

APPENDIX I - Title IB Program Specific Requirements

APPENDIX I

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIFIED PLAN SEC. 102(2)(D) TITLE IB

Regions and Local Workforce Innovation Areas

The local areas designated in the State, including the process used for designing local areas, the process used for identifying any planning regions under section 106(a), and a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in determining the planning regions.

A complete map of Illinois' local workforce areas is provided as Attachment P. Illinois issued WIOA Transition Policy #1 to address the initial designation of local areas as required by the WIOA and Training and Employment guidance Letter (TEGL) Number 27-14 that was issued by the U.S. Department of Labor. The majority (20 of 22) of the local workforce areas in Illinois met the criteria outlined in Sec. 1.A of TEGL 27-14. All of the Chief Elected Officials that met these criteria, in consultation with the local workforce boards, submitted a request to be designated as a local area under the WIOA. The Governor has approved all of the requests for initial designation using the following criteria:

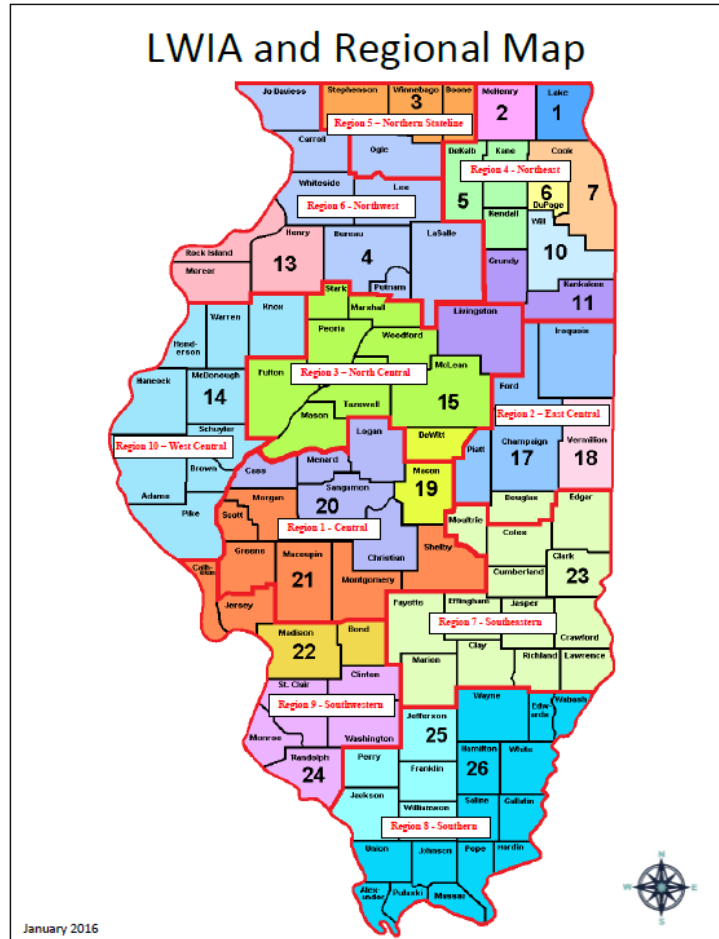
- The local area was designated under WIA as of July 22, 2012 or before;
- The local area met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for core indicators of performance described in Section 136(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for each of the most recent two consecutive years for which data are available;
- The Secretary of Labor has not made a formal determination during either of the last two program years that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity in the area has not sustained fiscal integrity; and
- All county CEOs within a current local workforce area, following a review of all current operations of the local area and by signature on the request, agree to all matters with regard to the request for designation by the State of the current local area.

The Chief Elected Officials of the remaining two local areas (LWIAs 4 and 15), in consultation with the local workforce boards, submitted a request letter under Sec. 1.B of TEGL 27-14, which provides that under the following conditions, the Governor may approve a request for initial designation as a local workforce development area under the WIOA from any area that was designated as a local area under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, but failed to meet all requirements of Sec. 1.A above. Each of these areas was involved in a consolidation with an adjacent local area during the time frame set forth, and each would have been eligible to apply under Sec. 1.A had their performance data not been impacted by the local area being absorbed.

Regional Planning Areas were designated to align with the State's ten economic development regions. These ten regions address the WIOA Section 106 requirement that the Governor identify and organize local workforce boards and core program partners into regional planning areas to engage in joint planning, coordinate service delivery, share administrative costs, and enter into regional coordination efforts with economic development agencies operating in the same region. The ten regions were first established in 2003 by the Governor based on the analysis of statewide commuting patterns surrounding major and minor metropolitan centers.

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In late 2014, a new analysis of the state was completed and the data confirmed this regional alignment is still appropriate. In early 2015, the Department collaborated with ICCB on creating a strategic plan for workforce and education. The Departments of Commerce and Employment Security and ICCB made the local areas and community college districts aware the data indicated the Economic Development Regions were still valid. Furthermore, we jointly announced our intent to strengthen the linkages of all our efforts to economic development by using these regions as the base for community college and WIOA planning regardless of community college district and LWIA alignments. As part of the ICCB planning, data packets for each region were prepared that included a map showing how the community college districts and LWIAs overlapped with the planning regions (See Attachment M). To promote continuity from the ICCB planning, these data packets are also being used by the WIOA regional planning teams.



The appeals process referred to in Section 106(b)(5), relating to designation of local areas

Illinois WIOA Transition Policy #1 provides that the Governor's decision regarding local area requests for initial designation may be appealed in accordance with Sections 679.290 of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. There were no local workforce areas that appealed the Governor's decision regarding initial designation.

The appeals process referred to in Section 121(h)(2)(E), relating to determinations for infrastructure funding

The appeals process relating to the determinations for infrastructure funding is outlined in the Governor's guidelines, included as Attachment H.

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(2) Statewide Activities

Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) oversees the administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IB programs. As administrator, Commerce issues policy guidance through its series of policy letters and notices that are posted on the *Illinois workNet* portal at http://www2.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources_WIOA/Pages/WIA-WIOAPolicies.aspx. Commerce has issued guidance on the implementation and administration of the WIOA for the following activities:

- Data Management and Reporting
- Fiscal Reporting and Accountability
- General Administration
- Governance
- Performance Management
- Planning
- Program Eligibility
- Training

Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding.

Commerce will work with the core partners to implement the strategies and activities outlined in the Unified Plan. Governor's set aside funding will be used as appropriate to support interagency initiatives that leverage formula funding sources. There are four general categories of activity that Illinois will support with these funds.

Collaboration

While collaboration between and among state, regional and local organizations will also be part of the activities described below, we think it is critical to highlight cross-program, multi-level collaboration as a primary activity we will pursue under WIOA. In this administration, the role of workforce development has been elevated as other programs have made the connection of how their efforts are impacted by the availability of skilled workers. As such, the workforce development team is increasingly being involved in conversations and efforts with additional organizations. For example, the Illinois Department of Health and Human Services (IHHS) is the point agency for setting standards on determining self-sufficiency in Illinois. The State's economy varies widely from region to region. Commerce's Office of Employment and Training is part of this IHHS interagency team working to establish parameters that allow for regional economic differences. We will continue to provide information and staff support to these types of groups to the benefit of WIOA participants.

Innovative Workforce Pilots & Research

Commerce is interested in pilot projects that integrate the workforce, education and economic development services that respond to the talent pipeline needs of businesses within regions. Priority consideration will be given to regional projects that:

- Implement innovative programs and strategies designed to meet the needs of business, which programs and strategies may include incumbent worker training programs, customized training, sectoral and industry cluster strategies and implementation of industry or sector partnerships, and career pathway programs. Projects may include microenterprise and entrepreneurial training and

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support programs, utilization of effective business intermediaries, layoff aversion strategies, activities to improve linkages between workforce partners, and other business services and strategies that better engage employers in workforce investment activities and make the workforce development system more relevant to the needs of the State and local businesses.

- Develop and/or implement education and training programs that respond to the labor market analysis within the region(s). Projects should ensure that training credits are portable and stackable and allow participants to accelerate through the program.

Priority Populations Pilots

Commerce is interested in regional projects that break down barriers to accessing job-driven training that will result in employment opportunities for all Illinois workers. Projects may focus on:

- Developing strategies for effectively serving individuals with barriers to employment and for coordinating programs and services among workforce partners. Projects may include the integration of employment and training activities with:
 - Child support services, and assistance provided by State and local agencies carrying out Part D of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 651, et seq.);
 - Cooperative extension programs carried out by the Illinois Department of Agriculture;
 - Programs carried out in local areas for individuals with disabilities, including programs carried out by State agencies relating to intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities, activities carried out by Statewide Independent Living Councils established under Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 796d), programs funded under Part B of Chapter 1 of Title VII of such Act (29 U.S.C. 796e, et seq.), and activities carried out by centers for independent living, as defined in Section 702 of such Act (29 U.S.C.796a);
 - Programs that target services to out of school youth in the Juvenile Justice System;
 - Programs that target services to out of school youth in the Child Welfare System;
 - Adult education and literacy activities, including those provided by public libraries;
 - Activities in the corrections system that assist ex-offenders in reentering the workforce; and
 - Digital literacy and financial literacy activities.
- Supporting the development of alternative, evidence-based programs and other activities that enhance the choices available to eligible youth and encourage such youth to reenter and complete secondary education, enroll in postsecondary education and advanced training, progress through a career pathway, and enter into unsubsidized employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

Statewide Technical Assistance, Capacity Building Activities & Evaluation

The Department of Commerce is interested in state and regional projects that will assist in the effective and efficient implementation of WIOA regulations. Projects may focus on:

- Providing technical assistance to, as appropriate, local boards, chief elected officials, One-Stop operators, workforce partners and eligible providers, in local areas. Projects will identify which provision of technical assistance is appropriate, including the development and training of staff and the development of exemplary program activities. Projects may also provide technical assistance to local areas that fail to meet local performance accountability measures described in WIOA regulations.
- Providing technical assistance to improve the integration of case management, training services, supportive services, business services and employer engagement among workforce, education and economic development partners.

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There are many technical assistance activities planned that just a few months ago fell under innovation. Many components of our Workforce Innovation Fund initiative are now codified into the new program. Sector Strategies, work-based learning, accelerated training, enhanced cross-program career services, lean principles, using dashboards to better track program services and participant progress and outcomes, talent flow analysis and communicating business competencies have been underway in Illinois as innovation efforts over the last three years. Under WIOA these activities will be scaled up statewide. Cross-program live and virtual peer networking and business engagement will crossover into technical assistance and capacity building. The following capacity building efforts will be a priority under WIOA, and the Department will provide staff support and other funding as needed to leverage advances in these areas:

- Sector Strategies
- Talent Pipeline Management
- Career Pathways for Economic Advancement
- Coordinated and enhanced career services
- Expanded access to Labor Market Information
- Improved public-private data infrastructure

The State of Illinois will also place greater emphasis on not only identifying which practices work well and those that do not, but also understanding why. Governor's discretionary funding will support activities such as: data collection, activity and outcomes tracking, reporting and evaluation. This will include expanding the benchmark report and developing other tools that will inform policy-making and improvements in service delivery and participant outcomes. Across all these types of activity, where feasible, Governor's discretionary funds will be used to leverage additional investments from other public and private sources.

Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers.

The Department of Commerce is the lead state agency for coordinating rapid response activity in Illinois. The Rapid Response Team includes the Department of Commerce Rapid Response Staff, IDES Staff, Local Workforce Area Staff and other partners, as appropriate. These partners coordinate efforts to make impacted workers and businesses aware of available services, eligibility requirements and the application process.

The Illinois Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, requires employers to provide 60 days advance notice of pending plant closures or mass layoffs. The law applies to "business enterprises" with 75 or more employees (excluding part-time employees). A covered "mass layoff" under Illinois WARN is a reduction in force ("RIF") at a single site of employment that is not the result of a "plant closing" and results in employment losses during any 30-day period (or, in some cases, during any 90-day period) for at least 33% of the employees and at least 25 employees, or at least 250 employees regardless of the percentage. While rapid response is required for closures and mass layoffs, it is the Department of Commerce's policy that effective rapid response services are to be provided to as many workers and companies as possible. Rapid Response funds will be used to administer all of the required and allowable activities outlined in WIOA, including, but not limited to:

- Layoff aversion activities;
- Immediate and on-sit contact with the employer, representatives of the affected workers and the local community;

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- The provision of information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs, such as short-time compensation, comprehensive One-Stop Delivery System services, and employment and training activities, including information on the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, Pell Grants, the GI Bill, and other resources;
- The delivery of other necessary services and resources including workshops and classes, use of worker transition centers, and job fairs, to support reemployment efforts for affected workers;
- Partnership with the local board(s) and chief elected official(s) to ensure a coordinated response to the dislocation event and, as needed, obtain access to state or local economic development assistance. Such coordinated response may include the development of an application for a national dislocated worker grant as provided under WIOA;
- The provision of emergency assistance adapted to the particular layoff or disaster;
- Developing systems and processes for identifying and gathering information for early warning of potential layoffs or opportunities for layoff aversion, analyzing, and acting upon, data and information on dislocations and other economic activity in the state, region, or local area; and tracking outcome and performance data and information related to the activities of the rapid response program;
- Developing and maintaining partnerships with other appropriate federal, state and local agencies and officials, employer associations, technical councils, other industry business councils, labor organizations, and other public and private organizations, as applicable, in order to:
 - Conduct strategic planning activities to develop strategies for addressing dislocation events and ensuring timely access to a broad range of necessary assistance;
 - Develop mechanisms for gathering and exchanging information and data relating to potential dislocations, resources available, and the customization of layoff aversion or rapid response activities, to ensure the ability to provide rapid response services as early as possible;
- Delivery of services to worker groups for which a petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance has been filed;
- The provision of additional assistance and funding to local areas that experience disasters, layoffs, or other dislocation events when such events exceed the capacity of the local area to respond with existing resources; and
- Provision of guidance and financial assistance as appropriate, in establishing a labor management committee if voluntarily agreed to by the employee's bargaining representative and management. The committee may devise and oversee an implementation strategy that responds to the reemployment needs of the workers.

In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

Natural disasters create more significant impacts than economically-driven layoffs because multiple facets of individuals' lives are disrupted, sometimes permanently and often without warning. Natural disasters in Illinois are typically related to: tornados, flooding, ice and snow, drought, and less frequently, earthquakes. State rapid response staff mobilize upon learning that a natural disaster is underway. In instances where the Federal Emergency Management Agency declares a disaster area, DOL/ETA typically provides a National Emergency Grant. The rapid response team contributes to the Department of Commerce NEG application.

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Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed (Section 134(a)(2)(A). This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Section 221(a)(2)(A) and Section 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.

The state will use the information developed by the interagency data team, feedback from regional sector strategies and intelligence from economic development officials to expand layoff aversion efforts and respond to the needs of businesses before layoffs occur.

As the Department of Commerce Office of Employment and Training receives notice of potential layoffs and petition filings, the Rapid Response team organizes and establishes logistics for informational meetings for Trade impacted and non-Trade Act impacted worker groups. The Rapid Response team includes partners from IDES and Title 1B administrators from the local workforce areas, as well as other partner programs based on worker and situational needs. The Benefits, Rights and Obligations, along with Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) and RTAA/ATAA benefits are covered at length with the affected workers. Since workers often times are not all scheduled for layoff on the same date, multiple workshops are held to provide the Trade specific information to the workers. Staff, including Title 1B, has access to updated Trade Program forms and information on Illinois workNet, and ongoing support and technical assistance from the Department of Commerce and the Department of Employment Security UI and Trade program staff.

Rapid Response Reserve funds are dedicated to layoff aversion strategies and to assist laid off workers. Layoff aversion strategies include the Talent Pipeline RFA opportunity through the Department of Commerce. The Talent Pipeline is designed to award grants for demonstration projects providing Rapid Response services to businesses and workers impacted or at risk of being impacted by company closures or layoffs. The goal of this program is to help businesses avoid layoffs where possible and help unemployed workers re-enter the workforce. Commerce is interested in investing in projects that specifically identify employers that serve WIOA-eligible dislocated workers from layoff events; projects for recently separated veterans; projects that connect employers and WIOA eligible dislocated workers with short-term, on-the-job and customized training programs; and registered apprenticeships before or after layoff and prior to new employment. The Department will consider incumbent worker projects to assist with training existing employees who are at-risk of being laid off without the training.

Training projects must provide workers with new skills to retain their existing job or quickly transition to a new one and maintain financial stability. The value for employers is remaining competitive in the global economy and saving operational, overhead and productivity costs by training current, reliable employees rather than going through the process of replacing them. For laid off workers, Rapid Response Reserve funds offer additional assistance for outreach and recruitment, training, supportive services and in the case of large layoffs, these funds also provide assistance for transition centers to add additional support for affected workers and accommodate serving a higher volumes of individuals.

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(b) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

Work-Based Training Models If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

Work-based training is one of the highest priorities for Illinois under WIOA. The underlying advantage of work-based learning is that by definition, it incorporates skill competencies needed by the business. There is no doubt the trainees are learning the specific skills needed, and furthermore they are learning to apply skills in the way the employer prefers. This practically guarantees individuals that complete training are positioned to immediately add value in the workplace and have marketable skills to provide upward mobility in a career pathway.

Commerce has promoted a resurgence of on-the-job training going back several years using National Emergency OJT Grant (NEG). Through investing in statewide rapid response set-aside we have been working to help local areas and businesses create a positive experience through OJT and work experience. Further, using a \$12 million Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) initiative, Commerce, ICCB, IDES and the Illinois Manufacturer's Association collaborated to promote combining work-based career exploration, paid work experience/internships, transitional jobs and OJT to create a continuum of services designed to allow participants to "earn and learn" and businesses to "try before buy". We also encouraged community colleges to collaborate with local workforce areas to create internship opportunities for eligible students before and upon graduation. This strategy is designed to ease participants and students into a paid position so they gain valuable real-world experience and the opportunity to demonstrate their essential skills to prospective employers.

WIOA was signed into law during the training cycle of our WIF project; and we strongly encouraged local areas to take advantage of the opportunity to build business relationships and pilot test work-based training under WIF to prepare them for WIOA. Another strategy we have found helpful is to engage an industry partner that can facilitate work-based placements from the workforce system into its member businesses. The industry partner can speak the language of both worlds and "translate" between private and public sector to reduce communication breakdowns.

Illinois recognizes that one of the best ways for local areas to help key industries remain globally competitive and establish good relationships with businesses is through incumbent worker training projects. Illinois has a long history of supporting incumbent worker training at the state, regional and local levels. With the elimination of the layoff aversion requirement for local incumbent worker projects, it is anticipated that there will be a marked increase in incumbent worker activities. The state enthusiastically supports work-based training strategies including incumbent worker training projects that will make both the business and employees more competitive.

Registered Apprenticeship. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.

The use of apprenticeships will be encouraged through demonstration projects, policy guidance and technical assistance. With increased attention on various forms of work-based learning, we expect apprenticeships to become more common as WIOA is implemented. With participants set up to succeed in the workplace and learn higher technical skills, they can continue to earn and learn through an apprenticeship. The ultimate solution to incorporating registered apprenticeships into WIOA will

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depend on the final form of Title IB performance requirements, the planned duration of the apprenticeship program, and the occupational demand. Additional information on how the Title IB Program is encouraging registered apprenticeship, unregistered apprenticeship and structured internship opportunities is posted on Illinois workNet at: <https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/Training/Pages/Apprenticeship.aspx>.

Training Provider Eligibility Procedure. Provide the procedure for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

Illinois WIOA Policy Letter 14-PL-07 establishes the procedure for Local Workforce Areas to provide transitional eligibility for training providers and training programs under WIOA. It also provides the procedures for Registered Apprenticeships to request additions to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). All Registered Apprenticeship programs registered with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship or a recognized state apprenticeship agency are automatically eligible to be included as an eligible training provider. Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs) are responsible for establishing contact with Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors within their local area to identify the programs that want to be included on the state's ETPL.

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program.

WIOA inquirants are asked to self-attest and/or provide documentation and those without post-secondary credentials and degrees are tested for math and reading skills at intake to determine eligibility for the Adult program. Individuals that become participants in the Adult and Dislocated Worker streams have information on their income, basic skills and enrollment in other social service programs such as SNAP recorded in the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS). Tracking of participants with these indicators is done routinely at the local and state level to ensure that priority of service requirements are met.

Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

The Program Year 2015 Funding Notice for the Title 1B funds provides that the local workforce areas can transfer up to fifty percent (50%) of funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams without approval from the state. The Department will consider requests that exceed the fifty percent (50%) transfer threshold based the local data and overall performance.

(c) Youth Activities

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in Section 129, information identifying the criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describing how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in Section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii).

WIOA Notice No. 14-NOT-05, Change 1 titled Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities Program Allocations for Program Year 2015 (PY'15) provides local workforce areas with guidance regarding the implementation of the youth program performance measures outlined in Section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA. At least seventy-five percent (75%) of local area

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available youth funding must be spent on the out-of-school youth population. Available youth funding is calculated as the total youth funds, minus any administrative funds. Twenty percent (20%) of the available youth funds must be spent on work experience activities.

Illinois WIOA Notice No. 14-NOT-05, Change 1 references Training Employment and Guidance Letter No. 23-14 issued by the U.S. Department of Labor that provides planning guidance for those local areas unable to meet this rate for Program Year 2015. The increased expenditures must be a minimum of ten (10) percentage points compared to the previous year and no lower than a fifty percent (50%) *Out of School Youth* expenditure rate. In addition, the local area must be prepared to describe how they will meet the seventy five percent (75%) rate with Program Year 2016 and describe concrete steps taken to comply with the seventy-five percent (75%) *Out of School Youth* expenditure requirement and strategies the state and local areas are taking to secure contractors, solidify partnerships, and transition from a focus on *In-School Youth* to *Out of School Youth* programs.

Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants.

In order to address the needs of youth in Illinois, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board created the Disadvantaged Youth Career Pathways Task Force to create a set of recommendations for how local areas should build partnerships and engage businesses for work-based learning and other initiatives, exercising any necessary WIOA program elements in pursuit of sustainable career pathways for youth throughout the state. It is anticipated that formal policy will be developed as the state reviews the Task Force recommendations and the final WIOA regulations.

Describe how the state will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA Section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented.

Illinois will maintain programmatic fidelity to WIOA youth policy through a system of robust monitoring, examination of best practices statewide and nationally, and continuous information sharing and technical assistance. Illinois' Disadvantaged Youth Career Pathways Task Force is the first step in this process.

Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

Due to extreme demographic and socioeconomic diversity in the regions and local areas of the state, Illinois finds it necessary to allow flexibility for Local Workforce Areas to issue and maintain their own policies defining additional assistance thresholds that speak to the needs of their population. The State will continue to consider this requirement and review the Task Force recommendations and the final WIOA regulations.

Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If State law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school,” indicate that is the case.

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Illinois State law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school”. We continue to work with education entities in the state to create a working definition. For the time being we place emphasis on the term “School”, which under the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5) is defined as “ School - “The terms "common schools", "free schools" and "public schools" are used interchangeably to apply to any school operated by authority of this Act.”

The Illinois School Records Act (105 ILCS 10/2) defines as: "School" means any public preschool, day care center, kindergarten, nursery, elementary or secondary educational institution, vocational school, special educational facility or any other elementary or secondary educational agency or institution and any person, agency or institution which maintains school student records from more than one school, but does not include a private or non-public school.

The Illinois State Board of Education states that “A non-public school is ”any non-profit, non-home-based, and non-public elementary or secondary school that is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and attendance at which satisfies the requirements” of 105 ILCS 5/26-1 of the Code.”

If utilizing the portion of the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.

With the issuance of WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-4.4 Youth Eligibility, we reference the Basic Skills Deficient definition found in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act which is:

The term “basic skills deficient” means, with respect to an individual— (A) who is a youth, that the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or (B) who is a youth or adult, that the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.

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APPENDIX II

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIFIED PLAN SEC. 102(2)(D) TITLE II

Adult Education and Family Literacy Program Activities and Assurances

The Unified State Plan must include a description of the following activities under Adult Education:

- I. **How the eligible agency will, if applicable, align content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1));**

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the eligible agency in the State with the responsibility of administering the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 – Title II Adult Education and Literacy Act.

In 2014, the ICCB integrated the Illinois Adult Education ABE/ASE Content Standards with the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards released by the Illinois State Board of Education as well as the Office of Career Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE). In addition to the above two referenced documents, the Standards Document also incorporated the Common Core, States' Career Clusters Initiative Essential Knowledge and Skill Statements, and the International Society for Technology in Education's National Educational Technology Standards for Students. This cross referenced Standards Document, along with a companion Curriculum Guide provides the foundation for curriculum development. All current programs have participated in statewide curriculum institutes to develop new curriculum as necessary or to align current curriculum to provide effective as well as rigorous content based instruction. An online repository is being developed that will house statewide approved curriculum and lesson plans to be used for adult education instruction. Instructors will be able to access, upload and provide recommendation for curriculum and lesson plans.

A statewide planning committee consisting of adult education instructors, local program directors, state staff and subject matter experts has been developed to review and evaluate the effectiveness and ensure alignment of the curriculum to the CCR standards.

To ensure the sustainability of standards based instruction throughout the State, ICCB has created a five-year implementation and sustainability plan. This plan institutes a train-the-trainer model. Cohorts of instructors who successfully complete and provide applicable evidence of standards-based instruction will be used to train the next cohort of instructors. It is the goal of ICCB to create a system of CCR content specialist/master teachers that will provide regional training, technical assistance, and guidance to instructors in their region, thus ensuring statewide rigorous standards based instruction in all programs.

- II. **How the State will fund local activities using considerations specified in section 231(e) for:**
 - aa. **Activities under section 231(b) [local activities];**
 - bb. **Programs for corrections education under section 225;**
 - cc. **Programs for integrated English literacy and civics education under section 243; and**
 - dd. **Integrated education and training;**

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Ilaa. Activities under section 231(b) [local activities]

Creating Pathways for Adult Learners: An Illinois Strategic Plan for Adult Education

Applicants should consider the priorities listed below as set forth in the Strategic Plan for Adult Education “Creating Pathways for Adult Learners.”

- **Assessment, Curricula, and Instruction:** Adopt and align assessments, curricula, and instructional practices that prepare adults for family-sustaining jobs and career advancement.
- **Support Services and Follow-up Services:** Provide comprehensive student support to reduce personal barriers to retention and progress that promote smooth transitions within and between educational/training providers and into the workforce.
- **High Quality Teaching and Professional Development:** Ensure that all adult educators have ongoing, specialized professional development in career cluster framework to deliver high-quality instruction and to use classroom support that fosters learner persistence.
- **Partnerships:** Build and sustain mutually beneficial relationships with key partners to identify regional skill needs and design and provide career pathways programs that meet those needs.
- **Research, Data, and Accountability:** Continue to expand and strengthen the State’s accountability system to document, evaluate, and improve student and program outcomes on a continuing basis.
- **Program Design:** Design pathways for adult education learners interested in employment or further education, regardless of their skill levels at point of entry.

The strategic vision for adult education is a “foundation of a career pathways system that prepares adult learners for economic self-sufficiency.” The ICCB sees a system of adult education as one that is transforming the lives of adult learners and readying them for continuing education and employment. It will require a system that will include:

- Multiple entry points for all adult learners
- Accelerated learning options
- Industry-focused curricula that is contextualized and prepares learners for employment and careers, such as Bridge programs and Integrated Career and Academic Pathways System (I-CAPS) or other integrated models. By the end of FY2016, all programs are required to offer Bridge programming.
- Support Services and a transitional framework that accelerates student progress and completion
- Alignment with Common Core and College Readiness Standards to ensure students are college ready
- Responsiveness to the workforce needs in Illinois
- Collaboration with partners and connecting adult learners to services and employment opportunities
- Innovative approaches to build and deliver instruction that meets the needs of the adult learner and the workforce
- Accountability and the use of data to improve instruction and services
- Using evidence-based and integrated teaching methodologies that are based on research
- Utilizing professional development that maximizes the skills of adult educators to support quality teaching and learning in the classroom

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The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will publish and distribute broadly a Request for Proposals (RFP) that is aligned with the Unified State Plan in the spring of FY2016. In addition, the ICCB will host bidders' conferences throughout the State to answer questions related to the application process.

During a competitive year, to be considered for funding, applicants must:

1. Be an Eligible Applicant, as listed below:
 - Local educational agencies (LEAs)
 - Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) or Faith-Based Organization (FBO)
 - Volunteer Literacy Organizations of demonstrated effectiveness
 - Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)
 - Public or Private nonprofit agencies
 - Libraries
 - Public-housing authorities
 - Non-profit institutions that are described previously and have the ability to provide literacy services to adults and literacy activities
 - Consortia of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described previously
 - Partnership between an employer and an entity described above
2. Respond to the Request for Proposal by the due date
3. Complete all required portions of the application
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 workforce board plans are essential.

The ICCB will consider the success of a funded provider in meeting or exceeding such performance measures as identified by the Federal National Reporting System (NRS). The ICCB also recognizes the need to build a career pathway system for adult learners that will enhance education and employment opportunities. In order to accomplish this, the program/applicants must consider the following considerations as outlined in federal law:

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.

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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 postsecondary 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, one-stop centers, job training programs, business, and social service agencies.
11. The program offers flexible schedules and supportive services (such as child care and transportation) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.
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.

Eligible Instructional Categories:

Programs applying for Federal and State adult education resources must abide by the policy and procedures set forth. All programs must provide instruction that is direct, at a distance or a combination. These activities are important to the success of the program and the students served.

The activities below are the approved instructional activities for an ICCB approved adult education program.

- **Adult Basic Education (ABE)** curriculum consists of approved courses designed to bring a student from grade zero through the eighth-grade competency level. As determined by standardized testing. Beginning level courses cover grade zero through the third-grade competency level. The intermediate level courses cover fourth-grade competency through the eighth-grade competency. Each level of courses covers each content area and includes College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) in the curriculum. The curriculum is designed to accommodate the concept of individualized instruction and includes courses in general basic skills; reading literacy and communication skills; computational skills; technology and digital literacy skills; workforce/employability skills; life skills; career exploration/awareness skills; workplace Literacy; family literacy/parenting; bridge instruction and U.S. Citizenship education.

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- **Adult Secondary Education (ASE)** curriculum consists of approved courses designed to bring a student from grade nine through the twelfth-grade competency level as determined by standardized testing. The curriculum is designed to prepare a student to achieve a High School Equivalency credential and includes College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) within each curriculum. The curriculum is also designed to accommodate the concept of individualized instruction and includes courses in basic skills; general academic and intellectual skills; reading literacy and communication skills; computational skills; technology and digital literacy skills; workforce/employability skills; life skills and career exploration/awareness skills; workplace literacy; family literacy/parenting; bridge instruction and U.S. Citizenship Education.
- **English Language Acquisition (ELA)** curriculum consists of approved courses designed to include **instruction in English** for those whose native language is not English. Beginning, intermediate and advanced courses include a curriculum in listening, speaking, reading, and writing using the English language. Technology and Digital Literacy skills as well as CCRS are also included in the curriculum. Other courses using the English language may include instruction in life skills, citizenship education, career exploration, employability skills, workplace literacy, family literacy, bridge instruction and EL/Civics. Student levels are based on proficiency as measured by ICCB-approved standardized tests. The curriculum is designed to accommodate the concept of individualized instruction.
- **Career Exploration/Awareness Skills** curriculum may include instruction in workplace language, career readiness/exploration, development of career plans, career awareness job readiness, career development including, the use of career cluster essential knowledge and skills statements, job skills and career interest inventories, soft skills, preparation for college entrance exams and career planning. This also includes instruction related to employment opportunities, access to job information, and self-analysis techniques. The instruction is offered at every level of instruction (ABE/ASE/ELA), but each level will only include the most appropriate information. The ICCB will incorporate this as a new item in the future.
- **Integrated English Literacy/Civics (IEL/Civics)** includes education to immigrants and other limited proficient populations and are designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program. Curriculum for this instructional category assists participants to effectively engage in the education, work, and civic opportunities of the United States of America.

The Illinois EL/Civics competencies consist of seven thematic units (components) of civics development and more than 40 practical and immediately relevant activities for immigrant integration and success. The seven thematic units include: Consumer Economics (CE), Community Resources (CR), Democratic Process (DP), Employment (EM), Health Services (HE), and Housing (HO), U.S. School System (SS).

Throughout a combination of classroom instruction and community connections, these competencies will enable participants to effectively engage in education, work, civics opportunities, and rights and responsibilities of citizenship while continuing to build their English Language and Literacy skills. The competencies may be used at each level of ELA instruction; however, a program should increase the level of difficulty as the student progresses.

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- **Bridge Programs**

Career Pathways services must be incorporated into the instructional process for all adult learners and at all educational functioning levels. This includes the incorporation of career awareness, career development activities designed to assist learners in making informed decisions regarding making smooth transitions to postsecondary education.

The use of bridge programs has been piloted and has shown promise in introducing adult learners to different career options while increasing basic skills.

Bridge programs provide adult education learners with contextualized occupation-specific basic skills needed to successfully transition to postsecondary education and employment in high-growth industries. The Illinois Community College Board and other key state agencies and stakeholders, developed a bridge definition that is used to ensure consistency in use statewide. This group defined a bridge as a program that prepares adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations.

The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment.

Three core elements are required to be included as part of a bridge program:

- *Contextualized instruction* that integrates basic reading, math, and language skills and industry/occupation knowledge.
- *Career development* that includes career exploration, career planning within a career area, and understanding the world of work (specific elements depend upon the level of the bridge program and on whether participants are already incumbent workers in the specific field).
- *Transition services* that provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of moving from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or occupational programs. Services may include (as needed and available) academic advising, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services, e.g., transportation and child care.

- **Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS)**

The ICAPS model is an Integrated Education and Training (IET) model that blends both adult education and Career Technical Education instruction that leads to a postsecondary credential or an industry recognized credential and postsecondary credit.

- **High School Credit (HSCR)**

High School Credit (HSCR) consists of approved courses offered in collaboration with locally approved school districts. Upon satisfactory completion, the student must meet the requirements of the locally approved school district for graduation. **ICCB AEFL funds can only be used for approved core academic courses and electives that will prepare students for college and career readiness.**

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- **Vocational Skills Training (VOC)**

Vocational Skills Training (VOC) consists of an ICCB AEFL-approved course that is short-term in nature. VOC training leads to an industry recognized certificate or credential related to a specific career pathway. The training must provide entry-level workforce skills which lead to employment and prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations.

A program may choose to offer Vocational Skills Training in addition to the required instructional categories listed above. The recommended method to offer VOC training is as a part of either a bridge program or through an Integrated Education and Training (IET)/Integrated Literacy and Civics Education (IL/CE) programs.

- **Family Literacy**

Family Literacy is an integrated, intensive service for at-risk families that must include, but is not limited to, the four components—adult education, parenting education, parent/child activities, and child education—of family literacy. Each component is defined as:

- **Adult education** as defined above.
- **Parenting education** includes information and support for parents on issues such as childbirth, development and nurturing of children, child rearing, family management, support for children learning, effective advocacy strategies for the rights of all children, and parent involvement in their child’s education.
- **Parent/child activities** include regularly scheduled, interactive literacy-based learning activities for parents and children.
- **Child education** includes age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences (includes early childhood programs, school programs and/or childcare).
-

Only three components—adult education, parenting education, and parent/child activities—can be funded by ICCB Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) funds. The fourth component—child education—must be funded by an appropriate child education partner.

- **Volunteer Literacy Coordination**

Volunteer Literacy Coordination may include coordination, tutor training, tutor scheduling, and other support activities that promote student learning gains. Volunteer literacy services must be in conjunction with Adult Education and Family Literacy instructional programming provided by trained volunteers to target population students.

Volunteer Literacy Services support classroom instruction and increasing student learning gains. Trained volunteers may work with students during classroom instruction under the supervision and coordination of a paid instructor in an AEFL funded class.

Instructional hours may not be claimed for services provided by volunteer tutors.

- **Workplace Literacy**

Workplace Literacy may include coordination of workplace education projects that are designed to meet the unique needs of participating workers and employers. Workplace Literacy refers to an individual’s

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ability to read, write, speak, compute, and otherwise solve problems with enough proficiency to meet every day needs on the job and to pursue professional goals. This includes a knowledge of phonics, word identification and comprehension, which enables the employee to read technical information and complex manuals. Workplace literacy also refers to the ability of an individual to function in job situations involving higher order thinking and the capacity to evaluate work situations and processes. An employee who is workplace literate has increased job success, experiences fewer frustrations in the workplace, has higher self-esteem, and has less need for retraining as the job and technology change.

Workplace Literacy can be funded with Adult Education and Family Literacy funds, provided the class or classes have the same open access as traditional Adult Education classes. All other rules of the AEFL grant apply as well.

The ICCB will continue to work to align new terminology with the requirements of the Federal law (e.g., Workplace Literacy to Workforce Education).

IIbb. Programs for Correctional Education and Other Institutionalize individuals under Section 225

The State agency allocates funds in accordance with Federal law to adult education providers who offer services within correctional institutions, throughout the State. Adult Education programs provide incarcerated inmates with assessments that determine the individual's educational functioning level gains and offer mandated basic literacy programming in reading and math for inmates to achieve High School Equivalency (HSE) and programs to ensure a path to post-secondary education or career training.

The ICCB funds adult education in correctional institutions and are designed to provide criminal offenders with basic skill instruction as well as career pathway preparation. Given the low skill levels of many offenders, the ICCB adult/correctional education model understands that most participants' re-entry preparation will begin with adult education. Adult education is designed to help individuals strengthen their basic skills, earn their high school credential and transition to further education and training such as career and technical education or other postsecondary education programs. Illinois' adult education programs within a correction framework may provide the following core services that are consistent with the requirements for all statewide adult education programs: Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English Language Acquisition (ELA). These services are based on the needs of the institution. Other services that may be offered include: (1) adult education and literacy activities; (2) special needs assessment, as determined by the eligible agency; (3) integrated education and training or bridge programs; (4) career pathways; (5) concurrent enrollment; and (6) peer tutoring. The ICCB will work with the Second Chance program through the Correctional programs to establish a process for individuals to transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. The ICCB will, in conjunction with the Correctional programs, develop a process of referral to adult education programs in the area of release and to the local community college.

Through partnerships, adult education programming will align its educational services with the labor market needs to determine jobs without criminal history restrictions. For example, the Illinois Department of Corrections developed a bridge program in Culinary Arts to provide instruction to those with low basic skills. The use of contextualized instruction and the incorporation of career awareness and workforce preparation activities will be incorporated into instruction to provide the offenders with knowledge and skills necessary for their success. The ICCB will work with core and required partners

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under WIOA to provide extensive wrap-around services to ensure successful recruitment, retention, re-entry, transition into post-secondary education, career training, and workforce preparation to incarcerated individuals to reduce recidivism.

Ilcc. How the State will use the funds to carry out activities under section 243 [integrated English literacy and civics education]

Integrated English Literacy and Civics funding will be awarded to providers that address how their programs are designed to prepare adults including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

As a part of this requirement, Illinois Adult Education requires those enrolled in Integrated English Literacy Civics (IEL/Civics) to demonstrate competency in achieving outcomes. As part of the application process, Adult Education Providers must address Illinois' specific EL/Civics Competencies in their proposals. Each applicant must address competencies such as the Democratic Process, Community Resources, U.S. School System, Housing, Employment and Consumer Economics. The goal of IEL/Civics is to provide integrated program of services that incorporates English Literacy and civics education to help immigrants and other Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations to effectively participate in education, work, and civic opportunities in this country.

The IEL/Civics will be expanded to include the identification of career pathway/awareness activities, the need to Integrate EL/Civics activities with occupational skill training with linkages to employers that will lead to employment and continued education for students.

Iidd. How the state will use the funds local activities for Integrated Education and Training (IET)

The ICCB will use funds to address integrated education and training (IET) through the development and implementation of the Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS). Developed out of the Accelerating Opportunity Initiative through Jobs for the Future, ICAPS provides concurrent enrollment in both basic skills and technical training.

