



Building an Integrated Regional Planning Framework: Self-Assessment for Regional Teams

I. Introduction

This brief self-assessment tool is designed to support Illinois's 10 regional workforce planning regional teams in evaluating their "current state" relative to the vision and eight principles established under the state's recent National Governor's Association (NGA) Workforce and Education Policy Academy work and to the six key strategies outlined in the state's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) plan outline. Regional team members will use this tool to identify areas of strength, weakness, and opportunity and determine initial priorities for action during the Regional Meetings December 9-11, 2015.

The established workforce planning vision that guides our work is as follows:

Business-driven talent solutions that integrate education, workforce, and economic development resources across systems to provide businesses, individuals, and communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the state's economy.

The eight principles established under the state's NGA Workforce and Education Policy Academy are intended to guide action across systems and stakeholders toward the vision above. Principles were developed not to serve as a list of specific actions – the state and regional WIOA plans will offer those – but rather to identify the means by which Illinois will realize its vision for a demand-driven workforce system. These principles include:

- 1. Demand-Driven Orientation:** Through a sector strategy framework, the state should support the systemic assessment of business needs for talent across regions and ensure that strong partnerships with business drive decision-making across the talent pipeline.
- 2. Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels:** Strong partnerships with business will focus on equipping businesses with the support and tools they need to define in-demand skills and articulate those needs to education and training providers. Strong partnerships at the regional and local level should be recognized and inform the development of high-quality partnerships across the state.
- 3. Career Pathways to Today's and Tomorrow's Jobs:** Partnerships with business should drive the development of career pathways that meet business skill needs today, while offering individuals clear opportunities to build and upgrade their skills and advance their career over time. Those pathways should be integrated within the P-20 system (pre-kindergarten through advanced post-secondary education) to help students and young adults identify career pathway options and offer flexibility to build upon their skills to meet the evolving needs of the global economy.



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4. **Cross-Agency Collaboration and Alignment:** Developing career pathways and stackable credentials will demand collaboration and alignment across agencies that contribute to Illinois' overall talent pipeline. There should be a focus on improving the strategic connections across all components of the education and workforce systems to ensure no "dead ends" in education and training and that all receive the supports they need to realize success.
5. **Integrated Service Delivery:** Enhanced collaboration and alignment across state agencies at a strategic level should lead to better integration within service delivery. Multiple state agencies and partners are positioned to support the success of individuals and businesses. Technology and integrated data systems can help illustrate those interrelationships and position the system to collaborate across agencies to deliver the right services, at the right time.
6. **Access and Opportunity for all Populations:** Coordinated and comprehensive services can help vulnerable populations prepare for and advance along a career pathway. Connecting individuals with relevant supports, such as transportation and child care, enables the systems to be nimble to meet unique needs and support the economic success of all regions and populations.
7. **Clear Metrics for Progress and Success:** The state plan should include clear metrics for assessing progress and success. As the talent pipeline serves two customers – both businesses and individuals building a career – those metrics should reflect the strategic priorities of the state that relate to building a globally-competitive workforce. Suggested metrics include:
 - ❖ College and career readiness of high school graduates
 - ❖ Talent pipeline's economic impact on the state's businesses and economy
 - ❖ Reduction in unemployment across ages and populations
 - ❖ Reduction in poverty across ages and populations
8. **Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation:** The system should establish mechanisms for continual assessment of systems performance and opportunities for improvement, as well as for surfacing and disseminating innovations. That also includes embracing non-traditional methods of delivering education and training and the growing role of entrepreneurship and its contributions to employment and economic growth.

This self-assessment incorporates the vision and the guiding principles described above and is structured according to the six key strategies prioritized in Illinois' state WIOA plan outline:

1. **Align and integrate economic development, workforce development, and education at the state and regional levels** to improve the economic growth and competitiveness of Illinois businesses and their workforce.



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2. **Improve and expand business-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.
3. **Expand career pathway opportunities** through more accelerated work-based training and aligned and integrated programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.
4. **Expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers** to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement.
5. **Expand information for businesses and job-seekers** to access services and make informed career decisions.
6. **Improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure** to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development, and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways and targeted disadvantaged populations.

II. Process Guidance

Regional team members are asked to complete this self-assessment in advance of the Regional Meeting. Team members may choose to complete it individually, or to come together as a group, either virtually or in-person, to complete it. **Please note that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to the self-assessment questions and responses will be used only to inform team facilitation and regional planning efforts, not to “grade” or “rate” regional teams.** Please answer self-assessment questions candidly; your perspective is vital!

Please submit completed self-assessments via email to your regional team point of contact, who will forward them to your team’s Maher & Maher facilitator prior to the Regional Meeting. During the Regional Meeting, teams will debrief and discuss members’ responses, considering the following questions:

- ❖ *What areas represent our strengths?*
- ❖ *What areas represent learning opportunities or potential focus points?*
- ❖ *Do we have different points of view within our team about our self-assessment scoring? What can we learn from different perspectives?*
- ❖ *What do self-assessment results suggest about our potential priorities for regional planning and action?*

If you have questions about completing the self-assessment, please contact your regional team point of contact. Thank you for your time and effort on this activity, and we look forward to working with you at the Regional Meeting!



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III. Self-Assessment Questions

Regional Team: _____ **Name:** _____ **Organization:** _____

For each of the factors in the sections that follow, please select a rating from 1 (“haven’t started yet”) to 5 (“advanced”) that reflects your perspective on where your region stands in relation to the factor [1-5 scale with accompanying descriptions will be provided].

