



## Illinois Workforce Investment Board

Pat Quinn, Governor

Warren Ribley, Co-Chair

John Rico, Co-Chair

Lincoln Land Community College  
Trutter Center  
2450 R. L. Poorman Drive  
Springfield, IL 62794  
March 24, 2011

### IWIB Welcome/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:09 pm. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

**Present:** Warren Ribley, John Rico, Tom Ashby, Rosiland Bruce, Robert Kilbury, Earl "Sandy" Moldovan, Ronn Morehead, Janet Payne, Theresa Payne, David Stoecklin.

**Present by Proxy:** Charles D. Johnson (Jennifer Morrell), Dr. Chris Koch (Mark Williams), Maureen O'Donnell (Jim Preckwinkle), Barbara Oilschlager (Michael Monaghan), Michael Perry (Kent Beauchamf), Dr. George Reid (Ocheng Jany).

**Absent:** Honorable James Clayborne, Jr., Geoffrey Obrzut, Honorable Sandy Pihos, Tom Prinske, Michelle Saddler, Catherine Shannon, Eloy Salazar, Larry Walsh, Diane Williams.

### Approval of December 16, 2010 Minutes - Action Item

The board members were asked to review the December 16, 2010 minutes as provided in the meeting's handouts. Earl "Sandy" Moldovan noted that the December 16, 2010 Roll Call did not reflect that Nick Palmer attended the meeting as Larry Walsh's proxy. Theresa Payne also noted that she was not listed on the Roll Call as being absent. Co-Chair John Rico requested for a motion to be made to pass the December 16, 2010 minutes with the noted corrections. Earl "Sandy" Moldovan made a motion to approve the meeting minutes and Tom Ashby seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### Opening Remarks

Co-Chair John Rico welcomed the IWIB members and guests to the meeting. Co-Chair Warren Ribley addressed the members with opening remarks with regard to new and ongoing developments including ongoing grant opportunities, as well as the meeting's agenda. Warren requested Bob Sheets briefly review the grant opportunities that the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is pursuing. Bob stated that various grant opportunities are available, both competitive and eligibility-based. The grants that Illinois is tracking and supporting include the Illinois Community College Board's (ICCB) Career Pathways Innovation Fund application, which may be reduced by a federal funding cut, and the healthcare grant application by the Illinois Center of Nursing for designation by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for excellence in nursing, which recently was awarded to Illinois. In addition to these grant opportunities, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Association released a Request for Proposal for the Green Jobs Innovation Fund. The Illinois Energy Sector Partnership Task Force met and discussed the request for proposal to ensure that eligible organizations within Illinois would be applying for the funding which focuses on apprenticeship programs. At least three organizations or partnerships will be submitting applications. Co-Chair Warren Ribley recognized and welcomed David Stoecklin, a future member of the board representing the Illinois Workforce Partnership.

### Updates

Co-Chair Warren Ribley provided a brief update on the federal budget situation and reminded the board members that currently the federal government is operating under a continuing resolution that expires in early April. The information provided to the (DCEO) is that a budget for the balance of the fiscal year will be presented and voted upon. One of the key leaders on this issue is Senator Dick Durbin, who has been a strong advocate of the federal workforce system. Recently, Senator Durbin has been traveling through Illinois holding press conferences emphasizing the importance of workforce funding and highlighting various success stories.

Illinois is anticipating a funding reduction for the balance of the current fiscal year. Co-Chair Warren Ribley stated that there is reason for concern with President Obama's budget for Fiscal Year 2012; the biggest concern is the proposed fifty percent reductions in the amount of funding that is retained at the state level. Eighty-five percent of the funding stream flows through the twenty-six local workforce investment areas and the remaining fifteen percent is retained, which is used for administrative costs and to support innovative workforce initiatives, including sector-based initiatives recommended by the IWIB task forces. The funding reduction is problematic and will hinder Illinois' ability to continue to take a leadership role in workforce development. He also made it clear that the fifty-percent reduction is not a reduction in the overall federal budget but U.S. Department of Labor would retain the funding which would probably be awarded through a competitive solicitation. Everyone was encouraged to continue to support the efforts to retain the full fifteen percent funding by the states.