Pivotaly based on a partnership between Adult Education and Career & Technical Education, ICAPS integrates both technical training and basic skills education, delivered in a team taught environment, culminating in educational functioning level gains, industry-recognized credentials, college certificates, college credit and, ultimately, employment. Students enrolled in an ICAPS program are provided with technical training for a specific career pathway, such as Welding, CNC Manufacturing, Cisco Network Associate, or Emergency Medical Technician.

To better ensure success and efficacy, ICAPS programs must develop integrated pathways, plan for scale and sustainability, demonstrate a culture shift, provide comprehensive student supports, and capture stakeholder engagement. The integrated career pathways are designed to be accelerated, allowing students to move steadily, but quickly, through the program and into the workforce or postsecondary education. Programs are strongly encouraged to develop and implement plans for scale and sustainability, including the use of braided funding strategies. Comprehensive student supports,

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encompassing much more than just academic student services and financial aid (i.e., ability to benefit), and team teaching both require fundamental culture shifts – moving away from the traditional educational format.

Capturing stakeholder engagement is one of the most pivotal pieces in the process. In providing technical training and instruction, it is necessary for the students to have available employment upon completion. As a part of the process of developing career pathways, programs must demonstrate an adequate level of demand for the pathways in question, either through inclusion on local workforce innovation board demand lists or through other verifiable forms of local data demonstrating robust local demand.

Students in ICAPS programs are team-taught by a professional technical instructor and an adult educator to allow for a fully contextualized and facilitated learning environment. That same adult educator then teaches the students in a support course, in which the highly technical information learned can be contextualized and reinforced with basic skills education and learning strategies.

As part of the application process, applicants must identify the career pathway and the key partners in the development of the ICAPS. This must include: Adult Education Administrator, Career Technical Education, Instructors, Postsecondary Academic, Financial Aid, Student Services, and others as deemed appropriate.

Applicants will be required to examine local, regional, state and national level data to demonstrate the need for the specific career pathway(s) selected. The applicant must also identify the college certificates, stackable and industry recognized credentials as well as the credit hours the individual student will receive as part of the program of study. The applicant must demonstrate the institutions buy-in as well as the capacity to develop an ICAPS model, how the model fits into the overall institutional plan, and how it will be sustained and evaluated for enhancements or improvements.

Other key elements will be incorporated into the ICAPS model following the evaluation to ensure the success.

The ICCB will continue to connect the IET programs and services with Career and Technical Education (CTE), postsecondary education, state and local workforce boards, and employers to provide better opportunities for students to meet programmatic outcomes and requirements. ICCB will continue to explore other methods of delivery of the IET programs within the state. The ICCB will also examine an expansion of bridge programs as a way of connecting students to IET programs. Combined professional development activities through the Transitions Academy will be implemented by Adult Education and Career and Technical Education professional developers. Bridge programs are contextualized models that combine occupational specific terminology with basic skills. This program will be modified to connect closer with the IET model.

III. How the State will use the funds to carry out activities under section 223 [e.g., alignment with other core programs; establishment of high quality professional development programs; technical assistance; monitoring and evaluation; etc.]

- A. The ICCB will provide services that have been identified previously under this plan. The ICCB will assist programs in the coordination and delivery of key services within the one-stop delivery

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system. These services may include instructional, assessment, support and referral services. The ICCB will develop and provide relevant training to assist locals in the development of partnerships within the one stop system. The ICCB will also provide technical assistance to all core partners in understanding the adult education system and more specifically, training in appropriate administration of educational assessments to students.

The ICCB will continue to assist local programs in the development of career pathway programs and will identify tools and develop curriculum needed to support students entering career pathway programs.

- B. The ICCB will develop and continue to enhance high quality professional development to support instruction provided to local adult education programs. Professional development will be or will continue in the following areas: Leadership Excellence Academy (LEA) for administrators in the overall evaluation of program instruction and services provided; Evidence Based Reading Instruction (STAR) (i.e., enhanced toolkit); Content Standard Development and Implementation (i.e., enhance ABE/ASE standards; develop ELA standard alignment with CCR Standards); Curriculum and Lesson Planning Development; English Language Acquisition (ELA); Civic Education; Integrated Literacy and Civics; Competency Development and Implementation; Transitions and Workplace Education; Integrated Education and Training; Bridge Programs; Career Awareness; Math, Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening; host conferences, workshops, training and meetings that promote career pathways education, transitions, adult literacy; and other activities that support the ongoing enhancement of adult education instruction.
- C. The ICCB will also assist programs with incorporating technology into instruction; research and develop distance education tools that may be used to enhance instruction; identify and implement the most recent research in reading, writing, math ELA, and transitions; and develop standards for implementation into instruction.

The ICCB will also provide training to local adult education programs in the development of partnerships within the one-stop system. The agency will work with state workforce board and one-stop system to determine appropriate training needed across partner organizations. The ICCB will host a variety of regional planning summits/forums/workshops for all partners to enhance and align partnerships in the delivery of services.

- D. In addition to the research activities identified, the ICCB will continue to participate in studies and research projects that are designed to provide a better understanding of how to enhance Illinois adult education. Also, the ICCB will conduct studies that will allow innovation to occur at the state and local levels. Lastly, the ICCB will encourage partnership research across partner agencies to determine how to best serve the student/client.

ICCB will carry out the following State Leadership Activities:

- **The support of a Statewide Professional Development.** Utilizing federally allocated State Leadership Funds, Illinois adult education will maintain a Statewide Service Center Network (SCN) to provide professional development. The ICCB will continue to work with the SCN to identify professional development needs of the State based upon regional assessments and local program data. While the SCN addresses a host of professional development needs, each also has its own

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unique priority to address the goals in the State. These goals include: ongoing professional development at the State, local and regional level to improve the quality of adult education instruction; participation in reading research projects; enhancement to the statewide instructional content standards; and the development of bridge programs which includes the design, curriculum, and instruction.

- **The development and implementation of technology applications, translation technology, or distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology.** ICCB will continue examine technology use at all levels in order to expand the reach of instruction. This includes technology use by administrators, instructors, students as well as maximized use in the classroom. The ICCB will expand its offering of online professional development. Lastly, the ICCB will expand its use of digital literacy at all levels, but more specifically the ELA levels of instruction through participation in the LINCS ESL Pro Project.
- **Developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways.** The ICCB will explore models that link or connect student interests to instruction. This may include but is not limited to a framework that will assist programs in helping students identify career needs and opportunities, development of a process that will place students on a pathway, career awareness and instruction map design to illustrate a student’s movement from basic instruction through career pathway programs, and portfolio development. The ICCB will continue to add additional IET and bridge programs through ongoing technical assistance via the Transitions Academy. The academy is a year-long process to assist programs in the development of their career pathway programs.
- **The development and implementation of a system to assist in the transition from adult education to postsecondary education, including linkages with postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education.** The ICCB will work through its’ Area Planning Council process and the local workforce boards to develop a streamlined approach to link students to postsecondary education, transitions between and among programs, partnering on bridge programs and Integrated programs, employment and other services and activities.
- **Activities to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities.** The ICCB has partnered with businesses, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, postsecondary education throughout the State in the development of a Health Care, Manufacturing, and Transportation, Distribution and Logistic (TDL) curricula. The ICCB will research workplace programs that will connect students to employment and will work closely with the state workforce board to identify statewide curricula in other career pathway areas to be developed.
- **Developing and piloting of strategies for improving teacher quality and retention.** The ICCB will conduct research on the professional development requirements in an effort to enhance the quality of instruction as well as professionalize the field of adult education. Currently, the ICCB requires eight professional development hours annually for instructors. The ICCB will also conduct research on full-time vs. part-time instructors in programs and the impact on performance outcomes. The ICCB will identify and pilot strategies geared toward teacher quality and also provide curriculum and lesson planning training to increase the knowledge of instructors. The ICCB will develop instructional staff pathways to improve teacher quality and retention. This will include master teachers, transition specialists, content specialists, and standard proficient instructors.

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- **Integration of literacy and English language with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers.** The ICCB will conduct research on effective models and pilot the development and implementation of these models.
- **Identify curriculum frameworks and aligning rigorous content standards and identify the knowledge and skills needed of students.** The ICCB will continue to revise and enhance the content standards developed in ABE, ASE, and ELA; and will continue to develop a crosswalk of student knowledge and skills to other postsecondary education areas and occupational programs. The ICCB will continue to explore the alignment of ELA standards to CCRS.
- **The development and implementation of programs and services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners, which may include new and promising assessment tools and strategies that are based on scientifically valid research, where appropriate, and identify the needs and capture the gains of such students at the lowest achievement levels.** The ICCB will continue to explore options to identify and assess the instructional needs of students. This can be accomplished by exploring other diagnostic tools that can be used with literacy students, those with learning disabilities, and ELA learners. The ICCB will continue to provide Special Learning Need trainings to local programs as well as the American with Disability Coordinator Training to all adult education programs throughout the state. The ICCB will partner with Vocational Rehabilitation in the identification of new tools and strategies that can be integrated.
- **Outreach to Instructors, students, and employers.** The ICCB will continue to identify instructors who have incorporated promising practices into instruction to help develop strategies that can be used in the classroom. Currently, the ICCB uses instructors/coordinators in the development of standards, curriculum and lesson planning activities. ICCB will continue to work with employers in the development of career pathway curriculum development and connecting students to employment. ICCB will also develop a process of getting student input on adult education related activities.
- **Other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of this title.** The ICCB will continue to work with CTE, business and industry, and the state workforce board to develop and connect workforce activities within the State. Also, the ICCB will continue to identify the areas of need and enhance the system of adult education to promote career pathway and literacy activities, especially for those at the lowest literacy levels.

IV. **How the State will use the funds to carry out activities under section 243 [integrated English literacy and civics education]; Same as Iidd**

The ICCB will use funds to address integrated education and training (IET) through the Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS). Developed out of the Accelerating Opportunity Initiative through Jobs for the Future, ICAPS provides concurrent enrollment in both basic skills and technical training.

Pivotaly based on a partnership between Adult Education and Career & Technical Education, ICAPS integrates both technical training and basic skills education, delivered in a team taught environment, culminating in educational functioning level gains, industry-recognized credentials, college certificates,

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college credit and ultimately, employment. Students enrolled in an ICAPS program are provided with technical training for a specific career pathway, such as Welding, CNC Manufacturing, Cisco Network Associate, or Emergency Medical Technician.

To better ensure success and efficacy, ICAPS programs must develop integrated pathways, plan for scale and sustainability, demonstrate a culture shift, provide comprehensive student supports, and capture stakeholder engagement. The integrated career pathways are designed to be accelerated, allowing students to move steadily, but quickly, through the program and into the workforce or postsecondary education. Programs are strongly encouraged to develop and implement plans for scale and sustainability, including the use of braided funding strategies. Comprehensive student supports, encompassing much more than just academic student services and financial aid (i.e., ability to benefit), and team teaching both require fundamental culture shifts – moving away from the traditional educational format.

Capturing stakeholder engagement is one of the most pivotal pieces in the process. In providing technical training and instruction, it is necessary for the students to have available employment upon completion. As a part of the process of developing career pathways, programs must demonstrate an adequate level of demand for the pathways in question, either through inclusion on local workforce innovation board demand lists or through other verifiable forms of local data demonstrating robust local demand.

Students in ICAPS programs are team-taught by a professional technical instructor and an adult educator to allow for a fully contextualized and facilitated learning environment. That same adult educator then teaches the students in a support course, in which the highly technical information learned can be contextualized and reinforced with basic skills education and learning strategies.

As part of the application process, applicants must identify the career pathway and the key partners in the development of ICAPS. This must include: Adult Education Administrator, Career Technical Education, Instructors, Postsecondary Academic, Financial Aid, Student Services, etc.

Applicants will be required to examine local, regional, state and national level data to demonstrate the need for the specific career pathway selected. The applicant must also identify the stackable and industry recognized credentials as well as the college certificate and credit hours individuals will receive. The applicant must also demonstrate the institutions buy-in as well as the capacity to develop an ICAPS model. The applicant must also show how the model fits into the overall institutional plan and how it will be sustained and evaluated for enhancements or improvements.

Other key elements will be incorporated into the ICAPS model following the evaluation to ensure the success.

The ICCB will continue to connect the IET programs and services with Career and Technical Education (CTE), postsecondary education, state and local workforce boards, and employers to provide better opportunities for students to meet programmatic outcomes and requirements. ICCB will continue to explore other methods of delivery of the IET programs within the state. The ICCB will also examine an expansion of bridge programs as a way of connecting students to IET programs. Combined professional development activities through the Transitions Academy will be implemented by Adult Education and Career and Technical Education professional developers. Bridge programs are contextualized models

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that combine occupational specific terminology with basic skills. This program will be modified to better connect with the IET model.

V. **How the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) [high quality professional development programs].**

The ICCB will evaluate and has evaluated programs on a continuous basis and through a variety of processes. Programs will be assessed and monitored throughout the year through program visits, the Desktop Monitoring Tool, fiscal and compliance monitoring, and through the Data and Information System – Illinois (DAIS-I). In addition, a state Policy and Procedure manual is widely distributed and is posted on the ICCB website, <http://www.iccb.org/aeft.pub.reports.html>.

ICCB funded Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs will be monitored to determine:

- program improvement;
- the degree to which the programs comply with ICCB, State and Federal policies and guidelines;
- information needed in local program planning efforts; and
- the ability to achieve state and federal requirements.

During the course of the fiscal year all programs will be reviewed through a combination of program visits by ICCB staff, the State’s Desktop Monitoring Tool and approved data collection system. Staff, on an ongoing basis, will review program data and inform programs where there is a need for improvement. In addition, a probation and watch status was instituted in 2014 that will be continued to ensure a program receives significant technical assistance to improve program outcomes.

Fiscal and compliance monitoring will be conducted throughout the year to determine compliance with Federal and State requirements. Programs will be contacted to schedule the review. Reviews may be onsite and or may be handled through online submissions. Specific information on fiscal and compliance monitoring will be provided to programs in advance of the monitoring review.

The Illinois Community College Board will provide data and procedures for funded providers to evaluate their own performance in comparison to statewide performance and in comparison to funded providers with comparable students, goals and/or activities. The providers will use data reports that have been developed through the data collection system. These include:

- **Student Error reports** that indicate errors on a student record and where to locate/ correct the specific error(s).
- **Enrollment Reports** that provide information about the number of students served and units generated in each instructional category by a specific funding source.
- **Master List Reports** generate a list by funding source of students by student name and Social Security number. The Master List Reports also provide a breakdown of the enrollment hours generated by students in the specific funding source by instructional category.
- **Program Status Reports** include all students eligible to be served through AEFL funds. It is the most inclusive of the required ICCB reports and provides demographic and testing data that can be used to foster continuous program improvement.

APPENDIX II – Title II Program Specific Requirements

- **NRS Performance Reports** exist in two versions. The first version reflects all activity including all post-testing. The second version applies an attendance hour filter to the testing results. When the second version is generated, the results of any post-testing conducted before the minimum attendance hours were met as established by the test publishers will be excluded from the report. The second version (with AH filter) reflects what programs will be granted credit for in terms of NRS completion rates.

In addition, several Static reports are available that provide a snapshot of program performance at a more granular level. These include:

- **AEFL Certification of Units Report** represents the total number of students the program will be granted credit for in terms of the ICCB-AEFL funding formula. It represents the total number of students meeting the criteria for inclusion (In Open-Entry classes, have accrued at least 7.5 attendance hours in a single class section, prior to dropping. In Fixed-Entry classes, have been successfully retained through the mid-term date and have accrued at least 7.5 attendance hours in that single class section, prior to dropping) and be served through an approved funding source.
- **Cohort: Follow-up Measure 3-Earned GED or Secondary Credential report** includes all learners who take all HSE tests and exit during the FY, and all learners who are enrolled in adult high school (HSCR classes) at the high ASE High Level and exit during the FY.
- **Cohort: Follow-up Measure 4-Entered Post-Secondary report** includes students from the group that was counted as a success for the Earned GED/HS Diploma cohort or that entered the program with a Secondary Credential or was enrolled in a course specifically designed to transition them to post-secondary education and exited during the FY.
- **EL/Civics Report** provides information about the number of students supported with EL Civics dollars and the competencies completed by these students.
- **High School Equivalency (GED 2014 Series) data match report** by student, or program record includes all data matched GED results for all students that provide consent.
- **Generation Reports** detail the total number of student enrollments, attendance hours and class/individual persistence rates by funding source, instructional category or other classification.
- Instructor Individual and Summary Outcomes Reports include students that meet the criteria to be in the Program Status Report. In addition, to be claimed with a specific instructor, the student must meet the usual requirements plus have at least 7.5 attendance hours with that instructor (and have reached the midterm successfully if enrolled in fixed entry classes).
- **NRS Core Performance Measures reports** provide a detailed breakdown of educational functioning level (EFL) gains and separates students into four distinct categories to illustrate areas where program performance meets targeted levels.
- **Professional Development Reports** illustrate levels of compliance to minimum professional development requirements by instructors. Tracks quantity, type and cost of professional development hours accrued in a fiscal year.
- **Program Outcomes Report** (Building) indicates student post-test percentage, percentage of students gaining levels, average attendance hours at specified building by instructional category, persistence rates for students and overall average attendance hours by students at specified building.

APPENDIX II – Title II Program Specific Requirements

Education Department General Administrative Regulations (34 CFR Part 76.104)

1. The Plan is submitted by the eligible State agency.
2. The state agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under this program.
3. The state legally may carry out each provision of the Plan.
4. All provisions of the Plan are consistent with State law.
5. A state officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the Plan.
6. The state officer who submits the Plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the Plan.
7. The agency that submits the Plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the Plan.
8. The Plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program.

Assurances

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions).
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA.
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA.
4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.
5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.
6. Using funds made available under Title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

Additional: Illinois Community College Board General Assurances and Certifications for fiscal year 215-2016. Certifications will follow.

APPENDIX II – Title II Program Specific Requirements

OMB Number: 4040-0004
Expiration Date: 03/31/2012

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424																									
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f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:																									
<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Prefix: Mrs.</td> <td style="width: 30%;">*First Name: Jennifer</td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Middle Name: K.</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>*Last Name: Foster</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Suffix: _____</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Title: Deputy Director of Adult Education and Workforce</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Organizational Affiliation: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">*Telephone Number: 217 785 0171 Fax Number: 217 558 6700</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">*Email: Jennifer.Foster@Illinois.gov</td> </tr> </table>		Prefix: Mrs.	*First Name: Jennifer		Middle Name: K.			*Last Name: Foster			Suffix: _____			Title: Deputy Director of Adult Education and Workforce			Organizational Affiliation: _____			*Telephone Number: 217 785 0171 Fax Number: 217 558 6700			*Email: Jennifer.Foster@Illinois.gov		
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APPENDIX II – Title II Program Specific Requirements

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424
9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type: A. State Government
Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type: H. Public / State Controlled Institution of Higher Education
Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:
*Other (Specify)
*10 Name of Federal Agency: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education
11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 84.002 _____ CFDA Title: Adult Education – Basic Grants to States _____
*12 Funding Opportunity Number: Not Applicable
*Title: 2016-2017 Unified State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
13. Competition Identification Number: Not Applicable _____ Title: Not Applicable _____
14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.): Not Applicable
*15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project: The Unified State Plan is being submitted by the State of Illinois to promote 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.
Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

APPENDIX II – Title II Program Specific Requirements

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424	
16. Congressional Districts Of:	
*a. Applicant: <input type="text" value="IL - All"/>	*b. Program/Project: <input type="text" value="IL - All"/>
Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.	
17. Proposed Project:	
*a. Start Date: <input type="text" value="July 1, 2016"/>	*b. End Date: <input type="text" value="September 30, 2017"/>
18. Estimated Funding (\$):	
*a. Federal	<input type="text" value="\$16,654,876"/> Est.
*b. Applicant	
*c. State	<input type="text" value="\$21,572,400"/>
*d. Local	
*e. Other	
*f. Program Income	
*g. TOTAL	<input type="text" value="\$ 38,227,276"/>
*19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?	
<input type="checkbox"/> a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on _____ <input type="checkbox"/> b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.	
*20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If "Yes", provide explanation and attach.	
21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications** and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U. S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ** I AGREE	
** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.	
Authorized Representative:	
Prefix: <input type="text" value="Mrs."/>	*First Name: <input type="text" value="Karen"/>
Middle Name: <input type="text"/>	
*Last Name: <input type="text" value="Hunter-Anderson"/>	
Suffix: <input type="text" value="Ph. D."/>	
*Title: <input type="text" value="Executive Director"/>	
*Telephone Number: <input type="text" value="217 785 0123"/>	Fax Number: <input type="text" value="217 785 0090"/>
* Email: <input type="text" value="Karen.H.Anderson@illinois.gov"/>	
*Signature of Authorized Representative: <input type="text" value="Karen Hunter-Anderson"/>	*Date Signed: <input type="text" value="1/22/16"/>

ASSURANCES - NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0040), Washington, DC 20503

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED BY THE SPONSORING AGENCY.

