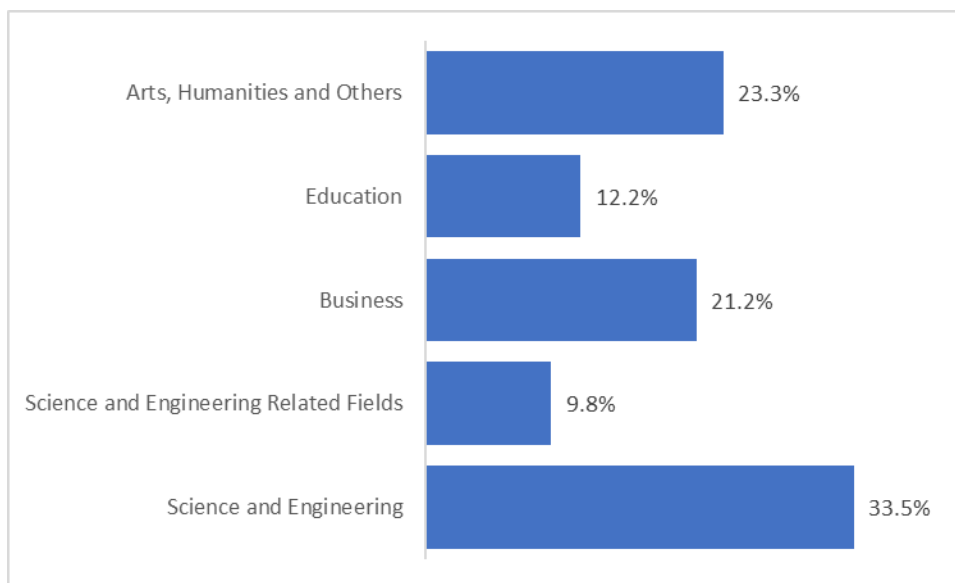


Source: US Census Bureau, 2006-2010 & 2017-2021 American Community Survey, Table S1501.

According to the 2017-2021 American Community Survey, the largest share of bachelor's degree holders in Illinois majored in science and engineering fields (33.5% of bachelor's degrees). The second largest category for bachelor's degree attainment was arts and

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humanities. The least common category for bachelor's degree attainment was science and engineering related fields. In the science and engineering related fields, some job seekers instead pursue associate's degrees or postgraduate degrees.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey, Table S1502.

In 2022, there were 67,810 bachelor's degree completions. The largest share of completions were for health professions, such as registered nursing. The second largest curriculum category for bachelor's degree completions was business, management, and marketing. This category includes accounting, business administration, and finance. The third largest category for bachelor's degree completions was social sciences. Relatively fewer completions were in math & statistics, public administration, or English.

### Bachelor's Degree Completions in 2022

Curriculum Category	Count of Bachelor's Degree Completions in 2022	Share
Total	67,810	
Health Professions	13,660	20.1%
Business, Management, and Marketing	11,131	16.4%
Social Sciences	3,910	5.8%
Engineering	3,872	5.7%
Psychology	3,727	5.5%
Visual and Performing Arts	3,684	5.4%
Computer and Information Sciences	3,584	5.3%

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Biological and Biomedical Sciences	3,578	5.3%
Education	3,502	5.2%
Communication and Journalism	3,014	4.4%
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness	1,479	2.2%
Security & Protective Services	1,457	2.1%
Math & Statistics	1,074	1.6%
Public Administration & Social Service	1,058	1.6%
English Language & Literature	1,048	1.5%
All Other, <1,000 Completions Each	8,032	11.8%

Source: Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2022.

There were 44,026 Masters' Degree completions in 2022. The largest share of completions were in business, management, and marketing, e.g., MBA. Health professions were the second largest category, and the largest sub-category was . The third most common category was education.

### Masters' Degree Completions in 2022

Curriculum Category	Count of Masters' Degree Completions in 2022	Share
Total	44,026	
Business, Management, and Marketing	11,799	26.8%
Health Professions	8,078	18.3%
Education	5,648	12.8%
Computer and Information Sciences	2,926	6.6%
Public Administration & Social Service	2,457	5.6%
Psychology	1,606	3.6%
Engineering	1,496	3.4%
Math & Statistics	986	2.2%
Visual and Performing Arts	973	2.2%



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Legal Professions	948	2.2%
Theology	831	1.9%
Social Sciences	824	1.9%
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	787	1.8%
Communication and Journalism	718	1.6%
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness	701	1.6%
Multidisciplinary Studies	562	1.3%
All Other, <500 Completions Each	2,686	6.1%

Source: Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2022.

There were 9,953 doctoral completions in 2022. By far the largest category for doctoral completions was health professions, which represented 45.4% of completions. The second largest category was legal professions at 17.7%. Education was the third largest category, representing 6.8% of doctoral completions.

### Doctoral Degree Completions in 2022

Curriculum Categories	Count of Doctoral Completions in 2022	Share
Total	9,953	
Health Professions	4,521	45.4%
Legal Professions	1,764	17.7%
Education	679	6.8%
Engineering	515	5.2%
Psychology	447	4.5%
Physical Sciences	326	3.3%
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	315	3.2%
Social Sciences	242	2.4%
Agriculture	166	1.7%
Computer and Information Sciences	139	1.4%
Theology	132	1.3%
Math & Statistics	112	1.1%

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Business, Management, and Marketing	102	1.0%
All Other, <100 Completions Each	493	5.0%

Source: Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2022.

### *Comparison of Economic and Workforce Analytical Conclusion*

#### *Data Disaggregation of Economic Outcomes*

Based on the review of educational attainment, labor force participation, and unemployment rates by race, sex, and target populations, several trends are apparent:

- African Americans are considerably less likely to have a bachelor's degree, participate in the labor force, or find employment. The unemployment rate for African Americans is more than double the unemployment rate for the total labor force in Illinois.
- Hispanic persons are more likely to participate in the labor force, but they are also more likely to be unemployed and less likely to have a bachelor's degree.
- Several target populations have considerably larger unemployment rates than the total population- those with low income, single parents, persons with disabilities, and youth.
- Veterans typically have a lower unemployment rate than the overall civilian population, but they are also considerably less likely to participate in the labor force.
- Single parents are considerably more likely to participate in the labor force, but they are also more likely to be unemployed.
- Persons with disabilities are substantially less likely to participate in the labor force, and those in the labor force have higher unemployment rates.

#### *Employers' Employment Needs*

When examining trends in job postings by major employment sectors, we identified several key trends in employers needs for general and specialized job skills:

- Communication skills are one of the most in-demand foundational skills in every employment sector. Other common skills mentioned in the majority of sectors include management, customer service, and business operations. These categories are broad, but necessary in most employment settings.
- CPR and basic life support certifications are mentioned frequently in several large employment sectors- health care, construction, leisure & hospitality, education, and other services (e.g., repair and maintenance).
- One of the largest employment sectors is health care and social assistance. The most in-demand specialized skills in this sector are nursing, medical records, and nursing care.
- Each employment sector has unique employment needs, but several specialized skills are currently in demand across multiple sectors.

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- Forklift operation is needed for transportation and warehousing, manufacturing, and wholesale trade
- Project management is necessary for utilities, professional and business services, other services, construction, manufacturing, financial activities, and education.
- Marketing is a specialized skill required in professional services, wholesale trade, financial activities, education, and information.

### *Skill Gaps & Labor Market Alignment*

We measured labor market alignment using gap ratios that compare educational completions to projected job openings. The analysis offers an initial assessment of how recent education completers match employer demand in occupations with large numbers of job openings statewide. Several key takeaways from the analysis are:

- Illinois has a stronger supply of completers for occupations requiring more education. There was a surplus of completers for demand occupations requiring an associate's degree, and for occupations requiring education beyond a bachelor's degree. There were considerable shortages of completers for occupations requiring some college (certificate or license).
- Occupations with strong surpluses (more completers than job openings) include:
  - Certificate programs for medical secretaries and EMT/paramedics
  - Associate degree programs for computer user support specialists, although this program attracts a considerable number of international students who might not find employment in Illinois
  - Bachelor's degree programs for secondary school teachers
  - Graduate programs for management occupations in computer and information systems management, sales, marketing, and finance. These occupations have different work responsibilities and skill requirements, but overlapping education requirements.
- Occupations with large shortages of completers relative to job openings include:
  - Certificate programs for automotive service technicians and licensed practical/vocational nurses
  - Associate's degree programs for paralegals, medical records/health information technicians, and miscellaneous engineering technicians
  - Bachelor's degree programs for insurance sales agents and software developers
- No demand occupations at the graduate-degree level had major shortages- the lowest gap ratio in this category was 0.9 – just below one completer per job opening.

## Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

### *The State's Workforce Development Activities*

### **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity**

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## U.S. Dept. of Labor Funded Programs

### WIOA TITLE I

DCEO administers the workforce development activities required by Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. WIOA Title I formula funds allocated to local areas for adults and dislocated workers must be used to provide career and training services through the one-stop delivery system. Local Workforce Development Boards determine the most appropriate mix of these services to deliver through American Job Centers.

- The Adult program is targeted at low-skill and low-income adults.
- Dislocated Worker services are targeted for workers who are unemployed and have lost a job through no fault of their own, such as mass layoffs, global trade dynamics, or transitions in economic sectors. or who have exhausted their Unemployment Compensation.
- WIOA Youth services focus on assisting youth who have one or more barriers to employment prepare for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and secure employment with career/promotional opportunities. Youth services are available to in and out-of-school youth between 14 and 24 years old.

### Trade Adjustment Assistance (Required WIOA Partner)

DCEO and Local Workforce Innovation Areas provide services to Illinois employers who are planning or have gone through a layoff. The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program helps workers who have lost their jobs as a result of international trade get back to work. The program offers a variety of benefits and services to eligible workers, including job training, income support, job search and relocation allowances, tax credits for health insurance costs, and a wage subsidy to workers 50 years of age and older.

### National Dislocated Worker Grants

DWGs are time-limited funding assistance in response to major economic dislocations or other events that cause a significant impact on states and local areas that exceed the capacity of existing formula funds and other relevant resources to address.

- DWGs are supplemental resources that provide flexibility responding and recovering from qualifying events (disasters and layoff events)
- The projects align with existing state and local priorities, resources, and programs including coordination with local government, emergency management agencies, social service agencies, employers and industry organizations, education, faith-based organization, public health, etc.

### Apprenticeship Expansion

Apprenticeship Illinois is a hub or network for fostering apprenticeship expansion and supporting the apprenticeship ecosystem throughout the State of Illinois. The Apprenticeship Illinois website provides a platform for Employers, Job Seekers, and Apprenticeship Partners to connect, learn, and act.

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1. Employers: On the employer site, businesses can (a) connect with an Apprenticeship Specialist in their region for support in creating a program; (b) learn about different industries and occupations with apprenticeship programs, the state's tax credit, and the value proposition for adopting the apprenticeship training model; and (c) start the process for implementing an apprenticeship program.
2. Job Seekers: Individuals who wish to start an apprenticeship program can (a) see successful apprentices in Illinois from various industries and occupations; (b) learn about the benefits of an apprenticeship program; and (c) search for programs in their area.
3. Apprenticeship Partners: Apprenticeship Partners, who include workforce, education, and economic development professionals, can (a) connect with the State and others who are in the apprenticeship ecosystem; (b) access professional development and resources; and (c) support employers, job seekers, or each other with aspects of an apprenticeship program.

### Rapid Response

DCEO and Local Workforce Innovation Areas provide services to employers in the state of Illinois who are planning or have gone through a layoff. Along with providing services, they, along with individuals and employers, have the ability to report layoffs in Illinois.

Rapid Response is a federal service strategy which coordinates services with an employer and employee representative(s) to maximize efforts and avert a planned layoff and/or minimize disruption for individuals and communities in dislocation events.

### U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Funded Program

#### Community Services Block Grant

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) helps individuals attain the skills, knowledge and motivation necessary to achieve self-sufficiency and provide immediate life necessities such as food, shelter, medicine, etc. An equal emphasis is placed on self-sufficiency efforts and providing relief for the immediate needs of eligible low-income populations. Individuals served must be at or below 125% of the federally established poverty level.

CSBG funds are allocated through Illinois' network of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and statewide migrant organizations to provide antipoverty services in Illinois' 102 counties and in the City of Chicago. The funds are allocated among the CAAs according to a poverty population-based formula.

### State of Illinois Funded Programs

#### Climate and Equitable Jobs Act

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) is comprehensive energy legislation that

- Incentivizes renewable energy development;
- Accelerates electric vehicle (EV) adoption and expands charging station infrastructure;
- Creates statewide clean energy workforce training programs to ensure our workforce is prepared for the jobs of the future; and,
- Supports communities facing energy transitions and much more.

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The clean energy workforce training programs will help Illinois' workforce prepare for and train for jobs in the clean energy industry and to provide support to workers and communities facing plant closures. These programs prioritize Illinoisians who live in communities that have historically faced economic barriers and environmental damage, bolstering a diverse workforce in the clean energy industry. CEJA workforce programs include

- The *Energy Transition Navigators Program* will provide outreach, education, and recruitment to eligible individuals to participate in CEJA workforce programs, and work with local job markets and workforce organizations to help place trainees in careers. The Energy Transition Navigator Program will prioritize outreach and recruitment for the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program and the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Hubs. They will provide support and career guidance for participants enrolling in these two workforce programs. They will engage with local workforce innovation boards, community organizations, and educational institutions to promote the CEJA workforce and contractor programs. They will engage with employers, apprenticeship programs and local economic development organizations to facilitate job and apprenticeship placement.
- Through the *Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program*, thirteen Workforce Hubs across Illinois will offer training, certification preparation, and skill development for entry-level jobs in clean energy-related industries. This program will utilize a *Clean Jobs Curriculum* developed by DCEO and its implementation partners and prepared via a broad stakeholder process. This curriculum will identify career pathways, a training curriculum, and skill sets needed for participants to enter clean energy jobs.
- The *Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program* will provide training to prepare people to succeed in apprenticeship programs in construction and building trades that are expected to see clean energy job growth. The goal is to create a qualified, diverse pipeline of clean energy workers.
- The *Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training* provides training to prepare people in the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections for entry-level clean energy jobs. Participants will receive essential employability skills training as part of vocational or occupational training. The training will lead to certifications or credentials that prepare candidates for employment. The Returning Resident Program will use a standard Clean Jobs Curriculum (similar to the one used in the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program).
- The *Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program* will provide eligible contractors with access to low-cost capital, support for obtaining insurance, assistance registering to become vendors for state incentive programs, connections with firms hiring contractors and subcontractors, and other vital services. Participating contractors will receive training, mentoring and support to build their businesses, connect to projects, compete for capital, and execute clean energy-related project installations and subcontracts.
- The *Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program* will provide a 5-year, 6-month progressive course of one-on-one coaching to assist contractor participants in developing 5-year business plans. This will include review of monthly metrics and advice on achieving participant's goals. Participating contractors will also be eligible for operational support grants (not to exceed a total of \$1,000,000 annually) and will have access to capital for upfront project costs and pre-development funding. Participants

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will receive mentorship, assistance preparing bids and Request for Proposal applications, assistance connecting to state and federal programs, and more.

### Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program

The goal of the Illinois Works Act is to ensure that all Illinois residents have access to State capital projects and careers in the construction industry and building trades, as well as provide contracting and employment opportunities to historically underrepresented populations in the construction industry and the trades. The *Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program* is a critical component in the success of the Act, by increasing the number of qualified construction and building trades apprentices who are women, people of color, veterans or from otherwise underrepresented populations and preparing them to enter full apprenticeship programs on their way to careers in the construction and building trades.

### Illinois Community College Board

#### U.S. Dept. of Education Funded Programs

#### WIOA TITLE II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) provides services to help adults develop basic skills (e.g., reading, writing, math, English language acquisition), transition to postsecondary education and training, and gain employment. The purpose of AEFLA is to help adults increase literacy and numeracy activities necessary to complete a high school education, transition to postsecondary education and training, and obtain employment. The Act funds adult education and literacy services, including workplace literacy, family literacy programs, and English language services.

#### Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education

The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education is a part of the AEFLA Act. IELCE services are education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees or credentials in their native countries, that enable such adults to achieve competency in the English Language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. IELCE services include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and includes workforce training. Title II eligibility is limited to adults who are at least 16 years of age and not currently enrolled, or required to be enrolled, in high school. Additional eligibility criteria include one of more of the following: basic skills deficient; lack a high school diploma or its equivalent; function below the level of a high school graduate (even if the individual has a high school credential); or unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

#### Illinois Career Accelerated Preparation System - Integrated Education and Training Program

The Integrated Education and Training Program, funded with braided funding from Adult Education and Literacy and Postsecondary Perkins, is designed to support the development, improvement, and scale of integrated education and training (IET) programs. IET is a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually

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with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

### Postsecondary Career and Technical Education (Perkins V)

Postsecondary CTE is funded by both state and federal dollars, as authorized by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V). The purpose of the Perkins Grant program is to develop more fully the academic knowledge and technical and employability skills of postsecondary education students who elect to enroll in career and technical education (CTE) programs of study. The intent of postsecondary CTE is to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the global economy. CTE equips students with the foundational knowledge to explore a cluster of occupations and careers, allowing them to transition seamlessly while providing them with hands-on exploration and rigorous academics.

Perkins V also places a concerted focus on equity and encourages recipients to adopt an equity lens in program design and implementation. In Illinois, eligible recipients of Postsecondary Perkins Grant funds are the community colleges. Funding is also provided to the Department of Corrections to enhance instruction and academic support activities that strengthen and improve career and technical education within Illinois correctional centers. CTE coursework at correctional centers is provided by several Illinois community colleges and is available for in several program areas including automotive technology, culinary arts, construction occupations, and horticulture.

### State of Illinois Funded Programs

#### Early School Leaver Transition Program

The Early School Leaver Transition program, funded by both federal Perkins and State CTE dollars, is aimed at helping at-risk students (ages 16-24) become reoriented and motivated to complete their education by allowing students to participate in adult education instruction as well as career and work training activities. The overarching goal is to assist students in achieving high school completion as the basis for entry into postsecondary education/training and meaningful employment by incorporating Model one of the Integrated Career Academic and Preparation System (ICAPS) outlined as an Integrated Education and Training (IET) model.

#### Non-College LPN Program

The purpose of the Licensed Practical Nursing grant is to provide operational funding for LPN programs at the Capital Area Career Center and Career Center of Southern Illinois. State funding supports this workforce development activity.

#### Innovative Bridge and Transition Grant

State funding supports the Innovative Bridge and Transition grant which is designed to create, support, or expand: innovative bridge programs and services; transition programs which improve student transitions to and through postsecondary education and into employment; programs that promote equity and diversity among those served; and/or programs and services that support individuals with disabilities. The target population includes those individuals 16 years of age or older, who have limited academic or basic skills, underemployed



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or unemployed and youth who are in school preparing to enter postsecondary education or training programs.

### **Pipeline for the Advancement of the Healthcare Workforce (PATH) Grant**

The purpose of the PATH Grant is to create, support, and expand the opportunities of individuals in the nursing pathway and select healthcare pathways to obtain credentials and degrees that allow them to enter and/or advance their careers in the healthcare workforce. This grant program aims to address the shortage of workers in the healthcare industry that have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was modeled off the Workforce Equity Initiative grant program and requires colleges to meet unmet healthcare community and employment needs by increasing enrollment and retention in nursing and other healthcare pathways, specifically for underrepresented groups of students who might not otherwise be successful or able to enroll in healthcare programs.

### **Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI)**

The purpose of this grant is to create, support, or expand short-term workforce (credit and/or noncredit) training opportunities in high need communities focused on specific sectors with identified workforce gaps. The grant requires a minimum of 60% of the students served to be African American students. The overall goal is to accelerate the time for the individuals to enter and succeed in postsecondary education/training programs that lead to employment in high skilled, high wage, and in-demand occupations.

The ICCB supports other workforce development activities that may vary from year to year dependent on competitive, short-term federal funding opportunities such as the Customized Apprenticeship Programming in Information Technology grant funded by the U.S. Department of Labor that ends December 2023 as well as state initiatives that may be funded on irregular basis.

## **Illinois Department of Employment Security**

### **U.S. Dept. of Labor Funded Programs**

#### **WIOA TITLE III: Wagner-Peyser**

Wagner-Peyser funds are used by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) to provide employment services to all job seekers and employers seeking qualified individuals. Those services are provided online through the state's labor exchange system, Illinois JobLink or by IDES staff located in AJCs and include, but are not limited to, career services, job readiness, employer outreach, employer seminars, employment retention services, labor market information, career information, employment plans, and referrals to training, educational opportunities and supportive services.

Employment services offered include assessments for job placement, job search assistance, and online job application processing. Employment Security is responsible for increasing community awareness about the services provided via job fairs, community collaborations, onsite recruitments, resource linkage and presentations to both job seekers and employers.

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Wagner-Peyser Employment Services are available for all U.S. citizens and those eligible to work in the U.S.

IDES also employs dedicated staff who conduct outreach to migrant and seasonal farmworkers to inform them of services available in the AJCs, their employment rights, and how to file any employment-related complaints. IDES also employs an MSFW State Monitor Advocate who monitors whether MSFWs are receiving equitable services as required under Wagner-Peyser.

## WIOA Title III: Wagner-Peyser 7b Special Populations

Section 7b of the Wagner-Peyser Act provides that 10% of the state's allotment under the Wagner-Peyser Act is reserved for providing activities including but not limited to services for groups with special employment needs. IDES focuses its use of Wagner-Peyser 7b funds on services to youth through Hire the Future (HTF), and to returning citizens through Re-Entry Employment Services (RESP.)

Hire the Future is designed to provide qualified candidates for employers seeking to fill positions within their respective companies. HTF strives to give the youth of Illinois opportunities to gain work experience with employers who understand the importance of encouraging career growth by collaborating with those employers as well as other workforce partners to hold youth-centered hiring events. In addition, IDES staff conduct outreach to schools to present information regarding career planning through the Illinois Career Information System (CIS) and other employment readiness topics.

Re-Entry Employment Services offers assistance to Returning Citizens (persons who are residents of a given area who were previously involved with the justice system) by helping them to overcome their employment hurdles and barriers to employment. Employment Services staff administer direct case management through Illinois JobLink to returning citizens. This assistance begins with an assessment interview and may include: referrals to other WIOA workforce partners; staff assisted services; career guidance; job search activities; referral to employment opportunities; resume assistance; and, interview coaching. In addition, IDES staff strive to develop relationships with employers who may be open to hiring Returning Citizens so that quality employment referrals can be made.

## Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA). RESEA is an Unemployment Insurance eligibility program funded by the U.S. Department of Labor to assist unemployment insurance claimants with returning to work. IDES's Economic Information and Analysis Division (EI&A) has developed a predictive analog that identifies claimants with the highest propensity for exhausting UI benefits, in addition to transitioning veterans receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members (UCX). UI claimant participation in RESEA is required, for those identified, to remain eligible for UI benefits. Services provided by the RESEA teams include, but are not limited to, orientations to the American Job Centers and services offered by our workforce partners, development of individual employment plans, labor market information, career information, job readiness assistance, , employment retention services and referrals to employment, training and educational services.

## Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program (JVSG)

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IDES is responsible for the (JVSG) program. All veterans and other eligible persons coming into the AJCs receive an Initial Assessment and if they self-attest to one or more Significant Barrier(s) to Employment they are referred to the JVSG program staff for Individualized Career Services and possible case management. While receiving services from the DVOP specialist, a veteran and other eligible person may continue to receive services from all AJC partners.

### WorkShare IL

WorkShare IL is Illinois' Short-Term Compensation (STC) program. WorkShare IL is a voluntary unemployment insurance program that provides employers with an alternative to layoffs during an economic downturn. IDES administers this program and coordinates with DCEO on outreach to employers who may see this layoff diversion program as a solution in order to keep trained employees engaged and on the job.

Foreign Labor Certification: IDES assists employers in complying with federal requirements when they seek to hire foreign workers under the federal H2A (seasonal agricultural jobs) and H2B (non-agricultural jobs) visa programs. IDES assists with activities to ensure that if there are not enough qualified U.S. workers available to perform the work and that the hiring of foreign workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers. IDES staff assist with the posting of employer job orders into IJL, inspection of housing for agricultural workers, and conduct field visits.

### Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Program

WOTC is a federal income tax credit incentive provided to private sector employers. An employer may be eligible for WOTC when they hire from certain target groups of job seekers who face employment barriers. The requirements for the program are set by the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. WOTC is an incentive for employers and is intended to help individuals move from economic dependency, while participating employers can reduce their income tax liability. IDES processes WOTC certification requests submitted by employers.

Fidelity Bonding Program (FBP): The U.S. Department of Labor established the FBP to provide fidelity bonds that guarantee honesty for "at-risk," hard-to-place job seekers. The bonds cover the first six months of employment. There is no cost to the job applicant or the employer. The bonds issued by the FBP guarantee the job honesty of job seekers to employers who want to hire them. IDES assists employers who can request the bonds as an incentive to hire these applicants.

## **Illinois Department of Human Services - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

### U.S. Dept. of Education Funded Programs

#### WIOA TITLE IV: Vocational Rehabilitation

The Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services oversees the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program to provide VR services for individuals with disabilities, consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and

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informed choice, so that they may prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment or supported employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

To be eligible for the VR program, individuals must have a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment and who require and can benefit from VR services to achieve employment and maximize career goals.

An Individualized Plan for Employment directs how services are provided and funded. Supporting services to VR customers may be either provided directly by a VR counselor or through contracts with community rehabilitation programs, local school districts for employment related services and supports, and other vendors offering transition, employment, and other support services.

### Small Business Enterprise Program for the Blind

The Small Business Enterprise Program for the Blind (SPEPB) is a subset of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program authorized by the Randolph-Sheppard Act provides persons who are blind with remunerative employment and self-support through the operation of vending facilities on federal and other property. The program, enacted into law in 1936, was intended to enhance employment opportunities for trained, licensed blind persons to operate facilities. The law was subsequently amended in 1954 and again in 1974 to ultimately ensure individuals who are blind are a priority in the operation of vending facilities, which included cafeterias, snack bars, and automatic vending machines, that are on federal property. The program priority has broadened in Illinois through state law to include state locations as well. The BEPB has a total of 489 main locations and satellites of main locations.

### Supported Employment Program

The Supported Employment Program provides supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, which includes youth with the most significant disabilities, who require supported employment services following the achievement of a supported employment outcome. Supported employment grant funds are used to supplement funds provided under the State VR Services Program to provide supported employment services. Program funds may be used to provide supported employment services for up to 24 months and to supplement other VR services necessary to help individuals with the most significant disabilities find work in the integrated labor market.

### Independent Living for Older Blind Individuals Program

The Independent Living for Older Blind Individuals Program is not exclusively employment focused, but rather dedicated to assisting individuals who are losing their vision later in life (after the age of 55) to adjust to the change and to retain their independence through training, adaptive aids and advocacy.

## **Illinois Department of Human Services - Division of Family and Community Services**

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Funded Programs

TANF Job Placement with Retention Program (Required WIOA Partner)

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The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Job Placement with Retention Program is for individuals receiving TANF benefits. Customers participate in a variety of activities that are countable in the federal participation rate while searching for unsubsidized employment. Activities are highly structured, monitored and documented to develop work experiences or unsubsidized employment that leads to a livable wage.

Individuals on TANF do eligible activities for up to 30 hours/week and this maintains their qualifications to receive their monthly TANF cash award. Activities allowed are defined by the TANF program. Additionally, the Provider is responsible for developing and administering programs in a manner that will result in a client compliance level of at least 75%. Activities are highly structured, monitored and documented

### U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Funded Programs

#### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (Required WIOA Partner)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) Program is a program to help customers acquire work skills and find employment. The program also helps customers with work-related expenses and retention support up to 90 days after attaining a job.

Participation in SNAP E&T enables participants to gain work skills and experience, meet the federal work requirements for SNAP benefits, if applicable, and become self-sufficient through SNAP E&T “components”. Components are categories of allowable program activities such as, Job Search Training, Vocational Training, etc. Many participants are hard to serve individuals with limited work histories and experience. Some may need additional education and training to find and keep a job or have other significant barriers to employment.

#### SNAP to Success Program

SNAP to Success Program is intended to help customers acquire work skills and find employment. Participation in SNAP E&T enables participants to gain work skills and experience, meet the federal work requirements for SNAP benefits, if applicable, and become self-sufficient through SNAP E&T “components”. Components are categories of allowable program activities such as, Job Search Training, Vocational Training, etc. Many participants are hard to serve individuals with limited work histories and experience. Some may need additional education and training to find and keep a job or have other significant barriers to employment. This is a newer program and utilizes more matching funds to fund services and is not as reliant on USDA 100% funds (meaning grant funds), however the rules and restrictions on these funds is more complex.

#### Earnfare

Earnfare is an employment and training program which offers eligible participants an opportunity to gain work experience and earn limited cash assistance. Participation is limited to adults who receive SNAP benefits, who volunteer for the program and to individuals who are court-ordered to participate. Participants “work off” the value of their SNAP benefits at the state minimum wage up to a maximum number of hours per month as determined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) before earning an additional amount in cash stipend.

#### Illinois Youth Investment Program

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The Illinois Youth Investment Program (IYIP) is a multi-faceted approach to youth employment that invests in the future of Illinois' at-risk transition-age youth (16-24). This approach to youth employment accounts for the youth's employment barriers as well as the physical, emotional, social, and mental health needs while helping them to secure and sustain long-term and/or career employment thereby ensuring a greater likelihood of success and self-sufficiency.

The Department has identified four program categories for which it made grant funding available. Each of the first three categories are designed to take into account various stages of a youth's employment readiness and employment needs. The fourth and final category, addresses the need within the State and local communities to develop additional employer training programs.

This multi-faceted approach will allow applicants to consider programming and services best suited to meet the needs of youth.

- Category I – Short-term, Summer Employment

(Work-based Learning; Career Development Experience; and Pre-Apprenticeship programs)

- Category II – Targeted Long-term Employment

(Targeted long-term employment and Youth Apprenticeship programs)

- Category III – Career Development - Industry-linked Long-term Employment

(Registered Apprenticeship; Non-Registered Apprenticeship; and Recognized Postsecondary Credentials (Industry-Linked Credentials, Certifications, or Licenses))

- Category IV – Expansion of Industry-Linked Career Development Opportunities

(Registered Apprenticeships; Non-Registered Apprenticeships; Youth Apprenticeships; and Recognized Postsecondary Credentials (Industry-Linked Credentials, Certifications, or Licenses))

### Second Chance Act Youth Offender Reentry Program

The Second Chance Act Youth Offender Reentry Program supports states, to provide comprehensive reentry services for moderate to high-risk youthful offenders before, during, and after release from confinement. Within the context of this initiative, reentry is viewed as an evidence-based process that begins while the offender is still confined and ends with their successful reintegration into the community. Successful reintegration is denoted by no criminal behavior, to include but not be limited to rearrests, at 6-month increments for up to 24 months post-release.

### *The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities*

#### **Strengths**

Building on the work of the IWIB Equity Task Force, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is emphasized for all program delivery. Supportive service and barrier reduction funds are being used to address challenges to training and employment.

Workforce program delivery continues to become more integrated across WIOA core and required partners, as well as with other workforce development programs.

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- State-funded programs housed in community colleges, Clean Energy Workforce Hubs, and local community-based organizations are coordinating services, primarily through local American Job Centers. Navigator roles are being funded to facilitate this work.
- The RESEA program now has dedicated staff who assist UI claimants with getting back to work more quickly. IDES is working on program improvement, including a new focus on utilizing RESEA as an entry way for UI claimants into other workforce services.