Factors to Consider:	Rating					Comments / Notes
	Have not started	Just beginning	Making progress, but work to do	Advanced, but want to strengthen	Advanced	
	1	2	3	4	5	
STRATEGY #1: Align and integrate economic development, workforce development, and education at the state and regional levels to improve the economic growth and competitiveness of Illinois businesses and their workforce.						
a. Economic development, workforce development, education, and other partners have jointly reviewed available data and validated that data with businesses to identify shared target industries for strategic focus in our region.						
b. At the service delivery level, partners in our region have organized on a unified, region-wide business services team to coordinate outreach to and support for companies in our region.						
c. We actively, intentionally, systematically, and regularly collaborate across agency, program, and funding stream “silos” to align our goals, strategic efforts, investments, and service delivery activities to meet shared targets for our business and job seeker/worker customers in our target sectors.						



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d. We focus on building integrated talent solutions for business and job seeker/worker customers, no matter how those solutions are funded. Funding and planning of those activities is a “back-office” function, coordinated among partners, and invisible to customers.						
STRATEGY #2: Improve and expand business-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.						
a. Workforce development, education, economic development, community, and other partners in our region are fully engaged in organized, business-driven sector partnerships to collectively understand and seamlessly address the workforce needs of companies in our regional target industries.						
b. Businesses trust us to deliver on the solutions they need, from labor exchange to more complex talent solutions.						
c. We regularly engage in two major activities in order to ensure that businesses’ ever-changing needs for talent are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze diverse data sources to identify changes in workforce trends in industry sectors. Engage businesses both indirectly (as in surveys) and directly (as in information exchange sessions, meetings, etc.) to explore trends and identify workforce talent needs more deeply and precisely. 						



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d. Changes in workforce needs, no matter how identified or determined, are disseminated between and among all partners in a systematic, managed fashion.						
e. Our strategic plans and service delivery processes, for both job seekers/workers and businesses, reflect meeting the assessed workforce needs of businesses in our target industry sectors.						
STRATEGY #3: Expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated work-based training and aligned and integrated programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.						
a. Partners in our region are engaged in a sustained and coordinated manner to work with businesses to define career pathways in critical regional industry sectors. We are focused on developing career pathways with embedded stackable credentials that link our various regional partners, provide new opportunities for our workforce customers, and enhance competitiveness for businesses in our region.						
b. All talent development partners understand the pathways businesses need us to help build now and in the future to address their talent pipeline needs.						
c. The workforce and P-20 (i.e. pre-kindergarten through advanced post-secondary education) systems work systematically to ensure that information on career pathways and career opportunities is up-to-date, shared, coordinated, and accurately and effectively transmitted to students, education professionals, and parents.						



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d. We actively encourage and support the movement of students, workers, and job seekers along defined and integrated career pathways that meet businesses' needs and also offer individuals opportunities for labor market competitiveness and career advancement, without encountering "dead ends" in education and training.						
STRATEGY #4: Expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement.						
a. We have a solid and shared understanding of the populations in our region, their needs, and the ways in which we can best meet their needs. We ensure that our services are accessible to the diverse populations we serve.						
b. Customers' needs – rather than program or funding stream requirements – drive our strategic priorities and service delivery architecture. Business and job seeker/worker customers' needs determine the integrated workforce solutions we provide. We leverage and braid program resources and funding streams to support those solutions.						



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c. We understand the nature and extent of support service needs of diverse populations in our region and have aligned our resources and service delivery accordingly. We meet any customer “where he/she is,” and have the partnerships and capacity to connect them to what they need in a seamless and accessible way. We are skilled at connecting customers to the supports they might need, such as transportation, ESL support, or childcare assistance.						
d. We have developed and implemented targeted strategies to address the most prevalent barriers to employment and career advancement among individuals in our region.						
STRATEGY #5: Expand information for businesses and job-seekers to access services.						
a. We provide business-friendly frameworks, venues, and tools to simplify and enhance businesses’ transmission of skill needs to education and training providers.						
b. In a coordinated fashion, regional partners proactively outreach to job seeker, worker, and student audiences where they live, work, study, and play to enhance their awareness of and access to our services.						
c. Business and job seeker/worker customers in our region are well-aware of the work we do and are frequent “repeat customers” of our talent development system.						



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d. We regularly solicit and then respond to business and job seeker/worker feedback to ensure that we remain responsive and relevant.						
STRATEGY #6: Improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development, and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways and targeted disadvantaged populations.						
a. We use technology and have integrated data systems to support interrelationships among agencies and programs and position the system to collaborate across silos to deliver the right services at the right time.						
b. We measure impact beyond funding stream/program-specific and Federal performance measures. Our key measures include customer value received and customer satisfaction with the work we do, as well as impacts on key economic indicators, such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. College and career readiness of high school graduates 2. Talent pipeline's economic impact on the state's businesses and economy 3. Reduction in unemployment across ages and populations 4. Reduction in poverty across ages and populations 						



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c. We have embedded continuous assessment of performance and customer value/satisfaction across partners and programs and have mechanisms in place to assess that performance and respond/adjust as necessary.						
d. We are focused on surfacing and scaling innovations and ensuring sustainability of our efforts. We actively share the good work we're doing, and have aligned, leveraged, and braided resources to ensure that our work will be sustained moving forward.						