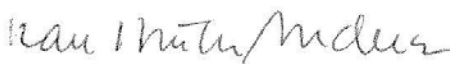
Note: Certain of these assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have questions, please contact the awarding agency. Further, certain Federal awarding agencies may require applicants to certify to additional assurances. If such is the case, you will be notified.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant I certify that the applicant:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance, and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management, and completion of the project described in this application. 2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States, and if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives. 3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain. 4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency. 5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. §§4728-4763) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the 19 statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 C.F.R. 900, Subpart F). 6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. §§1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. §794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d) | <p>the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) §§ 523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. §§ 290 dd-3 and 290 ee 3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. § 3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (i) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and (j) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases. 8. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§1501-1508 and 7324-7328) which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds. |
|---|---|

APPENDIX II – Title II Program Specific Requirements

- 9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. §§276a to 276a-7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. §276c and 18 U.S.C. §§874) and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. §§ 327-333), regarding labor standards for federally assisted construction subagreements.
- 10. Will comply, if applicable, with flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is \$10,000 or more.
- 11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. §§1451 et seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clear Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clear Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended, (P.L. 93-523); and (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, (P.L. 93-205).
- 12. Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. §§1721 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.
- 13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. §470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. §§469a-1 et seq.).
- 14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.
- 15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. §§2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.
- 16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. §§4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.
- 17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.
- 18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations and policies governing this program.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL 		TITLE: Executive Director
APPLICANT ORGANIZATION: Illinois Community College Board		DATE SUBMITTED 1/22/16

APPENDIX II – Title II Program Specific Requirements

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion -- Lower Tier Covered Transactions

This certification is required by the Department of Education regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 34 CFR Part 85, for all lower tier transactions meeting the threshold and tier requirements stated at Section 85.110.

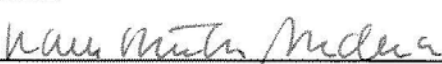
Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.
2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
4. The terms "covered transaction," "debarred," "suspended," "ineligible," "lower tier covered transaction," "participant," "person," "primary covered transaction," "principal," "proposal," and "voluntarily excluded," as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to which this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.
5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency with which this transaction originated.

6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may but is not required to, check the Nonprocurement List.
8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

Certification

- (1) The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.
- (2) Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

NAME OF APPLICANT	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND/OR PROJECT NAME
Illinois Community College Board	
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Karen Hunter-Anderson, Ph. D. Executive Director	
SIGNATURE	DATE
	1/22/16

APPENDIX II – Title II Program Specific Requirements

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

* APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	
Illinois Community College Board	
* PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Prefix: Mrs.	* First Name: Karen
Middle Name:	
* Last Name: Hunter-Anderson	Suffix: Ph. D.
* Title: Executive Director	
* SIGNATURE: <i>Karen Hunter-Anderson</i>	* DATE: 1/22/16

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Vocational and Adult Education**

**The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
Enacted August 7, 1998 as Title II of the
Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220)**

The Illinois Community College Board (State Agency) of the State of Illinois hereby submits its revised State plan extension to be effective until June 30, 2017. The eligible agency also assures that this plan, which serves as an agreement between State and Federal Governments under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, will be administered in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations, including the following certifications and assurances.

CERTIFICATIONS

**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GENERAL
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS
(34 CFR Part 76.104)**

- (1) The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan.
- (2) The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program.
- (3) The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan.
- (4) All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law.
- (5) A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan.
- (6) The State officer who submits the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan.
- (7) The agency that submits the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan.
- (8) The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program.

ASSURANCES

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998
(Public Law 105-220)**

Section 224 (b) (5), (6), and (8)

1. The eligible agency will award not less than one grant to an eligible provider who offers flexible schedules and necessary support services (such as child care and transportation) to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities, or individuals with other special needs, to participate in adult education and literacy activities, which eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with support services that are not provided under this subtitle prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities provided under this subtitle for support services.
2. Funds received under this subtitle will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities under this subtitle.
3. The eligible agency will expend the funds under this subtitle in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements in Section 241.

Section 241 Administrative Provisions

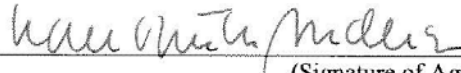
- (a) Supplement Not Supplant.—Funds made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle shall supplement and not supplant other State or local public funds expended for adult education and literacy activities.
- (b) Maintenance of Effort.—
 - (1) In General.—
 - (A) Determination.—An eligible agency may receive funds under this subtitle for any fiscal year if the Secretary finds that the fiscal effort per student or the aggregate expenditures of such eligible agency for adult education and literacy activities, in the second preceding fiscal year, was not less than 90 percent of the fiscal effort per student or the aggregate expenditures of such eligible agency for adult education and literacy activities, in the third preceding fiscal year.
 - (B) Proportionate reduction.—Subject to paragraphs (2), (3), and (4), for any fiscal year with respect to which the Secretary determines under subparagraph (A) that the fiscal effort or the aggregate expenditures of an eligible agency for the preceding program year were less than such effort or expenditures for the second preceding program year, the Secretary—
 - (i) shall determine the percentage decreases in such effort or in such expenditures; and
 - (ii) shall decrease the payment made under this subtitle for such program year to the agency for adult education and literacy activities by the lesser of such percentages.
 - (2) Computation.—In computing the fiscal effort and aggregate expenditures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall exclude capital expenditures and special one-time project costs.

- (3) Decrease in federal support.—If the amount made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle for a fiscal year is less than the amount made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle for the preceding fiscal year, then the fiscal effort per student and the aggregate expenditures of an eligible agency required in order to avoid a reduction under paragraph (1)(B) shall be decreased by the same percentage as the percentage decrease in the amount so made available.
- (4) Waiver.—The Secretary may waive the requirements of this subsection for 1 fiscal year only, if the Secretary determines that a waiver would be equitable due to exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances, such as a natural disaster or an unforeseen and precipitous decline in the financial resources of the State or outlying area of the eligible agency. If the Secretary grants a waiver under the preceding sentence for a fiscal year, the level of effort required under paragraph (1) shall not be reduced in the subsequent fiscal year because of the waiver.

Illinois Community College Board
(State Agency)

401 E. Capitol Avenue

Springfield, IL 62701
(Address)

By: 
(Signature of Agency Head)

Executive Director
(Title)

1/22/14
(Date)

APPENDIX III – Title III Program Specific Requirements

APPENDIX III

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIFIED PLAN SEC. 102(2)(D) TITLE III

Wagner-Peyser Act Program and Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP)

- (a) Employment Service professional Staff Development
 - (1) In an effort to provide high quality services to both job seekers and employers, professional development training sessions will be provided to Employment Service staff as it relates to workshop presentations, public speaking, resume writing and critiquing, interview skills, networking, and use of social media for job seeking and outreach purposes. In an effort to maintain these skills, refresher training sessions will be provided to staff performing employment services. In addition, state-sponsored professional development opportunities via the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) and Department of Human Services (DHS) are also made available to Employment Service staff.
 - (2) The strategies that will be developed to support training and awareness across core program partners will be a collaborative effort. This collaboration among the core and required partners will include providing training and general knowledge of each core and required program related to services offered in the comprehensive one-stop centers. Effective methods of communication will be established to provide all staff with updates to programs and services offered by the core and required partners. Employment Service staff is currently trained to identify UI eligibility issues and refer those issues to UI staff for adjudication when required. Training the Employment Services staff on identifying UI issues and the referral process has been provided in person, and the training modules are maintained and accessible on the agency's internal website. Similar methods of training will be provided for other required partners under WIOA, including through live and pre-recorded webinars, job aids, and in-person training sessions as needed.
- (b) Meaningful assistance to individuals requesting guidance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through the comprehensive one-stop center will be provided by the Employment Service staff located in the one-stop center. These staff members will have existing knowledge of the UI program and claim-filing process. Direct linkage consisting of on-demand, real time access to additional agency staff will also be available to assist in the UI claim-filing process. Information about the UI program will be provided by the staff and supplemented via brochures (or other forms of written communication), in addition to messaging on a common system that will be utilized by all core program partners.
- (c) Strategies that will be utilized to provide reemployment assistance will include requiring UI claimants to register with the employment service system as an eligibility requirement; referring individuals to meet with an Employment Service staff member to register with the employment system immediately after filing a UI claim in-person; conducting reemployment workshops for profiled individuals and other targeted populations in collaboration with our local partners; providing individual assistance to develop reemployment plans; increasing and improving messaging/communications related to employment services opportunities when individuals file claims via the website or call center; matching qualified job seekers with employers' recruiting needs; utilizing electronic notification of available job openings; and making referrals for training or retraining on in-demand skills. Individuals who file UI claims in-person will be referred to an Employment Service staff member.

APPENDIX III – Title III Program Specific Requirements

(d)

(1) Coordination between Wagner-Peyser and Unemployment Insurance programs will begin with the requirement of all UI claimants to register with the employment services system to fulfill the UI eligibility requirement. As a result of the UI claimant being registered in the employment services system, the employment services staff will be able to target this population and provide labor exchange services by requesting the claimant to report in-person to conduct reemployment assessments for job placement and training needs. Contacts to claimants will be made via phone notification systems, e-mail blasts and/or mass mailings.

(2) Section 500A of the Illinois Unemployment Insurance Act states: *An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the Director finds that: He [or she] has registered for work at and thereafter has continued to report at an employment office in accordance with such regulations as the Director may prescribe, except that the Director may, by regulation, waive or alter either or both of the requirements of this subsection as to individuals attached to regular jobs, and as to such other types of cases or situations with respect to which he [or she] finds that compliance with such requirements would be oppressive or inconsistent with the purposes of this Act, provided that no such regulation shall conflict with Section 400 of this Act.*

A process will be established in which an eligibility issue will automatically be created after a designated amount of time for those individuals who fail to fully register with employment services after filing an initial claim for benefits.

(3) UI claimants who are determined eligible for benefits will be referred to employment services upon completion of filing an Unemployment claim. The population of UI claimants that is identified through the profiling program will be required to participate in the reemployment workshop. Failure to report to the workshop and participate as required will be documented in the employment service system, which will trigger the posting of an adjudication issue in the UI benefits system. If an eligibility issue arises while providing employment services, the case will be referred to the UI staff for immediate resolution, resolved by the employment service staff member, or posted and scheduled for resolution on a different date and time.

(4) Employment Service staff has been trained on how to identify UI issues and when to refer for adjudication. Training on identifying UI issues and the referral process is accessible via in-person training as well as online reference materials available on the agency's internal website.

APPENDIX III – Title III Program Specific Requirements

Assurances

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)).
2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers.
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I.
4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN AS REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA



State of Illinois Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker
Program Year 2014

Wagner-Peyser Act-Agricultural Outreach Plan

Modification to Five Year Plan
March 13, 2014

**Providing Services to Agricultural Employers and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
(MSFWs)**

As required by 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107, the *Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)* provides Wagner-Peyser Act-funded program services to migrant seasonal farm workers (MSFW) and agricultural (Ag) employers.

Agricultural Employers

A goal for PY 14 is to strengthen employer relationships by increasing employer outreach and targeting top AG employers based on hired employees. Outreach staff will train and encourage the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System and IllinoisJobLink.com to recruit and post job openings. In addition, employers will be advised on staff assisted services offered to employers such as on-site hiring and recruiting events that include local training providers and workforce partners.

IDES will continue to build relationships with membership organizations such as the Farm Bureau and discuss ways to reach AG employers and inform them of IDES's employer services. Publications, event presentations, workshops and other communication means will be utilized when possible. IDES anticipates that increased knowledge of IDES' services and programs will improve the number of job orders, referrals and job placements.

Farm Labor Contractors (FLC) who recruit and employ farm workers are an employer type that will be targeted for employer services and compliance with state and federal regulations. There

APPENDIX III – Title III Program Specific Requirements

are 35 FLC's in Illinois known to have recruited and employed farm labor. Approximately 2,000 migrants have thus far been employed by FLC'S in 2013.

IDES anticipates that the number of migrants hired by FLC's will remain consistent with prior years in areas where staff provided outreach. PY 2014 outreach plans include strategies to reach MSFWs in the northern and upper northwest regions where we have not been able to penetrate in previous years. PY 14 Outreach staff will be assigned to these areas and with the collaboration of the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC) we anticipate an increase of employer and job seeker registrations and possibly new FLC's.

Outreach staff will continue to monitor FLC's licensing and strengthen coordination with the Illinois Department of Labor for their expertise and support on FLC registration with the state. With this, it is anticipated that agricultural employer registrations will increase by 20 during PY 14. In addition, the added support of IDES' Business Services Team will help with PY 14 employer goals. The Business Services Team works directly with employers and employer organizations such as local chambers of commerce to inform employers of IDES employer services. Additionally, the Business Service Team can assist with registering agricultural employers and entering their job orders.

Foreign Labor Certification (H2A) type employers are increasing slightly and we anticipate this will continue in PY 14.

Referral and placement of domestic job seekers remains a challenge. Recruiting events will continue in PY 2014 at locations convenient to the employers and applicants. Domestic applicants report that travel and overnight stay is a barrier to accepting job offers. Additionally, the short-term nature of the work (many jobs are 3 months or shorter) is another disincentive to domestic workers. . Other limitations to placing domestic workers are work experience requirements and six day mandatory work schedules.

After collaborating with other outreach staff and fellow monitor advocates from neighboring states, it was determined that certain characteristics of the agricultural labor force were more desirable than others. With technology influencing the behavior of this generation in terms of field work, growers have expressed that most of the local workforce is moving into other "less labor intensive," industries of specialization.

The quantity of workers needed for yielding an anticipated amount of crop is dependent on the number of quality agricultural workers. In addition to the type of labor affecting agriculture, weather conditions greatly influence how and when certain crops will be available for harvest. This information is supported by the data found in historical crop reports compiled by National Agricultural Statistics Services.

APPENDIX III – Title III Program Specific Requirements

MSFW Outreach Based on Previous Year Activity

As required by 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.101, IDES will ensure that MSFWs are offered the same range of employment services, benefits and protections as those provided to non-MSFWs.

Staff assisted services for job referral include:

1. Assist job seekers in completing quality and full registrations in IllinoisJobLink.com
2. Provide Career Guidance
3. Improve job matches by identifying job preferences and complete work history.
4. Educating the MSFW about training opportunities.

IDES continues to meet 3 of 5 Equity Indicators of Compliance, as well as 4 of 7 Minimum Service Level Indicators. (Migrant Indicator Compliance Report Part 3 and 4.) During PY 14, IDES will focus on improving the compliance areas that are not being met by training new staff and setting regional goals to achieve compliance. Areas to improve include referral to employment, job development and placement.

While IDES continues to meet Equity measures, we remain committed to improving job placements and placements in long term non-AG jobs. During PY 14 we look forward to continue strengthening the working relationship with Illinois' WIA 167 Grantee, the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC). A recent agreement between IMC's agency Director, Eloy Salazar, and IDES is to increase outreach and improve wrap-around services to MSFW's. This collaboration will require establishing an effective referral process, additional training for the IMC frontline staff on IllinoisJobLink.com and improving communication amongst staff at all levels. IDES' Statewide Monitor Advocate will coordinate efforts with the WIA 167 Director and record activity on a monthly basis.

In response to previous year staffing challenges, 3 to 6 MSFW outreach staff will be hired and assigned to critical regions of the state to provide MSFW services full-time. This will lead to a positive impact on job development, placement and career guidance activity. IMC's WIA 167 staff was provided with training on IllinoisJobLink.com and given staff access along with review and copies of staff user guides. IMC staff has used the system and will be offered a review session during a pre-season meeting.

Distribution of bi-lingual flyers and brochures will continue and when necessary they will be mailed to clients. Service providers participate in distributing IDES materials but the highest distribution is at MSFW events. In PY 13 IDES staff participated thus far in 68 MSFW events, we anticipate increasing this number in PY 14.

We anticipate the number of contacts will remain steady or increase slightly during PY 14. In the first two quarters of PY 13 staff reported 3136 contacts while the entirety of PY 2012 concluded with 3683 contacts. This increase was the result of outreach staff dedicated solely to the MSFW

APPENDIX III – Title III Program Specific Requirements

program for the entirety of the season, increased use of technology, specifically IllinoisJobLink.com, and stronger coordination between IDES, IMC and other partner agencies. These successful activities will be built upon in PY 14 as outlined below.

As reported by US DOL/ETA TEGL 13-13, Illinois is 15th on number of MSFW registrations and is required to meet significant local office requirements. At this time, Champaign and Peoria local offices have been designated by the USDOL as Illinois' MSFW significant offices. This is a decrease in the number of significant offices as designated by US DOL. A comprehensive level of MSFW services will be provided at these offices, including but not limited to, access to information about workplace safety and rights, career guidance and referrals to training opportunities.

In addition to the physical locations prescribed by the USDOL, a majority of the contacts and services will be provided in the field. In order to enable a much higher impact in PY 14, IDES will be recruiting 3 to 6 outreach workers assigned to work full-time on the MSFW program throughout the season. The new staff will be provided comprehensive Wagner-Peyser and MSFW training and will have authority and flexibility to travel the state in support of the MSFW program. MSFW outreach staff will be provided with technology tools such as laptops with air-cards and dedicated access to vehicles. While physical locations have decreased, IDES' commitment to the MSFW program has never been stronger and savings realized from fewer brick and mortar locations are being invested back into the program in the form of dedicated staff, technology and training.

Assessment of Need

Assessment is based on prior years' activity and accomplishments. PY 12 (June 2012-June 2013) numbers are reported below. Already our PY 13 numbers have far surpassed PY 12 due to training, dedicated staff and use of technology during last year's growing and harvest season. Our goal is to continue this increase in PY 14.

In PY 2012 (June 2012 to June 2013) total MSFW applications were 973. Of these, 35 (3.60%) were referred to employment; 904 (92.91%) received staff assisted services; 789 (81.09%) were referred to supportive services and 640 (65.78%) received career guidance. These results exceed the equity measures compared to non-MSFW clients.

In the first half of PY 13 IDES has already exceeded the PY 12 outcomes and in PY 14 IDES will improve in the referrals to employment, job development and job placement categories.

Major Crop Activity

Seed and Grain companies; hog farms; Pumpkin and horseradish farms are the primary industries for employment needs. Other industries with smaller workforce remain in fruit and vegetable farms. While Illinois is considered a seasonal state, crop activity begins in April and ends in early December.

The University of Illinois Extension Service; *Summary of Illinois Specialty Growers Association* reports the following schedule of crops and seasons for Illinois:

- Asparagus (April to June)
- Strawberries (Late May to Early June)
- Apricots and Cherries (June to July)
- Blueberries (June to August)
- Beans, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cauliflower and Peas (June to October)
- Fresh Herbs (June to October)
- Raspberries (June to November)
- Summer Apples, Blackberries, Peaches, Nectarines (July to August)
- Beets, Corn, Cucumbers, Pickles & Plums (July to September)
- Peppers and Tomatoes (July to October)
- Thorn less Blackberries (August)
- Grapes, Muskmelons and Watermelons (August and September)
- Eggplants and Greens (August and November)
- Turnips (September to November)
- Fall Winter Apples (September to November)
- Pumpkins, Squash and Gourds (November to December)

Workforce Oriented Publications

- MSFW (bi-lingual) Program Brochure: identifies ES services and staff information.
- Employment Service Complaint System: Identifies contact information and is posted at all IDDES offices. Flyer type format is distributed with brochure.
- Illinois Migrant Council: WIA training information, training eligibility and locations.
- IllinoisJobLink.com: Brochure and Spanish registration form.