State-funded workforce development activities, including the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, Workforce Equity Initiative, and others provide the ability to quickly address talent pipeline issues.

Workforce partners are highly coordinated locally for Business Services outreach. We have built a good foundation for coordinated outreach to employers.

### Weaknesses

Demand for services frequently exceeds available resources. This is becoming increasingly true for services directed towards immigrant populations. Regulatory restrictions on expenditures can create additional challenges.

State-funded workforce development activities, due to their annual budget process, are more difficult to predict, causing issues for capacity and planning.

### *State Workforce Development Capacity*

During the pandemic, workforce partners all pivoted quickly to virtual service delivery and now virtual service delivery is a necessary component to delivering public services. That means that the workforce system needs to focus on the infrastructure needed to maintain and enhance virtual services and the staff skills and competencies to do that effectively.

The capacity of the workforce ecosystem continues to be affected by the decline in real dollars of the federal resources while the cost of delivering services does not. One-time funding opportunities and state and local resources are not a predictable or sustainable substitute.

## State Strategic Vision and Goals

### Vision

IWIB members, state agency leaders representing core, required and other workforce partners, various employers and representatives of community-based organizations came together as part of the development of the WIOA State Plan for Illinois to envision what the workforce system in the state should focus its efforts in the near future. Informing the visioning process were learnings from Governor J.B. Pritzker's Commission on Workforce Equity and Access, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's Equity Task Force and other examinations of the state's workforce system and current economic trends.

General concepts that resulted where:

- Using a customer-centered approach to service delivery
- Ensuring employers know the workforce system can provide them with skilled workers to meet their evolving needs
- Centering equity and access throughout the Workforce Development System

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- Providing job-seekers with pathways to good careers, not just jobs
- Enhancing coordination and collaboration between WIOA partners and other workforce and education systems
- Building a broader awareness of the Workforce Development System

Those concepts helped inform the state's vision and goals, and provided the foundation for the state plan, regional plans and local plans.

## Illinois' Vision:

Illinois' workforce system will meet employers, jobseekers, and community members where they are, centering the customer experience in an interoperable, equitable, and accessible manner to ensure all customers achieve their goals. We will support employers by building diverse, quality career pathways and provide effective training, education, and economic opportunities for jobseekers and communities to thrive.

## Goals

Illinois supports a unified Workforce Development System that looks beyond programmatic and funding silos. Therefore, in addition to being informed by the visioning process, the goals for the state's WIOA State Plan were also created to be in alignment with other workforce development plans being generated. Those plans included:

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Five-Year Economic Development Plan
- Illinois' Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Five-Year Plan
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Five-Year Apprenticeship Expansion Grant Plan
- Illinois Department of Employment Security Jobs for Veterans State Grant Annual Plan
- Illinois' Perkins V State Plan
- Illinois Department of Human Services Home Illinois: Illinois' Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness
- Illinois Poverty Commission and Interagency Task Force on Poverty

Based on the work done to create Illinois' vision for its Workforce Development System and the identification of how the WIOA State Plan could intersect with other workforce plans being developed, the state created the following goals:

1. Illinois' Workforce Development System is an example of excellence in its approach to collaboration and customer service.
2. Illinois' Workforce Development System will enhance employers' abilities to hire and retain skilled workers that meet their emerging needs.
3. Illinois' Workforce Development System will use customer-centered and data-informed practices to improve the quality of the jobseeker experience in pursuing fulfilling career pathways in a manner that is equitable and accessible.

## Performance Goals

Illinois' proposed performance targets along with supporting documentation (including source references) associated with the PY 2024-2027 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) proposed performance targets has been prepared in response to



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the instructions provided by the United States Departments of Labor and Education. Illinois will enter negotiations with the Departments in State Fiscal Year 2024 to come to agreement on performance outcomes for Program Years 2024 and 2025. For the Title IB programs, this will be followed by local negotiations for each of the twenty-two local areas with their Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) negotiation teams. New policy and procedures supported with technical assistance will be developed to guide the process.

Based on an analysis of historical and current participant outcomes, each core partner will negotiate WIOA performance measures for each indicator, as applicable for Program Years 2024 and 2025. The six primary indicators of performance under WIOA for each core partner (note that primary indicators four and five do not apply to Wagner-Peyser Employment Services) are:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program (for Title I Youth, the indicator is participants in education, or training activities or employment in the 2nd quarter after exit);
- Employment Rate 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after exit - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program (for Title I Youth, the indicator is participants in education, or training activities or employment in the 4th quarter after exit);
- Median Earnings 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after exit - The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after exit from the program -- participants who obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent must also be employed or enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year of the exit from the program;
- Credential Attainment Rate - The percentage of program participants enrolled in education or training program (excluding those in OJT and customized training) who attain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in, or within, 1 year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only must also be enrolled in education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit;
- Measurable Skills Gains - The percentage of participants who during a program year are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational or other forms of progress towards such a credential or employment; and
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers (not yet defined by DOL or the United States Department of Education (ED)) - This will be based on indicators developed as required by Section 116(b)(2)(A)(iv) of WIOA.

The core partners present performance data to the IWIB regularly. This collaboration ensures all core partners are on track to meet the requirements set forth in this Plan and ensures customers in the Workforce System are provided with the education, training, and resources necessary to increase the talent pipeline for Illinois' diverse business and industry. See the Assessment and Evaluation Section of the Strategic Elements of the state plan for

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further details about the evaluation of the performance goals.

The Departments continue to pilot three approaches designed to gauge three critical workforce needs of the business community as a sixth indicator of performance.

1. Approach 1 – Retention with the same employer – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide employers with skilled workers;
2. Approach 2 – Repeat Business Customers – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time; and
3. Approach 3 – Employer Penetration Rate – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to all employers and sectors within a State and local economy.

A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) was issued on September 14, 2022 that proposes to define in a standardized way the performance indicator for effectiveness in serving employers for the regulations implementing the jointly administered requirements governing WIOA's six core programs. The NPRM proceeded through a public comment period and the Departments and WIOA programs are awaiting a final determination as to which Approach will be selected for states to report on and be assessed. The Departments concluded that the Approach 1 - Retention with the Same Employer approach placed the least amount of burden on States to implement while also providing a valid and reliable approach to measuring the indicator.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board selected Approaches 1 and 3 to report on during the pilot phase. Until further guidance on a final approach to the 6<sup>th</sup> indicator of performance on effectiveness in serving employers, Illinois’ core programs will submit a unified set of data for these two approaches.

Further, in accordance with WIOA Final Rules, states will be assessed on two Overall State scores, the Overall State Program Score and Overall State Indicator Score beginning with Program Year (PY) 2022. The Overall State Program Score is the average of individual indicator scores across all WIOA core programs, and the Overall State Indicator Score is the average of individual indicator scores for a single IWOA core program.

Following the completion of Program Year 2022, the Departments issued joint guidance that due to insufficient data to produce reliable estimates to be incorporated into the statistical adjustment model (SAM), revisions to the performance indicators to be assessed would change for Program Year (PY) 2022. Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 04-23 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Core Program Performance Accountability Assessment for Program Year (PY) 2022 (issued August 11, 2023) indicated the measurable skill gains indicator of performance would not be assessed for all core programs, nor would any indicators for the Title II program. Additionally, the Overall State Indicator Scores for all core programs and the Overall State Program Scores for Titles I, II and IV will have a delayed assessment.

This means the Departments will not assess performance for the purpose of imposing sanctions for the outlined performance indicators for PY 2022 but will continue to use

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performance data for effective program management, oversight, monitoring, and continuous improvement. Illinois will continue to submit timely and complete performance reports with risk of sanction for failure to do so. At this time, Illinois' core programs are proceeding as if all individual indicators of performance and the two Overall State Scores will be assessed beginning in PY 2023.

The context within which Illinois developed its proposed levels of performance for Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth and Wagner-Peyser measures encompasses past performance outcomes. Averages for prior program year outcomes were computed (using the five prior program years), as well as a Target Outcome and Predicted Outcome that was produced by DOL. Target values were established using all the above and the ninety percent threshold applied to the DOL Target Outcome. Taking all data element outcomes into account, along with the environmental factors in Illinois, each target was set as shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Performance Goals for Program Year 2024 and 2025

	Program Years: 2024/2025	
	<i>Expected Level</i>	<i>Negotiated Level</i>
<b>Employment Rate – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit</b>		
Title I – Adult	TBD	TBD
Title I – Dislocated Worker	TBD	TBD
Title I – Youth <sup>1</sup>	TBD	TBD
Title II – Adult Education	27.0%	TBD
Title III- Wagner – Peyser	TBD	TBD
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD	TBD
<b>Employment Rate – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit</b>		
Title I – Adult	TBD	TBD
Title I – Dislocated Worker	TBD	TBD
Title I – Youth <sup>1</sup>	RBD	TBD
Title II – Adult Education	27.6%	TBD
Title III- Wagner – Peyser	TBD	TBD
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD	TBD
<b>Median Earnings – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit</b>		
Title I – Adult	TBD	TBD
Title I – Dislocated Worker	TBD	TBD
Title I – Youth	TBD	TBD

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Title II – Adult Education	\$4,926	TBD
Title III- Wagner – Peyser	TBD	TBD
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD	TBD
<b>Credential Attainment</b>		
Title I – Adult	TBD	TBD
Title I – Dislocated Worker	TBD	TBD
Title I – Youth	TBD	TBD
Title II – Adult Education	30.9%	TBD
Title III- Wagner – Peyser <sup>2</sup>		
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD	TBD
<b>Measurable Skill Gains</b>		
Title I – Adult	TBD	TBD
Title I – Dislocated Worker	TBD	TBD
Title I – Youth	TBD	TBD
Title II – Adult Education	37.1%	TBD
Title III- Wagner – Peyser <sup>2</sup>		
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD	TBD
<b>Effectiveness in Serving Employers<sup>3</sup></b>		
Retention with the Same Employer in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit Rate	TBD	TBD
Employer Penetration Rate	TBD	TBD

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<sup>1</sup> Title I Youth Program Measure also includes participants enrolled in education or training activities.

<sup>2</sup> Title III Wagner-Peyser is not assessed on the education-based indicators of performance including Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains.

<sup>3</sup> “Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2024-2027 Illinois Unified State Plan.

Table 20: PY2024 and PY2025 WIOA Expected Levels of Performance for Illinois

<b>TITLE I ADULT</b> <b>TITLE I DISLOCATED WORKER</b> <b>TITLE I YOUTH</b>	<p>All measures were negotiated between U.S. DOL Region 5 and the State May19, 2022 for Program Years 2022 and 2023. No measures remain in baseline status. However, the Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit, Credential Attainment Rate, and Measurable Skill Gains indicators were not planned to be evaluated for performance success or failure until PY2022.</p> <p>For the Title IB Youth Program, the Employment Rates 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit also included youth participants who Enrolled in Education or Training.</p> <p>A Statistical Adjustment Model (SAM) will be applied to all negotiated goals to determine adjusted levels of performance.</p> <p>Actual performance outcomes will be compared to the adjusted levels to determine success or failure by the State.</p>
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<b>TITLE II ADULT EDUCATION</b>	<p>Employment, credential attainment and MSG targets were negotiated with the Department of Education for PY2022 and PY23 with targets demonstrating continuous improvement. Targets for PY2023 are indicated above for all measures, except Effectiveness in Serving Employers (which remains in baseline).</p> <p><i>*Title II Adult Education Employment Rate 2nd Quarter and 4th Quarter after exit and Median Earnings indicators require a file submittal to the state wage agency in order obtain wages on the individuals. It's important to note that current matching algorithms to track individuals into employment require an SSN. While students without an SSN are included in the tracking cohort (i.e., denominator), only students with a valid SSN can be successfully tracked and positively counted for employment. This results in undercounting for successful employment. No self-reported or survey data from programs on successful employment of students is included in these rates.</i></p>
<b>TITLE III WAGNER- PEYSNER</b>	<p>All measures were negotiated between U.S. DOL Region 5 and the State May19, 2022 for Program Years 2022 and 2023. No measures remain in baseline status. However, the Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit indicators were not planned to be evaluated for performance success or failure until PY2022.</p> <p>Credential Attainment and Measurable Skill Gains does not apply for WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser.</p> <p>A Statistical Adjustment Model (SAM) will be applied to all negotiated goals to determine adjusted levels of performance. Actual performance outcomes will be compared to</p>

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	<p>the adjusted levels to determine success or failure by the State.</p>
<b>TITLE IV VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION</b>	<p>For PY 2022 and 2023, Title-IV Vocational Rehabilitation programs have all five metrics able to be measured by their performance. For PY2022 the negotiated goal and expected level of performance for our Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit is 56%, 4th Quarter after Exit is 49%, Median Wage 2nd Quarter after Exit is \$3,627 and Credential Attainment Rate is 29.5%. Expected level of performance for MSG rate is 72.5% and negotiated level of performance is 61.0%.</p> <p>In PY 2023 the negotiated goal and expected level of performance for Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit is 60.0%, 4th Quarter after Exit is 51.0%, Median Wage 2nd Quarter after Exit is \$3,942 and Credential Attainment Rate is 31.0%. Expected level of performance for MSG rate is 75% and negotiated level of performance is 63.0%.</p> <p>A Statistical Adjustment Model (SAM) will be applied to all negotiated goals to determine adjusted levels of performance. Actual performance outcomes will be compared to the adjusted levels to determine success or failure by the State.</p>

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## Assessment of Goals

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) established the Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) is guided by six charges.

**Charge 1: Evaluation Design.** Review evaluation elements of policies and processes created by the IWIB to determine the appropriateness of their relationship to their expected outcomes. Provide feedback and recommendations.

**Charge 2: Evaluation Outcomes.** Review outcomes of evaluation to determine if results conformed to the intended outcome. Provide feedback and recommendations.

**Charge 3: Continuous Improvement at Local Level.** Review local performance related to the six federal performance measures for the WIOA core partners and make recommendations about strategies for continuous improvement at local levels.

**Charge 4: Benchmarks.** Examine and evaluate workforce quality and earning benchmarks and recommend changes.

**Charge 5: Data Recommendations.** Provide Recommendations for Readily Accessible Data and technical assistance recommendations for an intended audience.

**Charge 6: Priority Activities.** Manage priority activities as assigned by the IWIB Strategic Plan.

As part of the development of this plan, a tool has been designed to evaluate and report progress on the vision and goals laid out in previous sections. To accomplish this evaluation, the tool will examine the progress made on core program activities and strategies for accomplishing Illinois' strategic vision and goals.

Each core program activity will be evaluated every six months on the following four criteria by a group composed of members of the four core partners and others.

1. Goal (is the goal of this activity clear, shared and actively being worked towards?)
2. Committed Resources (are there adequate human and financial resources to carry out this activity?)
3. Leadership (Is there an advocate of the activity leading the effort to reach its goal?)
4. Progress (Is progress being made on the desired outcome of the activity?)

Each criterion will be evaluated on a four-point scale. The scale is as follows:

1. 1 point – failing expectations
2. 2 points – falling below expectations
3. 3 points – meets expectations
4. 4 points – exceeds expectations



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Further explanation will be provided anytime a score of 1 or 4 is provided to either adjust to ensure the success of the activity or to highlight best practices in the Workforce Development System.

### State Strategy

#### Goal 1 Strategies

1. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System uses a customer-centered approach to service delivery.
2. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System advances diversity, equity, inclusion and access.
3. **Strategy:** WIOA partners and other workforce and education systems in Illinois enhance coordination and collaboration.
4. **Strategy:** Jobseekers and employers have a broader awareness of the Workforce Development System.
5. **Strategy:** The state enhances local service delivery through supporting development to frontline workers.

#### Goal 2 Strategies

1. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System supports, informs and enhances employers' talent strategies.
2. **Strategy:** The various partners in the Workforce Development System leverage their business services to provide more holistic support to employers.
3. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System will build out tools and practices that can help employers adopt a culture that promotes equity and accessibility.

#### Goal 3 Strategies

1. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System educates and supports jobseekers regarding how to navigate the labor market.
2. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System interacts with jobseekers in the places where they live and visit.
3. **Strategy:** The Workforce Development System will use a data-informed approach to reduce barriers to services for jobseekers who have historically faced barriers to accessing services.

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# Operational Elements

## State Strategy Implementation

### State Board Functions

The Governor-appointed Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), includes leaders from business, industry, state agencies, education, labor, and community-based organizations to evaluate and meet the workforce needs of Illinois' employers and workers. WIOA requires that state workforce boards take a leadership role in guiding the workforce system through policies, strategies, and performance that address the needs of businesses, consumers, employees, community members, and partners. The boards oversee the Unified State Plan's development, implementation, and modification, convening all relevant programs, required partners, and stakeholders and providing oversight and strategic leadership for the state Workforce Development System.

Furthermore, boards are to act as conveners of the system, bringing together employers and community partners at the state, regional, and local levels to promote economic growth through these partnerships and ensure alignment between education and workforce services. Active participation of all board members and close collaboration with partners, including public and private organizations, is vital to this success.

In Illinois, this active participation occurs through a committee and task force structure, in which IWIB representatives from private/public partner programs implement policy recommendations to strengthen Illinois' workforce system.

Equitable access is a fundamental principle within WIOA, the Illinois WIOA State Plan, as well as a high priority of the Governor. The work of the IWIB is to establish goals to improve inequities for the populations we serve, create accessible career pathways for all customers that address barriers to employment, and enhance equality among partners.

#### **Business Engagement:**

The IWIB will engage the business community through sector strategies and career pathways that strengthen and expand the building and sustainability of business-led partnerships. Engagement will be targeted through industry sectors and emerging pathways by promoting work-based learning, seeking out minority-owned businesses, and developing innovative approaches to improve competitiveness and equity among partners.

#### **Customer-Centered Design:**

Executing a customer-centered service delivery model has the intended outcome of utilizing approaches that produce equitable outcomes and result in higher customer satisfaction for both businesses and job seekers. This will be accomplished by addressing challenges to employment and creating career pathway approaches for all clients that lead to industry-recognized credentials and, ultimately, sustainable employment.

#### **Technology:**

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Deploying user-friendly, accessible technology to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the system provides for coordinated service delivery, which is a foundational approach under WIOA.

### **Workforce Board Impact:**

Strengthening state and local workforce board effectiveness moves these boards into a strategic position to set priorities and garner a better understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Through a committee and task force structure, IWIB representatives from private/public partner programs offer policy recommendations to strengthen Illinois' workforce system. Illinois strives to foster improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.

The IWIB supports the key elements outlined in the WIOA State Plan by creating an environment favorable to the formation of employer-led sector partnerships and the improvement of communications between business, economic development, workforce development, and education through the work of the IWIB Business Engagement Committee. The IWIB works to increase the number of meaningful public-private relationships and improve the quality of the new and existing public-private partnerships within the work of the Apprenticeship Illinois Committee. Moreover, through the Continuous Improvement Committee, the IWIB promotes data and demand-driven workforce and education initiatives and provides support for the system to focus on evaluation. The IWIB supports utilizing the WIOA system infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development, and education initiatives to develop sector partnerships and career pathways through the Career Pathway Targeted Populations Committee. The IWIB is working to ensure that leaders and practitioners in the Illinois workforce system have the information, data, training, and skills they need to understand the equity challenges workforce system customers face and the tools they need to enhance equity in the workforce system through the work of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Committee. Each of the committees has its individual charges and priorities that are outlined in the IWIB Strategic Plan and are coordinated through the Executive Committee and the IWIB Leadership Committee.

The IWIB Leadership Committee was established as a networking vehicle and serves as a place for dialogue between committee chairs, the executive committee, and lead committee staff to coordinate work and remedy duplication between committees. In addition, the IWIB committee staff meet monthly to create space for informal conversation and opportunities for collaboration.

Furthermore, the IWIB strategies and activities discussed within this plan align with those found in the Illinois WIOA State Plan and the Perkins V state plan.

The Workforce Development System has a key role to play in improving equity in educational and economic opportunities in Illinois and across America.

Illinois is committed to applying an equity lens to our workforce investment strategies to help ensure that our most vulnerable populations gain skills and access good, family-supporting jobs. Key to that work will be identifying inequitable outputs and outcomes in the workforce system, exploring the cause of those inequities, and implementing solutions to advance equity within the system.

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In 2020, the IWIB's Equity Task Force developed a framework of recommendations within Illinois' workforce and education system to establish goals and remove inequities for the populations the system is meant to support.

The IWIB formed the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Committee in 2023 based on the recommendations of the IWIB Equity Task Force. Its work is informed by the recommendations of the [Equity Task Force](#) and the Governor's [Commission on Workforce Equity and Access](#). The primary focus for this committee is working to ensure that leaders and practitioners in the Illinois workforce system have the information, data, training, and skills they need to understand the equity challenges that customers, clients, and students face and the tools they

### Implementation of State Strategy

#### *Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy*

##### **GOAL 1 STRATEGIES:**

1. The Workforce Development System uses a customer-centered approach to service delivery.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** Service Integration: The core partners will continue efforts to align service delivery in a way that best helps the customers. Illinois will implement a new service integration self-assessment tool for economic development regions and local workforce areas that will ensure continuous improvement is made on service integration. Illinois will identify and use data already being collected related to a customer-centered approach to service delivery to identify areas of improvement related to service delivery and integration.
  - b. **ACTIVITY:** Referrals: The current referral process will be reviewed as part of a larger examination of service integration. Efficiencies and best practices will be recommended to make the referral process better for both customers and for staff. Additionally, enhanced referral streams from programs outside of WIOA will be examined.
  - c. **ACTIVITY:** Assessment of American Job Centers: Illinois will design and implement a comprehensive assessment of physical design, service delivery systems and staffing capacities of American Job Centers in the state. Based on the findings of that assessment, recommendations will be crafted on how American Job Centers can make improvements to better support individuals and employers.
  - d. **ACTIVITY:** Exploring how the state can support the local partners in exploring what the future of the workforce system looks like.

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2. The Workforce Development System advances diversity, equity, inclusion and access.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** Data will be disaggregated to uncover areas where equity and access need improvement. Review data to make sure it is good data.
  - b. **ACTIVITY:** The Nondiscrimination Plan will be integrated into the state, regional, and local planning efforts.
  - c. **ACTIVITY:** Good-Job Standard: U.S. DOL guidance (TEGL 07-22) released in early 2023 encourages state workforce agencies to develop a strategy for identifying and creating long-term partnerships with employers offering good jobs, and to create strategic, flexible career pathways to good jobs that respond to local labor market needs. TEGL 07-22 lays out attributes of good jobs, including pay levels, benefits, DEIA, job security, organizational culture, career advancement opportunities, among others. There are available indicators of some of these attributes, including quarterly wage records that allow calculations of earnings and tenure with individual employers. However, many are difficult to measure. Several Illinois state agencies that administer WIOA programs will continue working together and with the Illinois Department of Labor to determine ways of assessing job quality and subsequently working with employers to highlight best practices and provide strategies for improvement.
3. WIOA partners and other workforce and education systems in Illinois enhance coordination and collaboration.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** Region and Local Plan: An expanded focus on coordination and collaboration will be included in Illinois' guidance to economic development regions and local workforce areas regarding the development of four-year plans. This includes an update to a service integration self-assessment tool and a renewed service integration policy from the state's workforce board.
  - b. **ACTIVITY:** Interagency Agreement: The four Illinois state agencies responsible administering core WIOA programs in the state will create an interagency agreement that describes how, where possible, services will be shared, integrated and aligned between all agencies to best support the Workforce Development System.
4. Jobseekers and employers have a broader awareness of the Workforce Development System.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** Illinois will develop a marketing plan for the Workforce Development System that will raise awareness of the services the system provides. This could include advertisements through traditional media, social media and other avenues, word-of-mouth and other peer-to-peer campaigns.

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- b. **ACTIVITY:** Illinois will coordinate outreach efforts by the core and required WIOA partners to customers.
- 5. The Workforce Development System improves local service delivery through enhanced support of frontline workers.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** Professional Development and Technical: Illinois will provide professional development and technical assistance to service providers to enhance the ability of local workforce areas to implement recommendations from the Governor's Commission on Workforce Equity and Access and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's Equity Task Force.

### GOAL 2 STRATEGIES:

- 1. The Workforce Development System supports, informs and enhances employers' talent strategies.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** Facilitate Industry Champions in Emerging and Growing Sectors: The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's Business Engagement Committee (BEC) will establish a network of industry champions and a community of practice for each targeted industry in the state. The BEC wants to ensure that its effort to establish a network of industry champions to assist in outreach to business within targeted industries, respects existing industry leadership, leverages existing relationships and brings additional value to the champions and the businesses within their industry. As such, the BEC will pilot this approach, learn more about workforce needs directly from industry leaders, and ensure that sector partnership activities deliver a clear return on investment for businesses in the industry.
  - b. **ACTIVITY:** Promote Employer-Driven Regional Sector Partnerships: The BEC will educate executive-level employees at businesses throughout Illinois about Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) sector strategies, including how to operationalize public-private partnerships, sector partnerships and various talent pipeline management concepts. This outreach will effectively educate potential partners regarding sector strategies, including the TPM approach.
  - c. **ACTIVITY:** Expanding Apprenticeships: Illinois will build upon the existing apprenticeship infrastructure to better align partners, funding, and services to fully integrate and institutionalize within the Illinois workforce ecosystem. Illinois will build stronger partnerships with the State and local workforce system. Illinois will target innovative programs in Educational Services (K-12 Teachers), Care Economy, Climate/Clean Energy, Public Sector, Technology/Cybersecurity, Transportation, Hospitality, and the Supply Chain. Illinois will explore how to utilize apprenticeships to align and support the jobs required to implement the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including the expansion of broadband in Illinois.

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2. The various partners in the Workforce Development System leverage their business services to provide more holistic support to employers.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** Alignment of Business Service Teams Efforts: Illinois will leverage the various business service teams in the state, aiming to offer comprehensive and a more holistic approach to support employers. For example, Illinois will use U.S. DOL State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula funds to help local workforce boards support the roles of Apprenticeship Specialists within regional integrated business service teams (IBST). These teams will encompass representatives from various organizations, including WIOA core partners and local workforce, education, and economic development entities. The teams are tasked with coordinating IBST efforts, forging regional industry partnerships, engaging employers to offer an array of workforce solutions, and expanding registered apprenticeship programs.

The integrated business service teams will play a pivotal role in promoting, connecting, and granting access to initiatives that enable businesses to access and implement workforce programs aligned with their specific needs. To ensure effective implementation, the State will utilize the IWIB's Integrated Business Services Team Workgroup's Illinois' Integrated Business Services Framework, urging local business service teams to collaborate with partners for its execution.

3. The Workforce Development System will build out tools and practices that can help employers adopt a culture that promotes equity and accessibility.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** Illinois will explore what local workforce areas are doing, both here and outside of Illinois, in regards to supporting businesses promote a work culture that embraces equity and accessibility.
  - b. **ACTIVITY:** Illinois will also explore using existing equity and accessibility tools to help local workforce areas support employers' equity and accessibility efforts.

### GOAL 3 STRATEGIES:

1. The Workforce Development System educates and supports jobseekers regarding how to navigate the labor market.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** The core WIOA partners will develop a plan on how to coordinate educational efforts of individuals regarding how to find and navigate good career pathways.

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2. The Workforce Development System interacts with jobseekers in the places where they live and visit.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** The core WIOA partners will highlight and support best practices regarding service delivery outside of the one-stop center.
  - b. **ACTIVITY:** Illinois will explore what a virtual footprint looks like and lessons learned from the pandemic.
3. The Workforce Development System will use a data-informed approach to reduce barriers to services for jobseekers who have historically been underserved.
  - a. **ACTIVITY:** The WIOA Core partners will review data to make sure it is accurate, reliable and usable.
  - b. **ACTIVITY:** The WIOA Core partners will share good data to identify existing barriers and what can be done to reduce those barriers.

### *Alignment with Activities Outside the Plan*

Illinois took a comprehensive approach to aligning the work within WIOA to other activities and planning activities being undertaken by other state agencies and organizations.

Stakeholders in Illinois that are responsible for the creation of state and federal plans outside of WIOA were consulted throughout the development of the 2024 – 2028 WIOA State Plan. That communication will continue through the life of this plan, with the focus on how resources can be leveraged to best serve individuals and employers in the state. Some plans and stakeholders consulted for the development of this plan include:

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Five-Year Economic Development Plan
- Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Five-Year Plan
- Perkins V
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Five-Year Apprenticeship Expansion Grant Plan
- Illinois Department of Employment Security's Jobs for Veterans State Grant
- Illinois Department of Human Service's Home Illinois, Illinois' Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

The workforce system in Illinois will work outside of its funding and programmatic silos to ensure customers receive the services that will help them succeed. For example, The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) was signed into law by Governor Pritzker on September 15, 2021. CEJA is comprehensive energy legislation that

- Incentivizes renewable energy development to put Illinois on a path to 100% renewable energy by 2050;
- Accelerates electric vehicle (EV) adoption and expands charging station infrastructure;



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- Creates statewide, equity-focused clean energy workforce training programs to ensure the Illinois workforce is prepared for the jobs of the future; and,
- Supports communities facing energy transitions and much more.

The State will continue to explore how to braid funding and programmatic services of CEJA and WIOA. CEJA Regional Administrators will work with local workforce areas and to find opportunities for co-enrollment and leveraging of resources to efficiently deliver training and supportive services to participants in CEJA, WIOA, and other workforce programs.

Each CEJA program grantee is required to work in cooperation with the Local Workforce Innovation Centers in their service territory to leverage available resources to best serve program participants. The coordination can take the form of referrals or co-enrollment, depending on the needs of the participant and program eligibility.

Additionally, CEJA staff are working collaboratively with WIOA Regional Managers as well as the Regional Economic Development (RED) team and other DCEO offices to co-host events and co-present at other events where workforce opportunities are being discussed. Efforts are being made to coordinate calendars so similar events can either be combined or at least scheduled in a way that they don't compete.

### *Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals*

#### **Regional Planning Assessment and Analysis**

Illinois promotes an integrated WIOA regional strategic planning process across education, workforce and economic development, which provides comprehensive, high-quality customer-centered services. The regional planning process and biannual modification processes includes an examination of target population data provided by the WIOA Interagency Data Team and other relevant local studies. Regional teams examine supply-side data and consider ways to leverage partners' expertise, programs and resources to adjust strategies and connect available talent pools to career opportunities in targeted industries. The planning process includes analysis of how the partners in each region will address the evolving needs of the targeted populations and an asset mapping process to inventory the career, education, training and supportive services that are available in each region.

#### **MOU and Budget Guidance**

The State of Illinois will continue to develop and recommend policy to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) regarding system-wide policy (e.g., One-stop Certification, Service Integration, Eligible Training Provider List, etc.). The annual Memorandum of Understanding and Budget Guidance for State and local partners to negotiate shared costs and service delivery through one-stop centers is developed in a collaborative process based on input from the field and operational guidance developed with the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team to

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ensure compliance. Under the guidance, the Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) must collaborate with required program partners to describe the programs and activities that will be made accessible through the American Job Centers, the service delivery methods, and the allocation of shared costs to operate the centers and local service delivery system.

The WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team seeks input annually and collaborates with others to revise the guidance to reflect new federal guidance and/or major policy changes affecting local operations. An MOU approved by the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team is one of the prerequisites for obtaining one-stop certification.

### **One-Stop Certification**

The current one-stop certification framework addresses 41 criteria in 19 areas that include center effectiveness, accessibility, infrastructure and continuous improvement. The State reviews results of prior certification processes to identify improvements, opportunities for additional guidance and best practices. Additionally, the State ensures that the goals and outcomes from the systemwide policy are incorporated into the one-stop certification applications. The State will continue to develop recommendations for strengthening this policy and providing technical assistance as further information regarding the needs of the workforce system is gleaned and partners work toward advancing service integration at the state and local levels.