### Workforce Day of Action

Co-Chair Warren Ribley asked Therese McMahon, DCEO's Deputy Director of the Office of Employment and Training, to provide an update on the WIA WORKS Outreach Campaign/Workforce Day of Action. Therese informed the members that the National Workforce Day of Action is today, Thursday, March 24, 2011. Therese's presentation

highlighted activities that the various workforce organizations have participated in during the week.

First, seventeen national workforce organizations (including National Skills Coalition, the National Association of Workforce Boards, the U.S. conference of Mayors, the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), the American Association of Community Colleges, the National Council of La Raza) came together to stand united in support of adequate funding for workforce education and training programs.

Secondly, state and local workforce partners across the country are reaching out to members of Congress, especially this week, March 21 - 25, 2011, while U.S. Senators and Representatives are in their home districts, to inform them of the level of opposition to any funding cuts and, in particular, the elimination of funding for workforce development and related programs in this and future appropriation actions. Specifically, workforce organizations were asked to meet with their Congressman on-site at a one-stop (Illinois workNet Center in Illinois) facility or in their in-district offices today to discuss the value add of the workforce system. The meeting contained examples of letters and preparation materials, which is part of the WIA Works Outreach, to assist in continuing efforts to educate legislative members and staff as well as the public on the importance of providing adequate funding for workforce education and training programs through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The WIA Works Outreach Petition Drive has been successful in accumulating over ten thousand signatures nationally, five thousand of which were from Illinois citizens. A brief discussion was held among members after Therese's presentation with regard to contacting and scheduling time with Senator Kirk and Congressman Schock and their staff to educate them on the critical need for WIA funding and to showcase success stories within Illinois.

#### Resolution on Proposed Federal WIA Cuts - Action Item

Therese McMahon presented the 2011 Resolution supporting the National Workforce Action Day and the restoration of funding for WIA to the board members. Co-Chair John Rico asked for a motion to accept the resolution. Tom Ashby made a motion to accept the Resolution on Proposed Federal WIA Cuts as submitted; Ronn Morehead seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### Amend Bylaws - Action Item

Therese McMahon addressed the board members with regard to amending the Bylaws to remove the Local Workforce Investment Board Leadership Association reference. Sandy Moldovan made a motion to amend the Bylaws to remove the Local Workforce Investment Board Leadership Association reference; Mark Williams seconded the motion. Co-Chair John Rico asked if there was any discussion regarding the motion. There was no discussion. The Motion passed.

#### Update on IWIB Membership

Therese McMahon updated the board members on the status of IWIB membership. She stated that six members were waiting for final approval by the Office of the Governor and fourteen additional candidates were moving through the vetting process.

### Veterans Task Force - Approval of Report - Action Item

Co-Chair Warren Ribley introduced Stephen Konya, Chief of Staff of DCEO and Chair of the Veterans Task Force, who presented the Veterans Task Force Report to the IWIB members. Stephen recognized the efforts of the Task Force members and staff who assisted in the process especially, Jason Tyszko, Bob Sheets, Saul Sanchez, Oana Amaria, and Levi Beerup, who is a combat veteran.

The Task Force included representatives from employers; labor unions; universities and community colleges; veterans' organizations and programs; non-profit service providers; state veterans; and human services, education, workforce development and economic development agencies. The Task Force met seven times between March 2010 and February 2011 as a full Task Force and four subgroups were formed and met at various times to address the following high-priority challenges and issues: 1) employment transition and retention; 2) access and success in education and training; 3) access and utilization of benefits and support services; and 4) jump start projects.

The Task Force defined a veteran as a person who has served in the Armed Forces of the United States and received a discharge form. It was determined that many Illinois veterans face serious challenges and barriers in making transitions to civilian life, especially in accessing education, training, employment opportunities, and related veterans services. Therefore, the mission of the Task Force was to address the needs of Illinois' veterans as they attempt to enter civilian life and transition into the Illinois workforce by focusing on the following key areas: 1) improving transitions to employment; 2) improving the capacity of Illinois employers to hire and support veterans; 3) improving access and success in postsecondary education and training; and 4) improving access and utilization of veteran benefits and services.