Registrations/Job Placement and Monitoring via IllinoisJobLink.com

An increase in self-service registrations is highly feasible through the use of IllinoisJobLink.com. IllinoisJobLink.com employs a translator for multiple languages including Spanish. While Spanish Self-Service User Guides are available the most common method of completing registrations and enrollments is through staff assisted services. We seek to dramatically increase registrations in the field using our laptops and air-cards to cut down on paperwork and data entry.

APPENDIX III – Title III Program Specific Requirements

A completed IllinoisJobLink.com account offers clients a personalized home page where MSFWs are able to manage a job search, create or upload a résumé, and maintain his/her job seeker profile. Key words are used to search jobs and the job orders allow for self-referrals. Outreach staff assists in job referrals, follow-up and job readiness.

Monitoring staff activity is also an easier task through IllinoisJobLink.com as we are able to review MIC, 9002A, and many other data reports to review daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual data related to services provided to MSFWs. Data is available by user, local office, regional and statewide. This allows for quality data reports, setting benchmarks and improves outreach and ES services to MSFW's.

Since its implementation, the business services staff and the Illinois Migrant Council have been trained in specific MSFW features of the IllinoisJobLink.com system. IDES administrators regularly seek suggestions on how this system can be improved to meet the client and staff needs for quality and increase levels of MSFW services.

As planned for PY 13, IDES will continue promoting IllinoisJobLink.com to community organizations and partner agencies who have a vested interest in serving MSFW's and their families. Community resource centers such as Illinois Migrant Council in Cobden, Illinois continue to be the model on how partner staff assisted services can be successful.

Assessment of MSFW Needs

Through Case Management and community collaboration, outreach staff is able to identify barriers to employment; workplace safety and other challenges such as housing standards and overall social welfare needs of MSFWs. Critical needs are primarily labor rights violations, health and safety in the field and legal aid services. Staff referral to supportive services for PY 13 indicate staff is making referrals at a rate of 81% (1QPY 13) of those registered in IllinoisJobLink.com and we anticipate an increase in PY 14.

It is an important Outreach team responsibility to gain knowledge of community services within their respective regions, statewide and interstate services. IDES continues to work with community based organizations to simplify the referral process and achieve the goal of getting timely service to MSFW clients. We maintain that the critical need is also in remote areas where IDES is not able to reach MSFWs.

Referrals to Supportive Services

Outreach staff will make referrals to service providers year round; this is not a seasonal activity. Illinois Migrant Council WIA-167-Grantee is a primary referral source of MSFW training programs. IDES staff is in collaboration in promoting IMC's Health and Safety initiative. "Heat Stress Prevention" presentations are assisted by IDES outreach staff, there are 24 Heat and Stress

APPENDIX III – Title III Program Specific Requirements

events projected for PY 13. In addition, PY 12 activity reports 26 migrant arrivals events with approximately 1,000 referrals to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). An increase is projected for PY 13 and PY 14. Staff is trained on Federal and State services including Wage and Hour, OSHA, Department of Justice, Department of Human Rights, and other compliance agencies where referrals can be made to address challenges facing the MSFW community.

Wagner-Peyser Act Services Provided to MSFWs

- Employment information on IllinoisJobLink.com
- Referral to Job Openings
- Job Seeker Skills and Resume Preparation
- Job Development
- Assessment Interview
- Referrals to Supportive Services and Staff Assisted Services
- Information on Employment and Training Opportunities
- Labor Market Information
- Tax Credit Programs
- Bi-lingual Spanish Speaking staff and Limited English Proficiency Service
- Information on the Employment Service Complaint System
- Trained Complaint Specialists
- Re Employment Service Program (RESP, ex-offenders services)
- Career Guidance

Wagner-Peyser Act Services Provided to Agricultural Employers

- Agricultural Recruitment System (Local, Intrastate, Interstate)
- Housing Inspections
- Information and assistance on the Foreign Labor Certification process
- Farm Labor Contractor applications and information
- IllinoisJobLink.com self-serve or staff assisted job orders and recruitment
- Information and Referral to agencies offering programs or services benefiting the business community
- Tax Credit Program information and certification of applicants
- Informational Meetings Unemployment Insurance, Wage/Hour, Migrant Law, Worker's Compensation, OSHA and Migrant Camp licensing, etc.
- Labor Market Information
- Job Fairs
- Local offices offer Conference room for recruitment purposes
- Field Checks and Visits
- Participate at New Employee Orientation meetings

APPENDIX III – Title III Program Specific Requirements

Monitor Advocate Services

A full-time State Monitor Advocate (SMA) (now vacant) performs the duties as assigned an SMA and provides training for collaborating agency staff on the Statewide Monitor Advocate System, Outreach, provision of services to MSFWs and the Employment Service Complaint System, Migrant Labor camp Inspections and other topics as requested.

- Conducts statewide reviews of the delivery of services and protections afforded to MSFWs.
- Completes annual office reviews at all significant local offices
- Consults with various divisions of the agency to ensure accurate reporting of MSFW data.
- Prepare and implement operating instructions including Policy and Procedures relating to MSFWs
- Prepare for and participate in Federal reviews
- Prepare an annual Outreach plan as required
- Identify statewide opportunities for recruitment of MSFW
- Monitor and report on the Employment Complaint System, process MSFW complaints as needed
- Participate at membership organizations, which serve the Ag community. (i.e. Farm Bureau, 167)
- Maintain communication with Outreach staff and management and address issues as they arise
- Serve as Advocate to improve services for MSFWs within the employment service system
- Manage the timeliness of field checks, housing inspections, employer visits and complaint processes
- Meet with farm worker groups and employers to promote the use of Employment Service.
- Conducts field visits to working and living locations of MSFWs.
- Collaborates with WIA 167 staff and participates in sponsored events.

Statement of Approval of the State Monitor Advocate

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107 and as prescribed by Region V , the Monitor Advocate participated in the preparation of this agricultural plan and has been afforded the opportunity to approve and comment on the plan. Such review indicates that the plan has been prepared properly, omitting none of the prescribed requirements and properly describing the activities planned for providing services to both agricultural employers and migrant and (MSFWs).

Collaboration with Partners

Illinois Migrant Council (IMC): IDES and IMC held a telephone conference on Monday, March 10th to discuss the upcoming growing season to inform the AOP and address any concerns held by either organization. Topics covered included the appropriate recruitment and on-boarding of outreach staff, what geographic regions need more attention in the upcoming outreach season, collaboration on non-traditional outreach to ensure proper referrals, strengthening of referral

APPENDIX III – Title III Program Specific Requirements

process using IllinoisJobLink.com and more regular attendance at key meetings held by both organizations.

IDES will continue to partner with Esperanza Gonzalez, IMC Health Director, in providing Heat Stress informational sessions to farm workers. These are held in the fields, housing and other locations during the peak season. IMC is certified to give these training/information sessions, IDES staff assists in distributing information, translating, and distributes IDES service information. More than 20 of these presentations occurred last year and approximately 2,000 migrants received Heat Stress prevention training/information.

Illinois Association of Agencies and Community Organizations for Migrant Advocacy (IAACOMA): IDES met on Monday March 10th, IDES and IAACOMA met to discuss the upcoming growing season, to inform the AOP and address any concerns held by either organization. IDES agreed to offer participation in IAACOMA's upcoming conference. IDES seeks to have staff and invite community members, employers, service providers and farm workers to join us at the conference. These individuals will be those who normally would not attend or know of the IAACOMA goals to create change by educating community members on MSFW issues. Agenda's typically include Migrant Housing; Health Issues; Education needs; Safety in the Fields/Chemical exposure; and policy reform. Participating organizations include: IL Dept. of Public Health, OSHA Wage and Hour, Community Health Partners, Legal Assistance Foundation, Housing Action of Illinois, schools and employer staff are present. IDES staff has presented at IAACOMA's workshops and currently has one IAACOMA board member.

Illinois Migrant Legal Aide: IDES has contacted this group to further collaborate on issues of human trafficking and sexual harassment amongst MSFWs. A meeting and training is planned for April 22nd in Chicago.

Distribution of AOP

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107(d) (1), (2), and (3),

IDES submitted AOP copy to the following *Service Providers*.

Illinois Migrant Council WIA-167 Grantee
Illinois Department of Public Health-Migrant Licensing
Illinois Department of Human Services-Farm Workers Rehabilitation Services
Illinois Specialty Crops Association

Modifications to the 5 Year Plan will be submitted electronically to the Illinois Workforce Investment Board (IWIB) for approval, to the Regional Monitor Advocate, Eric Hernandez and a copy emailed to National Monitor Advocate, as required.

Questions Regarding IDES AOP

Contact: John Waters, MSFW Program Manager at John.M.Waters@illinois.gov or
telephone 312-793-2913.

APPENDIX IV – Title IV Program Specific Requirements

APPENDIX IV

Program-Specific Requirements for the Unified Plan Sec. 102(2)(D) Title IV

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PORTION OF UNIFIED WIOA PLAN

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by Section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

(a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

SRC Comment: SRC members continue to believe that consistency of services at DRS offices is important. SRC is in the final stages of the development of a Best Practices Guide (checklist) that will aid DRS staff in providing consistent services. SRC would like to see this guide tested by DRS per previous agreement, with benchmarks to show progress toward the goal of provision of consistent service levels throughout the state.

DRS Response: DRS agrees to conduct a test of the best practices checklist in several offices around the state and evaluate the effect on service consistency.

SRC Comment: SRC would like to recommend a regular statewide needs assessment and satisfaction survey be conducted as part of this effort, in order to gauge where priority areas for service improvement lie. Items in the survey should center on physical and programmatic accessibility, with an emphasis on customer satisfaction and ease-of-use.

DRS Response: DRS agrees that ongoing assessment of service needs is an important factor in assuring the effectiveness of the VR program, as is an evaluation of customer satisfaction. DRS intends to continue development of online survey response systems to gather information at a reasonable cost going forward.

SRC Comment: SRC members believe that job placement and retention can be impacted by several factors. In addition to job-related skills, including enhancements such as job coaching and on-the-job training, DRS should incorporate other skills necessary for individuals to not only obtain, but retain employment. These skills could include independent living skills, interpersonal skills and self-management skills such as efficient communication, planning, coping with stress, time management and good nutrition management.

DRS Response: DRS agrees that these factors are important components for many individuals seeking to obtain and retain employment. In contract arrangements with community rehabilitation programs, DRS has included requirements that pre-employment services such as these be included when required by an individual.

SRC Comment: Previously, SRC expressed a desire for transition services to begin at a younger age. SRC understands that State laws regulate transition services for students with disabilities begin at age 14. However, could some of the soft skills be taught at a younger age? Could youth complete unpaid volunteer work or internship experiences at a younger age through DRS contacts?

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DRS Response: DRS provides pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities beginning at age 14, consistent with State law as required by WIOA. These services include a variety of work-based learning experiences for students during their high-school years.

SRC Comment: SRC members believe that career exploration, job shadowing, volunteer experiences and internships are valuable tools for obtaining work related experience and ultimately help in obtaining employment. SRC encourages DRS to continually increase both paid and unpaid work-based learning opportunities for VR customers as a means of promoting employment.

DRS Response: DRS supports increasing the scope of work-based learning experiences for youth with disabilities, including internships, apprenticeships and other non-traditional experiences that increase the knowledge and capability of the individual and enhance future opportunities for competitive integrated employment.

SRC Comment: SRC members believe that creation of a Workforce Development Unit within VR would be beneficial. This unit could concentrate on attracting small-to-large employers within the State and explain the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities. This unit could offer support to employers by providing educational tools that would help guide employers on the best way to handle certain situations and disabilities. It could include examples of how to accommodate certain needs for all disability types, including mental health. This would help ease the fears of employers who may not hire persons with mental illness, intellectual or other disabilities. If a Workforce Development unit is not developed within DRS, then DRS should work out an agreement with other core WIOA partners IDES, ICCB and the Illinois Department of Commerce whereby those agencies leverage more of their resources to serve individuals with disabilities through strategies with a proven track record of success under DRS.

DRS Response: DRS is working with the Institute for Community Inclusion to develop a business engagement team to accomplish the purposes recommended by the Council. At present DRS is not able to create a special organizational structure for this purpose. However we expect that the technical assistance team will enable DRS to provide effective business services using existing staff.

SRC Comment: SRC supports your goal to complete a joint Strategic Plan between DRS and SRC. When would it be possible to begin work on this?

DRS Response: DRS supports establishing a strategic approach for the VR program and believes that working in cooperation with the Council is the most appropriate way to move forward. Presently DRS is working with other service divisions of the Department of Human Services on a strategic plan that will more fully integrate services to individuals and families. DRS will continue to work with the SRC to incorporate VR planning considerations into the larger strategic effort.

SRC Comment: SRC members are still concerned about the lack of jobs in particular geographic areas of the state. Are there other avenues that could be used by DRS to promote employment in these rural areas?

DRS Response: DRS is working with its workforce partners to develop employment plans in 10 economic development regions across the state, including both urban and rural regions. A detailed analysis of industry sectors and employment opportunities was conducted with the intent of promoting economic employment in each region.

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SRC Comment: Previously, DRS indicated that they were going to include short term job coaching and how it can be utilized in staff training modules. Has this happened? If so, has the use of short-term job coaching increased? Has its inclusion improved VR outcomes? If short-term job coaching has not yet been included in staff training modules, the SRC recommends that this be done.

DRS Response: DRS has developed training modules for counselors regarding the effective use of community rehabilitation program services, including short-term job coaching. Contract arrangements with CRPs now specifically include short-term job coaching as a service. At this time DRS does not have utilization data on this service.

(b) Request for Waiver of Statewideness

The Division of Rehabilitation Services maintains a considerable number of Third Party Agreements with other units of government, primarily school districts. These Third Party Agreements are designed to increase the availability of vocational rehabilitation services to specific populations of people with disabilities. DRS has a contract with each entity that is consistent with Federal regulations (34CFR361.26) and includes the following provisions: (a) the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided are identified; (b) the local agency assures that non-Federal funds are made available to DRS; (c) the local agency assures that DRS approval is required before services are provided; and (d) the local agency assures that all other State plan requirements, including the Order of Selection policy, are applied to persons receiving services through the agreement.

The following is a list of the Third Party Agreements now in place.

1. William Rainey Harper College

The purpose of this agreement is to provide post-secondary training to students in northern Cook County with hearing impairments, learning disabilities, and other disabilities who are eligible for VR program services. The college is a two-year public community college, which serves the northern part of Cook County. It is located in Palatine, Illinois.

2. The Evaluation and Development Center

The purpose of this agreement with the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is to provide a continuing program of rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities in Southern Illinois. This agreement provides evaluation and placement, independent living, residential, information and referral, and rehabilitation engineering services to customers eligible for services from the VR program. This program primarily serves the Illinois counties of Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Perry, Saline, Williamson, and Union.

3. Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP)

The purpose of this program is to provide rehabilitation services for customers who are still in secondary school. DRS has 144 contractual arrangements with school districts and cooperatives throughout the state. Of that number 135 are third-party contracts and nine are not. These arrangements resulted in VR services being provided to 8,586 in the most recent state fiscal year, and a total of 9,807 as of January 2016. STEP services typically include: classroom instruction focusing on career exploration and the development of job readiness skills; independent living, self-advocacy and community mobility skills

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training; and multiple work experiences in both school and community-based work sites. DRS anticipates that approximately 10,000 students will be served in the STEP program in PY2016.

Schools with Third-Party STEP Contracts in State Fiscal Year 2016 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016)

AERO Special Education Cooperative	Burbank, IL
Allendale Association	Lake Villa, IL
Alton Community School District 11	Alton, IL
Anna Jonesboro Community High School	Anna, IL
Aurora West Pub Schl Dist 129	Aurora, IL
Ball-Chatham Community Unit School District # 5	Chatham, IL
Belleville Township High School District 201	Belleville, IL
Bethalto Community Unit #8 Schools	Bethalto, IL
Black Hawk Area Special Education District	East Moline, IL
Board of Education	Evanston, IL
Board of Education City of (Peoria)	Peoria, IL
Bradley-Bourbonnais Community HS District 307	Bradley, IL
Cahokia Unit School District 187	Cahokia, IL
Canton Union School District 66	Canton, IL
Chicago Board of Education District 299	Chicago, IL
Childrens Home Association	Peoria, IL
Collinsville Community Unit School District 10	Collinsville, IL
Community High Schl District 155	Crystal Lake, IL
Community High School District 218	Oak Lawn, IL
Community High School District 99	Downers Grove, IL
Community Unit School - Woodstock	Woodstock, IL
Community Unit School Dist 95	Lake Zurich, IL
Community Unit School District 200	Wheaton, IL
Community Unit School District 203	Naperville, IL
Community Unit School District 220	Barrington, IL
Community Unit School District 300	Algonquin, IL
Community Unit School No 2	Serena, IL
Cons High Schl Dist 125	Lincolnshire, IL
Cook County High School Dist	Cicero, IL
County of Jackson (dba Comm Unit School Dist 186)	Murphysboro, IL
County of Kankakee 5 Manteno	Manteno, IL
Decatur Public Schools District 61	Decatur, IL
Dixon Unit School District 170, LCSEA	Dixon, IL
DuPage High School District 88	Villa Park, IL
East Alton - Wood River Community High School	Wood River, IL
Eastern IL Area Special Education (Mattoon)	Charleston, IL
Edwardsville Community Unit 7	Edwardsville, IL
Elmhurst Community Unit School District 205	Elmhurst, IL
Elmwood Park CUSD 401	Franklin Park, IL
Evanston Township High School	Evanston, IL

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Exceptional Children Have (Opportunities)	South Holland, IL
Fenton High School District 10	Bensenville, IL
Frankfort Community High School District 168	West Frankfort, IL
Franklin Community Unit School	Franklin, IL
Freeport School District 145	Freeport, IL
Galesburg Community Unit School District 205	Galesburg, IL
Geneseo Community Unit School	Geneseo, IL
Glenbard District 87	Glen Ellyn, IL
Granite City Community Unit School District 9	Granite City, IL
Hancock-McDonough ROE #26	Macomb, IL
Harlem Consolidated School	Machesney Park, IL
Harvard School Dist 50	Harvard, IL
Highland Community Schools District 5	Highland, IL
Hinsdale Township High School	Hinsdale, IL
Huntley School District NO 158	Algonquin, IL
Indian Prairie School Dist 204	Aurora, IL
Iroquois Special Education Association	Crescent City, IL
Jacksonville School District 117	Jacksonville, IL
JAMP Special Education SVCS	Grand Chain, IL
Jersey County CUSD 100	Jerseyville, IL
Johnsburg Community Unit School	Johnsburg, IL
Joliet TWP H S DIST 204	Joliet, IL
Kankakee Area Special Ed COOP	Kankakee, IL
Kankakee School District 111	Kankakee, IL
Kendall County Special Ed Cooperative	Yorkville, IL
LaGrange Area Dept. of Sp Ed	LaGrange, IL
LaSalle-Peru Township High	LaSalle, IL
Leyden High School District 21	Northlake, IL
Lincoln-Way Com High School	New Lenox, IL
Livingston County Special Serv	Pontiac, IL
Lockport Township High School	Lockport, IL
Maine Township High School	Park Ridge, IL
Marengo High School Dist 154	Marengo, IL
Mascoutah Community Unit 19	Mascoutah, IL
Massac County USD 1	Metropolis, IL
Mattoon Community Unit School District	Mattoon, IL
McHenry Community High School District 156	McHenry, IL
Mid-State Special Education - Christian County	Morrisonville, IL
Mid-State Special Education - Fayette and Bond Counties	Morrisonville, IL
Mid-State Special Education - Montgomery County	Morrisonville, IL
Mid-Valley SPEC ED Joint Agrmt	St. Charles, IL
Moline School Dist 40	Moline, IL
Mt. Vernon Township High School	Mt. Vernon, IL
Niles Township District 219	Skokie, IL
Northern Suburban Spec Ed Dist	Highland Park, IL