### **Labor Market Information**

Labor market information (LMI) and demand-driven data set the foundation for the WIOA career services in Illinois. The Illinois Department of Employment Security is responsible for LMI and the Illinois Career Information System, a web-based tool that incorporates Illinois-specific actionable data on in-demand occupations and wages that allow students and job seekers to make informed decisions about their career pathways. These services will result in individualized plans addressing how to reach career goals based on career and skill assessments and identified barriers requiring support services. Illinois will leverage the work of statewide, public-private partnerships to better coordinate investments, resources and planning for those programs with the goal of providing more opportunities for targeted individuals.

Workforce and education partners including Adult Education, Postsecondary Perkins/Career and Technical Education and Illinois State Board of Education will expand career development guides and technical assistance materials to promote leading career pathway models and best practices that can be implemented through regional sector partnerships and other regional sector initiatives. These technical assistance materials (along with associated professional development) will address how to improve career services and expand customer access to accelerated and integrated work-based and classroom training, align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and support services for targeted populations facing barriers to employment. They will also address how to fully mainstream targeted

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populations into sector-based career pathway initiatives to achieve outcomes similar to those of other populations.

### Coordinated Case Management and Supportive Services

Illinois will continue to highlight and encourage adoption of the best practices that are identified in statewide innovation projects that serve targeted populations throughout the state. This includes joint projects between the agencies responsible for administering the required WIOA programs.

- **Aligning and implementing the best practices for projects that address employment to people with disabilities.** The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) will work with regional and local partners to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities (aged 18 and above) in integrated career pathway and academic programs through community colleges and non-profit organizations in cooperation with American Job Centers, Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB), employment networks and other regional partners.
- **Aligning and developing work-based learning programs, pre-apprenticeships, and bridge programs for low-literacy and low-skilled adults to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and career path employment.** The state's bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training leading to career path employment in-demand occupations. The state agency partners will focus on expanding access and success in sector-based bridge programs that provide opportunities for low-skilled and low-literate youth and adults. The state will support new initiatives that promote sector-based pre-bridge, bridge programs and integrated education and training models that expand access and success of low-skilled youth and adults in career pathways. These programs are designed to introduce individuals to career pathway programs of interest.
- **Aligning and coordinating WIOA Title I services with efforts that currently address justice-involved youth.** Illinois is exploring a range of career pathway models for justice-involved youth seen nationally and statewide as best practices and examining ways to braid and blend funding for maximum impact. Where possible, these models will be folded into existing juvenile justice efforts for seamless service alignment to add the expertise of WIOA service providers to strengthen employment and training models.
- **Aligning and coordinating critical programs and services for veterans.** Through the federal Department of Labor-Veterans Employment and Training Services Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) funding, the Illinois Department of Employment Security employs Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, who must be fellow VA-Service Connected disabled veterans and provide individualized career services in compliance with Veterans Program Letter 03-14 to eligible veterans and other eligible

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individuals to meet their employment needs, prioritizing service to special disabled and other disabled veterans, as defined by 38 U.S.C. 4211, and to other eligible individuals in accordance with priorities determined by the Assistant Secretary – Veterans Employment and Training Services. Illinois veterans will be served through the WIOA priority of service, as well as targeted initiatives administered by the workforce and education partners and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. As the WIOA definition of case management describes, it takes a community of resources to assist veterans to overcome/mitigate the identified barriers to employment and get them back into the workforce.

- **Aligning and coordinating WIOA Title I with Title II Adult Education services to ensure immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners have access to services, such as workforce readiness, bridge programs, and Integrated Education and Training through the Illinois workNet American Job Centers.** As an example, in areas with high populations of English language learners, the resource room in a one-stop will offer online classes for students learning English.

### *Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers*

Employer engagement strategies and best practices are a hallmark of an efficient and effective workforce system. The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's (IWIB) Business Engagement Committee is designed to ensure the state workforce system is responsive to current and future needs of businesses. Three key objectives focus this committee:

- Identify Industry Sector Partnerships engaged in the workforce needs of the State of Illinois.
- Convene employers and WIOA service providers to better align business needs with training, services and program design.
- Identify target industries to focus on bringing together small and large employers with the Illinois Workforce Development System to discuss what is needed to streamline existing pathways and create new opportunities.

This committee is employer-led, bringing together representatives of the state and local workforce boards and other employers and employer organizations, as well as representatives of Illinois' WIOA system to identify best practices, lessons learned, marketing strategies and priority challenges. The diverse perspectives help create proactive measures to strengthen current engagement practices.

Under the strategic direction of the IWIB, Illinois has embedded sector strategies into workforce development programs across Illinois supporting businesses, employees and job seekers. These approaches enable the workforce system to customize solutions for employers in the industries that are most vital to our economy. Through customized training solutions, employed, unemployed and underemployed workers are better able to obtain the skills they need and that

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businesses require. Illinois will maintain this sector focus in the upcoming program years through activities that continue the development of a sector-based approach in Illinois.

### Integrated Business Services Framework

Illinois' Integrated Business Services Framework was developed by a workgroup made up of private sector members of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, representatives from the Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) and representatives from Illinois' core WIOA partners (Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Community College Board).

The framework will support talent pipeline strategies designed to assist partners in working together to address the workforce needs of business in a region. At the core of these models are industry sector partnerships led by businesses and a focus on crucial industry clusters. Sector partners work collaboratively to listen to and understand the workforce needs of business and to develop customized solutions that respond to those needs. Eight foundational elements for the framework were identified and recommended by the workgroup. The integrated provision of business services should be:

- **Sector-based** – The provision of business services should align around regionally identified industry sectors significant to the regional economy.
- **Transformational** – Engagement of businesses should provide a platform for regular and ongoing dialogue, providing a transformation of the relationships between business and workforce partners.
- **Regional** – Service delivery should be regional in nature and should align with the Governor's ten economic development regions, as well as multi-region and multi-state approaches when those are indicated by the needs of the sector partnership.
- **Coordinated** – The framework should describe coordinated approaches and strategies used by *all* partners to meet business needs.
- **United** – Building upon efforts already underway, efforts should continue to co-locate partners to ensure maximum coordination.
- **Flexible** – The framework should provide enough guidance to be helpful but should also allow flexibility for regional innovation and customization.
- **Aligned** – Existing policies/procedures should be reviewed and revised to ensure alignment and progress toward service integration.
- **Allowable** – Partners' federal mandates to provide specific, related services must still be met when developing the state framework.

The workgroup identified five components that are necessary for the integrated provision of business services in the state and its ten economic development regions:

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- **Organizational structure** – At both the State and regional level, organizational structures will be developed that enable communication between partners to develop a single, reliable, agreed-upon strategy to support engagement and contact between employers and the workforce/economic development system. The form of these organizational structures will vary according to economic development region and sector. Leveraging existing relationships between and among businesses and public partners is recommended as the most reliable initial strategy for engagement with particular employers and sectors. The ten economic development regions will develop mechanisms that will connect business to the full range of partner services—regardless of source.
- **Management of business intelligence** – Given the need to share information across partners—at the State level, but particularly at the regional/local level—management of business intelligence is critical. Recognizing the challenges of creating a statewide cross-agency Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, the State’s initial strategy will focus on supporting creative approaches to meeting these regional/local level responsibilities. It is important for regional partners to understand the grassroots nature of business intelligence development. Perhaps the most important data development issue will always be the creation of methods to record and access partner knowledge regarding employer needs, to share that knowledge across the partner network and then to utilize that knowledge to jointly develop and implement proactive solutions to business and sector needs.
- **Solutions-based service offerings** – The service offerings provided to businesses must be focused on delivering timely solutions to expressed business needs. Each region should have its own standardized process for contacting employers in each targeted industry sector and have the capability of providing direct access to appropriate services or referral to all partners who can provide those services. Solutions-based service first requires a focus on listening to what business communicates that it needs, and then requires flexible, creative and timely responses to those needs—a process that builds a portfolio of customized solutions for businesses without merely “dumping” pre-packaged programs and processes on them.
- **Emphasis on work-based learning and other business-focused services** – Closely tied to the solutions sought by businesses is the expanded use of work-based learning (On Site Work-Based Education, Registered Apprenticeships, Youth Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeships, Customized Training, On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training and others). This emphasis recognizes work-based learning as often the most effective mechanism for delivering Training and Education solutions in an environment that is directly shaped to and for the needs of the employer—their own business.
- **Accountability and performance measurement** – The four framework elements discussed so far will bring significant changes in the focus, intent and utilization of business services. Along with those changes comes the need to develop appropriate measures of performance. This will enable the measurement (and dissemination) of the

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meaningful results of those business services activities and will also serve to establish feedback loops that will facilitate data-driven course corrections to the other four framework elements. In particular, these measures should be focused on the value of these services to businesses through measures, such as reduced turnover, reduction in the time required to fill vacancies, enhanced employee retention, additional viable candidates applying for work and enhanced productivity.

### **Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives**

Coordination of the core, required, and optional program partners in each region and local area of the state will be required for Illinois to achieve the goal of coordinated business services. The support of employer-driven sector initiatives is a key WIOA strategy. Illinois will expand business engagement across the workforce system to align training with needed skills and to match companies with qualified workers and workforce needs, which will help point the state towards the creation of a talent pipeline that fuels economic growth and creates career pathways for all citizens of Illinois.

Illinois will continue to focus on the development of employer-based training options that work directly with businesses to identify hiring requirements, assess the skill levels of job seekers, and provide competency-based training to quickly fill skill gaps, prepare individuals to go to work, and allow employers to increase their productivity while reducing their hiring risk. Using approaches such as apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, work experience, and on-the-job training provides employers with a quicker method to fill critical job openings while providing trainees with a quicker route to a paycheck.

### **Apprenticeship Expansion Strategies**

Illinois' apprenticeship expansion strategies are centered on supporting businesses and individuals. Expanding apprenticeships helps businesses with their current and future workforce needs as well as individuals with a career pathway, which includes work-based learning. Employers are key to the success of apprenticeship programs. Without employers utilizing the apprenticeship model to build their workforce, there are no opportunities for individuals to join apprenticeship programs. To achieve the goal of expanding Apprenticeship programs with employers, Illinois has utilized a set of strategies including (1) Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) and (2) apprenticeship navigators and integrated business service teams to help businesses better understand the value and return on investment of apprenticeships and to support them in their efforts to create successful programs.

### **Talent Pipeline Management**

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce developed the Talent Pipeline Management™ approach to address chronic national skill gaps. Skill gaps exist where there is a disconnect between what skills businesses want new employees to have when hired and the actual skills of applicant pool.

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TPM uses supply chain principles to call on business and public policy leaders to transform education and workforce systems to be employer-led and business demand-driven. TPM is an overarching, systematic approach intended to help businesses better understand their short and long-term talent needs and to help public education and workforce programs adapt as demand for skills evolves.

Illinois will continue to utilize the TPM framework as a sector strategy to improve local capacity for the integration of business services across core partners and statewide business engagement. Illinois will continue to invest in building an infrastructure around supporting businesses, which includes a cadre of trained workforce and economic development professionals across the State. This training supports the Governor's priority of implementing and expanding apprenticeship opportunities as well as providing seamless and robust support to businesses from core State agencies.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) Academy is a program designed to address workforce challenges by helping employers develop partnerships to create a steady pipeline of skilled workers. The TPM Academy trains business, workforce, and economic development leaders on the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) approach, a demand-driven strategy to create real career pathways for students and workers aligned to dynamic business needs. TPM provides a framework and shared language for improving understanding and communication between employers and integrated business service team members.

The objective of the TPM training for Business Service Team representatives (DCEO Title I and IDES Title III) is to provide the resources and tools to develop and support industry sector partnerships within each of the local workforce innovation areas (LWIAs) and the ten economic development regions (EDR). The foundations are based on talent pipeline management (TPM) consisting of three principles and a six-strategy process for building high-performing education and workforce partnerships that delivers a measurable return on investment for employers and learners.

**Principle 1: Employers Drive Value Creation**—Employers play a new leadership role as end customers in closing the skills gap for jobs most critical to their competitiveness.

**Principle 2: Employers Organize and Manage Pipelines**—Employers organize and manage flexible and responsive talent pipelines in partnership with other employers and their preferred education and training providers.

**Principle 3: Employer Measures and Incentives Drive Performance**—Employers work collaboratively with one another to develop measures and incentives designed to reinforce and improve performance across all partners.

**Strategy 1: Organize for Employer Leadership and Collaboration**



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Strategy 2: Project Critical Job Demand

Strategy 3: Align and Communicate Job Requirements

Strategy 4: Analyze Talent Supply

Strategy 5: Build Talent Supply Chains

Strategy 6: Engage in Continuous Improvement and Resiliency Planning

### **Apprenticeship Navigators and Integrated Business Service Teams**

Illinois will continue to refine and evolve apprenticeship expansion efforts based on feedback and need. Apprenticeship navigator program is focused on:

- Building sector strategies through the talent pipeline management approach
- Leveraging regional business services teams
- Increasing statewide capacity through a train the trainer network of apprenticeship navigators
- Developing new strategies for communicating the value of workforce diversity to employers and proactively creating equity strategies that lead to historically underrepresented individuals entering and succeeding in registered apprenticeship programs.

Apprenticeship navigators are a part of regional integrated business services team to support the expansion of apprenticeship and work-based-learning programs. Navigators support partnerships among employers, the workforce system, education/training providers, and other stakeholders. Illinois will continue to build an apprenticeship network that provides:

- **OUTREACH:** Serve as a point of contact to assist in the development of apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities
- **PARTNER COORDINATION:** Support the regional coordination of apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities with employers and workforce / education / economic development partners.
- **DIRECT ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING APPRENTICESHIPS:** Serve as a subject matter expert to facilitate the establishment of an apprenticeship or work-based learning program based on the needs of the employer.

Further expansion efforts are defined in the Illinois Five-Year Apprenticeship Expansion State Plan.

*Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions*

**The Illinois Community College System**

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The Illinois Community College System covers the entire state with 48 colleges in 39 community college districts. Community colleges serve more than 600,000 Illinois residents each year in credit and noncredit courses and many more through their public service programs. The Illinois community college system is the largest workforce provider in the state, providing a range of customized training and formal education degrees that support the skill needs of local employers. Illinois community colleges work with nearly 10,000 unique employers in the state.

All community colleges are on the Eligible Training Provider List and as the most affordable public training option are priority providers for related technical instruction. All community colleges offer postsecondary career and technical education under the Strengthening CTE for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), which is a required partner under WIOA. To date, there are 4,254 approved CTE programs, consisting of 1,217 degree programs and 3,037 certificate programs. Community colleges serve on local workforce innovation boards, strengthening the partnership between the local workforce area services and community college programming.

Community colleges as well as Title II and Postsecondary CTE have representation of the State's Workforce Innovation Board, ensuring strong collaboration between the systems.

### **Adult Education Providers**

The Title II services are provided by over 70+ AEFLA funded programs which include community colleges, public school districts and Regional Offices of Education, correctional facilities, and community-based organizations. Each provider facilitates education and training services which include English Language Acquisition, adult literacy, digital literacy, career pathway, and employment instruction to all AELFLA participants to meet the expectations of WIOA and increase the talent pipeline for local employers.

One key strategy is the implementation of the Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System, ICAPS, an accelerated pathway to an industry-recognized credential through training partnerships – such as Career and Technical Education or an approved training provider – to serve eligible adult education students, including English Language Learners, while they are completing their Illinois High School Diploma and/or improving their English Language. Throughout the implementation of both work-place learning and work-based learning, core WIOA partners will provide ongoing support to all eligible adult learners as identified in the Coordinated Case Management and Supportive Services. As such, the state recognizes these strategies as mechanism for individuals who are basic skills deficient to enter employment and training. Core partners will engage with the community colleges, adult education providers, and area career and technical education schools through the support of WIOA customers enrolled in Bridge and ICAPS programming.

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## Workforce Education Exchange (WEX)

The Illinois Innovation Network launched the Workforce Education Exchange (WEX) Connects education, workforce development, and industry resources to ensure a diverse, skilled, job-ready workforce for in-demand and emerging industries in Illinois. DCEO, ICCB, University of Illinois Extension, and the Lt. Governor serve on the Advisory Board of the IIN, which is organized around DCEO's 10 economic development regions.

WEX programming:

- Focuses on portable employer identified and recognized competencies and skills attainment
- Advances policy innovation in concert with technological innovation
- Adopts a life-long learning approach

This alignment ensures that P-20 initiatives are captured and incorporates braided and blended funding, programing, and service delivery.

WXX provides multiple business sector benefits that simultaneously improve the employee experience:

- Provides a common access point to the state's education and workforce networks
- Creates a linked regional education and training ecosystem
- Convenes employer and industry partners in the supply chain
- Delivers to training providers continuous technical assistance and training
- Identifies resources and assets
- Establishes joint research or innovation hubs
- Engages through VR, AR, and gaming design training
- Impacts, with intentionality, diverse communities and communities of service

WEX operates through collaborative, multi-institution and professionally staffed Innovation Teams focused on the following themes:

- Industry Sector Partnerships
- Transfers & Articulation
- Curricular Design
- Community Engagement & Technical Assistance
- Workforce Agency Alignment

Through these teams, WEX:

- Co-develops DEIA recruitment strategies

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- Partners with networks of networks to identify, train, recruit, and retain talent
- Identifies through individualized company specific assessments jobs/sectors on which to focus
- Partners with industry and specific employers to identify and for them to provide the technical know-how for the job training
- Co-develops applied training programs and employer sponsored internships
- Identifies the facilities, labs, faculty, and support services needed for industry success
- Identifies the support services and ancillary supports that workers need to succeed in the training and placement, including job design, affordable housing, childcare, transportation, broadband connectivity, digital literacy, financial digital literacy, and language skills

By linking and accessing multiple resources, networks, and partners, WEX provides customized, just in time, sector focused training developed to meet the short-term and long-term needs of employers, creating a seamless trajectory for employees to enter and advance in their career trajectory. All Illinois employment providers, whether on the LIST or not, are eligible service delivery partners under WEX. Likewise, industry academy, universities, and training centers – those educational programs developed by industry within their own companies - are eligible service delivery partners. It is this unique combination of comprehensive aligned resources that invites customer focused engagement for employers, incumbent workers, and future workers.

### **Illinois Broadband Lab**

The Illinois Broadband Lab (IBL) enhances the ability of all people to connect and participate in the digital world. It is a collaboration between the Illinois Office of Broadband, Illinois Innovation Network, and the University of Illinois System, which serves as the administration agent. It is a strategic alliance with the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology that installs broadband and the University of Illinois Extension, which has a presence in all 102 Illinois counties. The IBL convenes a statewide Digital Equity Network that brings together community-based organizations, local government, technical support providers, and education providers to align strategies for the delivery of digital literacy services, from digital awareness to digital skills. The IBL fosters a vibrant ecosystem committed to reducing and eliminating the digital divide and bringing necessary resources to employees, employers, and communities throughout Illinois.

The IBL aligns its work broadly to include the following topics:

- Research (best practices, program design, and evaluation)
- Infrastructure (installation and technologies)
- Digital Literacy (awareness, access, and affordability)
- Financial Digital Literacy
- Workforce Development
- Digital Literacy & Digital Skills, including employer identified and recognized skills)

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- Industry Workforce (e.g. fiber splicers)
- Target Populations

The focus of the IBL is to provide access beyond infrastructure: using technology for civic, social, political, and economic confidence and participation, which directly impacts industry and workforce development initiatives.

The IBL curricular design includes:

- Embedded pre- and post-assessment to identify local training needs
- A comprehensive digital literacy curriculum to serve populations with limited technological experience (including components on job search, safety, financial digital literacies, troubleshooting, and others)
- Transferrable platform-based resources for self-paced learning, hybrid, and in-class training
- A system of support to complement courses and advance learning transfer
- Relatable to global and national evidence-based frameworks and standards

Its goals are the certification for 21st-century skills desired by employers and use of critical digital literacies. An additional goal is increased access to governmental resources for communities and individuals for services, including enrollment and access of the State's One Stop Centers, training provider search, job search, job application submission, online training, and

The IBL runs multiple programs to address the lack of digital knowledge and skills as well as digital access and devices. A sample of the programs include:

Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption + Digital Equity (READY) grants are provided to qualified regional entities statewide to explore opportunities for equitable advances in the areas of broadband access, adoption, and utilization.

The program is designed to identify current digital inequities as well as next steps in creating a digital inclusion ecosystem through regional collaboration.

Seeks to provide scalable solutions for broadband utilization across all 10 Illinois economic development regions.

The program was designed as a forerunner to provisions included in the Digital Equity Act, signed into law as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and serves as a foundation for Office of Broadband work in Digital Equity + Inclusion." The Broadband READY strategic partnerships is a regionally based partnership with local universities and programs to deliver digital equity and broadband services, including community based digital literacy education and

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training. These 10 projects operate in each of the 10 DCEO economic development regions. In the northeast region, the services are further divided into the following regions. Northeast Region - (10 counties/1 City)

### **Sub Region A**

- DeKalb
- Kane
- DuPage
- Kendall
- Grundy

### **Sub Region B**

- Will
- Kankakee

### **Sub Region C**

- Cook
- Chicago

### **Sub Region D**

- McHenry
- Lake

Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption + Digital Equity (READY) grants are provided to qualified regional entities—such as a community and economic development organization, regional planning council, or institution of higher education—to explore opportunities for equitable advances in the areas of broadband access, adoption, and utilization. The program is designed to identify current digital inequities as well as next steps in creating digital inclusion ecosystems through regional collaboration. It seeks to provide scalable solutions for broadband utilization across all 10 Illinois economic development regions. The program was designed as a forerunner to provisions included in the Digital Equity Act, signed into law as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and serves as a foundation for Office of Broadband work in Digital Equity + Inclusion.

Each READY region seeks to implement a Digital Equity Impact Project—often around digital literacy or device distribution—and serve as a key collaborator for regional digital equity work related to the state’s Digital Equity Plan.

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## Regional Breakdown

### Central | University of Illinois Springfield

Project Summary: Center for State Policy and Leadership (CSPL) at the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS) proposes a strategic partnership and collaboration to perform outreach and address digital literacy, particularly as it relates to healthcare. Initially, this project will concentrate in Sangamon County and partner with the Culturally Integrated Education for Latinos Organization (CIELO). Consultants with expertise in community health workers will assist to design and develop a detailed project plan, outreach and training plan and evaluation plan. CSPL will work with Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE) at UIS to utilize a learning management system and build any necessary curriculum. Then CSPL will continue in partnership with CIELO and other consultants to hire and train Community Health Workers (CHW) in Sangamon County to provide digital literacy curriculum and employ UIS students to provide hotline and virtual technical assistance in Sangamon County. The model aims be employed in other counties beyond Sangamon County in the future.

### East Central | University of Illinois Urbana – Champaign

Project Summary: The East Central READY team will advance a new partnership with the Parkland Community College's Support Workforce Training (SWFT) program, building on the partnerships with the Housing Authority of Champaign County, the Champaign-Urbana Public Health Department, Urbana's Cunningham Township, and Project Success of Vermilion County that was seeded from a Broadband Equity Project (awarded \$50K from State of Illinois' DCEO since 2020). The renewed READY funding from the DCEO allows the East Central READY team to develop a pilot Civic Empowerment and Artificial Intelligence in the Community Curricula for Parkland Students that will expand the Civic Empowerment Curricula previously developed with partner organizations. The Parkland partnership will allow the READY team to test a scaling of this curricula for the adult learners in SWFT who are all being trained to enter jobs in healthcare, trucking and factories where new AI technologies are being integrated. The curricula will empower community members to gain literacy around these trends in relation to workplaces in Illinois, while also developing practical literacy on existing resources should potential harms arise.

### North Central | Illinois State University

Project Summary: The North Central Region, led by Illinois State University (ISU) and in conjunction with McLean County, will work closely with an AmeriCorps Lead for America Digital Navigator, as well members of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission to build upon

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existing digital equity efforts underway in the region, particularly those from the Broadband Breakthrough program, a previous program in partnership with Illinois Innovation Network, Illinois Soybean Association, and other key partners to expand broadband access and agriculture yields in rural counties across Illinois. The team will partner with the computer refurbishing nonprofit PCs for People to conduct device distribution and Affordable Connectivity Program outreach events in Bloomington-Normal and Peoria communities and to host ACP enrollment events.

Northeast | Chicago State University

Northern Stateline | Northern Illinois University

Northwest | Northern Illinois University

Project Summary: The three most northern regions of the state have joined forces with their READY ambitions to coordinate various initiatives already underway in Chicago, Cook County, and northern Illinois. Chicago State University—with several key partners—was awarded a National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Connecting Minority Communities grant to enact the Advancing Broadband Equity through Learning Intermediaries in the Neighborhoods of Chicago (ABE-LINC program), which will tackle the digital divide by expanding broadband, distributing laptops and improving digital literacy through navigators conducting community outreach and training. Together, CSU and Northeastern Illinois University will run the digital navigator program that will provide training on basic digital literacy, digital conduct, online resources and tools, and internet subscriptions and device purchases. The navigators will come from and target specific Zip codes and populations, including returning citizens, seasonal transitory and undocumented workers, and single parents. The navigators will also provide laptops to households of priority neighborhoods to fill gaps in the ability to access telehealth resources and educational and employment opportunities. These efforts will compliment targeted digital literacy and library-focused initiatives across northern Illinois.

Southeast | Eastern Illinois University

Project Summary: The Southeast READY team seeks to focus its efforts on connecting the 13 rural counties in the Southeast Region of Illinois by building a list of stakeholders and convening plan for regional stakeholders. The team will identify issues related to the equitable distribution of broadband in the 13 rural counties. This will include a database of knowledge skills and capacities to assist regional efforts around grant seeking & other digital equity initiatives. The team aims to be a regional source for both infrastructure and digital literacy coordination, devoting funds to secure a grad assistant dedicated to these efforts. The team also intends to engage with a 3-county cohort participating in the Broadband Breakthrough broadband-



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agriculture program to connect this community broadband planning with region-wide workforce development initiatives.

### Southern | Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Project Summary: SIU Carbondale will finalize an instructional guide to establishing Community Technology Centers in rural communities in the southern 19 counties. They will develop a written document which outlines the partners to be engaged, steps to be taken, and potential sources of funding and support. They aim to partner with Shawnee College to provide information and programs related to expanded broadband access, technical assistance, consultative services, and the establishment of Community Technology Centers in one, or more, of the communities of Cairo, Mounds, Mound City, and/or Ullin. They also will provide continuing support for the Eurma C Hayes Community Technology Center to include technical assistance, consultative services, and educational programs, as requested.

### Southwest | Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Project Summary: The Southwest READY team will be building upon previous work from its involvement in the READY program, using funding to develop a train-the-trainers program whereby a cohort of 10 Community Broadband Advocates (CBA) are trained to provide digital literacy workshops in their communities. Training will be delivered by a Digital Equity Project Manager and will equip CBAs with effective pedagogical strategies and digital literacy skills. Upon completion of the training, CBAs will work with the SIUE-Southwestern Region team and Project Manager to identify community-based organizations and audiences where 8-week digital literacy workshops can be offered. All survey data collected from the workshops will be summarized into the Digital Equity Dashboard for the Southwestern Region, and this data will be combined with an expanded dataset of open-source quantitative data that are available pertaining to broadband accessibility and community demographics. The final dashboard will be freely shared so that communities have the tools they need to advocate for needed broadband resources.

### West Central | Western Illinois University

Project Summary: The Western Illinois University (WIU) School of Computer Science, Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs (IIRA), Malpass Library, Department of Communication, and Social Media Lab propose to enhance digital literacy and improve broadband utilization in the West Central region through a variety of integrated projects. The intent is to make WIU's Malpass library a regional hub for community libraries and serve as a resource for communities. WIU will host a conference for librarians in the region to create a sense of connectedness, share

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resources, and engage a listening session to best serve those that have contact with various communities. Educational training sessions will be hosted for businesses, organizations, and individuals to better utilize digital tools when engaging with the public. Sessions will also present instructive information on cybersecurity, and will assist with rural library inclusion through RAILS. Further successful Chromebook and hotspot device distributions will continue, as well as ongoing digital literacy outreach through the hiring of a grad assistant.

The IBL offers a statewide Digital Navigators network that provides individual, training of the trainers, and group digital literacy training. The training includes access to financial digital literacy, free and reduced digital devices (computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, and hot spots), and enrollment training for supportive services (housing, health, mental health, banking, low-heat, etc.).

The IBL is in process of aligning Digital Literacy and Financial Digital Literacy Curriculum to ensure accessibility by persons without digital knowledge or experience, persons with low-literacy levels, and persons without confidence in the use of digital tools. The IBL curriculum will be used statewide through the Digital Navigators to enhance the work. The curriculum includes:

### **EdSystems**

Aiming to strengthen existing partnerships between education and workforce systems, EdSystems continues to be a valuable partner in workforce development. Housed in Northern Illinois University, EdSystem's policy development encompasses numerous State agency partners and stakeholders to create organizational change. The partnership with EdSystems also includes residing on policy advisory committees to support career pathway systems. Two current advisory committees are the Work-based Learning Quality Criteria Advisory Committee and the Career Pathway Quality Criteria Advisory Committee.

### **ISBE Work-based Learning Quality Criteria Advisory Committee**

This committee explores innovations and promising practices pertaining to the student experience, including preparation, engagement and follow-up best practices for students, schools, and partners to ensure equitable access to high-quality work-based learning.

### **ISBE Career Pathway Quality Criteria Advisory Committee**

This committee explores innovations and promising practices pertaining to what the student experience and engagement should look like to inform continuous improvement processes and ensure equitable access to quality pathway components.

### **College and Career Pathway Endorsements**

College and Career Pathway Endorsements (CCPE) were developed under the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (PWR Act). The PWR Act aligns support from State agencies,

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school districts, postsecondary education providers, employers, and other public and private organizations to allow the State of Illinois to develop and implement a coordinated career readiness system. This strategy from the PWR Act allows school districts to award college and career pathways endorsements on high school diplomas. EdSystems continues to enhance the comprehensive framework for CCPE, and one goal of the quality criteria advisory committees is to elevate and scale educator and employer connections.

### **Relaunching the Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary**

To help transform outcomes for youth and adults across Illinois, EdSystems, together with the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois State Board of Education, and Illinois Student Assistance Commission, re-launched the innovative Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary as a new comprehensive and user-friendly web-based resource. The first-of-its-kind Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary now includes expanded and updated definitions as well as resources and implementation guidance on a new website, [pathwaysdictionary.org](http://pathwaysdictionary.org).

As career pathways systems continue to scale across education and workforce systems throughout Illinois, the dictionary is geared towards equipping policymakers and practitioners with information and tools to implement high-quality college and career pathways.

### **The WIOA Eligible Training Provider List**

The Illinois Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) policy was revised in 2022 to ensure all customers have access to quality eligible training providers across all geographies, especially in communities and neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by adverse economic conditions. The revisions reflect the importance Illinois places on equitable access to services. The revisions were overseen and conducted by ETPL Workgroup membership, which comprised all WIOA Core Partners, employers, and local workforce representatives. Each stakeholder worked together to enhance engagement and coordination and to ensure the policy reflected the needs of the workforce system.

To ensure the continued expansion of the ETPL, Core Partner Leadership has begun developing roles to ensure coordination when adding and reviewing providers and programs to the list. Out-of-state provider procedures are also being evaluated to ensure oversight while promoting a comprehensive ETPL to encourage customer choice. WIOA Partners will continue to work together as the policy, and the system is updated to ensure understanding and implementation throughout the state.

