

## **STATE OF ILLINOIS INTEGRATED BUSINESS SERVICE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN REPORT – MAY 2016**

### **BACKGROUND**

Illinois' regional planning process consistently highlighted the need to align and integrate economic development and business services at the state, regional and local levels. Illinois responded by requesting consultant support from the United States Department of Labor's (DOL) Chicago Regional Office to integrate the business services design and operations starting with the four WIOA core partners [Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Office of Employment and Training (DCEO/OET), the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), the Department of Human Services' Vocational Rehabilitation (DHS/VR) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)]. DOL provided Illinois with consulting support from Maher & Maher to assist with this project.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN REPORT**

This report is the product of the Illinois' core agencies' technical assistance request and the ensuing collaboration between Maher & Maher and the Illinois WIOA core partners to collect, analyze and compile information around current business engagement and service delivery for each agency. Recognizing that integration is a complex process, the agency partners, Maher & Maher, DOL and Illinois' WIOA core partners agreed that a strategic first step should be an inventory or "environmental scan" to document how business services are currently structured, designed, and delivered across the four core partners in Illinois. The process included surveying (for those agencies partnering with organizations at the local level to deliver services), multiple interviews and extensive follow-up discussion to ensure as much accuracy as possible. This information will support the agencies' understanding of each other's work and allow for identification of opportunity areas for streamlining and alignment.

### **BEST PRACTICES**

In addition to the scan of current business service delivery, Maher & Maher was also asked to identify key components of effective integrated business services as well as promising practices or models related to those elements to support possible replication, in part or whole, by the Illinois Inter-agency team. Those resources will help support the agencies as they move forward with developing an action plan for business services integration. Finally, the Maher & Maher team was asked to capitalize upon the knowledge gained through its work supporting various workforce initiatives in the State of Illinois and around the country to provide recommendations for next steps to be taken by the four partner agencies to "move the needle" toward integration.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The resulting 2016 Illinois Integrated Business Service Environmental Scan report recommended that the State develop a business services framework that considers the following key elements:

- *A sectors-based approach* – As a result of WIOA regional planning work across the state, each Economic Development Region has identified target industry sectors. The work of the unified business services team in each region should align around their region-specific industry sectors.
- *From transactional to transformative* – Much of the current work with businesses across the state are based on a transactional approach – processing job orders, coordinating on-site recruitment events, and more. While these tasks will continue to be important components of service delivery, the overall engagement of businesses should take on a transformational focus that provides a platform for regular and ongoing dialogue.
- *Regional in nature* – Service delivery should be regional in nature and align with the regional designations identified by the Governor for WIOA, which are the 10 Economic Development

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Regions. The core partners should look at the pros and cons of aligning, to the extent possible, their geographic boundaries in order to remove this as a barrier to coordinated service delivery.

- *Consideration of federal statutory mandates* – Three of the four core partners have a federal mandate to provide specific, related services. Because these federal requirements are spread across three agencies, coordination is a bit more difficult and thus needs to be taken into account when developing the state framework.
- *Coordinated approach* – The framework should describe a coordinated approach to business services and suggest a process for determining which partner is going to serve as the point of contact for particular businesses/industries and how the point of contact will coordinate with other partners to meet business needs.
- *Co-located staff* – Building upon efforts already underway, continue efforts to collocate in workNet Centers to ensure maximum coordination between partners.
- *Policies and Procedures* - Policies that each of the four agencies will adopt including coordinated program and staff performance measures. This may mean that existing policies/procedures need to be reviewed and revised to ensure alignment.
- *Local Engagement* - It is critical for local partners to be engaged in the creation of the framework to ensure that it provides enough guidance to be helpful but also allows enough flexibility to allow regional innovation and customization. Businesses, as well, need to be engaged in the creation of the framework.

### NEXT STEPS

This report will be submitted to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board and other workforce stakeholders. The Interagency Work Group has reviewed the DOL technical assistance report and has recommended that each of the core agencies obtain a formal commitment from the agency directors to move forward to develop a joint vision of unified business services in Illinois.