The Task Force reviewed findings from an ongoing study by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) addressing veterans identified by the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) who were discharged between 2001 and early August 2010. During this period, Illinois had approximately 109,000 total discharges involving about 89,000 veterans from the National Guard, Reserves, and all major military branches. Based on the data from this study as well as the discussions of the task force members, the final report presented to the IWIB board members included the following findings and recommendations: 1) coordinating and improving the veterans transition process; 2) improving transitions to employment; 3) improving capacity of Illinois employers to hire and support veterans; 4) improving access and success in postsecondary education training; and 5) improving access and utilization of veterans benefits and services.

The first set of recommendations addressed in the final report focus on coordinating and improving the transition process for veterans. Stephen provided a brief background on the federal law that requires veterans and their families receive services to improve their transition to civilian life. For active duty veterans, this is done mainly through the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) provided through a partnership between the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS). Additional transitional services are received through the Disabled Transitional

assistance Program (DTAP), family support centers, and Veterans Administration benefit counseling and information meetings.

The Task Force determined that many Illinois veterans were not effectively accessing employment, education, and support services opportunities during their transition from military to civilian life starting before discharge and ending years later. This will require a more coordinated state and local outreach and service integration effort that builds on existing federal and state efforts. The Task Force identified a number of challenges and issues that Illinois should address through the following actions: 1) improve connections with Illinois employers; 2) better translate the skills, training, and credentials of veterans to civilian employment; 3) develop more comprehensive transition services for National Guard and Reserve veterans; 4) provide better transition services to connect with education and support services; 5) provide multiple access points into various support services over a longer period of time after discharge; 6) develop more comprehensive benefit counseling and support services that address the needs of the entire family; and 7) develop a more comprehensive behavioral support approach to include early screening and diagnostic services before and during discharge followed by coordinated services throughout the transition process.

These challenges and issues must be addressed during a period when most federal, state, and local employment, education, human services and veterans programs are facing funding reductions. Also, the challenges and issues must be addressed during a time of high unemployment when many workers, including veterans, are finding it more difficult to find employment. As a result, Illinois should address these challenges by improving the coordination and effectiveness of existing public and private resources and strengthening connections to Illinois employers in key sectors that are committed to expanding opportunities for Illinois veterans.

The Veterans Task Force recommended that Illinois should establish a Statewide Illinois Veterans Transition Team, which would coordinate and improve the transition of Illinois veterans to civilian life starting before and during discharge over multiple years in cooperation with regional and local partners and a statewide network of veterans specialists. The focus should be on improving transitions to education, training and employment and accessing veterans benefits and services. This team should be a public-private team with representation from federal and state agencies, employers, labor, veterans' organizations and other organizations critical to improving the veterans transition process. The team would be responsible for the following: 1) developing a comprehensive family-based approach; 2) improved connections to Illinois employers; 3) improving coordination with federal agencies; 4) continuous outreach and connections; 5) connecting to statewide veterans specialist networks; 6) supporting the veterans specialist networks at local and regional levels; 7) connecting key employment sectors such as healthcare; manufacturing; transportation, distribution, and logistics; information technology, etc., 8) connecting to entrepreneurship opportunities; and 9) evaluating and improving performance of the transition process.

The second set of finding and recommendations addressed improving transitions to employment. Stephen stressed that even though the TAP and the various other local and state employment programs provide assistance to veterans in making the transition to employment, the Task Force

still found major problems in employment transitions for Illinois veterans. The Task Force identified two major problems that must be addressed to improve the transition to employment: 1) improving the translation of military skills, training, and credentials into related civilian employment skills and licensures; and 2) improving the overall job readiness of veterans and their skills in finding and retaining employment. The two recommendations made by the Task Force would have the Illinois Veterans Transition Team: 1) improve access to tools to translate military skills and training by identifying leading transitional tools, improve connections to online resources, and provide training and support to veterans specialists; and 2) provide job readiness training for Illinois veterans by identifying leading models that can be scaled-up by networks of veterans specialists.