### *Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access*

Education, including workforce training and development, is economic development. Thus, the state's strategies include incorporating education and workforce development components into traditional economic development initiatives, which has not been the historical approach to

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economic development strategies. This more integrated approach is a new tool to grow industry and opportunity throughout the state. Two examples of this effort include the formation of the Illinois Innovation Network and Innovate Illinois.

### **Illinois Innovation Network**

The State's unique education and workforce training programs provide competency-based training and education that address industry needs through diverse locations, methods of instruction, and types of institutions. Addressing worker and employer needs for a streamlined system, the Illinois Innovation Network is developing the Workforce Education Exchange (WEX), a platform to more easily leverage programs within existing systems to deliver just in time training. The Illinois Innovation Network is a network of networks, comprised of the state's 12 public universities working in partnership with the state's 48 community college system, state agencies (including DCEO and its LWIAs), and community providers to build innovate, agile, and flexible collaborations that deliver training through new technologies, incorporate the latest scientific developments, and respond to business metrics. By tapping into the existing framework of proven programs and incorporating new tools, WEX provides an opportunity to replicate and scale training to WIOA target populations from high school forward, addressing the needs of new and lifelong learners and employees in high skill industries. WEX is the base for a recent award \$1,000,000,000 U.S. Department of Energy hydrogen HUB, \$1,000,000 National Science Foundation Advancing Smart Logistics Regional Engine Development Award, and other high impact collaborative partnerships for growing the 21st century economy. The DCEO, Illinois Community College Board, and Lt. Governor serve on the IIN Advisory Council. The University of Illinois System, which includes the State's land grant institution and an annual budget of \$7,650,000,000 serves as the administrative body for the IIN and the WEX and provides the administrative backing to propel and buttress inclusive participation by smaller and community-based institutions.

Additionally, the IIN is grounded in equitable and inclusive economic development and innovation strategies for the state, tapping into a vast network of research, applied research, and programmatic funding impacting workforce education, training, and delivery.

### **Innovate Illinois**

Innovate Illinois is a public-private coalition that was formed to drive the coordinated and robust effort in securing unprecedented levels of federal funding made available by landmark legislation including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. Securing more federal funding for key technologies will propel the state to attract more companies and investors to grow Illinois' vibrant tech ecosystem. Formed in March 2023 and led by the Governor, with UL Solutions and the University of Illinois of Urbana-Champaign as Vice-Chairs, this new partnership seeks to leverage opportunities for workforce, economic development, community development in an integrated manner. The initiative will serve as the "front door" for businesses who would like to partner with the state and education

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system for research, technology, and workforce development for innovation-related federal grant opportunities, thus ensuring the inclusion of and pursuit of workforce development initiatives.

### **Illinois Board of Higher Education**

The Illinois Board of Higher Education adopted an equity-based approach that prioritizes sustainability, growth, and community. Through a comprehensive community engaged strategic development process, the IBHE launched a Thriving Illinois plan that recognizes that “educational equity and economic growth are inseparable.” Anchoring education within economic development, Illinois increased funding for higher education by more than 12.4% than in the previous year and the largest increase in 20 years, funding capital development projects, equipment, innovative programming, and operations. This significant investment targets African American, Latinx, low-income, and rural students, making community colleges free for many students while increasing higher education competitiveness to retain students in Illinois. By strengthening the base, Illinois incentives investments that grow workforce opportunities while simultaneously promoting educational attainment for those opportunities. The generational impact of a sustainable base cannot be overstated in promoting equity initiatives, especially when aligned with the state’s economic development strategy. This approach to integrated economic development and through existing programs and a new WEX platform for coordination facilitates leveraging complimentary funding across the federal government and increasing the support service base for students and employers.

### *Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials*

#### **Comprehensive Career Pathway System**

Core education and workforce partners agree that quality career pathways include a series of education and training experiences that enable individuals to grow their skills and progress through a range of steps in their education and career. To ensure local and state practitioners are aligned with their approach to comprehensive career pathway systems, the Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary was collaboratively created. The Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary, approved by core education and workforce partners, was first published in 2018 as a first-of-its-kind resource for policymakers and practitioners alike. It includes the overarching State definition for career pathways and terms essential to career pathway programs and system elements. These definitions were developed and refined through research, stakeholder engagement, and thoughtful alignment to a variety of efforts—especially the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Illinois Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan, and the Illinois Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act.

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Illinois implements many career pathway programs that contribute to increased postsecondary credential attainment.

### **Integrated Education and Training**

ICAPS is a quality instructional framework in Illinois for the implementation of Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, as defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). ICAPS provides an accelerated pathway to an industry-recognized credential through training partnerships – such as Career and Technical Education or an approved training provider – to serve eligible adult education students, including English Language Learners, at the same time that they are completing their Illinois High School Diploma and/or improving their English Language. Instruction and training are supplemented by support courses, and comprehensive student support services, and augmented by collaborative teaching practices between workforce training instructors and basic skills instructors.

Illinois supports the programmatic development of Integrated Education and Training that supports adult learners as they obtain industry recognized credentials through postsecondary education or approved training. The core support is delivered through the annual Transitions Academy which is designed to assist colleges and partnerships working on developing Bridge and ICAPS (Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System) programs. The extensive support includes technical assistance through an annual Academy, ongoing Virtual Learning Communities, and individualized programmatic support designed to improve the talent pipeline for Illinois businesses and employers.

All ICCB-funded adult education providers are required to offer a bridge program as well as an IET program. This requirement as well as the suite of professional development opportunities will continue into future program years.

### **Improving Access to Apprenticeships**

Community colleges are centers of their communities and have significant connections with employers, community-based organizations, and high schools; therefore, their role in helping Illinois meet its apprentice goals regarding equity and scale is substantial. In academic year 2023, Illinois community colleges served 1,320 apprentices across both registered and unregistered programs. Using a sector-based approach to apprenticeship expansion can be a targeted and successful approach to apprenticeship expansion. Through ICCB's USDOL-funded Customized Apprenticeship Programming in Information Technology, ICCB through a 10-community college consortium served over 2400 participants, of which 1100 were apprentices hired by an employer in an IT role. While this particular grant program will come to an end in December of 2023, the model will continue to be supported scaled through the system.

Illinois also recognizes that apprenticeships can include college apprenticeships that tap into career development opportunities, providing students the opportunity to simultaneously pursue employment and degree education, rather than having to choose between the two,

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and thus increasing completion and graduation rates, access to higher skilled employment based on work-based experience obtained simultaneously with academic instruction, and ability to seek middle skill and grow into management positions. The focus on assessing academic majors directly respond to immediate employer needs, such as accountants in financial services or software programmers, also generates an opportunity to create shorter-term programs for upskilling and reskilling employees leaving jobs where demand or advancement is lacking.

### **Illinois Innovation Network's Workforce Education Exchange (WEX)**

The Illinois Innovation Network's Workforce Education Exchange (WEX) connects education, workforce development, and industry resources to ensure a diverse, skilled, job-ready workforce for in-demand and emerging industries in Illinois. This includes aligning experiential training opportunities to complement classroom instruction, paving the way,

### **Teacher Apprenticeship Pilot Program**

The Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and higher education partners are collaborating to address teacher shortages with a newly established teacher apprenticeship pilot program. This pilot program will strengthen and create sustainability in the teaching profession. The Notice of Funding Opportunity for this pilot aims to establish a teacher apprenticeship program for current paraprofessional educators facing barriers to employment. This apprenticeship program will provide career pathway opportunities and supportive services to ensure placement into the teacher workforce. Successful candidates will earn teacher licensure with the Learning Behavior Specialist I endorsement. This credential will allow paraprofessionals to upscale to certified teachers, enabling them to teach students from P-22. The overall goal of this program is to establish a Department of Labor-registered apprenticeship for teacher apprenticeships in Illinois.

### **Micro-Credentials**

To expand educational access through robust professional development efforts, workforce micro-credentials are currently under development. Through partnerships with Southern Illinois University -Edwardsville, the University of Illinois – Champaign, Illinois State University, and the Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, the early stages of micro-credential framework development are in the works. The workforce micro-credentials will be portable and stackable. In addition, the framework will incorporate competency-based, job embedded experiences. The first micro-credential that will be completed is Employment 101, which will incorporate both career awareness and career exploration.

### *Coordination of Regional and Local Planning*

The state is coordinating a data/demand-driven strategic planning process across education, workforce and economic development at the state, regional and local levels using Illinois' ten

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Economic Development Regions (EDR). Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development Regional Economic Development Regional Managers and supporting staff are responsible for managing business relationships, developing business plans and cultivating customer relationships and company growth in their assigned regions or territories. The goal is to provide a one-stop resource focus on providing customized services to business including:

- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Technical Assistance with Site Selection
- Regional Collaboration with Key Stakeholders
- Assistance Eliminating Governmental Red Tape
- Custom Workforce Training
- Expedited Permitting, Licensing & Other Approvals
- Connection to Civic & Business Partners
- Potential Financial Support

## State Operating Systems and Policies

### **State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies**

#### **WIOA Title IB – Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)**

WIOA Title IB is overseen by DCEO. The Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs case management system is known as the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS). The IWDS provides electronic storage of users, customers, applications, providers, services and grants for local workforce innovation areas (LWIAs). IWDS is designed to specifically address WIOA Title I policy, procedure and reporting requirements. It is integrated fully with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program and Illinois Employment and Business System (IEBS) Rapid Response Dislocated Worker Tracking and event assignment information. Key functional elements of IWDS are: 1) customer management and case notes; 2) application management that includes an imbedded logic to ensure WIOA policy compliance, particularly regarding assessment, eligibility and service assignment; 3) service providers, employers, training providers and training program information tied to participants and participant outcomes; 4) service tracking and outcomes; 5) performance management via selection from a reporting menu in which a viewer can print and save standard reports; 6) DOL PIRL and WIPS reporting system of record for WIOA Title I. IWDS contains shared data uploaded via secure batch file processes to display Illinois Employment Security UI profile data, UI wage data Trade Readjustment Allowances / Alternative Adjustment Assistance (TRA/ATTA) payments. IWDS also has access to State Workforce Information System (SWIS) data and the Illinois Department of Human Services allows access to SNAP/TANF data to facilitate eligibility assurance. IWDS has continued to be updated on a timely basis to accommodate all necessary WIOA assessment, eligibility, service and training changes,



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and performance and reporting outcomes deliverables to stay in compliance and meet deadlines. Chicago Career Workforce Partnership (CCWP), the largest LWIA in Illinois utilizes Geographic Solutions system “Career Connect”. IWDS has API with Career Connect to download real time participant data into IWDS database for client management and DOL reporting activities. While ongoing updates have maintained IWDS functionality, the 30-year-old system is approaching its technical end of life. The process to replace IWDS with a modern, more robust system is now in the first stages of development. The current plan calls for the new system to be in place by the last quarter of calendar year 2025.

### **WIOA Title II – Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)**

The Adult Education and Literacy Act is administered through the ICCB. The Adult Education program uses a web-based system to collect data from 78 programs throughout the state. The DAISi (Data and Information System – Illinois) was developed to collect pertinent adult education data for Federal and State reporting. The system is available through a direct portal. The programs input student information, including demographics, assessment and testing, employment information, courses, funding, instructional activities & service and federal and state requirements, including information pertinent for federal National Reporting System (NRS) and WIOA reporting.

Programs must submit reports quarterly and can do this through the DAISi system. Detailed instructions for reporting are provided to all programs prior to these submissions. These instructions assist to identify and correct errors. The system is designed to exclude any student records that are not error-free and compliant with the error check mechanism within the system. Data staff know that failure to correct errors results in the loss of reporting of a student’s activity and progress in the program. In addition, the system provides an error check mechanism that allows users to check for errors or system warnings on a regular basis. Programs are instructed to run this error check on a weekly basis, and the system has been designed to exclude students with errors from official reporting until the student records have been corrected. Program staff reviews student files through on-site visits, and also use the system's state-level Desktop Monitoring Tool to review program data. The data system is designed to ensure required data elements are collected as a student's record is entered. All fields that are required are highlighted in red and if one of these fields is not completed, the system does not accept the record. Instead, the user is presented with an error message outlining what is missing in order for the record to be accepted. The front-end error checks also ensure that data is entered in a specific order to avoid missing data from the system.

The data system has a comprehensive error check to ensure that local programs are entering valid and accurate assessment information. When entering assessment information, users are guided through a series of fields and selected assessment information from drop-down menus. If a value is entered for a score that is outside the range of that particular assessment, the user receives an immediate prompt alerting to this error. For example, the student's NRS level, scale scores and point/level gains are calculated by the system and are not dependent upon the user

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indicating if a level gain has occurred. For students who receive several post-tests during the fiscal year, the system calculates final gains based only on the final assessment results in comparison with the first assessment given.

Programs are required to submit Performance and Status reports on a quarterly basis. Detailed quarterly reporting instructions are sent to the field to outline how to develop and run the report from the DAISi system and the submission process at each reporting period. Users also complete an end of the year verification process that allows them to review final data for the year.

ICCB maintains a DAISi listserv group of users to allow communication directly with those using the system. The ICCB also posts important announcements on the system's homepage where users arrive when logging into the system. Users can post questions on a discussion forum and view the questions of others. DAISi users also have access to a technical helpdesk through our grant contractor and assistance is provided by ICCB staff to handle all policy-related questions.

The ICCB is also the administrator for the Illinois High School Equivalency (HSE) program. The ICCB maintains a database of records at both the state and local levels, including Cook County. This system houses all the pertinent records of individuals who take approved exams instate. These exams are used to certify high school equivalency attainment. Currently, the exams include the GED(c) and the HiSET. The ICCB works with each vendor to upload data through a nightly feed into the system to ensure that timely and valid records are maintained. Error checks are embedded to ensure records are cross-matched and the names and other identifiable information is accurate. The system also maintains constitution results, which is a requirement in order to issue a High School Equivalency Certificate/Diploma. The HSE not only validates that an individual meets the requirements as established by the ICCB but also produces both official and non-official transcript information on each exam taken.

### **WIOA Title III – Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)**

IDES continues to work to enhance the Labor Market Information (LMI) system to support the six WIOA strategies. Traditional LMI produced by Employment Security is readily available on the Employment Security website, the Virtual Labor Market Information (VLMI) system (a Geographic Solutions web tool which houses the Workforce Information Database per the requirements of the Workforce Information Grant), and limited LMI through the IL Career Information System (wages and projections). Traditional LMI includes occupational wage information, current economic conditions by industry and geography, as well as statewide short-term Industry and Occupational Employment Projections, as well as long-term Industry and Occupational Employment Projections, at three geographic levels: statewide, by Economic Development Region and by Local Workforce Investment Area. Also included are the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (labor force data) and Current Employment Statistics (local area jobs data by industry). Near real-time LMI includes information on The Conference Board's Help Wanted Online Job Ads postings by Economic Development Region and can be customized upon

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request. Other real-time LMI utilizes information from the state's Unemployment Insurance and Employment Service programs.

The Illinois Benefit Information System (IBIS) is a web-based custom-developed application that administers the unemployment insurance benefits program for the State of Illinois. The benefits system provides 24/7 web access where individuals can file claims, certify for benefits and obtain payment information. Additional methods available to file claims and certifications include the Claimants filing their claims and their weekly benefits through a variety of methods: online, through an Interactive Voice Response System (Teleserve), over the telephone with a call center agent, or in person at one of the 36 locations throughout the state. The system IBIS keeps track of claims filed, certifications, correspondence, benefits investigations, payments, appeals, benefit charging, wage information and historical transactions. An integrated interface also exists between IBIS and Illinois JobLink, providing the opportunity for UI customers to transition to employment services immediately after filing a claim for benefits. Correspondence is received from both claimants and employers utilizing an electronic case folder. Adjudicatory hearings are scheduled and conducted via telephone. Payments are issued to eligible recipients via direct deposit or paper check delivered by the United States Postal Service. In addition to administering regular Unemployment Insurance claims, IBIS also administers Trade Readjustment Allowance Act (TRA) for impacted worker; Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA); Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC); Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE).

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) is the primary agency that administers Employment Services pursuant to Title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Through the one-stop delivery system, labor exchange services are delivered by utilizing IllinoisJobLink.com (the State of Illinois' mandated labor exchange system). IllinoisJobLink.com is a robust, dynamic and comprehensive web-based Workforce Development System that is available 24/7 for job seekers, employers, training providers and workforce professionals with real-time data and reports, for meeting and tracking federal performance goals across all programs for core partners. To date, all known WIOA requirements are available to be fully implemented in IllinoisJobLink.com for: Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth), Title II (Adult & Basic Education), and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation). WIOA requirements for Title III (Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange) are fully implemented.

Job seekers, employers, training providers and workforce professionals in Illinois use IllinoisJobLink.com for their labor exchange and case management needs. IllinoisJobLink.com is WIOA compliant and is updated every twelve to sixteen weeks to include all state and DOL mandates and requirements. Moreover, the reporting functionality allows Illinois to manage and produce Wagner/Peyser services and DOL PIRL performance reports. Illinois is a member of America's Job Link Alliance (AJLA), which is a consortium of states that use AJLA products and services. Currently, there are nine states (Arkansas, Arizona, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Oklahoma and Vermont) using the AJLA products. The value of membership allows the

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consortium of states to participate in monthly 'Team' meetings to share best practices and propose system enhancements that create better end-user experiences.

IllinoisJobLink.com is a robust, dynamic and comprehensive web-based Workforce Development System for job seekers, employers, training providers and workforce professionals with real-time data and reports, for meeting and tracking federal performance goals across all programs for core partners. The Labor Exchange functionality in IllinoisJobLink.com enables the claimant to transition – seamlessly, and in real-time -- from filing an unemployment claim to start the journey back to gainful employment. The platform provides real-time, scalable, collaborative and integrated case management across programs, which allows the staff to focus on the job seeker and reduce the administrative overhead. Since IllinoisJobLink.com implementation in December 2011, we have trained all partners in all local workforce areas, and all partners have case-management access to the system.

### **WIOA Title IV – Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)**

DRS's Web Case Management System (WebCM) is the primary case management system for the Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program, providing electronic storage of customer case records, as well as links to other systems that display information related to case requirements. WebCM is an internet-based system that can be accessed from any location with appropriate security and was developed internally by DHS information systems staff. WebCM was developed to be in compliance with all WIOA requirements and mandated data reporting. Key elements include: customer management and case notes; case progression and record-keeping for intake, assessment, eligibility determination and service plan development; secure access for vendor agencies; report generation and service tracking; and online linkage to partner systems, including the wage verification system, Social Security system and the DHS integrated eligibility system.

The Integrated Eligibility System (IES) promotes service integration and improves how eligibility is determined for health and human services, education, employment training and placement activities, along with other viable services needed to improve economic stability. It offers specific features for customers to access and manage their own cases. Staff and WIOA partners are trained to assist customers in obtaining case information, as well as applying for benefits online without the hardship of physically coming into the local offices.

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Family & Community Services (FCS) is the state administrator of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF is a time-limited cash assistance program designed to help low-income families with children attain economic independence. DHS operates more than 100 Family Community Resource Centers (FCRC) statewide serving TANF customers on the pathway to self-sufficiency. TANF customers are evaluated and assessed for suitability for inclusion in employment and training programs. TANF customers are also assessed to determine barriers and to identify if barrier reduction services are required for upward mobility. Barriers assessed and identified may be associated

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with substance use, mental health and domestic violence for example. The FCRC identifies the customer's needs and creates a Responsibility and Service Plan (RSP), which is a guide to services to assist the customer. The RSP contains employment and training needs, supportive service needs (e.g., transportation and uniforms), childcare and other tangible services and resources needed.

FCS contracts with community-based organizations to provide either work experience or job placement for TANF Employment and Training customers. The FCS provides oversight of programs statewide as the Division's goal is to cultivate more career pathway opportunities for our TANF customers. FCS has a strong presence in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers. DHS is committed to increasing workforce engagement with aligned and coordinated services to achieve employment opportunities for all adults served by DHS.

A taskforce has been created to strategically move through the process of ensuring service integration among partners in the one-stop centers. Pre-Pandemic staff were located in the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and were trained to assist customers utilizing the online TANF/SNAP/Medical application through the Application for Benefits Eligibility System (ABE), which is accessible through Illinois WorkNet. DHS team members are currently working remote and participate in virtual partnership meetings to continue to identify and share resources within the American Job Center and with customers

TANF staff will continue their visibility and orientation participation at the one-stop centers to ensure TANF customers are identified for program assessment and engagement. A streamlined referral process will continue and be refined and formalized based on observation and demonstration of how the referrals will be used and monitored. DHS-TANF staff will continue to actively participate in the monthly partnership meetings and cross-training sessions held at the One-stop centers in order to promote the definition of partner collaboration and service integration per the Governor's Guidelines. A key factor for TANF is assessments measured and based on evaluations through surveys shared with the one-stop program partners regarding services and/or employment received from the centers. This creates a statistical model for accountability, measurement and areas of continuous improvement.

### **Cross-program Data Integration Efforts**

In addition to these systems, Illinois has additional platforms that reach across agencies and state boundaries to demonstrate new and innovative options for data-sharing and technology integrations.

The Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) and the Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA) mentioned in the original Unified State Plan are progressing well. The system has successfully matched demographic data among seven of Illinois' workforce and education agencies, and now has millions of Master Client Index IDs to bridge data across education, training, wages and employment. Technology, shared data agreements, research

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procedures and data-matching techniques can all be leveraged from ILDS practices and utilized to find solutions towards Illinois WIOA technology unification. The ILDS assists the WIOA state agencies, partners and the IWIB with research and in improving availability of intelligent and reliable combined program trends and outcomes that enable the state to make data-driven decisions.

The Governor's Office has endorsed and is forging ahead with ILDS 2.0 work in Illinois and is moving forward with establishing and implementing a state-of-the-art IBM Cloud Pak for Data ("Cloud Pak") as a Core technical component of the ILDS, alongside the Centralized Demographic Data Administrator ("CDDA"). Each Agency participating in the ILDS will make its best effort to introduce to Cloud Pak any data sets it intends to use for interagency analysis and to catalog those data sets such that they can be incorporated into the ILDS universal data request tool for analytics and portal development.

Another initiative underway utilizing the WDQI funding award is the Coleridge Initiative which utilizes NYU --Administrative Data Research Facility (ADRF) that has the ability to extend data sharing outside Illinois borders. The system enables secure access to analytical tools, data storage and discovery services, and general computing resources for users to revolutionize evidence-based policymaking and comply with the Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2016. I-ADRF is a FedRAMP-compliant, secure computing environment for approved analyses using agency administrative datasets. It currently consists of records from several State agencies – including Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) – and it resides within a broader ADRF ecosystem, administered by New York University containing microdata from states around the Midwest. This ecosystem facilitates inter-state data linkage and thus the pursuit of research questions across broader geographies, as well as pertaining to particular sub-populations such as those receiving public assistance or returning citizens from the justice system. In 2020, IL joined an inter-state WIOA research collaboration team with multiple Midwest states such as Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan to develop the prototype for the first Regional WIOA Performance Data Research and Reporting Platform via the ADRF. The Midwest collaborative continues to meet and gain momentum on a regional innovative solution to longitudinal data transparency.

In addition to the Midwest Collaborative work IDES and DCEO are working together on best practice data sharing to tell the story and rebound from COVID-19 pandemic. The Unemployment to Reemployment Portal data environment, an established program between states and the Coleridge Initiative, has already implemented longitudinal record linkage between the following Illinois administrative data sources: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Weekly Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant files, weekly Program for Measuring the Insured Unemployed Statistics (PROMIS) files, Quarterly Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage records, Monthly Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage records, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I training data, and Reemployment Services and

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Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) services data. IL will leverage this record-linkage best practice to integrate the state's new hires file and design portal reports to address key reemployment questions, such as: Does the reemployment rate of individuals following a spell of unemployment differ by education and training? What is the relationship between the new job and their prior job loss? Are claimants in some education categories reemployed with the same employer at a higher rate than others? If not, are they reemployed in the same industry?

The portal will display timely reemployment metrics for diverse claimant subgroups.

DCEO continues to utilize the governmental agreement with Southern Illinois University (SIU) Center for Workforce Development to evolve the agile and cloud technology of the Illinois workNet (IwN) platform. For decades IwN has been the "go to" resource to connect individuals, employers, education & workforce professionals and community partners to career training and development resources and tools. Job seekers, businesses, non-profit organizations or state or local governmental entities seeking guidance can all utilize the portal as a resource. In PY2019 DCEO enhanced the backend customer and pilot program infrastructure to fully develop a case management system capable of fully managing customers from intake, referral, assessment, eligibility, career planning, accountability tracking, performance attainment, and reporting to DOL via PIRL/WIPS. The new Illinois Workforce Integration System (IWIS) is 100 percent integrated with DCEO's IWDS system for WIOA Title I via an API. IWIS was piloted for the Apprenticeship IL grants and proved to be a success and a platform that can be a solution for much of Illinois' integration issues. IwN has also provided the staffing and platform to further improve upon the online WIOA ePolicy site and host webinars to involve and inform state stakeholders. This state asset has continued to be a collaborative portal in which the state workforce and educational institutions can engage and explore new ways to combine efforts and data to create a seamless experience for the customer.

The next generation of innovative and integrative intake, client management, resource tracking, services and performance outcomes measurement is currently under development and will be launched in 2022 with the Apprenticeship Expansion project. The IwN next generation integration system will include the ability to access a full-service menu of intuitive system screen design that tracks business and client engagement and outreach efforts throughout the state. Navigators, local governments, state economic developers will all be able to use a standardized approach to conduct informed and standardized business outreach engagements. The system will track the activity and allow for the ability to detect underserved populations and areas to target for special outreach efforts. Improvement efforts on this site to increase sharing or business information Illinois Business System (IEBS), the new integrated business engagement and layoff intake and tracking platform was launched in November of 2020. It contains economic landscape dashboards and predictive analytic statistics that facilitate business analysts and layoff specialists throughout the state to track layoffs and make more informed and proactive decisions to avert layoffs. Illinois Employment Business System (IEBS) is a cloud-based agile software platform. The ultimate goal of IEBS is to provide quality workforce

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information and layoff tracking data from multiple reliable sources that is easy to access, easy to understand, and easy to retain and extract in order to make data-driven decisions that facilitate state efforts for layoff aversion and promote economic and workforce advancement in Illinois. Built-in responsive design, IEBS empowers users to have the business intelligence they need via smartphone, tablet or laptop to quickly search the economic landscape of Illinois utilizing real-time D&B global business data, IL Dept. of Employment Security LMI data, and State and local workforce layoff tracking data. Providing government workforce and economic advocates with critical transparent business intelligence via on-the-fly dashboards, analytic tools, and industry cluster SWOT information will facilitate informed strategic decision making and result in the ability for State leadership to formulate evidence-based policymaking. In addition, IEBS was proclaimed to be a national Best Practice in their review of the Rapid Response Dislocated Worker state review in 2021.

### **The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies**

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), has charged its policy workgroups with developing several new and revised policies to assist in implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These policies provide guidance for state agency partners and service providers in such areas as:

- General transition to and implementation of WIOA
- Designation of Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs)
- Chief Elected Official (CEO) agreements and functions
- Local workforce board composition and certification
- Eligibility for youth, dislocated worker and adult populations
- Eligible training providers and their programs
- Certification of One-Stop Centers
- Minimum Training Expenditures
- One-Stop Operator Procurement
- Service Integration
- Designation of Centers within Illinois' One-Stop System

The IWIB continues to utilize a highly collaborative policy development process to address policies with system-wide implications, such as one-stop certification and service integration. Due to the far-reaching impact of such policies, it is important that a broad cross-section of workforce stakeholders be involved in policy development. As a result, a process has been established that involves consultation among State and local Board members, chief elected officials, WIOA partners, employers and other stakeholders in crafting policy that provides cost-effective and efficient guidance to the field. Gathering input from all stakeholders ensures continuity and consistency among the programs throughout the state.

An important policy work group that has been launched under this policy development process is the IWIB Service Integration Work Group. As a foundational element of Illinois' Unified State



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Plan and the IWIB's Strategic Plan modifications, service integration is a way to link and leverage scarce resources and improve customer outcomes. This policy work group focused on using service integration to help "optimize the effectiveness of the one-stop system for all customers"—one of the five objectives of the IWIB's Strategic Plan. The content of the policy was shaped over a 16-month period by the IWIB's Service Integration Policy Work Group representing IWIB members, local workforce areas personnel, state-level WIOA partners, and other workforce stakeholders. The policy describes seven service integration functions, each having a corresponding outcome and one or more associated goals. The Service Integration Policy Work Group adopted a model of service integration that moves through five stages: isolation, communication, coordination, collaboration and integration. The work group organized into committees to develop clear standards of what each stage of integration looks like across the core functions of one-stop centers. These functions include customer-centered design, staff, intake and assessment, services, career pathways, information, and evaluation. Taken together, the goals and outcomes for these functions represent a long-term, high-level vision for one-stop service integration in Illinois. Operationalizing these goals is occurring locally through the WIOA planning, one-stop certification, and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiation processes.

The Service Integration Policy Work Group is modeling how to leverage resources by utilizing the Illinois Department of Human Services Rehabilitation Services Technical Assistance Grant received from the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center, known as WINTAC. WINTAC is funded by the United States Department of Education. A key focus of WINTAC Activity is on service integration. Through WINTAC, the model is using the five stages and seven core functions for service integration. Three sub-workgroups formed around the seven core functions will be exploring policy and practice best practices to put in place to achieve service integration.

The first sub-workgroup explored the development of a self-assessment tool that enables each local one-stop system to evaluate its level of integration across all seven core functions and use those results to develop an improvement plan. With WINTAC's permission, the project team developed the self-assessment tool based on their Service Integration Facilitator's Guide. Several of WINTAC's function areas overlapped with the goals of Illinois' service integration policy and other areas had to be developed by the team. The guide also outlines a process and related materials for convening one-stop partners to collaborate on the assessment.

The second sub-workgroup was tasked with integrating the goals and outcomes of service integration into the one-stop certification application when they were directly tied to a one-stop center versus the one-stop system as a whole. The group has conducted a detailed review of the original certification application and has identified a number of needed changes to strengthen its service integration requirements. Updates to the one-stop certification application have been finalized and will be used to certify centers in the future.

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The final sub-workgroup was charged to recommend an evaluation approach/high-level design for the IWIB's Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) that describes how outcomes of the new service integration policy will be measured, what information will be needed to assess and document outcomes, and a timeline. Technical assistance needs associated with local evaluation efforts also will be identified. The CIC will evaluate the policy to determine if it is being implemented as envisioned. The Service Integration Policy Work Group will reconvene in the coming months to discuss the evaluation conducted by the CIC and will make recommendations to address shortcomings of the policy if any are identified.

As part of policy development, guidance and technical assistance, Illinois continues to utilize an ePolicy manual (<https://apps.il-work-net.com/WIOAPolicy/Policy/Home>) on the Illinois workNet portal. This ePolicy manual contains policy, procedures, related documents and resources to support the LWIB in implementation and provision of service under WIOA. The manual organizes policy into logical categories (chapters) starting at the statewide system level and narrowing into guidance directly related to WIOA Title IB. This portal was reviewed by other states and is being adopted and adapted by at least one state under the direction of workNet staff. Additionally, to assist with service integration efforts, the portal houses a technical assistance site that deals specifically with service integration <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Pages/Service-Integration.aspx>.

The following are policies developed and issued through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Office of Employment and Training (OET) in consultation with the Interagency Technical Assistance Team:

- The IWIB continues to utilize the approved new procedures for communications between the State Board, its Executive Committee and the Interagency Technical Assistance Team – especially as they pertain to the continued implementation of WIOA and policies issued by the board, and begin to implement provisions of the IWIB Strategic Plan. It also provides guidance and instructions regarding: 1) regional and local planning requirements, 2) Governor's Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners Negotiating Costs and Services under WIOA, and 3) Criteria and Procedures for Certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers under WIOA. This guidance provided a framework for program activities.