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Northwest Sp Ed District	Freeport, IL
Northwest Suburban Special Ed	Mount Prospect, IL
Oak Park & River Forest High	Oak Park, IL
O'Fallon Township High School	O'Fallon, IL
Ogle County Educational Coop	Byron, IL
Ottawa Township High School	Ottawa, IL
Perandoe Special Education District	Red Bud, IL
Plainfield School Dist 202	Plainfield, IL
Princeton Township High School	Princeton, IL
Proviso Township High School	Forest Park, IL
Putnam County Community Unit	Granville, IL
Quincy Public Schools	Quincy, IL
Regional Office of Education (McLean,-Dewitt)	Normal, IL
Rochester CUSD 3A	Rochester, IL
Roxana Community Unit School	Roxana, IL
Rural Champaign Co Sp Ed Coop	Rantoul, IL
Sangamon Area Sp Ed District	Springfield, IL
School Assn for Special Educ (DUPAGE CO.)	Naperville, IL
School District 131 (Aurora East)	Aurora, IL
School District 205 Board of Rockford	Rockford, IL
School District 234 Ridgewood High	Norridge, IL
School District Unit 46	Elgin, IL
Seneca High School	Seneca, IL
South Eastern Special Educ	Ste. Marie, IL
South Macoupin Association	Staunton, IL
Southern Will County Coop 22	Joliet, IL
Southwest Cook County Cooperative Assoc. for Special Education	Oak Forest, IL
Special Education Association	Bartonville, IL
Special Education District of Lake County SEDOL	Gages Lake, IL
Special Education Services	Aurora, IL
SPEED Special Education Joint Agreement, District 802	Chicago Heights, IL
Springfield Public School District 186	Springfield, IL
Streator Township High School	Streator, IL
Sycamore CUSD 427	Sycamore, IL
Tazewell Mason Ctys Sp Ed Assn	Pekin, IL
The Hope School	Springfield, IL
Thornton Township High School District 205	South Holland, IL
Triad Comm Unit Sch Dist 2	Troy, IL
Tri-County Special Education	Murphysboro, IL
Valley View School District 36	Romeoville, IL
Vermillion Association of Sp Ed	Danville, IL
Villa Grove C U Dist 302	Villa Grove, IL
Wabash and Ohio Valley Special Education District	Norris City, IL
Warren Township High School	Gurnee, IL

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West Central IL Sp Ed Coop	Macomb, IL
West Washington Community	Okawville, IL
Whiteside of Carroll Counties	Sterling, IL
Williamson County Special	Marion, IL
Winnebago County Special	Rockton, IL
Woodford County Special Ed Assoc	Metamora, IL

Entities with Non-Third Party STEP Contracts

Arlyn Day School	Wilmette, IL
Bartlett Learning Center	Bartlett, IL
Beacon Therapeutic School Inc	Chicago, IL
Cove School Inc	Northbrook, IL
Easter Seals Metropolitan	Chicago, IL
Little Friends, Inc.	Naperville, IL
Nexus INC	Manteno, IL
South Central Community Health Services, Inc.	Chicago, IL
Summit School, Inc.	Elgin, IL

(c) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System

General Information on Interagency Cooperation

Illinois DRS maintains cooperative agreements and working relationships with a wide variety of state, local and education entities that provide services to individuals with disabilities. DRS presently has over 25 interagency agreements in effect with other state agencies. DRS has a long-standing agreement with the Illinois State Board of Education regarding the provision of transition services to students with disabilities age 14 and older. This agreement has been revised to comply with WIOA requirements. The revised agreement places greater emphasis on the roles of each party in preparing students for the transition to employment, education and training.

Presently DRS provides VR services to around 10,000 students with disabilities each year through contracts with 144 school systems. DRS provides vocational rehabilitation services to another 1,000 high school students with disabilities outside of the contractual system. DRS also has agreements with 12 state universities and 36 community colleges in Illinois regarding funding for services to students who are VR customers.

DRS has contracts and working agreements with around 150 not-for-profit community rehabilitation programs, which serve about 4,000 VR customers each year, providing vocational evaluation, job placement and supported employment services. DRS maintains working relationships with the Statewide Independent Living Council, as well as the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, and has contracts with centers for independent living to provide a variety of rehabilitation services. Illinois does not have an agency receiving a grant under part C of Title I of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians. Also, Illinois does not have a separate VR agency for individuals who are blind.

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State Use and Rural Development Programs

DRS does not presently have formal interagency agreements with state use programs operated within Illinois. The Department of Human Services Procurement Office, which coordinates purchasing activities, maintains procedures for purchasing from designated state use sources on behalf of the Department. DRS does not have formal interagency agreements with Rural Development Programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

(d) Coordination with Education Officials

The DRS interagency agreement with the State Board of Education identifies financial roles and responsibilities for transition services. This agreement has been re-written and is under review pending signatures by department heads. The overall responsibility for funding a student's educational program lies with the local education authority, with support from the State Board of Education. DRS provides funding for vocational rehabilitation services, both through the STEP program and through general VR caseloads. DRS has contracts with 144 school districts, of which 135 involve the use of school funds as VR matching funds. DRS coordinates and provides support for operational costs of regional Transition Planning Councils. DRS establishes qualifications for personnel it employs, and the State Board establishes qualifications for personnel working for school districts.

Since 2009 DRS has worked with schools that have third-party cooperative agreements to ensure that federal VR requirements are followed in the provision of transition services. This has included a contract addendum as well as specific exhibits that are now incorporated into the contract package itself. DRS believes that these measures have resulted in an environment where all parties understand and are in compliance with these requirements.

DRS provides consultation and technical assistance to educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities. This is accomplished through a number of mechanisms. DRS has assigned qualified rehabilitation counselors to act as liaison to every high school in Illinois. A fundamental part of the liaison role is to provide consultation and technical assistance to educators involved in the transition process.

Transition Planning Councils in each area of the state work with school districts to identify students with disabilities needing transition services. Aggregate services needs are reported annually to the State Transition Council. Through the counselor liaison relationships, students with disabilities have ready access to the VR program. DRS counselors provide consultation regarding vocational services and provide general information on disability services available in the community. DRS also sponsors the Next Steps parent-training program to assist families in understanding their children's needs regarding transition services.

Illinois has a committee dedicated to transition issues, the Interagency Coordinating Council, that develops policy and establishes roles and responsibilities. DRS participates on the Council along with the State Board of Education and other state agencies involved in serving youth with disabilities. DRS also coordinates regional Transition Planning Councils, with school and community rehabilitation programs also participating. State law requires that transition planning begin at age 14 ½. DRS assists local schools in building a vocational focus as the student progresses through the school system. The Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP) is funded by DRS and provides financial support for students with disabilities during the high school years. Participation in DRS services for students in STEP is incorporated in the IPE during the time the student is in school. For transition students not

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participating in STEP, an IPE is developed no later than the last semester of high school, per state rule (89 Ill. Admin. Code 572.50 (c)). For transition students, transition planning includes the facilitation of the development and completion of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education

In Illinois there is no single government agency responsible for the administration of higher education in the state. There are two agencies with regulatory responsibility for higher education in Illinois. The Illinois Board of Higher Education is responsible for regulating the activities of public and private colleges and universities in the state that offer four-year programs and graduate programs. The Illinois Community College Board has a similar role for two-year community colleges throughout the state. Because there is no single administrative entity, DRS must initiate individual agreements with each institution.

In recent years DRS has worked to develop cooperative working agreements with institutions of higher education that serve vocational rehabilitation program customers. The primary focus of the agreements has been arrangements for payment of auxiliary services and supports provided to students who are VR customers. In particular, the agreements have focused on payment for sign language interpreter services and computer-assisted real time captioning services for students who are deaf. While there are many other types of services involved in the agreements, these represent the highest cost services.

(e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

DRS has contractual agreements with non-profit rehabilitation providers to provide services to VR customers. DRS works with the Facilities Advisory Council consisting of provider representatives to discuss issues and identify service needs in an ongoing manner. In 2013 DRS began the process of developing formal contracts in the place of cooperative working agreements with non-profit rehabilitation service providers. This is part of a state-level effort to establish greater consistency in human service contracting. DRS contracts specify the responsibilities of the service providing agency, the performance basis of the contract, and the rates to be paid to the provider.

DRS has contracts with around 150 not-for-profit community rehabilitation programs, which serve about 4,000 VR customers each year, providing vocational evaluation, job placement and supported employment services. DRS maintains working relationships with the Statewide Independent Living Council, as well as the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, and has contracts with centers for independent living to provide a variety of rehabilitation services.

DRS develops community service contracts based on an assessment of need at the local level. Counselors and office supervisors work with regional administrators to identify specific areas of need and potential provider agencies qualified to provide services. To the extent possible DRS has utilized one-time funding to establish new service contracts with providers. Depending on performance, contracts are continued using VR funds and are converted to a performance-based methodology.

Illinois has developed an emphasis on performance-based or outcome-based funding for human services. DRS has converted over 80 percent of its VR-funded contracts to a performance basis in the last three years. This means that providers earn payment when individuals are working in the community, with the maximum payment based on the individual achieving at least 90 days of successful employment. DRS believes this method aligns the interests of the individual, the provider and the VR program.

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(f) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

For many years DRS has had a number of contracts and cooperative working agreements with community provider agencies to provide both supported employment and extended services to individuals with most significant disabilities. DRS has a standing committee of community rehabilitation programs known as the Facility Advisory Committee which meets regularly to discuss service arrangements, including but not limited to, supported employment and extended services. DRS believes that this group is the best mechanism for communicating with provider agencies and maintaining a grasp of the demand for these services. DRS also has an interagency cooperative team that involves the DHS Division of Mental Health to provide ongoing support services to individuals with serious mental illness.

In PY2016 DRS expects to continue the following levels of funding for supported employment activities. Supported employment services provided with Title VI-B funds: approximately 150 individuals, total funding \$1.05 million, with 20 provider agencies. Supported employment provided with Title I funds: approximately 1,450 individuals, total funding \$3.8 million, approximately 45 provider agencies.

Beginning in July 2012 DRS implemented a new rate structure for supported employment services, and DRS anticipates that the new rate structure will encourage providers to become involved in providing supported employment services.

DRS will not be able to provide the same level of extended services as in the past, due to an elimination of state general revenue funding for this program. In PY2016 no state funds will be available for extended services. DRS continues to pursue additional state funds. In addition, DRS is working to identify other sources of funding for extended services.

DRS has worked with DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities to specify circumstances under which individuals can receive long-term extended supports through the DD waiver program.

DRS also intends to pursue ongoing changes in its supported employment program. Illinois has seen a trend where the number of individuals participating in supported employment services has declined in recent years. DRS plans to reverse this trend by focusing on youth with disabilities who require additional support to enter and retain employment. In addition DRS intends to convert its supported employment contract arrangements to a performance basis within the next two years. The present funding system is based on the use hourly service rates which are not sufficiently tied to successful employment results.

(g) Coordination with Employers

DRS is beginning a new era of relationships with employers. The focus of activities in this era will center on the relationships in each Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA), of which there are 22 in the State. DRS has an office supervisor or other manager as member on each local board (LWIB), which presents the single greatest opportunity for interactive communication with employers as well as other workforce business representatives. Each LWIB is in the process of developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to formally describe many of the relationships within the area. This will include mechanisms for sharing information on employment opportunities as well as career exploration and work-based learning opportunities at the local level.

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In addition, DRS representatives are participating in the regional planning process related to WIOA implementation. This process is based on 10 economic development regions (EDRs) around the state. Within each region, extensive data analysis has been conducted to identify employment sectors that are most likely to account for job growth and expansion in the next five years. The employers in these key expansion sectors will be those targeted for the highest level of business engagement, including discussions around establishment of work-based learning experiences, including internships and apprenticeships. DRS staff will work closely with other LWIA business services teams to ensure that services are not duplicated.

DRS is participating in the job driven technical assistance program through the Institute for Community Inclusion. The goals of this project are to establish a business engagement strategy and to train VR staff to provide basic business engagement services, including those related to disability awareness, workplace accommodations and benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. The target for the first year is to establish relationships with 20 employers. While these services will be distinct from representation of specific job candidates, DRS anticipates that provision of business engagement services will result in competitive employment outcomes for its customers.

The activities discussed above are intended to have a positive impact on VR customers of all ages. Other activities focused specifically on transition age youth will be developed in consultation with other entities, including the Transition Advisory Councils, community rehabilitation program agencies, and service providers working with the WIOA Title I youth programs. For years DRS has relied on its Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP) to create work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities. While this has been an effective practice, there is much less capacity for development of work-based learning opportunities for out-of-school youth with disabilities. DRS believes that the Title I experience in serving out-of-school youth provides a key opportunity for inclusion of youth with disabilities. As noted above, development of these opportunities will take place through a localized planning process and be focused on the growth sectors identified through regional planning.

(h) Interagency Cooperation

State Medicaid Agency: Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS)

In the last two years DRS has worked with HFS as part of the Illinois Employment First initiative. This is a multi-agency effort to promote competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities in both the private sector and public sector. To date there has been a special effort to facilitate hiring of people with disabilities within state government. In addition, Illinois is involved in the Vision Quest technical assistance effort sponsored by the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy. Subject matter experts have worked with Illinois state agencies to review policies and service funding rates to identify opportunities for change that will facilitate employment goals. Additional efforts have focused on policy issues relating to employment options for individuals participating in Medicaid waiver programs administered through HFS and operated by other state agencies.

State Agency for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

DRS and DDD have participate on the State's Employment First Task Force, as well as the DHS employment first team. DHS activities have focused on the Balancing Incentive Program (BIP), which provided one-time funds to Illinois to promote innovative services that will benefit individuals with

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disabilities. Both DRS and DDD have utilized BIP funding to create pilot projects for customized employment for people with intellectual disabilities. BIP funds will expire in 2016 and both divisions are working to develop options for continuing customized employment services on an ongoing basis.

DRS and DDD have worked to coordinate efforts around supported employment services, in particular looking at policies and rules that may need revision in order to make an effective transition from VR supported employment to DDD supported employment for individuals requiring long-term supports.

In addition DDD and DRS are cooperating to work with employers that hold Department of Labor subminimum wage certificates, including development of options for contacting individuals working for subminimum wages and offering counseling around options for pursuit of competitive integrated employment. Many subminimum wage employers have relationships with DDD and that agency is in a good position to improve communication with VR.

State Agency for Mental Health Services: Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health (DMH)

DRS has enjoyed an effective partnership with DMH for several years. This partnership is centered on provision of vocational services through the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) service model. DRS and DMH have worked with the Psychiatric Research Center to implement a fidelity-based service model that has been shown to be very effective in assisting individuals with serious mental illness in becoming employed. DRS and DMH have a cooperative funding model in which DMH utilized Medicaid funding to the greatest extent possible and DRS provides VR funds to support the vocational aspects of the IPS model.

DRS has worked with DMH to expand IPS services to a youth population and intends to continue expansion to this group through additional pilot projects as funding becomes available. In addition both agencies intend to participate in evaluation projects that document the effectiveness of IPS as an evidence-based practice.

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is dedicated to ensuring an adequate supply of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals are available. This is accomplished through the strong commitment to providing and making available training programs to all staff especially staff who provide direct services to individuals with disabilities.

Personnel Data

Sufficiency of Current Staffing Levels

DRS believes it has sufficient staff on hand to staff the VR program. Each staff category has a normal number of vacant positions, and DRS works aggressively to fill vacancies as soon as possible, in conjunction with DHS personnel managers. There has been little growth in the overall VR caseload in the last several years, which means that DRS has sufficient staff available to serve people with disabilities meeting its order of selection policy, and has the capacity to fill vacant positions to continue to meet that level of need.

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DRS has 235 VR counselor positions with 210 on hand and 25 vacant positions, and 24 rehabilitation and mobility instructors, with 19 on hand and five vacant positions. These staff are supported by 133 rehabilitation case coordinator positions, of which DRS has 122 on hand with 11 vacant positions. Counselor vacancies are somewhat higher than normal due to a personnel classification issue that has since been resolved. DRS anticipates that it will be able to fill these positions in the near future and return to a more normal pattern of vacancies.

Specialty counselor positions have a slightly higher vacancy rate, but one that still allows DRS to provide services to select populations. DRS has 30 staff positions for counselors certified to communicate in sign language with eight vacancies in this category, as well as 24 counselors fluent in Spanish, and nine vacancies in that category.

Projected Number of Replacement Staff in Next Five Years

DRS anticipates that its long-term replacement rate will remain the same despite several developments in the last two years. There was a large increase in retirements in May 2012 due to pending changes in the state pension system, with 22 VR program staff retiring along with 40 other DRS staff. Following that there were disruptions in the state hiring process due to management of layoffs and labor contract uncertainty. These issues have been resolved and regular job postings resumed. Based on job application trends, DRS anticipates that sufficient applicants will be available to fill nearly all posted vacancies within a few months.

The number of staff on hand and projected annual number of replacements by title are: rehabilitation counselors 210 (20 projected replacements); rehabilitation case coordinators 122 (15); rehabilitation and mobility instructors 19 (4); field office supervisors 37 (5); field office support staff administrative support 28 (4); business enterprise program for the blind staff 13 (1); central office staff 61 (5); bureau chiefs 1 (1); assistant bureau chiefs 6 (1).

Illinois Rehabilitation Education Programs

There are four nationally-accredited rehabilitation counselor education programs in Illinois: Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago; Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago; Northern Illinois University, DeKalb; and Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. The program at the University of Illinois in Champaign has been discontinued.

Enrollment and Expected Graduates

The most recent available data on enrollment in and graduation from the MA programs in rehabilitation counseling at the five universities is shown in the table below. A total of 121 students were enrolled and 46 graduated. The estimated replacement rate for DRS counselors is 15 per year, although the replacement rate will be higher in PY2016 due to administrative delays in filling vacancies. While many of these graduates will choose not to work for DRS, DRS believes that these programs make a significant contribution to its ability to hire new staff and replace staff who leave DRS. In Illinois graduates with an MA in rehabilitation counseling who pursue CRC certification are eligible to become licensed as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) through the State of Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

Recruitment and Retention

Each year DRS estimates the number of staff needed to operate the VR program, particularly the number of rehabilitation counselors needed. In addition, DRS works with university programs to estimate the number of students graduating from the programs. DRS has strengthened its relationships

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with the four university programs providing master's degree training for rehabilitation counselors, through formation of the University Coordinators Meeting which meets regularly to discuss educational needs, hiring practices and internships.

DRS has surveyed the four university programs and has information on the expected number of graduates each year. This information is analyzed in relation to administration estimates of the number of rehabilitation counselor positions that will need to be filled in the next year. In the last 12 months DRS has begun the process of hiring new VR counselors after an administrative delay. There have been numerous applicants for each vacant position, indicating a sufficient supply of qualified counseling staff.

Based on the information available from the university programs and the number of applications for posted vacancies, DRS believes that there are adequate numbers of qualified personnel available to fill all needed rehabilitation counselor positions.

The newest counselor-training program was established in 2005 at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). The program is available to all students but especially focuses on Hispanic enrollments. DRS administration has been in frequent communication with the new NEIU program, and has arranged for a presentation to the faculty and students. DRS has made several presentations to program staff and students regarding employment with our agency.

DRS actively recruits minority individuals and individuals with disabilities for rehabilitation counselor and other positions. The Department of Human Services personnel unit works with DRS to publicize available positions in DRS and attends numerous job fairs likely focusing on minority students and students with disabilities. The State of Illinois has recruiting policies, which assist minority individuals in obtaining employment in key positions, and also encourages training and education for current employees. State policy also encourages the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DRS worked with the state personnel agency to create a position dedicated to monitoring and assisting with the hiring of persons with disabilities in state jobs.

In addition to recruitment, DRS works actively to promote the retention of individuals with disabilities and individuals from minority backgrounds. These efforts include those sponsored by the Department of Human Services, of which DRS is a part, as well as through other state government organizations and membership associations. The purpose of these activities is to facilitate the training and professional development of staff from these populations, to promote understanding of the need for a diverse workforce, and to encourage the participation of staff in a variety of cooperative efforts aimed at making a contribution to the organization.