The third set of findings and recommendations presented to the board members addressed improving the capacity of Illinois employers. Presently, there are examples of promising public-private partnerships including regional and state networking, job fair events and targeted employment programs. However, current efforts to assist human resource managers and recruiters, such as the Easter Seals Operation Employ Veterans Program, have found it challenging to engage human resource managers and recruiters in face-to-face outreach and training sessions. Illinois employers have the desire to hire veterans but some lack the capacity to identify and effectively recruit veterans, navigate state and federal employment laws when targeting veterans, and find services and benefits available to support employed veterans. The Task Force's recommendations for addressing these challenges and issues are: 1) expand existing efforts to provide informational resources to Illinois employers; 2) provide guidance and training to employers in hiring Illinois veterans by providing examples of best practices and models; and 3) educate employers on how to assist veterans in accessing and utilizing benefits that will improve their transition and retention in employment.

The fourth set of findings and recommendations outlined in the final report involved improving access and success in postsecondary education and training. Stephen stated that IDVA and state education agencies have worked in recent years to improve the capacity of all community colleges and universities to serve veterans. Most Illinois community colleges and universities now have veterans coordinators that direct veterans to the on-campus veterans service office and some are exceeding expectations. For example, Southern Illinois University recently received a statewide award for veterans services.

ICCB is working with community colleges to standardize their websites for veterans services, expand credit transfer opportunities, and share best practices. Also, Illinois has been working with veterans student organizations throughout the state to build stronger peer-to-peer student networks to support veterans, including use of work-study programs. Finally, IDVA is conducting outreach efforts to expand awareness of new job training benefits that can support veterans training in non-college degree programs and on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs. Despite current efforts being made, the Task Force determined the following challenges and issues need to be addressed: 1) military education, training, and credentials often do not transfer easily to educational credits; 2) military certification and licensure in key sectors, such as healthcare and transportation, often do not transfer into civilian certification and licensure in the same fields; 3) additional support is needed for student veteran organizations and

peer-to-peer support programs; and 4) lack of remedial skills may serve as a barrier for veterans seeking postsecondary education and training.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends the following actions: 1) improve access to tools that translate skills and training to education and professional credentials as well as identify career and education pathways; 2) improve capacity of Illinois colleges and universities to support on-campus veterans coordinators and to strengthen student veterans networks through technology platforms, work-study programs, and training; 3) expand job training opportunities by coordinating with IDVA to increase the utilization of non-traditional postsecondary education and training; and 4) expand efforts to address basic skill barriers by early assessment of remedial education needs and by developing bridge programs.

The final set of findings and recommendations addressed improving access and utilization of veterans benefits and services. Stephen emphasized that state and federal veterans programs were designed primarily for transition to employment with less focus on providing comprehensive access to support services throughout the transition process, except for veterans transitioning directly from veterans' hospitals and other medical facilities. It is the opinion of the Task Force that Illinois needs a more comprehensive family-based approach to transition services that includes a stronger behavioral health component which would provide coordinated outreach to veterans at defined points throughout the transition process and customized for different targeted veteran populations.

The Task Force identified four major challenges and issues: 1) lack of sufficient screening of mental health issues prior to and throughout the transition process; 2) barriers to employment resulting from criminal records, often resulting from mental health and substance abuse issues; 3) the need to expand diversionary court programs piloted in Illinois; and 4) barriers associated with transportation access to appropriate services. It is the recommendation of the Task Force to have the Illinois Veterans Transition Team take the following actions: 1) work with partners to build a stronger mental health component into transition services and launch efforts to address the stigma associated with mental health services to maximize access and utilization of services; 2) work with leading state and federal court representatives and criminal justice experts to formalize and expand veterans' courts and related programs throughout the state and improve their coordination with other veterans services; and 3) expand access to transportation services by working with state agencies and local and regional partners to build on current efforts to improve transportation access to critical services including mental health services.