The IWIB will be discussing the policy process to identify any needed revisions. The CIC developed an implementation plan for evaluating policies that has been incorporated within initial draft changes, and further implementation steps may be incorporated, as necessary.

- Under a work group structure, Illinois has developed policies and guidance to address the provisions of WIOA. This ensures a seamless transition for customers during intake and the continued provision of career and training services, including the expanded training services described in WIOA.

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- Membership, certification, and subsequent certifications of LWIBs under WIOA is governed under policies that are consistent with the provisions - including the assurance of more streamlined boards with a majority of business members, and minimum percentage of labor and community service organizations represented. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that business representatives reflect regional industry sectors and the diversity of the population. An online portal for tracking LWIB composition and compliance has been developed and use began with the LWIB recertifications that were due in October 2021. Changes to the Local Workforce Area Contact System (LWACS) that are identified during this implementation phase will occur over the next several years.
- Policy was implemented to address CEOs in each local area, including an understanding of their required functions as confirmed through a CEO agreement. The agreement addresses those LWIAs that have multiple CEOs. CEOs are given authority, as the local grant recipient, to designate local grant subrecipients and fiscal agents for the Title IB funds of WIOA. It also defines each CEO's liability for WIOA funds determined to have been misspent or used for unallowable purposes.
- Eligibility policies have been written and updated to ensure that all the requirements of WIOA are clearly outlined for the LWIAs and their staff that delivers intake and registration services to customers. All customers of the system, whether served by local one-stop staff, through technology or self-served, are included in the general eligibility policy. Those seeking more than self-service assistance are determined eligible based on the funding stream under which they will be served. Detailed descriptions of the eligibility requirements and allowable documentation sources to confirm such eligibility decisions provide guidance to career planners in their decision-making. Priority of service is emphasized throughout to all populations identified as priority of service within WIOA, taking into account preference to veterans. A stand-alone priority of service policy will be updated as equity goals discussed earlier in the plan are developed.
- WIOA policy has been issued to provide guidance to all training providers (including new providers, those that previously provided transitional eligibility, and the LWIBs and LWIAs) regarding the process for determining eligibility of providers and training programs. The policy covers initial and continued eligibility of all providers, with separate guidance for those Registered Apprenticeships choosing to be added to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). This list highlights those programs that meet the state's requirements for in-demand occupations. The current procedures are under review by a work group that will address the performance collection requirements for all students, streamline the current approval process for eligibility, and make suggestions for changes to the reporting system. This work group will also incorporate career pathways into the discussions and process of eligibility determination by local workforce innovation boards. The work group has developed new metrics to identify high demand jobs within Illinois. This list has incorporated the most recent data available on average annual job

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openings and wages, along with required education which were data points identified by the work group.

- The IWIB revised policy on the requirement that local boards expend a minimum of forty percent (40 percent) to fifty percent (50 percent) of their Title IB Adult and Dislocated Worker funds on direct training costs. Through a policy work group, the allowable activities and direct training that can be considered calculable was revised to ensure it reflects the WIOA emphasis on registered apprenticeships and other new training opportunities as well as certain leverage resources such as through grants supported by Statewide Activities funding. This activity will be managed under the priorities of the Continuous Improvement Committee.
- Policy guidance on the process for selecting, certifying and designating one-stop operators in each of the twenty-two workforce areas through a competitive procurement process was developed. Following further guidance by U.S. DOL, this policy was revised to address the information published in a Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL). Key elements related to the Federal Uniform Guidance to be followed in the process, components of a formal procurement process, essential contract elements, and conflicts of interest were included.

### **Governor's Guidelines for Negotiating Infrastructure and Other Shared Costs**

The State of Illinois has established the "Governor's Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners for Negotiating Costs and Services under WIOA" to fulfill the WIOA requirement that the Governor issue guidance to state and local partners for negotiating cost-sharing (including determining equitable and stable methods for all required partners to contribute to funding infrastructure costs in accordance with WIOA Section 121(h)(1)(B)), service access, service delivery, and other matters essential to the establishment of effective local workforce development services under WIOA (§678.705). The Governor's Guidelines address negotiation of local Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), negotiation of infrastructure costs, negotiation of local one-stop delivery system costs, timelines for negotiation of MOUs and infrastructure costs, reporting of interim and final negotiation outcomes and appeals processes and reconciliation. The state expects all required and optional partners to adhere to these guidelines. LWIBs and CEOs are to act in accordance with the guidelines and to otherwise comply with them. The scope of the Governor's Guidelines includes:

- General guidance, direction and requirements for negotiating local MOUs that are required in each LWIA to support the operation of the local one-stop delivery system.
- Guidance related to comprehensive one-stop center infrastructure costs, including guidance for budgeting, allocation, negotiation and reconciliation of these costs using the two funding methods WIOA prescribes.
- Guidance for identifying and negotiating local one-stop delivery system costs that will be shared among required partners.

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- Timelines for local negotiation of MOUs and for reporting of the outcomes of these negotiations.
- Guidance related to requirements for reconciling budgeted shared costs to actual shared costs at least semi-annually, as well as new guidance regarding circumstances that require a formal budget amendment.
- Requirements for the process through which required partners can appeal decisions made in the application of these guidelines if the state infrastructure cost funding mechanism is used.
- Guidance for local boards wishing to request a waiver of any provision of the Governor's Guidelines.

Additionally, the Governor's guidelines include service matrices for career services and other programs and activities, demonstrating how career services and other programs are available through the local Comprehensive One-Stop Centers by required partners. To provide uniformity across the LWIAs, an MOU template is included in the Governor's Guidelines. This template provides the structure and elements of the MOU, providing placeholders for each LWIA to add their respective content and have been revised annually to incorporate the final WIOA regulations, subsequent guidance and submission timelines.

### **Evaluation & Benchmarks**

To determine whether the Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan and other WIOA requirements are being carried out effectively, and to identify continuous improvement opportunities in the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois' Workforce Development System and related policy, the IWIB created a Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC). This IWIB standing committee consists of six IWIB members and is supported by the IWIB Staff with technical and logistical support from Illinois university partners. Specific responsibilities of this Committee include recommending tools, measures, benchmarks and strategies. This committee will also serve as a resource to policymakers and other IWIB committees in establishing standards and metrics to assess and continuously improve system and program performance.

During 2021 the CIC's Performance Work Group created a report to assist stakeholders in examining outcomes across the core partners related to the WIOA Performance Indicators. As a part of this work, the work group provides easily accessible information about the definitions of each measure as well as the targets established by each title through negotiations with federal officials. While individuals involved in the day-to-day work of administering WIOA programs are aware of this information, the CIC group also wanted to ensure that other interested parties could easily access this information and utilize it.

The Performance Workgroup continues to work closely with the CIC committee to explore ways to maximize the use of the new resource and address performance-related questions from the committee and larger IWIB Board.

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Additionally, the CIC is currently piloting a new quarterly report on the progress being made on the strategies and activities listed in the Unified State Plan. The new report will highlight strategies and activities that exceed expectations, are falling below expectations or are failing expectations. The CIC plans to then further examine highlighted strategies and activities to either help determine a course correction, or to share with other programs the exceedingly successful strategies and activities.

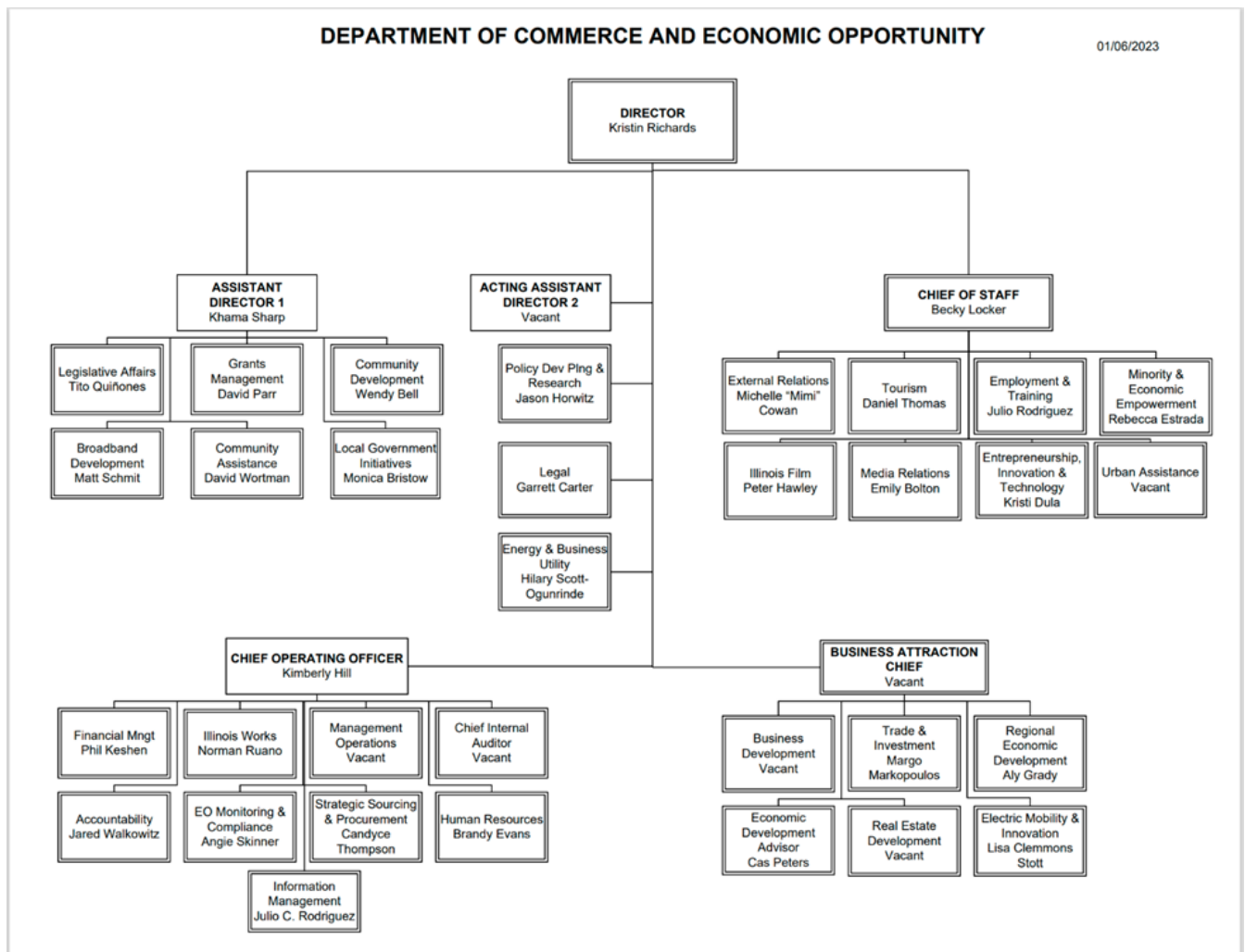
### State Program and State Board Overview

#### State Agency Organization

#### State Agency Organization Charts

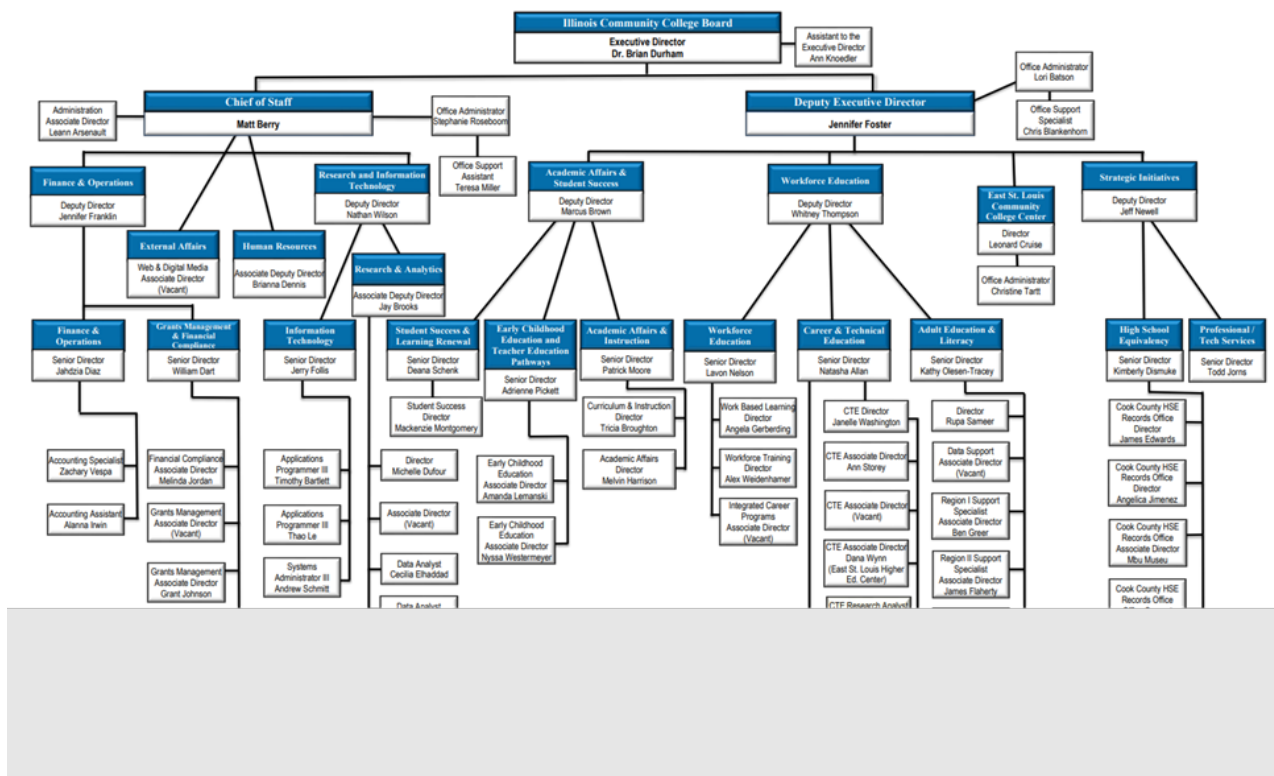
Images for each organization chart are also shown below:

#### Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Chart



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## Illinois Community College Board Chart



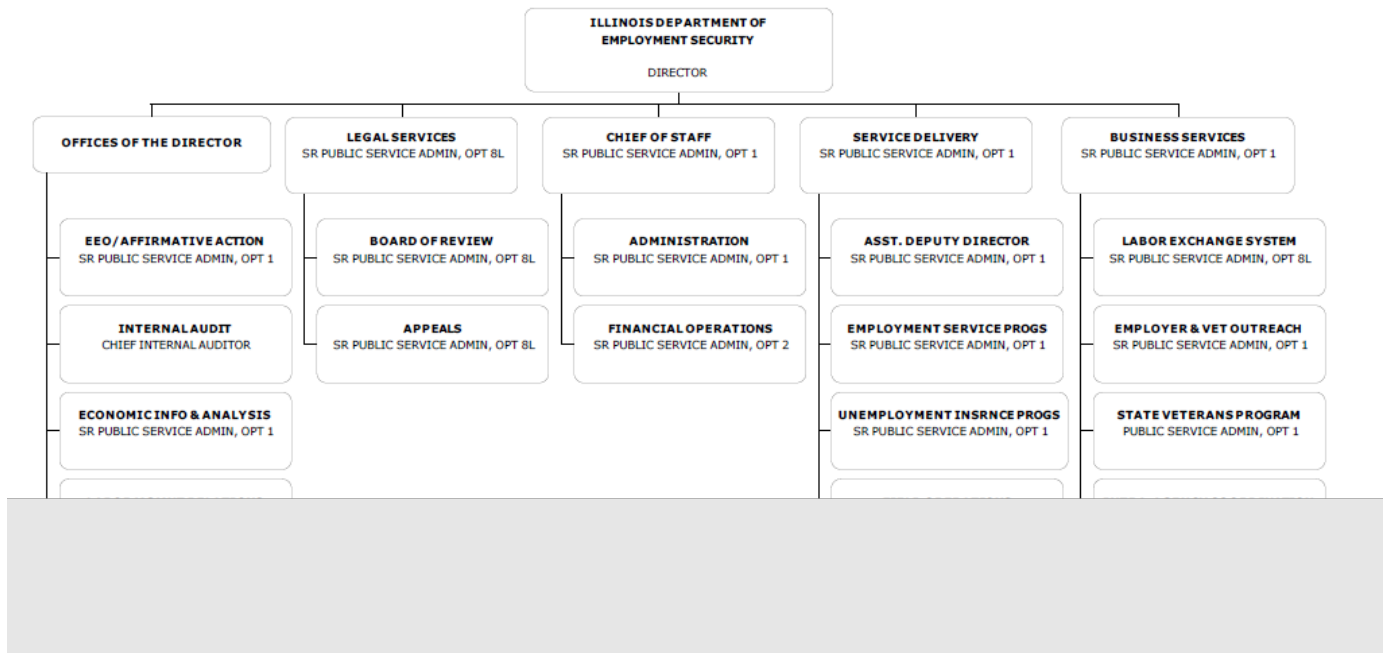
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**Illinois Department of Employment Security Chart**



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# ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

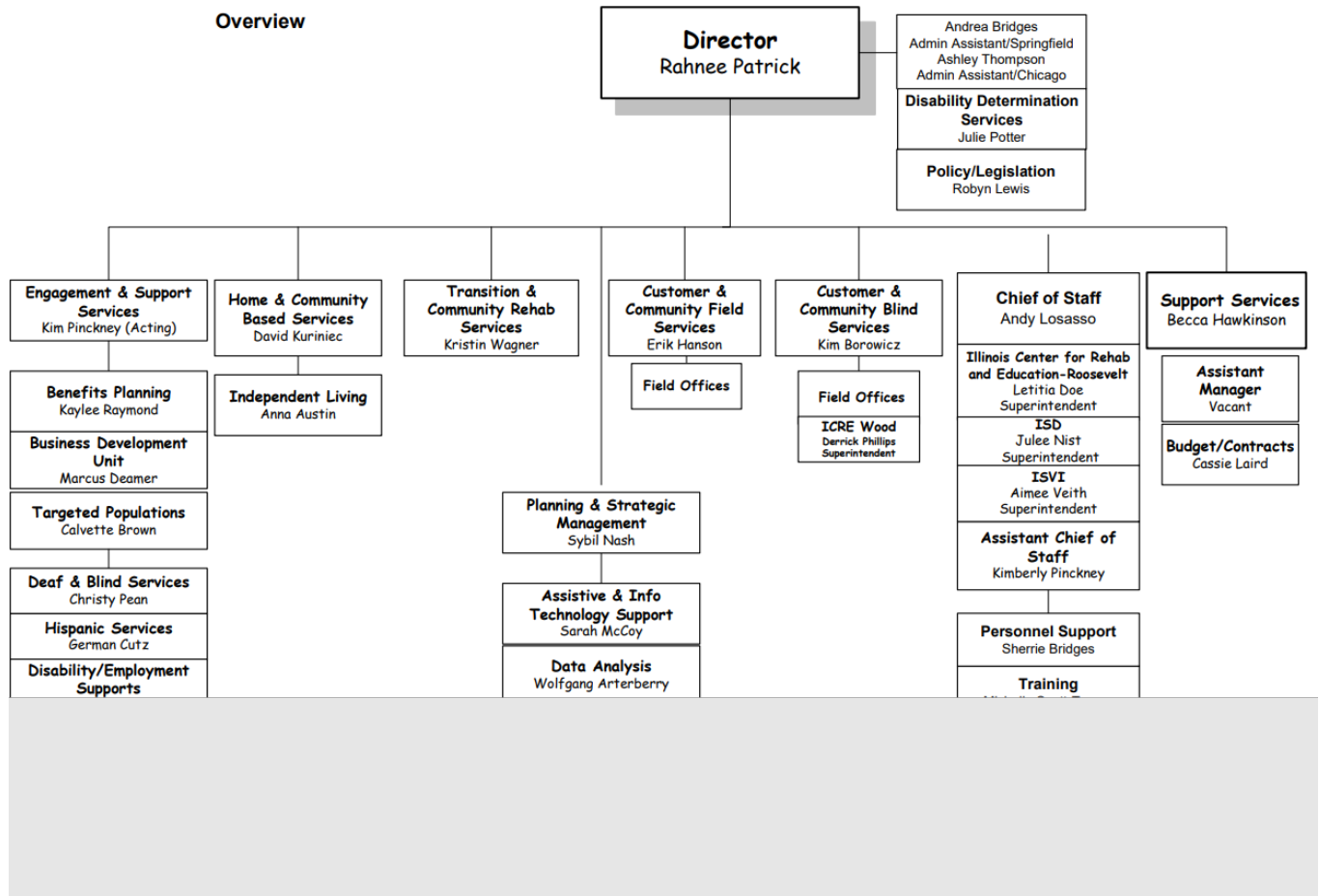


Illinois Department of Human Services Chart

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## Division of Rehabilitation Services

### Overview



## Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is the state agency that leads economic development efforts for Illinois. Its mission is to support and maintain a climate that enables a strong economy for taxpayers, businesses, workers and communities by keeping, attracting and growing businesses, maintaining a skilled workforce, and enhancing communities so that the climate here is one in which businesses (small and large) and workers can succeed to the greatest extent possible. A primary focus is to retain and create jobs in Illinois by assisting:

Existing businesses, encouraging them to reinvest and create more jobs for Illinois citizens;

New businesses, inviting them to relocate, invest and create new jobs;

International companies, positioning Illinois as a global business destination for Foreign Direct Investment;

Entrepreneurs and investors, connecting resources to support their startups and ventures; and

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Locally and globally, promoting Illinois as a world-class tourism and film destination.

DCEO works with businesses, local governments and community organizations to advance economic development and improve the state's competitiveness in the global economy. DCEO is organized into the following offices that are focused on economic growth for the State of Illinois:

**Business Development:** Administers job creation/retention grants, loans and tax credit programs;

**Community Assistance:** helps low-income households in Illinois maintain utility services and reduce energy costs through improved energy efficiency, and helps individuals and families move toward stabilization;

**Community Development:** Utilizes federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding to administer community infrastructure, housing and disaster recovery funding programs;

**Employment and Training:** Oversees statewide workforce training system and promotes and coordinates initiatives to bridge skills gaps;

**Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology:** Catalyzes local, national and global partnerships including the Small Business Development Center network and the Advantage Illinois program that strengthen Illinois' competitive advantage;

**Film:** Promotes the state's film and theatre industry through tax incentives, including the Illinois Film Tax Credit;

**Minority Economic Empowerment:** promote opportunities for all minority communities across the state through targeted programs, resources and advocates. The goal is to ensure minority enterprises have an equal opportunity to contribute to the growth of the Illinois economy;

**Regional Economic Development:** Integrates economic development activities and outreach across the state, connecting communities and businesses to programs and assistance;

**Tourism:** Markets state travel opportunities domestically and internationally, contributing to over \$2 billion in state and local tax revenues annually;

**Trade and Investment:** Promotes Illinois' economy through outreach events and trade missions, and provides financial and technical exporting assistance to Illinois companies; and

**Urban Assistance:** Manages the Urban Weatherization Initiative, targeting homes in disadvantaged communities and training home energy technicians, and the Employment Opportunities Grant program, which trains participants in the construction trade industry.

### **Office of Employment and Training**

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Supporting innovative workforce programs that connect employers to a highly skilled workforce is central to Illinois' commitment to ensure that businesses and communities thrive in Illinois. The Office of Employment and Training (OET) administers the WIOA Title IB Programs, WIOA statewide activities including rapid response and the training component of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act Program. Key units of the OET include: Planning, Policy, Performance, Monitoring, Reporting, Rapid Response and Trade, Technical Assistance and staff support to state workforce board activities.

### **Coordination with Economic Development**

DCEO is responsible for ensuring that economic development activities are integrated with the workforce strategies outlined in Il.c.1. Over the last decade, there has been a purposeful move to integrate economic and workforce development services at the state, regional and local levels. At the state level, DCEO's Business Development, Regional Economic Development Offices and the Office of Employment and Training collaborate to respond to the needs of business and industry in Illinois. This collaboration has accelerated over the last year under the leadership of the Governor and DCEO Director. There have been multiple informational briefings between offices and a marked increase in the use of cross-cutting teams to bring additional perspective and resources to bear on efforts of business retention, layoff aversion and business expansion. Establishing, maintaining and expanding these relationships is critical to the successful implementation of workforce strategies and activities.

### **Coordination with Community Development**

DCEO's Office of Community Assistance oversees the employment and training programs under the Community Services Block Grant Program funding. The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program provides federal funding to Illinois' 36 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to carry out locally designed programs providing a range of services and activities that have measurable impacts on the causes and effects of poverty. The CSBG program assists low-income populations with transportation, clothing, health services, food, shelter and programs designed to increase self-sufficiency, such as job preparedness, education and housing assistance. Small business loans are also available with CSBG funding. DCEO will use the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state, regional and local planning process to better align and integrate this program into the workforce and education system to strengthen Illinois' communities.

### **Guaranteeing Accessibility**

The Department's Office of Equal Opportunity (EO) Monitoring and Compliance is responsible for monitoring program and physical accessibility issues for WIOA-funded activities supported by the Office of Employment and Training, all its grantees including LWIAs, and one-stop centers across the state. In 2018, the EO offices in the Departments of DCEO and IDES developed an agreement to better manage the ADA monitoring process of American Job Centers. This

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agreement allows for better coordination of office inspection timing and for improved cross-agency communication regarding inspection findings. In addition, both offices agreed to use the same inspection checklist to promote cross-agency integration of effort.

In facilities with both Title IB and Title III staff, DCEO conducts the ADA inspections to avoid duplication of services and better align findings and related reports. DCEO provides IDES with the ADA inspection report after the inspection has been completed. If IDES is the leaseholder, IDES will then work with the Illinois Department of Central Management Services, which oversees all leases in state agencies reporting to the Governor, and/or the landlord to correct any findings. This agreement between agencies is a tangible example of WIOA service integration that increases efficiency and effectiveness of each department's EO staff and helps ensure that all individuals have access to WIOA services.

### **Illinois Talent Pipeline Program**

The Illinois Talent Pipeline Program develops strategies to train workers who can contribute to the growth and success of companies. Projects funded under this program are intended to develop sustainable work-based learning programs that will help Illinois companies retain and train current workers and hire new staff. The goal of a talent pipeline grant is to maintain a steady supply of hireable talent for the employer being served. Applications must address one or more of these Illinois Talent Pipeline activities to be considered for funding:

Projects that connect talent strategies with business needs;

Layoff aversion projects that support businesses and workers that are impacted or at risk of being impacted by company closures or layoffs; or

Projects that expand work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeships for targeted populations.

### **Youth Career Pathways Program**

The Youth Career Pathways Program provides grants for projects that address priorities identified in the WIOA Unified State Plan and that also incorporate practices that align with the statewide-adopted definition for a career pathway framework. Proposals must serve opportunity youth that face barriers to continued education and employment. Additionally, successful pilot projects will integrate workforce, education and economic development services and break down barriers to accessing job-driven training, resulting in employment opportunities. These projects will inform a framework for the development of sustainable career pathways for young people throughout the state. Additionally, they will assist in the effective and efficient implementation of WIOA regulations within Illinois' economic development regions.

### **Illinois Community College Board**

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The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state coordinating organization for the Illinois Community College System - the third largest in the country and the leading public workforce development trainer in the state. The ICCB has statutory responsibility for administering state and federal grants to community college districts and adult education providers and managing high school equivalency testing for Illinois. Illinois community colleges serve over 600,000 residents each year in credit, noncredit, and continuing education courses. Illinois is home to 48 colleges in 39 community college districts which provide high quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities to the entire state. The total economic output of Illinois community colleges on the statewide economy in fiscal year 2020 is estimated at \$3.5 billion.

The ICCB administers Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and receives funding for this purpose through the United States Department of Education Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education. Title II of the WIOA law reauthorizes and enhances the Adult Education & Literacy Act (AELA).

The eligible population to be served under the AELA include individuals who have attained 16 years of age and who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law and are basic skills deficient, do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education, or are English language learners.

The purpose of Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 is to provide adult education and literacy services in order to assist adults in becoming literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency; assist adults who are parents or family members in obtaining education and skills that are necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family; assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in transitioning to postsecondary education and training including through career pathways; assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in improving their reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills in English mathematics skills; acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

The ICCB recognizes that the Illinois Adult Education system must prepare the state's residents with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in post-secondary education and the workforce. To this end, the Illinois' system has long been a national leader in advancing career and integrated pathways and the implementation of instructional models that combine basic skills and English Language instruction with employability skills and workforce training through integration with college and career readiness preparation, credit-bearing career and technical education programs, or non-credit vocational training. With an emphasis on expanding and scaling comprehensive career pathways, the Illinois Adult Education system is proactively responding to a future of work that demands robust skill enhancement for its participants in the new economy.

The continuum of key AELA Services include:

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- Adult Basic Education for learners at the most basic literacy levels.
- Adult Secondary Education to prepare learners for their High School Equivalency Certificate.
- English as a Second Language instruction.
- Integrated Education and Literacy / Civics instruction for English Language Learners.
- Bridge Programming for ABE learners to provide work-based contextualized instruction.
- College and career readiness instruction to prepare learners to transition to post-secondary education or training.
- Employability Skills instruction embedded in all elements of Adult Education and Literacy instruction.
- Integrated Education and Training [through the ICCB's Integrated Career & Academic Preparation System (ICAPS)] that blends ASE instruction and workforce training, leading to an industry-recognized credential and community college certificates at those programs administered by the state's community colleges.

### **Illinois Department of Employment Security**

In addition to administering the Unemployment Insurance program in IL, IDES provides employment services to job seekers and businesses through programs funded by federal grants under: Wagner-Peyser Act (Title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WIOA); the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program (RESEA); Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JMSG); the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program (WOTC); Foreign Labor Certification (FLC) program; and Federal Bonding Program.

Wagner-Peyser funds are used by IDES to: provide employment services to job seekers and businesses; manage the state's online labor exchange, Illinois JobLink (IJL); and provide economic information and analysis.

Employment Services (ES) are provided to all job seekers looking for employment and employers seeking qualified individuals for employment. Those services include but are not limited to: career services, job readiness, employer outreach, employer seminars, employment retention services, labor market information, career information, employment plans, and referrals to training, educational opportunities, and supportive services. ES services are organized as "7a" and "7b" services reflecting the designation under WP law that 10% of funds can be designated for special initiatives. Under this provision (known as 7b), IDES focuses on returning citizens and youth (described below). In addition to direct services to job seekers and employers, IDES is responsible for increasing community awareness about the services provided via job fairs, community collaborations, onsite recruitments, resource linkage and presentations to both job seekers and employers.

IDES' ES services are provided by IDES staff in offices that are co-located with the partners, most frequently in American Job Centers (AJCs)[\[1\]](#). IDES coordinates with the state agencies responsible for the other WIOA Titles Illinois (Department of Commerce and Economic

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Opportunity (Title I), Illinois Community College Board (Title II), Department of Human Service's Division of Rehabilitation Services (Title IV)), each local LWIA administrator and several other partners required under federal law to provide a range of services in the AJCs across the state, as well as additional "affiliate" sites. These centers provide job seekers and employers "one stop" to find a range of employment, workforce, training, and other support services from multiple public and private entities.