These efforts include; (a) the Upward Mobility program, which is designed to further the careers of state employees from minority backgrounds as well as individuals with disabilities. This program provides support for a variety of training and educational opportunities for staff during the course of their employment with the state; (b) the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities, which engages state employees with disabilities in activities related to promoting the hiring and career advancement of people with disabilities. DRS administration is closely involved in the operations of the ICED; (c) The Illinois Association of Minorities in Government sponsors an annual conference addressing issues of concern to state employees from minority backgrounds, which is attended by DRS staff; and (d) the Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees also holds an annual conference, which focuses on state employees from Hispanic/Latino backgrounds. DRS sponsors staff to attend this conference each year. DRS believes that its sponsorship of attendance at these conferences and encouragement of

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membership in these organizations is a positive step in promoting a diverse workforce and a means of ensuring a high rate of job retention among its employees with disabilities and employees from minority backgrounds.

Internships

DRS has informal agreements with the four rehabilitation counselor training programs in the state to provide internship and practicum placement options for graduate students. At present DRS is not able to offer paid internships to counseling students. We continue to provide unpaid internships whenever possible, both to support the universities and students as well as to provide a job preview to students interested in working for DRS when they complete their training.

Strategies for Retaining, Recruiting and Hiring Personnel

DRS uses several strategies to recruit, hire and retain rehabilitation personnel. Key elements are promotion and publicizing the VR program, locating job candidates, monitoring the state hiring process, and identifying methods to encourage retention of staff.

The University Coordinator Committee is composed of representatives from the four rehabilitation education programs in the state. DRS administrators meet regularly with this committee to develop an understanding of the current training capacity of the programs, and to facilitate communication about DRS hiring practices and vacancies. DRS works with the DHS personnel unit to conduct outreach activities to individuals who may be interested in state employment. DHS maintains a regular schedule of job fairs, community events and recruitment initiatives that include a focus on hiring minority individuals.

DRS offers unpaid internship and practicum opportunities in its field offices to graduate students from the five rehabilitation education programs. These are arranged with the university faculty and DRS administrators as needed. DRS also makes presentations to undergraduate students to expose them to the field of vocational rehabilitation and provide them with information on graduate rehabilitation education programs.

DRS has an ongoing team composed of staff and administrators that focuses on issues related to hiring and retention of qualified staff. This group attempts to identify strategies that motivate staff to continue their employment, including rewards and recognition for high-level performance.

Personnel Standards

State Degree Standard

For several years, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has had the requirement for all new counselors of a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field. The Master's degree requirement for DRS vocational rehabilitation counselors is supported by state licensing categories as well. The applicable licensing requirement in the state is for a "Licensed Professional Counselor" license, which is issued by the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation. This license is a generic counseling license and is not specifically for vocational rehabilitation counselors. The license requires a Master's degree in counseling, rehabilitation counseling, psychology or related field. For purposes of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), the requirement of a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field will be considered the state standard.

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Completion of 1998 Goal

On October 1, 2008 DRS completed its 10-year plan to implement its degree standard for all rehabilitation counselors employed by the agency. All counselors now meet the standard.

Counselor Participation in Graduate Education

DRS is no longer involved in providing graduate training for rehabilitation counselors. Through 2012 DRS hired individuals as social service career trainees (SSCT) and assisted with the cost of graduate training to reach the state degree standard. This program has been discontinued.

Hiring of Individuals Not Meeting the State Standard

DRS does not hire individuals who do not meet the state degree standard. As noted above the Social Service Career Trainee program has been discontinued.

Counselor Data by Degree Status

DRS employs 88 individuals with a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling and 122 individuals with Master's degrees in a field closely related to rehabilitation counseling. In 2015 DRS completed a process that defined a smaller range of degrees as meeting the standard for "closely related" to rehabilitation counseling.

The DRS Staff Development Section (SDS) oversees the needs assessment, development, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all training programs offered within DRS. SDS has three full-time trainers and a program manager in addition to two support staff. SDS is responsible for providing training to DRS VR staff as well as coordinating training from other sources and maintaining the training data base which tracks the number of training hours for each staff person.

Training Requirements

All DRS staff are expected to participate in training events annually. Annual employee performance evaluations are designed to include training needs and expectations as identified by both the employee and the supervisor. Certain training events sponsored by DRS are mandated for attendance by staff in particular titles, such as rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation case coordinators.

SDS initiates new training activities and also responds to specific requests for training from DRS administrators and field office supervisors. SDS coordinates the New Employee Orientation (NEO) training in which each new DRS staff person participates in the first months of his or her employment. This includes an overview of agency policies as well as a review of how the VR program operates in Illinois.

While the NEO training is conducted centrally, nearly all other training is conducted in local offices or at convenient locations around the state to save on travel costs. In many cases, training events are provided at the initiation of field office supervisors or regional administrators in response to local concerns. DRS has initiated a proposal to secure funding for additional distance learning opportunities, both for staff convenience and to reduce travel expenses. In March 2013 DRS completed distribution of two-way video communication equipment to all field offices for use in conducting webinars and other distance training events.

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The following section lists training courses provided by the Staff Development Section in the last year, as well as statewide conferences attended by DRS staff with financial support from DRS.

Training Provided by the DRS Staff Development Section

Job Placement and Job Development Strategies

Case Progression and Documentation

Valuing Diversity in the Workplace

Conflict and Stress Management for Professionals

Working Effectively in Teams

Platinum Customer Service

Customer Service and Telephone Skills

Projecting a Professional Image

Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Work Place

Section 590 Subpart C: Training and Related Services (Webinar)

Effective Communication & Conflict Management

Dealing with Difficult Behavior in the Workplace

Partnering with Autonomy Works (Webinar)

The NET: A Model for Successful Employment Outcomes (Webinar)

Team Building and Problem Solving

Case Notes: Styles, Structures and Time Management

Training Provided by External Training Resources

Job Placement Skills

Social Security Benefits Training

Conferences Supported by DRS

Illinois Rehabilitation Association

Illinois Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

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Illinois Association of Agencies and Community Organizations for Migrant Advocacy

Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees

Latino Mental Health Conference

Statewide Transition Conference

Ongoing Staff Development

Training Needs Assessment

In 2013 DRS conducted an online training needs assessment survey for all field office staff, including supervisors, counselors and case coordinators. Staff were asked about their own training needs as well as their perception of training needs for individuals working in other field positions. The top training requests for field office supervisors was in the area of stress management and dealing with difficult people, as well as disciplinary procedures. For case coordinators, the top requests were in the areas of teambuilding and customer service. For VR counselors the top requests for training were in the areas of counseling skills, caseload management and time management. DRS is developing a plan to prioritize the training requests, develop training events when possible and arrange for external training providers if needed.

DRS provides ongoing training to staff in all areas of counseling, including counseling and guidance. All staff are required to take a five-day New Employee Orientation training course that focuses on the role of the counselor in the counseling relationship. A major emphasis is placed on role-playing various situations where counseling and guidance skills are used. Another major emphasis is on assessment of the individual's rehabilitation needs, beginning with the initial interview.

Placement skills are emphasized in training activities including regional meetings held annually, as well as on-site training in field offices. Training focuses on job development skills, communication with employers and preparing customers for job interviews. Job placement assistance is also provided to counselors through relationships with Employment Resource Specialist (ERS) staff located around the state. Each field office has an ERS assigned to assist counselors with job placement concerns. ERS staff can also act as a companion to the counselor on the computerized case management system, sharing information and making case notes to promote effective job placement.

DRS makes training available in rehabilitation technology to all staff. DRS employs rehabilitation technology specialists who provide on-site consultation to counselors and assist them in developing plans for provision of rehabilitation technology to VR customers. DRS also has contractual staff who focus on rehabilitation technology issues and provide on-site training and consultation. DRS works in conjunction with the Illinois Assistive Technology Project, the state's AT grant recipient, to promote understanding of rehabilitation technology needs and identification of technology resources. DRS makes use of the rehabilitation technology program at the University of Illinois at Chicago as both a training resource and a service provider for VR customers.

Dissemination of Research Materials to Staff

The staff development section operates a small library with books and video materials available on numerous topics related to disability and rehabilitation counseling. These materials are distributed to

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field staff upon request. In the last year the library has added new materials related to job search, job skills and career choice materials to enhance the rehabilitation counselor's access to research materials.

DRS makes use of its intranet system to provide linkages to research sources and other new information relating to the field of rehabilitation. DRS also maintains a close relationship with the Illinois Rehabilitation Association (IRA) including providing assistance in sponsoring the IRA annual conference. The IRA conference features presentations on new developments in the rehabilitation field including presentations on research from university professionals as well as rehabilitation practitioners. In addition, key categories of staff such as rehabilitation counselors for the deaf and mental health specialist counselors, participate in regional and statewide groups that share current research relevant to their fields of study. The DRS initiative on for individual placement and support services for persons with mental illness involves sharing research findings in a structured way with staff.

Training Technology

As noted above, a major emphasis in DRS has been the effort to obtain up-to-date interactive technology to facilitate training events and limit time and expense associated with travelling to training events. DRS has made use of a RSA quality grant to purchase video equipment, laptop computers and microphones to establish the capability for two-way interactive video in all offices across the state. Testing of the technology has been successful and training events will be scheduled soon using the equipment.

In 2014 DRS established a contract to develop online training modules in key areas of VR casework. The idea is that counselors will be able to take training on key topics and improve their knowledge of important concepts directly from their office computer. A quiz would follow each session, with the scores reported to a data base maintained by the training unit staff. The first two modules were tested in 2015 and received positive evaluations from VR staff.

DRS has also worked to implement standard webinar training events with visual presentation of materials along with spoken narration. Real time captioning is available as needed as an accommodation for webinar users. The staff being trained can interact with the presenter by responding to questions ("polling") and by texting in questions. All webinar training events are followed up with an online participant survey that provides feedback on the training. DRS has used this methodology over 1,505 times in the last two years months to provide relatively brief but important training updates to VR staff. Staff response to webinar technology for training has been very positive and DRS anticipates utilizing this format more often in the coming year.

Communication with Diverse Populations

DRS maintains rehabilitation counseling staff with expertise in communicating with diverse populations. A group of Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCDs) are employed throughout the state. These individuals are fluent in sign language and conversant with deaf culture, and provide the full range of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are deaf. The Bureau of Blind Services employs rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation instructors who are professionally qualified to provide rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. DRS strongly encourages the use of Braille as part of training for individuals who are blind. In addition, rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation case coordinators are employed who are qualified to communicate with individuals whose primary language is Spanish. Staff are tested in order to qualify for bilingual positions.

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DRS also works with individuals whose primary language is one other than English, Spanish or sign language. While the numbers of such individuals is relatively small, it is equally important to be able to communicate effectively with them about their rehabilitation needs. The Illinois Department of Human Services maintains a computerized resource directory, which includes information on translation services for a variety of languages, including Polish, Vietnamese and Arabic among others. DRS counselors can link with these resources to provide translation services. DRS has also piloted the use of a telephone-based translation service which can provide instant translations in over 100 languages and which requires only the use of two telephones. When professional translators are not available, DRS works with family members or volunteer translators from community or religious organizations who can assist the individual.

Coordination of the CSPD and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)

Relationship to IDEIA: DRS staff provide services annually to thousands of young people with disabilities, most of whom receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Approximately 10,000 young people participate in the Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP), which provides work experience during the high school years. The Next Steps program provides advocacy training to parents of students with disabilities. Part of the Next Steps training program includes providing information on the importance of transition planning.

DRS staff who work with high school students participate in training offered by the Illinois State Board of Education and its Transition Systems Change project. DRS maintains an administrative liaison position with the State Board to facilitate communication about transition issues, including available training options. Also, DRS has staff who serve on the Education of Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee.

There is no direct connection between DRS training efforts and the personnel development plan under IDEA. DRS staff are closely involved in the statewide network of Transition Planning Councils (TPCs), which consist of rehabilitation and education professionals, as well as employers and school administrators. The purpose of the TPCs is to facilitate transition from school to work and to identify local issues that affect transition. DRS staff are involved with the schools in their communities and frequently attend training events sponsored by schools.

(j) Statewide Assessment

The DRS comprehensive needs assessment is conducted every three years, with the last CSNA completed in 2013 and a supplemental needs assessment conducted in 2014. The next needs assessment will be conducted in 2016. DRS worked with a State Rehabilitation Council subcommittee to develop a decentralized approach to needs assessment that involved not one major assessment activity but a series of efforts over the three year period that would be summarized as a picture of rehabilitation needs for the state during that time frame. The survey instruments used were developed in consultation with the SRC stakeholder subcommittee and results were presented to and discussed with that group.

Overview of Needs Assessment Activities

These activities included: (a) a survey of transition age youth receiving VR services, conducted by DRS; (b) a survey of community service providers conducted by DRS; (c) an online survey of people with disabilities conducted by DRS; (d) a survey of community providers conducted by Illinois State University; and (e) a survey of VR customers conducted by Illinois State University. In addition, DRS

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collected and reviewed research data and Census data on disability for Illinois in comparison to the United States overall.

Demographic Information

DRS analyzed demographic data from a number of sources to obtain a perspective on trends that are likely to have an impact on the operation of the VR program. Illinois is a state with low population growth, with an expected growth rate through 2020 of only 1.1 percent compared to 4.2 percent for the U.S. as a whole. While the state birth rate is average, external migration from Illinois negates that area of growth, with international migration presenting some positive impact on growth. Overall growth is due almost entirely to the increase in the Latino population, both from births and immigration. The very low average age of the Latino population means that the greatest impact on the adult VR services system will not be felt for several years.

DRS has made use of disability data from the U.S. Census Bureau, particularly from the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS provides state-level data that is updated each year. Changes in the questions asked have made longer-term comparisons invalid, and since the ACS is based on a sampling methodology, there is some fluctuation in the results. Using the most recent ACS data on disability prevalence and the most recent Census estimate of the Illinois population, DRS estimates that there are 679,900 individuals with disabilities in the state aged 16 to 64 who are potentially eligible for the VR program. Of that number, DRS estimates that there are 530,400 who would qualify for services under the DRS order of selection policy.

DRS analyzed statistics available through the Disability Statistics Compendium, a resource that compiles Census data and other data to provide a picture of how Illinois compares to the U.S. as a whole. In general the observed rate of disability in Illinois is slightly lower across a number of categories than the figure for the country overall. Looking at all age groups, Illinois has a disability prevalence rate of 10.4 percent, compared to 12.2 percent for the U.S. This same difference is observed for youth (age 5-17), where Illinois has a prevalence rate of 4.2 percent compared to 5.2 percent for the U.S. For working age (18-64) persons, the prevalence rate in Illinois is more notably lower, at 8.2 percent compared to 10.3 percent for the U.S. This trend is observed across various disability categories identified in the survey: Hearing disability (Illinois 1.5%, U.S. 2.1%); Vision disability (Illinois 1.3%, U.S. 1.8%); Cognitive disability (Illinois 3.4%, U.S. 4.3%); Ambulatory disability (Illinois 4.2%, U.S. 5.4%); Self-care disability (Illinois 1.5%, U.S. 1.9%); and Independent living disability (Illinois 3.1%, U.S. 3.6%). Not only is the rate of disability observed in Illinois consistently, if slightly, lower, the rate of change in disability from 2009 to 2011 is lower in Illinois, with an increase of 2.0 percent compared to 4.4 percent for the U.S. as a whole.

The difference in prevalence rate observed between Illinois and the U.S. is more apparent for younger adults and disappears entirely for post working age adults. For adults aged 18 to 44 the Illinois prevalence rate stood at 13.3 percent compared to 15.6 percent for the U.S., with a similar difference among those aged 45 to 64 (Illinois 27.2%, U.S. 21.2%). For those aged 65 and older, there was no difference (Illinois 40.0%, U.S. 40.6%).

On a positive note, at 34.3 percent the employment rate for Illinoisans with disabilities is somewhat higher than the figure for the U.S. overall, at 32.6 percent. This is consistent across a range of disability categories: Hearing disability (Illinois 54.0%, U.S. 48.3%); Vision disability (Illinois 36.6%, U.S. 36.1%); Cognitive disability (Illinois 24.0%, U.S. 22.4%); Ambulatory disability (Illinois 26.6%, U.S. 23.9%); Self-care disability (Illinois 17.6%, U.S. 15.9%); and Independent living disability (Illinois 16.7%, U.S. 15.4%).

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Looking at persons with disabilities who were employed full-time year-round in the most recent 12 months, Illinois and the U.S. data were essentially the same, at 18.4 and 18.8 percent, respectively. DRS also reviewed Social Security Administration data on the number of persons receiving benefits under Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or both. While the number of persons receiving benefits has increased since 2009, the rate of change is less than for the country as a whole. In 2012 there were 245,873 working age Illinoisans receiving SSI (either blind or disabled), 283,252 receiving SSDI (as disabled workers), including 72,453 who received both sources of benefits.

DRS also reviewed school exit data from the special education system. The graduation rate increased from 78 to 79 percent from 2009 to 2011, while the dropout rate declined from 19.1 to 18.3 percent in that time period. These are small but positive changes. The overall number of students exiting school after participating in special education increased from 18,298 to 19,673 in that two-year period, a 7.5 percent increase that is of interest to the DRS VR program.

Of particular interest is the growth in the number of students classified as having autism or autism spectrum disorder. The data available from the IDEA data base does distinguish between those two categories, but the rate of growth is remarkable. Between 2003 and 2010, the number of Illinois students classified with autism increased from 5,080 to 14,869, an increase of 193 percent. This is comparable to data for the U.S. as a whole, which saw an increase of 212 percent in that time period. The extent to which these individuals will require different kinds of VR services or different service approaches is as yet unknown, but DRS like all VR agencies must be prepared for a large increase in the number of customers in this disability category.

Survey Data on Service Needs

The DRS online survey included ratings of 18 different services, as well as an option to indicate a service not included on the list. Each service was listed along with a description of the service, for example: Job Coaching – Help from an on-the-job assistant to learn how to do a job. The response options were: I need this service now; I may need this service in the future; I do not need this service; and I receive this service now. A weighted need score was created for each item based on giving twice the weight to “I need this service now” as compared to “I may need this service in the future”.

Overall Results: Across all survey items, 17.2 percent were rated as being “needed now”, 35 percent were rated as “may need in the future”, 23.5 percent were rated as being “received now”, and 24.3 percent were rated as “no need”. The average was 23.1 on the weight need measure.

The five highest ranked needs, based on the weighted score were: Job creation; Vocational training; Supported employment; Career exploration; and Customized employment. Three of these are related to immediate employment concerns (job creation, supported employment and customized employment) while the others focus on pre-employment activities.

2014 Supplemental Needs Assessment

In 2014 DRS conducted an online needs assessment survey that supplemented the survey conducted in 2013. The 2014 survey was concerned specifically with services for transition age youth with disabilities and involved both rating the relative need of services required by transition age youth as well as descriptions of specific program options under consideration by DRS.

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There were 10 services rated on a 7-point scale, where 1 represented the lowest level of need and 7 represented the highest level of need. For each item, a percentage of high ratings (either 6 or 7 on a 7-point rating scale) was computed, indicating the level to which respondents indicated that the service was needed more urgently. The items and the respective scores are listed below:

Internship Opportunities: Short term work opportunities that provide experience with a particular occupation or business 58.2

Customized Employment: Help finding a job or starting a business based on your individual strengths and needs 72.0

Supported Employment: On-the-job supports to help you retain a job 72.3

Self-Employment: Help planning for and starting your own business 18.2

Vocational Training: Learning new skills that will lead to getting a job 75.8

On-the-Job Training: Training at a job where you learn while getting paid to work 75.8

Job Placement Services: Help in finding a job that matches your skills 81.1

Benefits Planning Services: Help to manage Social Security benefits and plan to begin working 50.6

Support for College Expenses: Financial support to help pay for tuition, books and housing 42.0

Assistive Technology Services and Support: Special equipment and electronic devices to help with reading, speaking or using a computer 41.0

The second portion of the survey included brief descriptions of four projects relating to transition age youth that are under consideration by DRS for additional development or implementation. Respondents were asked to rate their support for the program option based on the brief description. The options were: strong support; moderate support; low level of support; and no support. The items are listed below along with the percentage of responses with strong or moderate support:

Outreach to minority youth with disabilities 82.5

Establishment of a vocational training and entrepreneurship program 76.6

Expansion of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services to transition age youth 93.5

Establishment of three Project SEARCH locations in Illinois 91.8

Survey Results

Responses to the 2014 survey were consistent with those received in 2013. What might be classified as typical VR services received high need ratings, including job placement (81.1 percent high need) vocational training (75.8 percent) and on-the-job training (75.8 percent). High ratings were also received for supported employment (72.3 percent) and customized employment (72.0 percent), the latter a relatively new service in VR. As was the case in the 2013 survey, college training (42 percent

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high need) and assistive technology (41 percent) were rated relatively low in terms of need. An item on self-employment was included in the 2014 survey that was not used in 2013. This received a very low overall rating, with only 18.2 percent indicating a high need for this service.