Stephen emphasized that the Task Force recommendations were made with the clear understanding that these challenges and issues must be addressed during a period when most local, state, and federal employment, education, human services and veterans programs are facing funding reductions and many Illinois workers, including veterans, have found it more difficult to find employment. Based on the collective knowledge of the Task Force members and recognition of current financial constraints, it was determined that many of these challenges be addressed by leveraging and improving the coordination and effectiveness of existing public and private resources and strengthening connections to Illinois employers in key sectors that are committed to expanding opportunities for Illinois veterans. The recommendations of this Task

Force, if acted upon, will ensure that our veterans are provided with every possible opportunity to be successful outside of the military.

In conclusion, Stephen recognized Governor Quinn's outstanding commitment to assisting veterans and their families, and thanked Director Warren Ribley of DCEO, Director Maureen O'Donnell of IDES, and Director Dan Grant of IDVA for their leadership in exploring new and creative ways to meet the Governor's commitment.

A brief discussion was held after the presentation including the following questions and concerns. Robert Kilbury noted that the report did not mention veterans with disabilities, including post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury or mental health issues. He also mentioned that veterans who are not eligible for certain veterans programs, may be eligible for the State's vocational rehabilitation program. Stephen responded by stating that the final report may not specifically mention veterans with disabilities, nonetheless, the Task Force members had discussed and referenced mental health issues in the last set of recommendations in the report. Ocheng Jany emphasized the importance of providing reasonable accommodations for all veterans with disabilities in the higher education field. Mark Williams stated that prior to the report he was not aware of problems in aligning military skills with civilian certifications as well as how soft skills translate for veterans. Tom Ashby thanked the members of the Task Force and commended the private sector participation in the efforts to assist Illinois veterans and their families.

Co-Chair Warren Ribley reiterated that the primary recommendation of the Task Force is to establish a statewide entity referred to as the Illinois Transition Team, which will advance the other recommendations in the report. He has had conversations with Director O'Donnell and Director Grant in how each agency will define areas of responsibility that will be undertaken by the three agencies with the support of the Office of the Governor. Also, Amy Amizich, staff member in the Office of the Governor, had been briefed on the Task Force findings and recommendations. Co-Chair Warren Ribley entertained a motion to approve the Veterans Task Force Report with the caveat to build in language referencing the access of services to veterans with disabilities. Robert Kilbury made a motion to approve the report with the added language as described by Co-Chair Warren Ribley. Ocheng Jany seconded the motion. The motion passed.

In conclusion, Co-Chair Warren Ribley thanked all the Task Force members for their time and efforts and recognized David Leckrone for his contributions specifically for drawing attention to the goal of increasing opportunities for veterans. Mr. Leckrone stated he was honored to be a part of the Task Force and knows the importance of the work given he is a veteran of the Army after serving 27 years and experienced similar challenges as he re-entered civilian employment. In summary, he stated the plan has been outlined and now the important next step is executing it so Illinois veterans may break through the barriers. Co-Chair Warren Ribley also recognized Donald Dedobbelaere with Deer & Company for his service on the Task Force. Donald stated it was a pleasure serving on the Task Force and was excited and encouraged to see the report implemented.



### Closing Comments, Public Comment, and Adjournment

Co-Chair Warren Ribley asked if there were any public comments. Ocheng Jany announced that the Illinois Board of Higher Education has a new Executive Director, Dr. George Reid, who is committed to attending meetings in the future.

Co-Chair Warren Ribley announced that the next meeting will be held on June 23, 2011 in Chicago with logistical information forthcoming. Additionally, he encouraged all board members and guests to attend the press conference on the proposed federal WIA funding cuts that was being held at the Workforce Development Center across the street following the IWIB meeting.

Co-Chair Warren Ribley thanked Rosiland Bruce for hosting the meeting at the Lincoln Land Community College campus facilities. Rosiland made a motion to adjourn. Tom Ashby seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.