### **Wagner-Peyser funded services:**

*Illinois JobLink:* IllinoisJobLink.com (IJL) was established as Illinois' Labor Exchange System as required under Wagner-Peyser to provide a job bank plus intuitive tools and resources that empower job seekers and employers. IJL leverages the O\*NET system, the nation's primary source of occupational information, to deliver highly relevant and precise job and resume matches. This integration allows job seekers and employers to move seamlessly from self-service activities to receiving help from their local AJC. IJL is fully integrated with the case management section which determines eligibility for job seeker services and maintains program registration and enrollment records for state and federal programs. The case management system was designed for U.S. DOL/ETA grants and provides one-stop service tracking, data collection, and reporting. It allows case managers to track client self-services and allows partner programs to access clients' universal information. Job seekers can post resumes, search for jobs, and maintain a work search record. Employers create and maintain a self-service account for the purpose of posting open positions and searching for potential candidates.

IDES has a dedicated staff team that provides IJL Help Desk support utilizing the Finesse phone system. Within the IJL team are subject matter experts (SMEs) who are responsible for vetting pending new employer accounts. These staff assist employers in navigating through the approval process with direct contact. For those employers holding federal contracts or working with specific workforce programs such as the Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Program (MSFW) or Foreign Labor Certification, IJL provides the means to meet federal job posting requirements, serving as the state's Agricultural Recruiting System.

### **Services for Job Seekers:**

IDES staff provide employment services and resources at no cost to the job seeker (these are referred to as "7a"). Services for job seekers may include: registration in Illinoisjoblink.com; assessments; assistance with individual employment plans; workshops (job readiness, resume building, job search techniques, interview skills, social media management, online job applications, etc); on-site recruitment events; referrals to open positions; assistance with IJL job search tools; and referrals to other programs and partner agencies. Referrals to other programs and/or partner workforce agencies can be for: job training; adult education or literacy programs; specialized services for veterans, youth, older workers, returning citizens, and people with disabilities. Interpretation and translation services are provided for LEP customers daily. Ongoing collaborations with various external providers are key to the success of service



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provision to the many populations needing LEP services. The internal signage is in English and Spanish at the local offices with additional interpretation services available upon request.

### **Outreach to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW):**

Wagner-Peyser regulations require that IDES ensure that domestic MSFWs have the opportunity to access ES services that are “qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate” to non-MSFW job seekers. IDES is required to conduct outreach to where MSFWs and their families work and reside in order to: make sure that they know about IDES services; make referrals to community partners that specialize in serving MSFWs; and collect any complaints related to their working conditions. In addition to IDES staff dedicated to conducting MSFW outreach, IDES also employs a State Monitor Advocate who monitors IDES services to ensure that the agency is complying with all federal requirements for serving MSFWs.

### **Hire the Future (HTF):**

HTF is one of the 7b programs and is designed to provide qualified candidates to employers seeking to fill positions within their respective companies. HTF strives to give the youth of Illinois opportunities to gain work experience. IDES takes an active role in linking youth with employers who understand the importance of encouraging career growth.

The HTF program is designed to provide youth (ages 16-24) with employment assistance in job readiness and career development services. Employers participate in this program by offering entry level positions that may provide on-the-job training opportunities. Jobs may be full or part time.

### **The Re-entry Employment Service Program (RESP):**

RESP is the other 7b program and offers assistance to Returning Citizens (persons who are residents of a given area that were previously incarcerated) through the administration of the RESP Program, which is designed to assist individuals in overcoming employment hurdles. RESP staff administer direct case management through IllinoisJobLink.com to returning citizens. This assistance begins with an assessment interview and can include: referrals to WIOA workforce partners; staff-assisted services; career guidance; job search activities; referrals to employment; resume assistance and interview coaching. IDES staff interview clients to identify employment barriers and then work with both the client and workforce providers to remediate those barriers in obtaining gainful employment.

### **Employer Outreach:**

IDES reaches out to individual employers, industry associations, chambers of commerce, economic groups, community-based organizations, and other employing entities to determine their hiring and workforce needs. IDES employer outreach staff: conduct workshops and educate employers on services offered by IDES and other partner programs; coordinate and co-host hiring events; market Illinois Job Link and assist with entering job orders; market

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WorkShare Illinois (Illinois short-term compensation program); refer qualified candidates; provide data and information for workforce planning; and assist with accessing IDES' Fidelity Bonding and Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC) programs. The IDES employer outreach staff are members of the business services teams in the LWIAs through which they coordinate outreach with local partners.

### **Economic Information and Analysis (EI&A):**

In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA), EI&A collects, analyzes, and disseminates data and related information, such as current employment statistics, average wages, job trends, and demographic characteristics that is useful in planning and evaluating economic and workforce development strategies. EI&A augments Title III funded activities with a range of independently-funded projects to meet a wide range of needs among government and business audiences. Through these innovative applications, the Division assists human service and economic development agencies in achieving program goals by expanding the usage of data previously collected. EI&A regularly supplies this workforce, career and labor market information to entities involved in or responsible for planning and decision-making in a small geography context, such as cities, counties, and other political subdivisions. These include Local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Boards, dislocated worker centers, local economic development commissions, chambers of commerce, educational institutions, public utilities, and individual businesses.

### **Employment Services programs with other federal funding:**

*Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA):* RESEA is a program that targets UI claimants that have been determined to be most likely to exhaust benefits and transitioning veterans receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX). By providing RESEA Services to job seekers, the goal is improving employment outcomes of claimants and reducing the average duration of unemployment compensation through re-employment activities. UI claimants identified for the RESEA program are required to participate to remain eligible for UI benefits. Services provided by the RESEA teams include, but are not limited to, orientations to the American Job Centers and services offered by our workforce partners, development of individual employment plans specific to the client's needs, labor market information, career information, job readiness workshops, employment retention services and referrals to employment, training and educational services.

### **Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Program:**

IDES offers priority career service and referral to job training opportunities to eligible veterans and other eligible persons ensuring them a smooth transition to the civilian workforce. The mission of the JVSG program is to assist those eligible veterans and other eligible persons who self-attest to having one or more Significant Barriers to Employment to obtain meaningful

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employment and connect employers with qualified veterans and other eligible persons candidates. Eligible veterans are those that have served more than 180 days on Active Duty and discharge other than dishonorable. If the DD form 214 states “Dishonorable Discharge”, “Discharge under Dishonorable Conditions”, or “Entry-Level / Unconditional Discharge” then the individual is not considered an eligible veteran for employment services from a Veteran Representative. All veterans, regardless of the type of military discharge, can receive staff-assisted Basic/Individualized Career Services from an Employment Services (ES) staff as well as any AJC Partners. Veterans and other eligible persons self-attesting to one or more Significant Barriers to Employment (SBEs) must be referred to the Veterans Career Coach - Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialist (VCC-DVOP) for Individualized Career Services. Veterans Career Coach - DVOP specialists (VCC-DVOP) provide Individualized Career Services (Assessment Interview and / or Individual Employment Plan) to veterans and other eligible persons who have self-attested to having one or more SBEs. In addition to Individualized Career Services, the VCC-DVOP specialists facilitate the Case Management process to guide and monitor the progress of these veterans and other eligible persons. They work collectively with all AJC and Community Partners to assist veterans and other eligible persons to mitigate their SBEs so they can concentrate on obtaining & retaining meaningful careers. Veterans Business Specialist - LVER (VBS-LVER) reach out to the employer community, including employers, employer associations, and business groups, to promote the advantages of hiring veterans and other eligible persons. VBS-LVERs advocate for the hiring of veterans and other eligible persons served by the AJC with business, industry, and other community-based organizations. Activities include, but are not limited to, participating in hiring events, conducting employer outreach, facilitating job search workshops in conjunction with employers, developing job opportunities, and informing Federal Contractors of the process to hire qualified veterans and other eligible persons. VBS-LVERs are also responsible for conducting training to all staff and partners within the state’s employment service delivery system to ensure easier access to the appropriate employment and training services for job seeking veterans and other eligible persons.

IDES is also involved in special initiatives for incarcerated veterans, veterans experiencing homelessness, and veterans with service-connected disabilities:

The Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) eligible veterans receive employment focused workshops while incarcerated in designated Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) facilities. IDES coordinates with IDOC to provide employment workshops for inmates that are within 18 months of their maximum release date and are eligible veterans. The IVTP workshops are facilitated by DVOP specialists and place emphasis on job search techniques and resources to help these veterans address the unique employment barriers and other obstacles they will face when attempting to reenter the job market after their release. IVTP veterans within 90-days of release are referred by the IVTP facilitators to a DVOP nearest to their relocation address for more Individualized Career Services.

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Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) is a DOL-VETS grant program with multiple grantees in Illinois. DVOP specialists are outstationed at the HVRP Grantee sites to assist with employment. In addition, to the extent possible, IDES supports Stand Down (all veterans) and Stand Up (Women Vets) events, coordinated by the Department of Veterans Affairs and other DOL-VETS approved grantees to provide resource services to homeless veterans. IDES supports these events with assistance from our DVOP staff.

Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E) is a U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs program. IDES focuses on the Re-Employment Track to assist Title 38, Chapter 31 veterans with service-connected disabilities and employment barriers to prepare for, find, and maintain suitable jobs. VR&E counselors refer veterans who are within 90-days of completing their VR&E funded training / rehabilitation and they are assigned to a DVOP specialist for Labor Market Information or Individualized Career Services as well as possible implementation of the Case Management Process.

### **Foreign Labor Certification:**

IDES assists employers in complying with federal requirements when they seek to hire foreign workers under the federal H2A (seasonal agricultural jobs) and H2B (non-agricultural jobs) visa programs. IDES ensures that there are not enough qualified U.S. workers available to perform the work and that the hiring of foreign workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers. To do that, IDES handles the placement of employer job orders, inspection of housing for agricultural workers, and the administration of prevailing wage and practice surveys.

### **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Program:**

WOTC is a federal income tax credit incentive provided to private sector employers. An employer may be eligible for WOTC when they hire from certain target groups of job seekers who face employment barriers. The requirements for the program are set by the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. WOTC is an incentive for employers and is intended to help individuals move from economic dependency, while participating employers can reduce their income tax liability. The maximum tax credit ranges from \$1,200 to \$9,600, depending on the employee hired.

### **Fidelity Bonding Program (FBP):**

The U.S. Department of Labor established the FBP to provide fidelity bonds that guarantee honesty for "at-risk," hard-to-place job seekers. The bonds cover the first six months of employment. There is no cost to the job applicant or the employer. The FBP is a unique hiring incentive tool and targets individuals whose backgrounds can pose significant barriers to securing or retaining employment, including:

- Justice-involved citizens

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- Individuals in recovery from substance use disorders
- Recipients of public assistance
- Individuals with poor credit records
- Economically-disadvantaged youth and adults who lack work histories
- Individuals dishonorably discharged from the military

The bonds issued by the FBP guarantee the job honesty of job seekers to employers who want to hire them. IDES assists employers who can request the bonds – starting at \$5000 up to \$25,000 free-of-charge as an incentive to hire these applicants.

### **Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services**

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is the designated state agency for administration of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program in Illinois. The main focus of the Department is to assist individuals with significant disabilities to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment. VR services are designed to prepare an individual for employment through an individualized planning process. Key VR services include:

- Job Placement - DRS VR counselors work with customers to identify job opportunities in the community, develop a resume and prepare for interviews. Other customers receive more intensive job placement and preparation services through community rehabilitation program agencies under contract to DRS.
- On-the-Job Training and Evaluations - Many VR customers receive on-the-job training and evaluation services arranged by DRS counselors in conjunction with local employers. These services provide an opportunity to demonstrate job skills and learn the requirements of a specific job.
- College and University Training - DRS assists many customers in pursuing a degree at a community college or at a university, based on the needs and abilities of the individual. Each year DRS assists about 3,500 individuals in attending college training.
- Treatment and Restoration Services - VR funds may be used to purchase medical, surgical, or psychological services, as well as other therapeutic services, to help customers achieve greater functioning and reduce barriers to employment.
- Supported Employment - Individuals with most significant disabilities often require a high level of support, both in preparation and on-the-job assistance, in order to achieve and maintain employment. Supported employment provides a variety of supports, such as job coaching, to assist customers in meeting employment goals.
- Assistive Technology - Many people with disabilities utilize a variety of technological devices to function in the world of work and increase their employment potential. The DRS VR program can assist customers with evaluation services and purchase of technology equipment that will meet their individual needs.

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- Transition Services - Students with disabilities benefit from work-based learning experiences and other pre-employment services designed to prepare them for post-school employment or additional training.
- DRS counselors establish program eligibility based on an evaluation of functional limitations, then work with customers to develop an individualized plan for employment. Many services are provided through a network of community partners with the capacity to assist customers in obtaining employment consistent with their needs. These include:
  - Around 150 school districts which provide pre-employment transition services, including work-based learning experiences, to over 10,000 students with disabilities;
  - About 135 community rehabilitation providers who provide job development, job placement and supported employment services to around 4,000 individuals; and,
  - Community colleges and universities that provide training services to about 3,500 individuals pursuing degrees or credentials to enhance employment skills.

DRS works in partnership with other elements of the workforce system to provide people with disabilities access to a wide range of services and employment opportunities. DRS staff are members of local workforce boards and serve as a key linkage to information on disability awareness, work accommodations and accessibility requirements.

### **Employment First Initiative**

An important resource for meeting the employment needs of Illinoisans with disabilities is the Employment First initiative. Illinois became an Employment First state in July 2013 with the passage of the Employment First Act (Public Act 98-91). Employment First is a national movement to promote competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities, particularly individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. WIOA defines “competitive integrated employment” as the key objective for people with disabilities, creating inherent synergy between the two laws.

In 2009, Public Act 96-0368 created the Illinois Task Force on the Employment and Economic Development for Persons with Disabilities (EEOPD) to work towards the goal of increasing competitive integrated employment for citizens with disabilities. Members of the task force are appointed by the Governor and include people with disabilities, business representatives and officials from state agencies. The Employment First Act assigned additional responsibilities to the EEOPD for coordinating state efforts in pursuit of the Act’s objectives.

The guiding principles of the WIOA Unified State Plan align directly with Employment First. The focus on integrated service delivery, robust engagement with business, competitiveness and accessibility, cross-agency collaboration and alignment of results-driven practices are shared by both the Unified State Plan and the Employment First movement and are in line with the findings and goals of the EEOPD. In addition, EEOPD is linked to the IWIB to ensure coordination and alignment of policy and practice rather than the IWIB creating a duplicative structure.

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[1] Under WIOA states are required to operate American Job Centers in each local workforce innovation area (LWIA). Illinois has 22 LWIAs and each is governed by a Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB).

### State Board

Overseeing the Workforce Development System on behalf of the Governor and General Assembly is the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB). The IWIB provides oversight and strategic leadership to the Workforce Development System to further the state's goals of meeting the workforce needs of businesses and workers. Appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Illinois Senate, IWIB members are charged with the task of reviewing the progress of the state's workforce development efforts. To meet this directive, the IWIB, in accordance with federal legislation, includes leaders from business, state agencies, industry, labor, education, and community-based organizations.

The IWIB is led by two governor-appointed co-chairs – one representing the system and one representing business.

The Governor-appointed Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) includes leaders from state, business, industry, labor, education, and community-based organizations with the goal of evaluating and meeting the workforce needs of Illinois' employers and workers.

IWIB is responsible for:

- Overseeing the development, implementation and modification of the Unified State Plan
- Convening all relevant programs, required partners and stakeholders, and
- Providing oversight and strategic leadership for the state Workforce Development System.

Through a committee and task force structure, IWIB representatives from private organizations and public partner programs offer policy recommendations to strengthen Illinois' workforce system.

Members of the IWIB represent community-based organizations, agencies or other entities and require optimum policymaking authority within those organizations. The IWIB also represents the diverse regions of the state, including urban, rural and suburban areas. Over 51 percent of the IWIB is made up of business representatives from both small and large businesses across Illinois. Business representatives include employers who are users of the Workforce Development System, leaders with optimum policy-making or hiring authority within their organization, representing diversity in company geography, industry, and size.

Other IWIB members include:

- the Governor
- A member from each chamber of the state legislature - two members are appointed from each chamber, one from the majority party, one from the minority.
- Local chief elected officials
- State government officials

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- Governor designees
- Other representatives
  
- labor organizations;
- Registered apprenticeship
- youth activities representatives;
- Workforce training representatives and education, including adult education, vocational rehabilitation, employment security, and other institutional representatives.

The Governor has made it a priority to recruit new business leaders to ensure board can provide broad and renewed insight for setting policies, and that ensures workforce development activities are aligned and integrated with education and economic development in a way that serves the needs of employers, incumbent workers and job seekers.

To support and strengthen collaboration with the P-16 education system and local workforce boards and areas, the Governor has ensured members from the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Department of Human Services, the Illinois Community College Board, Career & Technical Education under the Carl D. Perkins Act, and the sitting president of the Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) have a central role on the state board as Ex-Officio, Non-Voting representatives.

### IWIB Roster – October 2023

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Elba	Aranda-Suh	National Latino Education Institute
Tom	Ashby	Coordinated Transportation Development, Inc.
Christine	Caves	Quad Cities Chamber
Donna	Dorsey	Navistar Inc.
Christopher "C.D."	Daidsmeyer	Illinois Road Contractors, Inc.
Kara	Demirjian Huss	DCC Marketing TCCI
Victor	Dickson	Safer Foundation
Kaili	Emmrich	Google
Marcus	Evans	Illinois House of Representatives 33rd District
Daniele	Ferrari	ITC, Inc
Jennifer	Foster	Illinois Community College Board
Jane	Flanagan	Illinois Department of Labor
David	Friedman	AutonomyWorks
Karina	Garcia	A&A Transportation 1 Inc.
Jess	Giudici	Duravant
Norine	Hammond	Illinois House of Representatives, 94th District
Aliana	Harkens	Current



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Kevin	Irvine	Rush University Medical Center
Steve	LeFaver	PDC30 - North Central Illinois Finishing Trades Institute
William	Lo	Carbondale Chamber of Commerce
Ray	Marchiori	Illinois Department of Employment Security
Marlon	McClinton	Utilivate Technologies, LLC
Sheryl	Morris	UNITE HERE Chicago Hospitality Institute (UHCHI)
Mboka	Mwilambwe	Mayor of Bloomington IL
Sandeep	Nain	Sntial Technologies, Inc.
Barbara	Oilschlager	Lake County Vocational System
Rahnee	Patrick	Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services
Teresa "Terri"	Payne	AFL-CIO
Michael	Perry	AFSCME Council 31
Alex	Purcell	United
Kristin	Richards	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Daniel	Serota	AON
Elizabeth	Stuck	MXD USA
Chris	Toppin	AAR Corp
Jane	Vellinga	Chicago Women In Trades
Andrew	Warrington	United Conveyor Corporation
Terry	Wilkerson	Rend Lake College
Lisa	Wojick	Challenge Unlimited
<b>Ex-Officio Members</b>		
Tony	Sanders	Illinois State Board of Education
Caroline	Portlock	IWP representative
Brian	Durham	Illinois Community College Board
Grace	Hou	Illinois Department of Human Services
Nina	Tangman	Illinois Board of Higher Education
Whitney	Thompson	Illinois Community College Board

### IWIB Committee Structure

The IWIB utilized the standing committees, workgroups, and task forces to implement the IWIB Strategic Plan and the Unified State Plan.

IWIB committees include in alphabetical order:

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1. Apprenticeship Illinois Committee
2. Business Engagement Committee
3. Career Pathways Targeted Populations Committee
4. Continuous Improvement Committee
5. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Committee
6. Executive Committee

The work of the committees demonstrates the work of the IWIB. Each committee's work grows out of the priorities of the IWIB and is explained in the committee's charge and priority areas.

### **Apprenticeship Illinois Committee**

Charge:

- Fully integrate apprenticeship into state workforce development, education, and economic development strategies and programs.
- Support the rapid development of new apprenticeship programs and/or the significant expansion of existing programs.
- Support the development and recruitment of a diverse pipeline of apprentices.
- Build state capacity to make it easier for businesses to start apprenticeship programs and for apprentices to access opportunities.

Committee Priorities:

- Expanding apprenticeships geographically and to new industries.
- Increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in apprenticeship.
- Formalizing statewide apprenticeship coordination across partnering state agencies.
- Growing statewide capacity to provide job seekers and businesses apprenticeship opportunities.

### **Business Engagement Committee (BEC)**

Charge:

- Provide guidance and direction to help bridge the gap between Illinois' important business sectors and employers, and the Illinois Workforce Development System.

Committee Priorities:

7. Engage Illinois' business community in the development and direction of regional industry-led sector partnerships that will convene employers, workforce development professionals, and other regional institutions and partners. These partnerships will seek to coordinate investments, align workforce and education systems, and promote economic growth across the state.

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8. Develop and improve communication mechanisms between employers and the Workforce Development System in order to increase employers' awareness of the services that
9. are designed to provide them with the skilled workforce they require. Assist the IWIB and Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs) with outreach, recruitment, and engagement of business representatives to the board(s), that are representative of the geographic, demographic, and target industries of the state or local area, respectively.

### Career Pathways Targeted Populations Committee (CPTP)

#### Charges:

- Create opportunities for job seekers within specified targeted populations of all ages and abilities, understanding that creating equitable access to career pathways for target populations creates a more robust workforce system. Our goal is to enhance career awareness, career skills, career retention, and life skills through experiences with education and training, work-based learning, and essential skills leading to in-demand, high-wage occupations for target populations.

Through education and training and work-based learning, our goal is to enhance occupational skills, career awareness, and job retention in in-demand, high-wage careers for target populations.

- Serves as the intersection between job seekers, businesses, the education system, local workforce agencies, community-based organizations, and other interested stakeholders.

#### Committee Priorities:

- **Continuous Improvement:** Being a link between the IWIB and the Local Workforce system to impact and improve the lives of Illinois citizens, particularly those that are identified as WIOA-targeted populations, recognizing the equity implications of this work.
- **Service Integration:** Integration and comprehensive involvement of all partners, including the four core partners, business sector, secondary and postsecondary education, workforce labor, legislative, and local implementation partners. There is a need for a holistic approach for target populations.
- **Collaboration:** Act as a resource regarding career pathways for target populations across the state and in partnership with the committees and task forces of the IWIB. Participate in grant Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) as relevant.
- **Support Career Pathway Development for Target Populations:** Our three workgroups, the Returning Citizens Workgroup, Disability Workgroup, and Opportunity Youth Workgroup, work to advance career pathway opportunities for target populations.

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## Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC)

### Charge:

- **Evaluation Design.** Review evaluation elements of policies, programs, and processes created or overseen by the IWIB to determine the appropriateness of their relationship to their expected outcomes and application of an equity lens. Provide feedback and recommendations.
- **Evaluation Outcomes.** Review outcomes of the evaluation to determine if results conformed to the intended equitable outcome. Provide feedback and recommendations.
- **Continuous Improvement at Local Level.** Review local performance related to the six federal performance measures for the WIOA core partners by applying an equity lens to evaluation and make recommendations about strategies for continuous improvement at local levels.
- **Benchmarks.** Examine and evaluate workforce quality and earning benchmarks and recommend changes.
- **Data Recommendations.** Provide Recommendations for Readily Accessible Data and technical assistance recommendations for an intended audience.
- **Priority Activities.** Manage priority activities as assigned by the IWIB Strategic Plan.

### Committee Priorities:

1. Policy evaluation
2. Develop an understanding of how WIOA programs (under Title One, Two, Three and Four) are evaluated, what continuous improvement processes are in place and included, and what Technical Assistance from the lead agency is involved.
3. Provide the IWIB Committees with a Clear understanding of how outcomes are evaluated – defining the process for upcoming policy.
4. Service Integration

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) Committee

- **Draft Charge 1:** Review the recommendations of the [Equity Task Force](#) and the Governor's [Commission on Workforce Equity and Access](#) and develop a set of priorities that will guide the Committee's work.
- **Draft Charge 2:** Work to ensure that leaders and practitioners in the IL workforce system have the information, data, training, and skills they need to understand the equity

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challenges workforce system customers face and the tools they need to enhance equity in the workforce system.

- **Draft Charge 3:** Work with IWIB members and leadership to incorporate an equity lens into the IWIB's work.

### **Executive Committee**

#### **Charges**

- Develop policies to strengthen communication between partners and support engagement between employers and the workforce/economic development system.
- Establish goals to improve inequities for the populations we serve, create accessible career pathways for all customers that address barriers to employment, and enhance equality among partners.
- Develop policies and initiatives to improve coordination, communication, and relationships across business service teams, increase access for our clients, customers, and students, and encourage system integration.
- Support a system change from a social services-driven approach to a business-driven one.
- Recommend state policy and/or guidelines to encourage the adoption of effective local business coordination practices with a focus on human-centered engagement.

### **IWIB Professional Development**

Professional development for the IWIB is essential to ensure members are engaged with the system, aware of the program, and able to make an impact on the state. Over the past two years, the IWIB has worked to develop an onboarding process for IWIB members to introduce and reinforce their understanding of their roles and responsibilities, local workforce initiatives and strategies, and relevant workforce data and trends.

Throughout this year, the IWIB has implemented orientation for IWIB members and implemented online training focused on programs over which the board has authority. Online module topics include board effectiveness, partners and partnership, board policy development and oversight, and roles and responsibilities of represented sectors.

#### **Action Items:**

- a. Maintain the implementation plan, including timelines and delivery strategies,
- b. Utilize the annual IWIB retreat or time prior to regular quarterly meetings to inform members of the WIOA system climate.

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- c. Update the comprehensive, online IWIB Member Manual and maintain virtual libraries on workNet (including webinars, videos, and podcasts) for new IWIB and LWIB members. Topics should include their role, responsibilities, the overall purpose of the board, relevant legislation, an overview of WIOA programs and policies, core and required agency partners, and other providers of WIOA services.
- d. Create a mentoring program to connect new members with long-term members.
- e. Seek assistance from the National Association of Workforce Boards in building these libraries; adopt or adapt materials they might have already developed.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) stressed the need for the provision of professional development. Illinois' response is the development of a comprehensive Illinois Workforce Academy (IWA). The purpose of the IWA is to support the WIOA system in pursuit of continuous improvement through education. The Illinois Workforce Academy is designed to support the WIOA system in pursuit of continuous improvement through education. The IWA will provide diverse professional development that advances foundational knowledge for all partners to help WIOA personnel have the knowledge, skills, and capacity to serve our customers effectively.

The goal of the IWA is to.

1. Create, promote, and foster a system environment that values development, diversity, growth, critical thinking, and problem-solving opportunities for all employees.
2. Develop a learning platform to enhance requisite knowledge and skills to understand the unique needs of each customer and determine the best way to provide customer-centered service throughout all levels of the WIOA system.
3. Provide quality training that includes leveraging technology and resources that are appropriate to increase individual and organizational productivity through opportunities that enhance knowledge, develop skills, and enrich the system.

The WIOA Professional Development Committee coordinates professional development opportunities, comprised of representatives from the WIOA Core partners and businesses. The WIOA Professional Development Committee is charged with coordinating regional and statewide professional development for the WIOA system as it relates to WIOA implementation, service integration, and policy. As the committee worked to develop the IWA, they implemented a three-pronged approach to professional development to ensure all levels of the system were supported. Workforce Wednesday weekly webinars, regional workshops and a statewide WIOA Summit provide year-round support for the WIOA system.

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## Assessment of Core Programs

### Assessment of Core and One-Stop Program Partner Programs.

The Core Partners continue to monitor program enrollment, obligations and expenditures to assess the ability of local workforce areas and the State as a whole to meet program requirements and goals. Going forward, program staff will consult with federal staff as needed and make recommendations to WIOA program directors, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and the IWIB's Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) in response to any issues of concern and to identify best practices evolving from adapting service delivery during the pandemic.

The Governor, General Assembly, Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and state agency partners continuously assess the performance outcomes of the workforce system in annual performance and benchmark reports. The state agencies responsible for each of the core programs outlined in program-specific areas constantly assess performance accountability measures at the state, regional and local levels as required by each core program. To ensure that program partners are well-positioned to meet the performance accountability requirements of WIOA, a working group on performance accountability was formed. This group will work with core partners to ensure that systems have the capacity to collect and report required new and updated data elements under WIOA, as well as the capacity to track aggregate data for performance indicators applicable to all four core partners to the extent possible.

The core programs continue to work with the IWIB to establish updated procedures to negotiate performance benchmarks as applicable. The state continues to develop strategies for aligning technology and data systems across core programs, and to evaluate common performance outcomes (including the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs by local areas). One tool to support that assessment is a dashboard to aggregate data for all core programs. The CIC Performance Work Group will use a high-level view of each core program's performance by quarter and help identify the need for technical assistance or adjustments. Meanwhile, the state is working to identify common definitions, standards, and procedures to prepare core program partners to meet performance accountability requirements of WIOA. The intent is to ensure that data collected by each core program partner fully conforms to WIOA and accurately reflects the outcomes for each core program on a local level and in aggregate.

The Illinois Community College Board's (ICCB) review process details the criteria for success established by ICCB to each Local Workforce Innovation Board's (LWIB's) appointed designee. Completed reviews are submitted to ICCB. ICCB staff identify areas under the provisions of WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy in which each of the 22 Local LWIBs is required to review, not approve, the Adult Education competitive applications for Adult Education and Literacy federal and state funding through the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). The LWIBs reviewed applications submitted through the competitive process. The review process determines if there is alignment between the submitted Adult Education application and the

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local plan in each local workforce innovation area. The information gathered from the review will be used to evaluate alignment and develop ways to improve alignment between Adult Education and other core and required partners.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) provides reporting for three employment-related performance indicators (employment rate in the second and fourth quarters after exit and median earnings in the second quarter after exit), status in unsubsidized employment and quarterly earnings through direct Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage match. Under “Effectiveness in Serving Employers” the State has selected the measures of “Retention with the same employer” and “Employer Penetration Rate.” IDES will report performance data for Retention by providing (UI) wage match, understanding that this is a shared outcome across all six core programs within the State and will be a combined reporting measure. Wage records will identify a participant’s employment using an establishment identifier – FEIN for example. The Employer Penetration Rate will be determined by each core provider tracking of the number of establishments served within a program year. The State will collect that data and compare it to the aggregate number of employers in a given State and/or county.

Illinois’ WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team includes representatives from all of the WIOA core partners and required one-stop partners administered by State agencies. The team develops and issues field guidance for regional and local planning, the one-stop memoranda of understanding and cost-sharing agreements and provides a mechanism to resolve local WIOA implementation issues between partners. This WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team also reviews regional and local plans, MOUs, and cost-sharing agreements to ensure that local areas have documents that are complete, compliant and committed to the integration of required programs under WIOA. This team works with IWIB committees and work groups to update the planning and MOU guidelines as needed. The Governor’s Guidelines for MOU Development are updated annually to align MOUs with priority activities. The latest version incorporates concepts from the statewide Service Integration Self-Assessment completed by all Local Workforce Innovation Areas.

Illinois continues to track and analyze each LWIA’s training expenditure rate, fund obligation rate and planned vs. actual data on program enrollment. Final revisions have been made to the policy and the CIC is currently engaged in an evaluation process to determine if the policy is meeting its intended outcomes. The State will use the performance data, expanded benchmark report, plan/MOU submission and certification process to assess the quality effectiveness and improvement of programs in each local area.

The IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) has indicated they will be reviewing this information, as part of an overall review and analysis of all assessments conducted of the one-stop system to identify those best practices that all local workforce boards and one-stop operators could benefit from. Recommendations will be made to ensure the continuous improvement of all local workforce areas and ensure one-stop centers are providing the most effective and efficient services to customers.



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The Governor, the General Assembly, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and state agency partners continuously assess the workforce system. The state agency responsible for each of the core programs outlined in program-specific areas regularly assesses performance at the state, regional and local levels as required by each core program.

The state will utilize technology and data systems across one-stop program partners and to evaluate common performance outcomes, including the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs by local areas. For example, a digital dashboard will be used to aggregate data for all core programs. A performance working group of the IWIB will use the dashboard to help identify the need for technical assistance or adjustments in various programs

The WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team will continue to review WIOA regional and local plans and local workforce area's Memorandums of Understanding regarding infrastructure and service delivery costs.. The state level review of these documents provides each of the core partner agencies an opportunity to assess each of the regions and workforce areas in Illinois. The TA Team works with IWIB Committees and workgroups to update the planning guidelines as needed to include information for assessing the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of the one-stop program partners.

The IWIB, in cooperation with the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team, established objective criteria and procedures for use by local boards in assessing and certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, per Section 121(g)(1) of WIOA. The state standard certification criteria will help ensure a minimum level of quality and consistency of services in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers throughout Illinois, regardless of location. As local boards review and update the criteria and processes for certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers biannually, insights will be gained on assessing and establishing standards on effectiveness, physical accessibility, programmatic accessibility and continuous improvement. These review processes will help identify best practices in assessing and improving local one-stop partner programs, both core and required programs, to promote efficiency and effectiveness of the Workforce Development System. Outcomes of the assessments of one-stop program partners will be reported annually and made public. The State will use the performance data, expanded benchmark report, plan/MOU submission and certification process to assess the quality effectiveness and improvement of programs in each

### **Previous Assessment Results**

#### **Service Integration Update and Assessment**

Led by the IWIB Service Integration Workgroup, Illinois assessed service integration in each LWIA in 2019-2020. Each local area went through a service integration self-assessment process where all local partners participated in a facilitated joint assessment of integration. The assessment included current and desired levels of integration along a continuum from isolation to full integration for 16 integration goals organized around seven functions:

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- Customer-centered design
- Staff
- Intake and Assessment
- Services
- Career Pathways
- Information
- Evaluation

The process resulted in each local area creating a plan to move service integration goals towards integration. However, these plans were derailed by the pandemic.

In 2022, the Service Integration Workgroup of the Continuous Improvement Committee was reformed in response to the ever-changing Workforce Development System in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic and subsequent necessary changes to WIOA service delivery. The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) therefore formed the Service Integration Workgroup with the following charge: WIOA empowers State and local elected officials and private sector-led workforce boards to develop a strategic, integrated plan that supports economic growth and labor force needs intended to grow the capacity and performance of the workforce system. The IWIB formed the Service Integration Policy Workgroup to convey State-level expectations of local workforce areas as they address this critically important feature of their one-stop centers. The Service Integration Workgroup prioritized understanding the barriers Workforce Development System customers experience and addressed them through customer-centered design and an equity lens.

Beginning in July 2022, the Service Integration Workgroup, led by Becky Raymond, embarked on setting state-level expectations for WIOA service integration while incorporating applications for local areas in revising the 2018 Service Integration Policy. The policy was approved by the IWIB on behalf of the Executive Committee in May 2023.

The Self-Assessment guidelines were updated to reflect the guidance in the revised Service Integration Policy. The policy, which includes system-level goals and local-level application points, is the foundation of the updated Self-Assessment. The Self-Assessment instructs local areas to assess their progress toward each application point and have the opportunity to request technical assistance if needed. These updates reflect the importance State WIOA Partners place on setting service integration goals for all customers by creating a continually improving, equitable system in operationalizing these goals.

Core Partner Leadership has also begun meeting to develop state-level referral standards for the Illinois Workforce System.

These efforts reflect the importance Illinois places on seamless service delivery and collaboration in and between all WIOA Partners to better serve all of its customers, and informed the development of the strategies included in this plan.

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## Equity Task Force

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) created the Equity Task Force (ETF) in October 2020 to address equity within the Illinois workforce system and ensure that all customers are on pathways to success. The 42-member ETF met bimonthly from October 2020 through May 2022. Three workgroups were established to carry out the work: Data, Policy, and Program. Each group met monthly beginning in November 2020. Through workgroup and task force meetings, background readings, and consultations with experts and practitioners, the ETF explored challenges and opportunities and developed recommendations. In addition to its recommendations to the IWIB, the ETF also identified opportunities for local workforce boards, recognizing the critical role local workforce system leaders and practitioners play in advancing equity.

The following key insights emerged from the work:

### Challenges:

1. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, P.L. 113-128) programs appear to be reaching the at-risk populations the workforce system is intended to serve. Some customers, however, have greater barriers than others, and it is not clear that all customers get the services they need to succeed.
2. There are differences in employment and earnings outcomes by race in the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, but it is difficult to isolate the impact of the WIOA programs from other socioeconomic factors that impact employment and earnings using WIOA data alone.
4. Services accessed and occupational focus of training varies by participants' sex and race.
5. The current infrastructure, staffing, and systems for collecting and analyzing WIOA data in Illinois are not designed to support robust analysis of disaggregated data necessary to advance equity.
6. Organizations providing culturally specific services with a track record of success in serving target populations have trouble partnering with the workforce system and becoming eligible training providers (ETPs).
7. WIOA programs do not provide sufficient supportive services to help customers overcome systemic barriers that disproportionately impact women, people of color, people with disabilities, and other groups.

Through its discussions, background readings, and consultations with state board staff in Colorado and California, the ETF also identified the following opportunities for the IWIB:

- Increase equity by centering the voices and experiences of workforce system customers in decisions impacting the design and quality of workforce system services.

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- Leverage its leadership role better to push forward the state's workforce system equity efforts while empowering and supporting local workforce areas, workforce development leaders, and practitioners to feel ownership over this work.
- Establish an ongoing process for analyzing or diagnosing the impact of the design and implementation of policies on underserved and marginalized individuals and groups, as well as identify and potentially eliminate barriers.

Based on these insights, the Task Force identified recommendations in the following six categories. Detailed recommendations and next steps for each category are included in the report.

1. Build a culture of equity in the Illinois workforce system.
2. Integrate an equity lens into the work of the IWIB.
3. Invest in data analysis capacity, track disaggregated data and outcomes, and identify disparities and factors contributing to those disparities.
4. Diversify workforce system leadership and staff and provide systemwide training on equity, cultural competence, and cultural awareness and humility for those served by the system.
5. Provide funding to, and partner with, organizations providing culturally specific services with a track record of success in serving target populations.
6. Prioritize workforce services that include supportive services.

The IWIB adopted the Equity Task Force Report and created a standing Equity Committee to coordinate implementation of recommendations; and work with the governor, legislature, and state agencies to allocate resources necessary to develop and support the Equity Academy, data analysis, and local board activities identified in the report's recommendations. Recommendations from that report are incorporated into the strategies included in this plan.

### **2023 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) Online Survey.**

Illinois Department of Human Services – Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), Illinois' Title IV partner, committed to a large-scale study to incorporate a variety of methods to ensure participation by people with disabilities across the State, including those from targeted communities and individuals with the most significant disabilities.

The DRS elected to subcontract the 2023 Satisfaction with Customer Service and the Needs Assessment Surveys. Both surveys were conducted concurrently using online methodology. Three customer groups (disabled persons, providers, and employers) were surveyed. More than 19,000 respondents between all three customer groups completed the survey, a stark increase from the 2018 needs assessment, where DRS only collected 1,000 valid responses.

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Based on feedback from all three customer groups, the top five responses from all three groups were scored and weighted by priority of each group. The already implied responses were added for a total weighted score of priorities. This is the weighted priority order for all three groups:

- Making the referral process easier
- Virtual access to counselors
- Online access to applications
- Cross-training of staff on services provided by the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
- Information about transition programs on DRS website
- Better accessibility to other State workforce programs
- Coordinating funding and staffing
- Disability awareness training
- Increased DRS presence in the Illinois Workforce Development Systems
- Extended hours at in-person offices
- Accessible equipment in Workforce Development Centers
- Interpretation services for primary languages

The survey design incorporated feedback from collaboration with the Division of Rehabilitation Services State Rehabilitation Council (DRS-SRC) and a review of town hall meetings held by the Director of the DRS in 2022. The SRC indicated the following top priorities for the survey: statistically significant response rate, accessibility, readability, and translation into multiple languages. Analysis of the town hall transcripts revealed the following areas of concern: transportation, technology infrastructure, limited access to the DRS team, and the need for skills training.

Survey Respondents. Of the overall respondents, 84.9% were either a person with a disability (59.4% of overall respondents) or the parents or guardians of a person with a disability (25.6% of overall respondents). The remaining 15.1% of respondents break out as 12% as Disability Service Provider, Community Partnership Agency/Other, Teacher or Other Educational Professional and 3% Employers.

The disabled customers ages ranged: 8.4% were 18 years of age or younger, and 17.7% were within five (5) years of retirement age. Most respondents, 73.9%, will benefit from improvements in service in the next five years. The smallest age group(s) of disabled people responding were the three age ranges that include school-age students (Less than 14 years old, 15 to 16 years old, and 17 to 18 years old). Even combined these three populations only total 8.4% of the disabled respondents. Fifty-Six percent (56%) of respondents were female; while 42% were male; 1% non-binary; and 2% preferred not to say.

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The greatest percentage of disabled respondents reported identifying with the “Physical disability affecting mobility, walking or standing” (23%); while the remaining respondents reported learning disability (12%); mental illness or psychiatric disorder (12%); cognitive or Intellectual disability (10%); physical disability affecting use of arms or hands (10%); chronic health conditions (10%); autism or autism spectrum disorder (9%); brain Injury or stroke (5%); blind or visual impairment (4%); and deaf or hard of hearing (4%).

Respondents reported belonging to the following special groups: below poverty level (31.3%); student (30.8%); senior citizen (20.3%); LGBTQ (8.3%); homeless (3.6%); veteran (3.1%); religious minority (1.4%); parolee re-entering workforce (0.8%); and refugee or displaced individuals (0.6%).

Both the “disabled” and “provider” respondent groups identify the highest special population as “below poverty level” with 31.3% and 20.8% respectively. Poverty creates an even greater need for employment support related to transportation and support services. The “below poverty level” special population highlights the importance of collaborating with employers to develop quality employment opportunities that include a living wage and benefits.

The DRS provides unbiased services to all special populations, age groups, gender, and disability types across the State of Illinois. However, the demographic data reveals a potentially disproportionate response to the survey which may indicate a disproportionate engagement with DRS based on demographics.

From the demographics, we learn that the African American population and the urban area demographic sector in Illinois access the 2023 Survey link at higher rates than other groups within the State. Of the survey respondents, 48% were white alone; 10% were Hispanic or Latino; 31% were Black or African American alone; and 11% reported “other”. The top five languages by percentage of respondents were English (93.7%); American Sign Language (2.4%); Spanish (2.3%); Arabic (0.3%); and Polish (0.3%). It is encouraging that the Division provides services to minority groups typically underserved.

An overwhelming majority of respondents in all groups reported living, working, or employing disabled persons in Cook County. All counties had at least one (1) disabled person or their parent participate in the survey. However, 77 counties remained underrepresented. Twenty-five (25) counties represented 80% of the disabled person/parents of disabled person respondent groups, with Cook County representing 44% of total overall respondents, and 55% of the highest responding counties (80% of overall counties). The county of residence is important to align disabled workforce growth with the economic development regions to ensure equitable access to workforce opportunities.

Knowing the location of one’s advocates and navigators for workforce resources, training, and support is foundational to customer service. Thirty percent (30%) of total disabled or representative disabled respondents (~3000) reported not knowing the name of the DRS office

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responsible to help them navigate services and overcome roadblocks. Fourteen percent (14%) of total provider respondents (e.g., counselors, educators) reported not knowing the DRS office assigned to their customers. Eighteen percent (18%) of employer respondents reported not knowing the DRS office that would provide them or their employees employment support services.

**Satisfaction with Customer Service.** The key indicator question, “Overall, how happy are you with the employment support provided by the Division of Rehabilitation Services?” was asked of all three customer groups. The customer service results were overall affirming. According to the survey, 47.8% of respondents were either extremely or somewhat happy; 26.5% were neither happy nor unhappy; and 25.7% were somewhat or extremely unhappy with the employment support provided by DRS. Overall, respondents feel positively toward the services received by DRS. Respondents indicated they like the services received.

**Needs Assessment:** The Needs Assessment evaluates the effectiveness of programs within the DRS for the State of Illinois as reflected within the WIOA mission Statement. The survey organizes data into the service areas within the WIOA Mission Statement: Employment Programs, Education Services, Training Programs, and Support Services.

The survey also evaluates the communication and operational strengths of DRS. The survey assesses gaps in current services by asking the three customer groups (disabled, providers, and employers) how well these three program areas met their needs. The three response options were: “Did more than expected”; “Did a good job for me”; and “Did not meet my needs”. The overall understanding of DRS programs and specific terminology by the three groups surveyed is unknown. The difference in interpretation of terms likely impacted the survey, therefore providing skewed results.

**Strengths:** The Satisfaction for Customer Service and Needs Assessment Survey revealed many DRS strengths. The strengths include strong Division leadership; strong and supportive SRC; mature data sets tracking performance measures; well-developed PTS; and strong engagement by the Black/African American minority group.

**Opportunities for improvement:** Overall, the Satisfaction for Customer Service and Needs Assessment Survey revealed many opportunities for improvement for DRS. Areas that could be improved include increased engagement with the Hispanic/Latinx minority group; implement a formal Customer Service program; engage and measure performance of the senior disabled “special population”; and assess workflows and staffing numbers. Specific recommendations for each of the four categories emphasized in the WIOA mission Statement are outlined below.

**Employment Programs:** Disabled customers and their parents, providers, and employers identified improvement in self-employment as their top priority. Additionally, employers need help identifying and incorporating into their business plans quality employment opportunities for people with disabilities, especially “earn while you learn” training options.

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**Education Services:** Needs Assessment recommended improvements in the PTS programs. Based on the age ranges of survey respondents, it is important to remember that any improvements made in the PTS programs while positively impacting future students, will leave gaps for the students who have graduated or aged out before the improvements were initiated. Therefore, for the populations who aged out or completed the high school credentials, it is important to focus improvements on continuing education, training programs, and employment programs that can positively impact the measurable skill gains to fill the needs created by any gaps in services identified by the current student group.

**Training Programs:** Providers and employers reported “Work-based learning- Employer paid work experiences: Learning while earning money at a job” was one of the top three keys to success for the disabled persons, both the Disabled Persons and the Provider groups reported “On-the-job Training: Learning a job while getting paid to work” as a high priority area that DID NOT meet their needs. Increasing “earn while you learn” programs, such as paid work-based learning experiences and on-the-job training opportunities is considered a priority opportunity for improvement.

**Support Services.** Both disabled and provider respondent groups identified the following priorities for needed improvements in the “Support Services” area:

1. Transportation: Help getting from home to school or work.
2. Benefits Planning Services: Help to manage Social Security Benefits and plan to begin working.
3. Assistive Technology Services and Support: Special Equipment and electronic devices to help with reading, speaking, or using a computer.

**Summary:** Overall, respondents feel positively toward the services received by DRS. Respondents indicated they like the services received. However, the demographic data reveals a potentially disproportionate response to the survey which may indicate a disproportionate engagement with DRS for services based on race demographics. The Satisfaction with Customer Service Survey’s greatest learning is the largest percentage of all respondent populations were not aware of which DRS office aided them in obtaining disability services and support and the corresponding relationship to lower satisfaction scores.

### Evaluation

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board’s (IWIB) Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) leads the process to determine appropriate actions and recommendations to the IWIB regarding the design of evaluation and research projects across all four partners and one-stop required partners as opportunities arise. The CIC reviews performance measures to identify strategies that are effective in allowing local boards to meet their performance targets. Similarly, they will look at key factors that might present challenges to those boards that prevent them from meeting their goals. From this information, they identify and make recommendations regarding strategies that all boards should consider as methods for continuous improvement. The CIC



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reviews policies and processes to determine their relationship to positive outcomes, as well as to determine if outcome results conformed to the intended goals. They develop recommendations based upon their findings. Recommendations can be incorporated within new or revised policies, provided in informal guidance, and considered for inclusion in professional development and technical assistance opportunities.

Under the guidance of the CIC, an Evaluation Work Group will meet on a regular basis to ensure the state's Evaluation Toolkit remains relevant and reflects WIOA priorities and best practices for evaluation. Current policies that provide immediate opportunities to assess results are the one-stop center certification process and the recently updated service integration self-assessment.

### Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

#### Title I

##### **I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)**

Illinois will distribute Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth funds according to Section 128(b)(2)(A). Illinois does not intend to distribute WIOA Youth Program funds to local areas based on the youth discretionary allocation formula contained in Section 128(b)(3)(B). Utilizing the additional factors contained in Section 128(b)(3)(B) would, in our estimation, undermine decisions by the Governor and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board regarding the local area boundaries within which WIOA should operate locally. In many instances, local areas would likely be left without the amount of funding necessary to allow them to operate viable youth programs.

##### **ii. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3)**

###### Distribution of Funds-Title I (Adult)

Illinois will distribute WIOA Adult funds according to Section 133(b)(2)(A). Illinois also does not intend to distribute funds to local areas for adults based on the adult discretionary allocation formula contained in Section 133(b)(3)(B). As with the discretionary youth allocation described above, utilizing the additional factors contained in Section 133(b)(3)(B) would likely undermine the decisions by the Governor and the Illinois Workforce Board regarding the local workforce area boundaries. In many instances, local areas would likely be left without the amount of funding necessary to allow them to operate viable adult programs.

##### **iii. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned**

Illinois intends to allocate WIOA dislocated worker funds on the basis of the formula described below, pursuant to section 133(b)(2)(B). The state applies the required minimum provision requirements found in WIOA 133(b)(2)(B)(iii) to the Dislocated Worker funds just as it does for the Adult and Youth funding streams. Each of the following factors will be used to distribute 25 percent of the funds to be allocated:

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- Insured unemployment data: Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) unemployment insurance (UI) claimant data for the most recently completed calendar year will be used. Each local workforce area's share of the state total of such claimants is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.
- Unemployment concentrations: Unemployment figures for the most recently completed program year will be used. Only counties with unemployment rates above the statewide average will be included in the formula. Each workforce area's share of the state total of such unemployment is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.
- Declining industries data: For each workforce area, employment by three-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code is determined for the first calendar quarter (January-March) of the two most recent years for which data is available from IDES' ES-202 UI-covered employment report. The number of jobs lost within industries showing an employment loss from one year to the next is totaled for each area. Each workforce area's share of the state total of such employment loss is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.
- Long-term unemployment data: IDES data for the number of UI claimants who were unemployed for 15 or more weeks during the most recently completed calendar year will be used. Each workforce area's share of the state total of such long-term claimants is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.
- The plant closing and mass layoff data factor will be given zero weighting under the WIOA dislocated worker allocation formula, due to a lack of public use data sources with sufficient geographic detail to adequately serve the requirements of an allocation formula.
- The farmer-rancher economic hardship factor will be given zero weighting under the WIOA dislocated worker allocation formula, due to a lack of public use data sources with sufficient geographic detail to adequately serve the requirements of an allocation formula.

## Title II

### Multi-year grants or contracts

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state's eligible agency for adult education and literacy programs. ICCB is responsible for administering funds and providing fiscal, programmatic, and performance oversight to grantees. The ICCB will provide funding to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Funding for the AEFLA funds, Corrections Education, and Integrated English Language and Civics Education funds are allocated based on an equitable grant competition. Continuation of funding is provided within the designated continuation period if the grantee adheres to all state and federal grant expectations measured through

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annual applications, quarterly financial and program performance reports, and student outcomes measured by the Title II Management and Information System.

Through this funding process, the ICCB will identify, assess, and award multi-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state. AEFLA, Corrections Education, and IELCE funding reflect a number of variables, including availability of funding, demonstrated effectiveness from year to year, and other factors. Applicants may apply as a single entity or as part of a consortium and they can apply for AEFLA funds, Corrections funds, IELCE funds, or any combination of funding opportunities. To ensure equity in access, the application process used to award funding for eligible adult education applicants will be the same for every applicant. All eligible applicants of demonstrated effectiveness must provide evidence of their ability to meet or exceed prescribed performance outcomes and provide evidence of their capacity to provide instructional and support services to the targeted populations identified in the WIOA Unified State Plan.

An eligible applicant is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include: a local education agency; a community-based or faith-based organization; a volunteer literacy organization; an institution of higher education; a public or private nonprofit agency; a library; a public housing authority; a nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; a consortium or coalition or agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries or authorities described above; and a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

To determine if an applicant is an organization of demonstrated effectiveness, all applicants will be required to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve the skills of low-literate adults in the applicable instructional areas as described in the NOFO. Applicants may use existing data to demonstrate the ability to achieve state and federal performance measures for all student levels including English language learners or provide data and information to demonstrate the ability to assist learners in achieving learning gain, including low-literacy level and English language learners. An applicant will be required to demonstrate its record of improving the knowledge and skills needed to transition successfully to post-secondary education, skills training or employment. Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness. Applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of demonstrated effectiveness will not be considered for funding.

In continuation years of a multi-year grant cycle, demonstrated effectiveness will be evaluated based on past performance in achieving state negotiated performance measures, as well as achieving the prescribed requirements of the grant, including the attainment of educational functional level increases/measurable skills gains, and successful programs that transition students to post-secondary education, training and employment.

During the competitive grant cycle, all eligible providers will be notified of the funding opportunity through a uniform public notification and application process and will be asked to submit a competitive application, as well as complete a thorough pre-qualification process. All

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providers who meet all the eligibility requirements will be able to access and participate in the application process of a competitive grant cycle. Considerations used in the competitive process are listed below.

1. The documented need of the eligible applicant to serve individuals in the community who are most in need of literacy services and those who are in need of career pathway services, including individuals who have literacy skills (i.e., literacy statistics, regional and local needs, etc.).
2. The program is of sufficient intensity and duration for individuals, including those with learning disabilities, to achieve substantial learning gains.
3. The past effectiveness of an eligible applicant in improving the literacy skills of adults, including those with low literacy levels; and demonstrates the ability to meet or exceed the levels of performance.
4. The demonstrated alignment to the requirements of the adult education services and activities, as well as alignment to the local plans.
5. The program uses instructional practices and activities that research has proven to be effective in teaching to achieve learning gains, is of sufficient intensity and duration, is built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice and includes the essential components of reading.
6. The program demonstrates the effectiveness in providing instruction in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition and is based on best practices, research and state standards.
7. The program activities effectively employ advances in technology including the use of computers as a part of instruction, as well as distance education, when applicable.
8. The program activities provide contextualized learning including integrated education and training, as well as bridge programs to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace, transition to post-secondary education and training, advance in employment, and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
9. The program is staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, support staff and administrators who meet state guidelines and have participated in high-quality professional development.
10. The program activities are coordinated with other available resources in the community, such as establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, job training programs, business, and social service agencies.
11. The program offers flexible schedules and supportive services (such as childcare and transportation) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.

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12. The program maintains a high-quality information management system, as determined by the ICCB and has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance measures.
13. The local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English Literacy programs and civic education programs.
14. The proposed budget is consistent with the eligible provider's activities, is cost-efficient within administrative guidelines and places emphasis on serving the target populations (state consideration).

### Timeline

The following steps will be taken in conducting the AEFLA, Corrections, and IELCE competitions.

Competition Timelines	Activities
January – March	ICCB publishes multi-year federal AEFLA, Corrections, and IELCE Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) aligned with the priorities in the approved Unified State Plan and in compliance with state GATA and federal EDGAR and FFATA rules.
February – March	An open bidder's conference will be held to provide an overview of the competitive NOFO. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ICCB provides technical assistance to inquiries from potential eligible providers.</li> <li>2. ICCB recruits candidates to review and score AEFLA grant applications.</li> <li>3. ICCB coordinates reviewers with LWIBS.</li> </ol>
February – April	FAQs are posted to the ICCB website to distribute broadly the questions asked during the bidder's conference, as well as during the entire process.
March – April	Due date for AEFLA, Corrections, and IELCE grant applications. Grant Review Training is provided to all grant reviewers.
April – May	Using a Merit Based Review Process, Grant readers score the AEFLA, Corrections, and IELCE grant applications. This includes review of budgets and grant requirements. Final scores used to develop a rank ordered slate based on applicant scores.

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May – June	ICCB announces AEFLA, Corrections, and IELCE grant applicants that will receive funding, contingent upon the release of state and federal funding.
July 1	AEFLA, Corrections, and IELCE grant providers begin grant cycle, programming, and funding.

### Funding Distribution

Title II Adult Education and Literacy funding will be used to provide prescribed instructional and supportive services in all the designated Area Planning Councils (APCs) in Illinois. The APCs, designated by Illinois state statute as the geographic units for adult education funding distribution, are aligned with each of the 39 community college districts which are represented in each workforce region as well as Local Workforce Innovation Area. Funds that are awarded through competitive grant cycles will be distributed using a comprehensive funding methodology that is based on the APC's index of need, as calculated on an annual basis using the most recent United States Census Data/American Community Survey results. The variable used includes literacy needs of both the English-speaking population and the English language population, as well as poverty and unemployment needs in an area.

Within an APC, the funds are then distributed proportionately among approved eligible providers based on a variety of elements, including but not limited to, demonstrated performance, past performance and past enrollment. During continuation years in a multi-year grant cycle, the funding formula will also consider the most recently completed and verified data of skill gains as a continuous indicator of demonstrated effectiveness. Providers who are new to the process will be awarded funding based upon their proposed enrollments as indicated in their application as related to the funding request.

### Direct and equitable access

All grants awarded through the State of Illinois are subject to the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA), based on EDGAR, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations and FFATA, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. Under GATA, all grant applications and awards are subject to uniform processes to ensure transparency, fairness and equitable access to all eligible participants and providers. Grant notifications are performed through the posting of a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to a public web portal, Grants.Illinois.gov, where all of the eligibility criteria, application and grant requirements, and an explanation of the application and approval process are posted.

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The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), state eligible agency, will also provide notification and access to the public portal using the ICCB web site and with direct electronic mail notifications to all potential applicants, including both current providers and eligible potential providers. As part of the application process, an eligible provider must enter the portal and complete the grant prequalification registration process as listed detailed below. The ICCB will use the same application, process, and rubric/grading process for all applicants applying. When funding determinations are made, the ICCB will publish a Notice of State Award to the GATA portal and to the ICCB website.

### **Grantee Pre-qualification:**

All entities must be qualified to do business with the State of Illinois. To be qualified for a grant award, an entity must:

- Have a valid UIE number;
- Have a current SAM.gov account;
- Not be on the Federal Excluded Parties List;
- Be in Good Standing with the Illinois Secretary of State, as applicable;
- Not be on the Illinois Stop Payment list;
- Not on the Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services Provider Sanctions list.

Pre-qualification status will be verified after Grantee Registration is registered and nightly thereafter. If an entity has a pre-qualification issue, the specific issue and remediation support is provided thru the grantee portal. Entities on the Federal Excluded Parties List are not eligible to do business with the State of Illinois.

The ICCB will use the same procedures for announcement, application, and submission for all eligible applicants under WIOA Sections 225, 231, and 243. Each application will be reviewed and evaluated using criteria as indicated in the grant or contract application. Each applicant must address the areas that are applicable. Eligible applicants will be asked to address applicable activities listed below:

1. Adult education;
2. Literacy;
3. Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
4. Family literacy activities;
5. English language acquisition activities;
6. Integrated English literacy and civics education;
7. Workforce preparation activities; or
8. Integrated education and training.

During a competitive year, to be considered for funding an applicant of demonstrated effectiveness must:

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1. Be an Eligible Applicant (Provider), which means an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities that may include:
  - a. Local educational agencies (LEAs)
  - b. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) or Faith-Based Organization (FBO)
  - c. Volunteer Literacy Organizations
  - d. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)
  - e. Public or Private nonprofit agencies
  - f. Libraries
  - g. Public-housing authorities
  - h. Non-profit institutions that are described previously and have the ability to provide adult education and literacy services to eligible individuals
  - i. Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities as described previously
  - j. Partnership between an employer and an entity as described above
2. Respond to the Request for Proposal by the due date
3. Complete all required portions of the application, including registration through the State of Illinois Grants Accountability and Transparency Act portal.
4. Meet all deadlines and other elements as specified in the Request for Proposal
5. Meet all eligibility requirements The past effectiveness of an eligible applicant in improving the literacy skills of adults is a strong factor in the delivery of adult education instruction and supportive services. In addition, the alignment of local adult education activities with the local area plans and services, as well as local regional workforce plans are essential.

All grants awarded through the State of Illinois are now subject to the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA), based on EDGAR, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations and FFATA, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. Notification of continuation plan application availability will be via listserv. Eligible providers must then complete a thorough pre-qualification and application process through the public web portal, Grants.Illinois.gov. Eligible providers may then apply for grants. The continuation of an applicant is contingent upon the availability of federal and state funding; a sufficient appropriation of funding, as well as the applicant's demonstrated effectiveness in serving the target population, achieving the state negotiated performance targets, and the ability to meet all grant eligibility requirements.

### Vocational Rehabilitation

This is not applicable to the State of Illinois

### Program Data

#### Data Alignment and Integration

The Illinois core partners have long-standing data sharing agreements in place whereby the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Illinois Department of



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Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) request data matching of the Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). The agencies continue to look closely at the long-term agreements and determine if changes need to be made to accommodate the new and innovative sharing of data between the agencies.

The agreements facilitate cross-program access to data about common participants while minimizing duplicative systems costs. In addition to one-on-one data access, the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) and the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) fully executed a multiple agency data sharing agreement with all the State of Illinois educational and workforce agencies. This data sharing agreement allows for the sharing of agency data via the newly established Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA). The interagency agreements and the CDDA arrangement establish a master client index number for all clients and facilitates integrated and streamlined service delivery, common reporting and measurement of interagency longitudinal performance outcomes as required under WIOA Section 116(d)(2).

Illinois will continue to use existing web-based interfaces that integrate data via Application Program Interface (API) tools. Real-time access to workforce development resources for individuals, businesses and workforce professionals is available, shareable and viewable in user-friendly dashboards for better customer service. Ongoing discussions include how to further integrate the Internet-based data systems to enhance program alignment and service delivery.

- The DCEO - Illinois workNet portal connects individuals and businesses to workforce services and data. The portal serves as a hub for WIOA implementation resources and guidance for all WIOA programs and partners. The open-source and widget technology available in the new version allow for maximum agility in on-demand program development and implementation needs. The Illinois Workforce Information System (IWIS) launched in 2020 piloted the first fully case managed and DOL integrated reporting system - built in the cloud with agile development capabilities, IWIS is proving to be a system that can adapt and evolve quickly to add and integrate both state and Federal programs. It has robust client referral, tracking, and reporting capabilities, as well, among other innovative tools and enhanced data tracking features. Built in responsive design, IWIS can safely and securely be available on any device to accommodate the virtual workforce and virtual client needs.
- Employment Security administers the IllinoisJobLink (IJL) system to collect data on job seeker and employer customers. IllinoisJobLink.com is an internet-based system with a centralized job search engine and resume service that integrates workforce customer information to facilitate coordination of services across partner programs.
- The Illinois Community College Board—Adult Education administers the Illinois Data and Information System (DAIS-i), which is a web-based system that collects relevant student-

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level record data on education, attendance, courses and employment data needed for reporting to WIOA.

- The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services. The Web Case Management System (WebCM) is the primary case management system for the Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program, providing electronic storage of customer case records, as well as links to other systems that display information related to case requirements. WebCM is an internet-based system that can be accessed from any location with appropriate security and was developed internally by DHS information systems staff.

The IWIB and the Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) is working to align the state's evaluation and reporting strategies to ensure that they will be supported by the improved data systems.

The Governor's Office has embarked on ILDS 2.0. The ILDS 2.0 target operating model consists of five pillars: Governance, Systems Architecture, Data, Program Management and Organizational Capability. The Governance body consists of two standing committees the Executive Committee which meets once or twice a year consisting of agency leads and the Managing Committee that meets every other month that includes appointees from each agency that support research, data management, and technology. These roles differ at the different agencies.

- The core of the Systems Architecture uses an IBM tool called CloudPak for Data supported by the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT). Other technologies will be leveraged to create an ecosystem of data management and portal applications.
- The core of the system architecture will be made up of two standing datasets: the Early Childhood Participation Dataset and a dataset bringing together K-12, Higher Ed, and Workforce data. These datasets are still being defined.
- ILDS will provide program management services that help manage projects using this data including a process for a unified data request process across ILDS agencies and a process to develop a common analytics agenda. There is currently a working group in progress to define the data request process.
- ILDS Governance is working on the concept of "Data as a Function". This means that data analysis and management is a function similar to legal, finance, and IT, where it is infused within each agency based on defined roles and responsibilities but supported across state government with common processes and guidelines.

This initiative provides a technical record matching, identity resolution procedure and software to securely and confidentially match records across seven different agencies that include the four core partners:

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Illinois Community College Board

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- Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Illinois State Board of Education
- Illinois Department of Employment Security
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission
- Illinois Department of Human Services

Illinois is working to align and integrate participant and performance data across WIOA programs with the ultimate goal of providing effective and efficient services that lead to the participants' employment as quickly as possible. The Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) has conducted two phases of an independent *WIOA Technical Assessment* of the core partners' applications supporting the WIOA programs. The goal of the *WIOA Technical Assessment* is to identify technical solutions to better integrate the WIOA system in Illinois. The state Chief Information Officer contracted with technical experts to lead the assessment team that included technical leads from each of the WIOA core partners. The team identified that the WIOA data integration strategy should include:

- Functional and technical assessment of external and internal systems that can act as the common intake solution;
- Generation of unique customer identification;
- An automated initial assessment based on intake questions;
- Automated referral to partner agencies;
- Common dashboard for participant information;
- Identification and execution of the appropriate procurement plan;
- Execution of an inter-governmental agreement among partner agencies to fund and use a common intake system;
- Upgrading of agency solutions where needed to integrate to common intake solution; and
- Definition of detail plans by working with HHi2 program and state data practice for data warehouse and Master Data Management solutions.

The scope of the WIOA technical assessment included a review of business, information and system architecture and current applications supporting WIOA programs for the core partner businesses. This assessment is a key step in developing the capacity for common intake and improving service delivery. The WIOA technical assessment team's approach was to view the WIOA core partners collectively as an enterprise or program that is responsible for providing job seekers with a technology offering *Single Sign-On (SSO) access, Integrated Workforce Registration (IWR)*, real-time triage and coordinated service provisioning for the portfolio of WIOA programs. The WIOA technical assessment team approached the assessment of each of the core partner's systems from a customer-centric, job seeker user experience. The WIOA technical assessment team's approach aligned with the employment Training Administration's national vision for states to provide "a system that is driven by a single Workforce System Registration as the entry point to the nation's *reemployment system* and offers a coordinated

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customer-centric focus with full partner access.” DoIT and the agency partners have developed the following strategic recommendations as a result of the assessments:

- Create a configurable, web-based intake solution capable of conducting initial assessment and referral to appropriate partner systems;
- Allow partners to maintain and enhance their existing solutions to effectively manage eligibility, enrollment and cases;
- Develop a WIOA hub system capable of integrating with any number of existing and new agency systems to coordinate and update data needed for processing;
- Leverage the state’s Health and Human Services Innovation Incubator (HHi2) Master Data Management solution to generate unique participant identification numbers based on attributes collectively defined by the state; and
- Migrate data to the state’s proposed data warehouse environment for business intelligence and analytics.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board identified its Service Integration Policy Workgroup as the lead party for implementing the strategies towards its priority activity to provide a uniformly positive customer experience for job-seekers at all Illinois one-stop centers. These strategies include making the system easy to navigate and promoting a “no wrong door” approach that will adopt, adapt, or create one or more models of streamlined intake and referral that one-stop centers throughout the state can utilize to improve service delivery.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) monitors the state’s data infrastructure, including strategic coordination between core partners. This ensures the data systems across the required one-stop partner programs lead to improved service delivery and evaluation of common performance outcomes. The IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee’s (CIC) Performance Workgroup, with active participation from each core WIOA partner, was established and meets regularly to ensure the system has the tools and capacity necessary to collect and report all required data elements. This ongoing, unified, and collaborative leadership process strengthens the performance outcomes.

Under CIC’s direction the Performance Workgroup created a public facing dashboard which aggregates data for all core programs. This dashboard will enable a process for ongoing and streamlined sharing, monitoring, and evaluating of data throughout each program year to help identify potential needs for technical assistance or adjustment in program services. This process will improve service delivery to all individuals as potential gaps in service can be identified and action steps to remedy concerns can be put into place.

In addition to the ongoing data analysis, the CIC has created an evaluation tool kit to provide a framework and tools for effective evaluation for statewide workforce programs, policies, and processes across the various Titles. This toolkit uses an equity lens as its foundation based on the IWIB Equity Task Force’s concept of an equity lens an equitable workforce system is one where diversity, equity, and inclusion are foundational – in which race, ethnicity, gender,

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socioeconomic status, health, ability, and other demographic or geographic characteristics no longer predict one's outcomes in the labor market. When program outcomes are not met, the core partners and local one-stop partner programs have access to the toolkit to evaluate their services to identify evidence-based strategies for improvement.

Early work on evaluation will address questions of service delivery and potential approaches to improve the system, including exploring how data and technology can be better leveraged to ensure a successful system.

The CIC is developing a state and regional cross-agency benchmark report for stakeholders and the public. The WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team will build on the findings to provide additional regional planning data and tools to further support regional planning to align education, workforce and economic development. Furthermore, the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team will build upon existing agency initiatives to develop and use strategic indicators and benchmarks as part of comprehensive data resources for state and regional planning.

The four core partner programs currently collect all data necessary to develop and produce performance accountability reports required under Section 116(d)(2). Each partner submits quarterly and annual reports to the Departments of Labor and Education as appropriate to meet federal reporting requirements. These reports are reviewed with state and local program administrators to ensure Illinois continues to meet and exceed negotiated performance levels.

The State has in existence the ability to develop and produce reports required by sec. 116(d)(2) of WIOA and submit them annually using the template the Departments disseminate and, therefore, provide the required minimum levels of performance achieved with respect to the primary indicators of performance levels achieved consistent with § 677.175. The core state partners in collaboration with local workforce innovation boards and education institutions utilize existing database management systems to meet all the elements required for full WIOA reporting via Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) formatted submission on Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS).

### Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success

Lead state agencies are continually assessing the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs entering into and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. Via accountability and transparency dashboards and reports, student and participant activities are tracked, monitored and follow-up services are conducted. State and local staff maintain regular contact with individuals and/or employers during follow-up services.

Performance experts from the WIOA core and required partners continue to work with the Illinois Department of Innovation Technology to connect data systems that will allow the state to assess the progress of participants that exit the program and continue on with education programs and enter employment. This cross-agency workgroup is exploring the development of

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a common information system using the existing Illinois Framework for Healthcare and Human Services. Ongoing discussions include the possibility of adapting that framework for WIOA purposes, including tracking participant exits from all programs. Two additional initiatives that will support this effort are the *Longitudinal Data System* and the *Work Readiness Through Apprenticeship and Pathways*.

Partners established a common vision and built the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) with data-sharing agreements with universities and others to ensure consistently high levels of quality, reliability and security in matching and managing participant-level data across agency and university partners. The ILDS Agencies and the Governing Board have made substantial progress on activities that relate to the ILDS Functions. As detailed in this Section, this progress includes:

- Development and adoption of the Initial Annual Report and Plan;
- A number of intra-agency enhancements that support the broader LDS effort;
- The selection and establishment of the Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator; and
- Significant work and accomplishments in the end-user service priorities established by the Governing Board.

The Unemployment to Reemployment data environment, an established program between states and the Coleridge Initiative, has implemented longitudinal record linkage between the following Illinois administrative data sources:

- quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW);
- weekly Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant files;
- weekly Program for Measuring the Insured Unemployed Statistics (PROMIS) files;
- quarterly Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage records;
- monthly Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage records;
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I training data; and
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) services data.

The workforce system will leverage this record-linkage best practice to integrate the state's new hires file and design portal reports to address key reemployment questions, such as:

- Does the reemployment rate of individuals following a spell of unemployment differ by education and training?
- What is the relationship between the new job and their prior job loss?
- Are claimants in some education categories reemployed with the same employer at a higher rate than others?
- If not, are they reemployed in the same industry?

The portal will display timely reemployment metrics for diverse claimant subgroups. State agencies faced an immediate need in March of 2020 to provide an effective, data-based,

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response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to an unprecedented workload, the occupational composition of the unemployed changed drastically to a population unused to job loss. Within some industries, new occupational strata of unemployed emerged, in others the concentration of layoff activity intensified in traditional occupational groups, and, as well, there was greater concentration and geographic dispersion of some occupations than others. The Midwest Collaborative moved swiftly to develop an unemployment-to-reemployment portal (a UI portal) to inform policy makers. The structure of the portal highlights weekly (timely), county-based (local), and actionable information on Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant composition and transitions.

While the unprecedented claims volume has dissipated for much of the country, local workforce boards are struggling for data-driven, reemployment strategies in an effort to reengage large unemployed populations with the workforce. The pandemic labor market has necessitated and catalyzed a range of labor market behaviors among job seekers that requires policy makers and program administrators to find new data and information sources to plan and allocate resources. Of greatest importance is timely and locally-relevant information on reemployment pathways for workers by education/training. This project uses existing data in new ways to deepen understanding and increase timeliness of information, helping to fill that data gap as local economies quickly evolve. The project proposes to:

- create Tableau visualizations on local unemployment spell behavior for equity groups, such as low income, by claimant education/training categories; and
- establish the Directory of New Hires in the ADRF environment for the purpose of developing timely, local measures on reemployment activity. The data lag for the Directory of New Hires is only 1-2 months and the Quarterly UI Wage records (the only alternative employment data source) is 7-9 months.

The primary outcomes of the project are:

- Visualizations of local unemployment spell behavior by claimant education/training categories. Tableau visualizations and code on unemployment spell behavior for claimants by local area have already been developed and implemented in the “Unemployment to Reemployment” portal (see below). We will develop summary tabulations from administrative data and add a filter to display local spell trends by education/training categories for claimant cohorts. This will require 2-3 months.
- Timely measures for reemployment activity.
- The Coleridge ADRF already hosts seven Illinois administrative data sets covering employers, workers, claimants, and training participants. This project adds the Directory of New Hires to the ADRF environment for the purpose of developing timely measures on reemployment activity. Task 2 will require 4-5 months.
- Task 3- National Applied Data Analytics Training

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- Illinois will partner with the Coleridge Initiative to offer a national data-analytic training on education/training and the reemployment of UI claimants. This training will be structured similarly to the successful effort sponsored by U.S. DOL/ETA in Spring 2021 on the Unemployment to Reemployment portal. Task 3 will require 3 months to prepare training materials and 3 months to deliver the training.

The IWIB's Continuous Improvement Committee continues to implement certain provisions of the IWIB's Strategic Plan related to evaluations, assessments, performance, and accountability, they will be looking at opportunities for continuous improvement throughout the workforce and education systems. One measure they may consider after further discussion is the long-term employment of participants exiting the program. While current common performance measures track customers up to four quarters after exit, the IWIB is exploring utilizing available and new data to determine employment outcomes beyond one year. These might include employment within the same company, within the field of study or the wages of the customer for as many as five years after employment.

### Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

The Illinois Department of Employment Security will provide reporting for three employment-related performance indicators (employment rate in the second and fourth quarters after exit and median earnings in the second quarter after exit), status in unsubsidized employment and quarterly earnings through direct Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage match and State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) wages match. Under "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" the State has selected the measures of "Retention with the same employer" and "Employer Penetration Rate." Employment Security will report performance data for Retention by providing (UI) wage match keeping in mind that this is a shared outcome across all six core programs within the State and will be a combined reporting measure. Wage records will identify a participant's employment using an establishment identifier – FEIN for example. The Employer Penetration Rate will be determined by each core provider tracking of the number of establishments served within a program year, and the State will collect that data and compare it to the aggregate number of employers in a given State and/or county.

The Unemployment to Reemployment portal presents a series of data-analytic visualizations that are: 1. claimant based (UI certified status); 2. structured by cohort (anchored in the benefit week as determined when the claimant files a new initial claim (time stamp)); 3. longitudinal (sequenced by receipt of a weekly unemployment benefit (i.e., depletion of the maximum benefit amount)); and 4. made locally relevant (geographic coding of each claimant record by place of residence). The success of the portal culminated in a U.S. DOL/ETA-funded Applied Data Analytics training program in the Spring of 2021 that was attended by 120 participants representing 30 states.



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### Privacy Safeguards

Privacy Safeguards are incorporated into the Workforce Development System. Continuing to comply with federal and state laws governing protection of personally identifiable information is a priority during WIOA implementation. Existing privacy safeguards in administering the core programs in Illinois pose opportunities for additional collaboration and interoperability, while efforts also exist to ensure security systems and procedures do not inhibit service integration.

For instance, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) maintains student data related to high school equivalency exams. Any entities outside of the community college board system submit forms to ICCB staff focused on data accountability to ensure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), which protects the privacy of student education records. Future considerations include how data integration between required programs can facilitate a smooth transition from high school to the workforce or to post-secondary education while preserving the privacy of their records throughout the workforce system.

The Department of Employment Security's (IDES) existing system could also serve as a model for cross-agency collaboration. The Labor Exchange Program is a password-protected program backed by a user agreement, including an explanation of how individual data will be used throughout service delivery. Internal communications through the program use a unique participant identification number rather than a Social Security number. The unique identification number could be used across required programs to help preserve privacy and facilitate tracking of that participant by core program partners.

### Priority of Service for Veterans

Illinois places a priority in serving veterans and other eligible persons located throughout the state. Veterans and other eligible persons will receive priority of service in accordance with the Title 38 United States Code 4215, 20 CFR 1010, TEGL 10-09, TEN 15-10, and VPL 07-09. The Comprehensive American Job Centers are committed to helping veterans and other eligible persons find a job. Illinois veterans and other eligible persons have been served over the years through targeted programs administered through the Department of Employment Security (IDES) and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs in cooperation with other education and workforce agencies.

In Illinois, Employment Security serves as the lead agency for veterans' employment and employer services. The Illinois Department of Employment Security's JVSG Four-Year Stand-Alone State Plan incorporates and aligns with the Illinois Unified State Plan. All veterans, regardless of their characterization of discharge, are provided employment services by Wagner-Peyser staff, using the veterans eligibility triage process in accordance with Veterans Program Letters (VPL) 03-14 with Changes 1 & 2, 07-14, and 03-19. All veterans and other eligible persons coming into the American Job Centers must receive an Initial Assessment from either an Employment Specialist or WIOA staff. If during this Initial Assessment, a veteran or other

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eligible person self-attests to one or more Significant Barrier(s) to Employment (per Veterans Program Letter 03-14 with changes 1, 2, and 3), then they must be referred to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist for Individualized Career Services and possible case management. While receiving services from the DVOP specialist, a veteran and other eligible person may continue to receive services from all AJC partners. Once their significant barriers to employment (SBE) have been mitigated and are job-ready, the DVOP specialist will work to place them in active IJL Job Orders, make referrals and provide resumes to the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) for placement assistance. As a member of the agency's Business Services Team, the LVER advocates for all veterans and other eligible persons with businesses and business groups within the American Job Center's operational area. Any American Job Center staff member can refer a qualified veteran / covered person to the LVER for job development.

DVOP specialists provide employment assistance to all Chapter 31 Referred Veterans - U.S. Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment to include Labor Market Information and Individualized Career Services. For those veterans that are not eligible for VA-VR&E services or may need more specific state-level assistance, the DVOP specialist may refer veterans and other eligible persons to the IDHS-Division of Rehabilitation Services to assess and assist the veteran with mitigating his or her disability in order to meet their employment goal. DVOPs also work closely with other core and required partners, as well as community supportive service organizations, to help veterans and other eligible persons receive various supportive assistance, training and certification credentials. Some of the highlighted programs serving veterans and other eligible persons in Illinois include:

- IllinoisJobLink.com - Illinois Labor Exchange, an online tool used by veterans and other eligible persons searching for jobs in Illinois, provides Veteran Preference by notifying the veteran job seeker of a job opening 24-48 hours before a non-veteran. This system also signifies the person is being a veteran by placing an American flag next to their name.
- Illinois Joining Forces Foundation - Statewide public and private organizational network that works to identify, collaborate and marshal available resources and services to create efficient access and delivery of these programs to the state's military and veteran communities. One of the main objectives is to provide a network of organizations with improved capacity, awareness and intra-network referrals.
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) - RESEA targets any recipient of regular UI or UCX (Unemployment Compensation for Ex-service Members) benefits. The foundational element of the RESEA program is a one-on-one meeting between the claimant and an appropriately trained American Job Center (AJC) staff member to assess the claimant's continuing UI eligibility, employment status, and work search activities. RESEA services must provide participants with: 1) support in the development of an individual reemployment plan; 2) customized career and labor market information; 2)

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enrollment in the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program; and 4) information and access to other AJC services and resources the support the claimant's return to work.

- Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) - IVTP offers Illinois' eligible incarcerated veterans employment services during and post confinement at selected Illinois Department of Correction locations.

Nine DVOP specialists comprise the IVTP Team Leads that provide quarterly employment-focused workshops in 15 Illinois Department of Corrections facilities. Employment Security partners with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) to coordinate employment workshops for eligible veterans within 18 months of their maximum release date. Emphasis is placed on job search techniques and resources to help these veterans address the unique significant barriers to employment and other obstacles they may face in order to set them up for successful re-entry into the workforce and communities after their release.

Both DVOP and LVER staff conduct quarterly capacity building workshops to all AJC Partners, focusing on tools and updates to get veterans and other eligible persons hired. These quarterly capacity building workshops provide a platform for all AJC partners to train and educate each other on what they do to support/promote the provision of services or training programs to qualified veterans and other eligible persons.

The State of Illinois has issued policy addressing the priority of services requirement in serving eligible veterans and other eligible persons at the AJC. It requires that AJC staff appropriately identify customers at the point of entry who meet the priority in accordance with state and locally developed and implemented policies and processes. These policies address the provision of services regardless of the method of receipt, whether it be in a physical location or through technology. In compliance with Federal guidance, state policy details the appropriate priority decision-making that considers the eligibility criteria for enrolling and serving participants.

### **Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities**

Illinois is committed to ensuring both programmatic and physical accessibility to the one-stop delivery system by maintaining compliance with WIOA Section 188, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. Compliance monitoring is conducted at the state and local level to make certain that all comprehensive one-stop facilities, programs, services, technology and materials are accessible and available. These services must be provided "on-demand" and in "near real time" in the physical comprehensive one-stop center location or via technology consistent with the "direct linkage" requirement defined in WIOA.

Another significant role in ensuring the physical and programmatic accessibility is the IWIB's One-Stop Center Certification policy discussed in the State Operating Systems and Policies portion of the Unified Plan. The certification criteria specified by the IWIB to evaluate the

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Comprehensive One-Stop Center's programmatic accessibility ensures equal access to all required programs, services, and activities to eligible participants and employers regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence or education level. Services must be made available without unlawful discrimination. Primary criteria include equal access to career services, equal access to program services, direct linkage and reasonable accommodations. The indoor space is evaluated to make sure there is "equal and meaningful" access to programs for individuals with disabilities. Examples include computer accessibility, ergonomic set-up, screen-reading software programs (JAWS and DRAGON) and access to interpreters.

In addition to the role of the EOMC, the state has participated in or funded initiatives through the one-stop system that expand access to services for individuals with disabilities and that focus on developing relationships by leveraging resources and enhancing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Opportunity Youth are participating in sector-based training such as Information Technology through a connection between the school district and the one-stop system to make their existing "career pathways" systems fully inclusive of and accessible to individuals with disabilities. A significant improvement in this pilot is the development of an Individualized Career Development Plan (ICDP). The ICDP provides an overview of planned experiences for students participating in secondary school beginning at age 14½, or upon entry to high school. It also aligns with the Illinois Individualized Education Program (IEP) Transition Plan and Summary of Performance components to alleviate duplication of document development for students with disabilities and to provide comprehensive information about goals and avenues for meeting post-high school goals. It is important to note that the ICDP is a result of discussions between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and DCEO. Furthermore, ISBE adopted the ICDP for use by special education programs.

Finally, staff training is integral to making sure all services are programmatically and physically accessible. The state has hosted a series of webinar events that include updated provisions on WIOA Section 188, technical assistance provided by Diversity Partners project on leveraging business relations to benefit job seekers with disabilities, and the requirements of Comprehensive One-Stop Center certification. Additionally, the state has and will continue to conduct summits that provide best practices for serving individuals with disabilities.

The Departments of Commerce and Employment Security developed an agreement to better align the ADA monitoring process of American Job Centers. This agreement will allow for better alignment of office inspection timing and for improved cross-agency communication regarding inspection findings. In facilities where both Title III and Title IB staff are located, DCEO will conduct the ADA inspections in order to avoid duplication of services and better align findings and related reports. DCEO will provide IDES with the ADA inspection report after the inspection has been completed. If IDES is the leaseholder, IDES will then work with Central Management Services and/or the landlord to correct any findings.

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### Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners

In Illinois, there is a great need for interpreters due to limited English proficiency in many portions of the state. Staff members are trained to ensure that an interpreter is provided in these situations “in real time” to meet the needs of English Language Learners. The State of Illinois has a master contract with an interpreting service provider to offer these services to assist English Language Learners.

Adult Education and Literacy is the key education program in the state that provides English language instruction. These services will be coordinated within the one-stop delivery system. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) English language programs provide instruction to approximately 36,000 students annually. This instruction includes services to adults 16 years and over to achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language.

Adult Education English language programs provide instruction in civics education, workforce readiness, bridge programs, and Integrated Education and Training to English Language Learners at varying educational functioning levels. Adult Education has recently expanded online instructional efforts to connect more students to English language activities. In addition, the Integrated Education Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE) activities are being expanded to include more instruction offered concurrently in English language instruction, Workforce Preparation, Civics Education, and concurrently Integrated Education and Training. ICCB Adult Education has also developed an IEL/CE toolkit that will assist programs in the development of these instruction offerings. Training for this activity is determined by the ICCB, aligned with research-based strategies and using an equity lens. The trainings are provided to administrators, support staff, and instructors through the Professional Development Network. Additionally, as stated previously, WIOA Title I and Title II, Adult Education will partner within the one-stop center resource rooms to provide an online digital solution for language learning.

One of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s Department of Equal Opportunity Monitoring Compliance (EOMC)’s most essential ongoing goals is to ensure access to all. By working with the LWIAs, EOMC has outlined strategies to prevent discrimination based on national origin by failing to provide language services to someone with limited English proficiency (LEP). As such, under the new rules, recipients must take reasonable steps to ensure that individuals with LEP have meaningful access to aid, benefits, services and training. Together with Central Management Services (CMS), EOMC has secured language transcription and translation services that are utilized statewide with the assistance from contracts executed by the Governor’s Office. Multilingual Connections holds the Translation and Interpretation Services Master Contract (19-416CMS-BOSS4-P-8618) through May 13, 2023. Under this contract, Multilingual Connections provides the written translation, audio transcription and in-person interpretation services in dozens of languages. Together, with Propio Language Services, another DoIT communication contract that provides language interpreter services, EOMC can

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include oral interpretation and written translation of both hard-copy and electronic materials in non-English languages. This service ensures that individuals with LEP are informed about or able to participate in covered programs or activities.

The Illinois workNet portal consolidates resources for job seekers and businesses into one online forum that provides career, education, and work support information. Illinois workNet is designed to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their level of English proficiency, can access workforce services through the portal. Toward this effort, workNet has incorporated Spanish language content. Specifically, local and state content published in Spanish with a language switcher link is available to toggle between Spanish and English pages. The Spanish site provides the model to allow information in additional languages with minimal effort.

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) collects data on participants' preferred languages. Service providers record the preferred language of applicants who seek to participate in the Workforce Development System to help ensure they have the necessary information to serve LEP individuals as effectively as English-speaking applicants.

By utilizing this front-end approach to language determination, diverse non-English speaking participants will have meaningful access to aid, benefits, services, and training by utilizing the language of choice as administered during applicant inquiry. Breaking down the communication barriers ensures that individuals with LEP are informed about and able to participate in covered programs or activities. EOMC continues to clarify which documents are "vital" and thus must be translated into languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served or likely to be encountered.

Each recipient must also record the limited English proficiency and preferred language of each applicant, registrant, participant, and terminee. To that end, EOMC continues to clarify which documents are "vital" and thus must be translated into languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served or likely to be encountered. U.S. DOL CRC has identified and required vital information be offered in the most prevalent languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served and/or likely to be encountered. EOMC reserves the right to add additional languages as appropriate and has adopted the following list of specific languages as follows: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, French Creole, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

EOMC continues to educate LWIAs during continuous training seminars on the promising practices to help recipients comply with their legal obligations and includes the components of a plan to facilitate meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency. With these increased provisions to provide universal access throughout the workforce system, annual on-site monitoring of all recipients was enacted to provide assurances that recipients are complying with all nondiscriminatory provisions of the law.

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Copies of all monitoring reviews are submitted to U.S. DOL during their review schedule. These reports include findings, as well as corrective actions taken to ensure recipients of WIOA funding adhere to the assurance clauses of their contracts. Affirmative outreach efforts are also discussed and reviewed as part of the annual monitoring process at each LWIA. If EOMC determines there is insufficient outreach being performed (either through monitoring or data analysis review), the LWIA is required to complete a corrective action plan detailing how they will improve their efforts to attract the under-represented group(s).

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) ensures meaningful and equal access to the Limited English Proficient (LEP) Population so that they may enjoy the benefits, services and programs IDES offers in the same or similar way as English-speaking Illinoisans. Additionally, in August of 2021, IDES created and designated a Language and Disability Access Coordinator position to assist the agency in ensuring compliance with the Nondiscrimination laws.

Language and disability access as well as community outreach, are just a few ways that IDES has supported and furthered its DEI Plan's goals and objectives. There are various ways in which IDES documents these services. Illinois Benefit Information System (IBIS) is a computer software programs that IDES uses to implement and assist in issuing Unemployment Insurance (UI) services to claimants. IBIS tracks LEP claims filed and claimant's preferred languages. This data is used to determine whether IDES is meeting its language needs. IDES also documents the provision of language assistance services via the tracking of its webpages. IDES gathers and monitors data regarding the number of visits on each public facing webpage, including its multilingual pages. IDES uses this data to analyze whether it is meeting its requirements under the U.S. DOL LEP provisions. Economic Information and Analysis (EI&A) is a division within IDES that tracks labor market data on a quarterly basis. EI&A's data analysis also assists in ensuring that IDES can forecast trends and see where its services are needed.

The Office of Equal Opportunity Monitoring and Compliance (EO) Compliance Reporting Unit conducts an analysis and completes various reports which review the agency's LEP services and needs. These reports are the Illinois Bilingual Needs and Bilingual Pay Survey, the Affirmative Action Plan Report, the Illinois State Services Assurances Act Report and the Employment Plan Surveys. The Compliance Unit also reviews all hires and promotions to assess whether IDES employs sufficient bilingual staff to meet the LEP communities' needs. Also, EO's Monitoring Unit reviews Local Offices annually to determine the nature of LEP services that are sufficient to meet the needs of the LEP communities. Additionally, IDES' language line vendor compiles a report regarding the number of calls to the language line, what languages are being requested and the minutes being used on each call. This data is used on a continual basis to ensure IDES is staffed appropriately according to geographic location.

Below is an overview of all language services to be provided to LEP individuals as of January 2022. IDES will or is in the process of providing the following language services to LEP individuals:

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- Language Translations Widget on website - IDES has a Google translation widget on its public facing website. This widget allows all IDES webpages to be translated into multiple languages, including but not limited to the 6 most common Illinois languages at an instant. Additionally, IDES has performed a human review for accuracy of the multilingual widget to ensure the integrity of the translation.
- Language Line Services - DES contracts with various vendors to provide language translation services via the telephone. IDES also has created the multilingual telephony AI bot which assists callers in their preferred language. The language line vendor assists IDES in answering calls in hundreds of languages. Additionally, they provide IDES with vital data regarding language needs by geographical location. These services assist IDES in meeting U.S. DOL LEP requirements and determining where additional bilingual staff may be needed.
- Bilingual Employees - IDES employs 148 bilingual employees within its workforce to assist the LEP community in receiving its services and benefits. The languages that the bilingual employees speak are Spanish, Polish and Chinese. All other translation services are conducted via interpreters with our language line services.
- Advisory Councils - IDES has a representative on several Illinois Employment Plan Advisory Councils. The Councils in which IDES has a representative are the Hispanic, Asian American, African American and the Native American Employment Advisory Councils. Each Council is comprised of advocates that represent the specific group's interests and needs with a focus on State services and employment. These Councils offer advice and recommendations for how IDES as well as other State agencies may effectively reach and service, in a meaningful way, the LEP communities that they represent. IDES also holds roundtable discussions with legal aid clinics, the Illinois Language Justice Coalition and other stakeholders and community groups.

From City Colleges:

Community colleges are vital partners in ESL services.

We need to simplify the process by which English Language Learners, most of whom are immigrants and newcomers into our country, receive access to vital services, including those provided through Adult Education. One-Stop models work, as they can effortlessly walk applicants through all the steps necessary to receive adequate services and complete the enrollment process into programs such as ESL and GED.

Adequate bilingual supports are necessary. Work with community-based organizations is key as these groups are already connected with the community that our stakeholders trust and go to, including faith-based organizations. The usage of ambassadors in these One-Stop centers is vital as well; someone who has recently gone through the experience of enrollment can speak with honesty and transparency as to the challenges, obstacles and benefits of the process.



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From the University of Illinois:

Technical skills require a nuanced knowledge of English that is not taught in basic ESL classes. Universities and community colleges provide contextual and specialized skills-based ESL knowledge that provide greater access to higher wage/higher skill jobs. Allowing WIOA to cover these more specialized and intensive programs and courses allows ESL students to pursue higher skill technical training. It further facilitates incorporating immigrant students with higher education degrees and professions from another country into fields aligned with their prior education ((e.g., healthcare, etc.) where the demand for workers is greatest. The UIC Tutorium is an example of programs that provide courses across the full spectrum of ESL to ensure that students are able to apply for, participate in, and succeed in their career pathway, accounting for both prior education and the technical English skills required for the new position.

### Coordination with state plan programs

The plan development process has evolved in Illinois. When the original WIOA Unified State Plan was submitted, few of the currently existing cross-program groups existed. The plan was jointly drafted by representatives from each core partner and sent to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) for approval. In 2023, Illinois had the advantage of using well-established cross-program groups created by the IWIB and State agency directors to provide and review plan content and serve as sounding boards to ensure the Governor's vision is faithfully rendered in the plan. For the 2024 WIOA State Plan, a team of over twenty individuals that included representatives from core and required programs used an online collaborative editing process to create the content of the plan. Regular meetings were held to ensure cross-agency planning.

With regard to cross-agency planning for program implementation, the IWIB has multiple working groups comprised of IWIB members and program partner staff. These subject matter expert groups provide board-level leadership on WIOA implementation issues such as: 1) system evaluation; 2) training provider eligibility; 3) one-stop certification; and 4) cross-agency service integration. These groups continue to provide system leadership coordinated through the IWIB and its standing committees, task forces and work groups.