It should be noted that there were two items in the survey that mentioned starting a business. As noted above the item “Self-Employment: Help planning for and starting your own business” received high ratings from only 18.2 percent of respondents. However the similarly-worded item involving establishing a business (“Customized Employment: Help finding a job or starting a business based on your individual strengths and needs”) received high ratings from 72 percent of respondents. This indicates that there is support for the concept of starting a business particularly when there is an emphasis on individual needs.

Overall respondents were highly supportive of the four program options described in the survey. All four program options had at least 76 percent support when the two response categories “strong support” and “moderate support” were added together. Scores on this measure for each item were: Outreach to minority youth with disabilities (82.5 percent high support); Establishment of a vocational training and entrepreneurship program (76.6 percent);

Expansion of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services to transition age youth (93.5 percent); and Establishment of three Project SEARCH locations in Illinois (91.8 percent). Taken together these responses provide a high level of support for program options under consideration by DRS for further development and implementation.

Community Rehabilitation Programs

The 2013 needs assessment survey process did not indicate a need to expand the range of community rehabilitation programs in Illinois. Across the state there is a well-developed network of CRPs that provides a wide range of services to people with disabilities in cooperation with DRS.

In 2014 DRS conducted an online needs assessment survey that supplemented the survey conducted in 2013. The 2014 survey was concerned specifically with services for transition age youth with disabilities and involved both rating the relative need of services required by transition age youth as well as descriptions of specific program options under consideration by DRS. The program options rated by survey respondents included the following item:

Establishment of a Vocational Training Program and Entrepreneurship Program

The purpose of this project is to establish a facility in Chicago that will train youth with disabilities from across Illinois in vocational skills that will lead to employment, higher education or starting a business owned by the individual. This facility will employ state-of-the-art technology and methods to enable individuals with any type of disability to gain vocational skills or establish a business based on a solid plan with a high expectation of success.

Respondents were asked to rate their support for the program option based on the brief description. The options were: strong support; moderate support; low level of support; and no support. Survey results indicate a high level of support for this service option as described above. The “strong support” rating was used by 50.5 percent of respondents, along with 26.1 percent of respondents who used the “moderate support” rating. The “no support” rating was used by only 7.1 percent of those responding.

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Results on the service ratings were mixed. The item “Vocational Training: Learning new skills that will lead to getting a job” received high ratings (either 6 or 7 on a 7-point rating scale) from 75.8 percent of respondents. However the item “Self-Employment: Help planning for and starting your own business” received high ratings from only 18.2 percent of respondents. It should be noted that a similarly-worded item involving establishing a business (“Customized Employment: Help finding a job or starting a business based on your individual strengths and needs”) received high ratings from 72 percent of respondents. Thus while one of the two items relating to establishment of a business received only mild support, the other business-related item had a strong level of support from survey respondents. The average level of high ratings across the 10 items of the survey was 58.7 percent, so both the vocational training and customized employment ratings were noticeably higher.

Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities

DRS collected survey data on individuals with a primary disability of intellectual disability, mental illness, and brain injury since these individuals are very likely to be classified as having a most significant disability, and constitute the large majority of individuals who receive supported employment services. Survey results indicated that the five highest rated needs for this group were: Vocational training; Supported employment; Job coaching; Job creation; and Job seeking skills training. Respondents in this group rated both supported employment and job coaching higher than other respondents, while rating job creation somewhat lower.

DRS also examined data on individuals who indicated multiple disabilities in the online survey, in comparison to those who indicated only one disability. For the multi-disability group, the five highest rated service needs were: Vocational training; Supported employment; Assistive technology; Career exploration; and Benefits planning. For the single disability group, the five highest rated service needs were: Job creation; Customized employment; Career exploration; On-the-job training; and Vocational training. The multi-disability group was the only sub-group in the analysis to give a high rating to assistive technology, and one of the few to rate benefits planning highly.

DRS believes it has the capacity to respond to the service needs indicated in the survey. First, through ongoing efforts to promote supported employment services, including the recent significant increase in payment rates to providers. DRS also works with community providers to support job coaching as a standalone support service outside the framework of supported employment. In addition, DRS has a strong commitment to provision of assistive technology equipment and services. DRS also has provided training to staff on the latest trends in Social Security benefits planning. DRS maintained a full-time benefits planning specialist during the recent discontinuation of WIPA grants, and expects to provide a wider array of services when WIPA funding is restored.

Needs of Individuals with Disabilities Who Are Minorities

The DRS online survey enabled analysis by minority status. Minority respondents had a greater sense of urgency, with an average “need now” rating across all items of 20.7 percent, compared to 15.7 for white respondents. The average weighted need score was also higher for minority customers, at 25.3 compared to 22.1 for white respondents.

For minority respondents, the five highest rated service needs were: Job creation; Benefits planning; College support; Customized employment; and Supported employment. It is interesting to note that only the minority respondent sub-group rated support for college as a top five need, perhaps a reflection of overall economic need among this group.

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For white respondents, the five highest rated service needs were: Vocational training; Job creation; Job seeking skills training; Supported employment; and Career exploration. In this case three of the items were pre-employment in focus- career exploration, vocational training and job seeking skills training.

As noted above, DRS will be expanding its options for benefits planning services in the next year. Also, DRS has identified a key goal of expanding college training services at both the university and community college levels for the upcoming year. DRS also is continuing its outreach efforts to the Latino and Asian-American communities, which have the highest rate of population growth of any groups in Illinois. In 2014 DRS initiated an outreach effort aimed primarily at minority youth with disabilities which is expected to have an impact on the number of minority individuals served in the VR program as well as the number achieving employment outcomes.

Needs of Individuals Who Have Been Unserved or Underserved by the VR Program

The online needs survey used a self-report method to identify a disability. DRS was able to identify only five individuals who reported both a vision and hearing disability and therefore could potentially be classified as deaf-blind. This is an insufficient number of responses for meaningful analysis. However, DRS maintains an ongoing effort to identify and serve deaf-blind individuals. This effort is coordinated by the DRS deaf services unit with the assistance of the Bureau of Blind Services. DRS works with audiologist and vision professionals to develop referrals for VR services. In the last four years the number of deaf-blind individuals served at the Chicago training facility for the blind has grown significantly, as has the overall number of deaf-blind persons served in VR. While the overall number of deaf-blind individuals remains small, DRS believes that it will continue to increase the proportion of those individuals who receive VR services through its outreach efforts.

DRS is involved in an ongoing effort to implement a system of individual placement services (IPS) programs, formerly known as evidence-based supported employment programs, for individuals with serious mental illness. The IPS model is designed to provide employment services that are tailored to the specific needs of this population, which have traditionally been underserved by VR programs nationally. To further the DRS commitment to the IPS model, DRS intends to continue gradual expansion of IPS services as funding allows.

DRS is actively engaged through its transition services in working with individuals with autism and autism spectrum disorder. In the last decade the number of students in special education with these diagnoses has grown significantly, which has led to a gradual increase of autism cases in the DRS VR program. DRS works with advocacy groups and service providing agencies to identify service options and job placement strategies that will meet the needs of this group.

Needs of Individuals with Disabilities Served Through Other Components of the Statewide Workforce Investment System

The DRS online need survey did not directly address the workforce system as such. It is likely that people with disabilities have not yet come to view the one-stop centers as a focus for receiving services. What is clear from the survey data is that people with disabilities want direct assistance in identifying employment options, whether that assistance is labeled as “job creation”, “customized employment” or “career exploration”. It becomes the duty of DRS to make the connection between customer needs and the services available from workforce centers.

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Community Rehabilitation Programs

DRS believes that the system of community rehabilitation programs in the state is adequate to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation program customers. Very few comments were made in the online needs assessment regarding a need to establish or expand the CRP system. Some suggestions were made to expand non-vocational day habilitation programs, but that is not a service option appropriate for VR funding. DRS meets regularly with a statewide committee of CRP representatives (the Facility Advisory Council) to improve services provided by CRPs in Illinois.

Transition Needs

DRS needs assessment survey data continues to show a high level of support for transition services, although the specific types of services are often not specified. The distinctions made in WIOA between students with disabilities and youth with disabilities indicate a need to a more detailed examination of service options for these age groups. Pre-employment transition services are available to many students with disabilities through the Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP), a longstanding cooperative effort by DRS and local school systems, serving around 10,000 students each year. DRS also serves another 1,000 students outside the STEP framework through direct engagement with a DRS rehabilitation counselor and often with a community rehabilitation partner.

The area requiring expansion going forward is the provision of work-based learning experiences for youth with disabilities who have exited school. The primary option for this population at present has been through referral to a community rehabilitation program agency for assistance with job placement. Through its partnership with workforce entities and its business engagement strategy, DRS plans to expand the number and variety of work-based experiences to youth with disabilities, as well as direct job placement opportunities. It is unclear at present how quickly the business relationships can be developed, or how receptive employers will be to certain work-based experience options. However, this is clearly an approach that must be explored in depth without regard to immediate employment results. The best estimate is that it will take two years before significant growth is seen in the use of work-based options, with gradual growth in employment outcomes for the youth population.

(k) Annual Estimates

DRS uses disability data from the U.S. Census Bureau to estimate the number of potentially eligible individuals in the State. Using the most recent Census data on disability prevalence and the most recent estimate of the Illinois population, DRS estimates that there are 679,900 individuals with disabilities in the state aged 16 to 64 who are potentially eligible for the VR program. Of that number, DRS estimates that there are 530,400 who would qualify for services under the DRS order of selection policy, and 149,000 who would not be likely to meet the State's order of selection policy. In addition, DRS estimates that there are 77,200 individuals with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services under Title VI, Part B.

Of the 530,400 likely to qualify under the policy, DRS estimates that there are 183,000 who would be in the most significant disability category, 122,400 who would be in the very significant disability category, and 224,500 that would be in the significant disability category.

In the VR program DRS estimates that 22,015 individuals in the most significant disability category will be served in PY2016, along with 18,140 individuals in the very significant disability category and 4,345 individuals in the significant disability category. In the supported employment program, DRS estimates that 150 individuals, all in the most significant disability category will be served in PY2016

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IN PY2016 DRS estimates that \$109,000,000 federal VR funds will be available, along with \$30,000,000 in non-federal funds for a total program budget of \$139,000,000. With an estimated 44,500 individuals to be served this equals \$3,124 in total funds per person served, with \$2,450 in federal funds and \$674 in non-federal funds.

For the most significant disability category the average total cost is expected to be \$3,498, with \$2,743 in federal funds and \$755 in non-federal funds. For the very significant disability category the average total cost is expected to be \$2,811, with \$2,204 in federal funds and \$607 in non-federal funds. For the significant disability category the average total cost is expected to be \$2,530, with \$1,984 in federal funds and \$546 in non-federal funds.

(I) State Goals and Priorities

Goals and Priorities

The major goals for DRS are listed below. They are based on the needs assessment process described elsewhere in the state plan, an internal staff and administrative process, and surveys of stakeholder groups. The goals and priorities in this Plan were jointly developed and agreed to by DRS and the State Rehabilitation Council. Any revisions to the goals and priorities were jointly reviewed and agreed to by DRS and the SRC.

Goals and priorities contained in this Plan are based on an analysis of DRS performance on program standards, as well as other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including reports from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted by RSA under Section 107 of the Act.

Goal 1: Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes

The expected performance for the current year is 5,900 competitive integrated employment outcomes. DRS plans to increase the number of competitive integrated employment outcomes achieved each year, beginning with 6,150 in PY2016, then 6,335 in PY2017, 6,525 in PY2018 and 6,720 in PY2019.

Goal 2: Median Earnings Two Quarters After Program Exit

The best estimate of current performance is median quarterly earnings of \$2,343. DRS plans to increase the median earnings achieved by individuals exiting the VR program to \$2,460 in PY2016, \$2,595 in PY2017, \$2,750 in PY2018 and \$2,930 in PY2019.

Goal 3: Employment Retention at Two Quarters After Program Exit

The best estimate of current performance is 49.1 percent for all persons exiting the VR program. DRS plans to increase the employment retention percentage to 52.5 in PY2016, 55.0 in PY2017, 57.5 in PY2018 and 60.0 in PY2019.

Goal 4: Employment Retention at Four Quarters After Program Exit

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The best estimate of current performance is 45.7 percent for all persons exiting the VR program. DRS plans to increase the employment retention percentage to 48.0 in PY2016, 50.0 in PY2017, 52.5 in PY2018 and 55.0 in PY2019.

Goal 5: Educational Achievement

This measure includes all program participants who earn a secondary diploma, post-secondary degree or other credential while participating in the program or within one year after program exit. The best estimate of current performance is 5,050 individuals meeting this criterion, with 4,250 completing a secondary diploma, 600 earning a post-secondary degree and 200 earning some other type of credential. DRS plans to increase the number of people making educational achievements to 5,260 in PY2016, 5,470 in PY2017, 5,680 in PY2018 and 5,900 in PY2019.

Goal 6: Post-Secondary Training Skill Gains

This measure includes all program participants who are engaged in post-secondary training leading to a degree or credential and who are making measurable skills gains during the program year. The best estimate of current performance is 2,500 individuals meeting this criterion. DRS plans to increase the number of people achieving measurable skills gains in post-secondary training to 2,650 in PY2016, 2,800 in PY2017, 2,950 in PY2018 and 3,150 in PY2019.

Goal 7: Students with Disabilities Exiting Into Post-secondary Training

This is a measure of the number of students with disabilities who graduate from high school and enter post-secondary training programs within the first year after leaving school. The best estimate of current performance is that about 4,000 students exit DRS STEP services each year and about 700 enter post-secondary training. DRS plans to increase the number of students participating in post-secondary training to 750 in PY2016, 825 in PY2017, 900 in PY2018 and 1,000 in PY2019.

Goal 8: Establish a Business Engagement Team within DRS

In PY2016 DRS plans to establish a business engagement team, consisting of employment resource specialists, rehabilitation counselors and field office supervisors. The team will establish new relationships with at least 20 employers and achieve 50 employment outcomes for VR customers at those businesses. DRS will work in conjunction with the Job Driven VR Technical Assistance Center to develop a business engagement strategy and provide training to participating staff to increase the effectiveness of their engagement with employers.

Goal 9: Continue Expansion of Innovative Program Options

In PY2016 DRS plans to continue expansion of several innovative program options which have been evaluated following a set of pilot projects. These include customized employment services, individual placement and support (IPS) services for diverse populations, and Project Search sites. Evaluation of the pilot projects suggests that the majority of the projects have performed at a level sufficient to justify ongoing support through DRS VR funds.

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Goal 10: Expand Performance Funding

DRS has converted many of its community contracts to a performance basis in the last four years. DRS plans to continue to process of converting contracts for job placement and supported employment to a performance basis, achieving a level of 100 percent performance-based contracts with community vendors not later than PY2018.

(m) Order of Selection

Justification for order of selection

Illinois DRS has operated under an order of selection since 1979. Illinois changed its order of selection policy in April 2013. The overall purpose of the policy is to reflect the priorities of the agency and provide for an equitable distribution of resources to individuals with most significant disabilities.

Funding Considerations

All funding arrangements for providing services will be consistent with the order of selection. If any funding arrangements are determined inconsistent with the order of selection, DRS will renegotiate these funding arrangements so that they are consistent with the Order of Selection.

Estimated Spending

DRS estimates that total spending for the VR program in PY2016 will be \$139,000,000. Of that amount, an estimated \$109,000,000 will be VR funds, while \$30,000,000 will be non-federal matching funds. This is equivalent to the required non-federal match for PY2016 and therefore there is no projected surplus match for the fiscal year.

Average Spending per Person

DRS estimates that average spending per person served in the VR program in PY2016 will be approximately \$3,124, of which \$2,450 are VR funds and \$674 are non-federal funds.

Description of Priority categories

The priority categories established under this rule are based solely on the definition of “individual with a significant disability” defined in the Rehabilitation Act (Section 7 (21) (A)) and in regulations (34CFR361.36(d)(2) and 34CFR361.5(b)(31)).

Waiting List

Individuals certified as eligible for VR services but who do not meet the order of selection policy are offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. Prior to the recent policy change, individuals who choose to be placed on a waiting list were informed that the probability is very low that DRS would open the order of selection, based on the history of the policy. When the policy was changed in 2013, all individuals on the waiting list were contacted by letter or telephone and invited to come to the DRS office to develop an IPE. Individuals who are subsequently placed on the waiting list will be contacted annually to determine if they wish to continue having his or her name on the list. Individuals on the waiting list are entitled to receive information and referral services, as well as guidance and counseling services, and are encouraged to make use of other elements of the state’s workforce investment system. As of January 2016 there were 12 individuals on the waiting list.

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Funding Considerations

All funding arrangements for providing services will be consistent with the order of selection. If any funding arrangements are determined inconsistent with the order of selection, DRS will renegotiate these funding arrangements so that they are consistent with the order of selection

Description of Priority categories

Description of the Order of Selection Policy

There are three key elements to the order of selection policy: Categories of Eligible Individuals; Criteria for Significant Disability, Very Significant Disability and Most Significant Disability; and Determination of Serious Limitation to Functional Capacities. Together these elements define the relevant concepts and methods used to evaluate individuals and place them into a category under the policy. Each of these elements is described in detail in the following section.

Categories of Eligible Individuals

a) Pursuant to the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 USC 701 et seq.), DHS-DRS has established the following Order of Selection for the priority of provision of services to eligible individuals which counselors must follow when purchasing services for customers:

- 1) those individuals determined to have the most significant disabilities;
- 2) those individuals determined to have very significant disabilities;
- 3) those individuals determined to have significant disabilities; and
- 4) individuals determined to have disabilities.

b) For the purposes of administering services under the order of selection, the Director of DHS-DRS will determine at the beginning of each fiscal year, or more often as necessary, which of the categories under subsection (a) will be open for service.

c) Eligible individuals in a closed category under subsection (a) may choose to be placed on a waiting list for services.

Criteria for Significant Disability, Very Significant Disability and Most Significant Disability

Documentation of the determination that an individual has a most significant disability, a very significant disability, or a significant disability must be in the individual's VR case file, as well as documentation concerning the evaluation of his or her rehabilitation potential.

a) Prior to determining the significance of an individual's disability, it must be determined that he or she:

- 1) has a disability, or a combination of disabilities, that causes a substantial physical or mental impairment that is similar, but not limited to, the following list of disabilities:

A) amputation,

B) arthritis,

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- C) autism,
- D) blindness,
- E) burn injury,
- F) cancer,
- G) cerebral palsy,
- H) cystic fibrosis,
- I) deafness,
- J) head injury,
- K) heart disease,
- L) hemiplegia,
- M) hemophilia,
- N) respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction,
- O) mental retardation,
- P) mental illness,
- Q) multiple sclerosis,
- R) muscular dystrophy,
- S) musculo-skeletal disorders,
- T) neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy),
- U) paraplegia,
- V) quadriplegia (and other spinal cord conditions),
- W) sickle cell anemia,
- X) specific learning disabilities, or
- Y) end stage renal failure disease.

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2) has a disability, or a combination of disabilities, that seriously limits his or her functional capacities, as listed in Section 553.150 of this Part; and

3) requires VR services over an extended period of time at least six months or longer.

b) If an individual meets the requirements of Section 553.140(a), then the following criteria must be met to determine the significance of his or her disability:

1) To be considered an individual with a most significant disability, he or she must be an individual who has a disability that seriously limits three or more of his or her functional capacities and who requires two or more substantial VR services, in addition to the routine services of counseling and guidance, and information and referral to ensure a successful employment outcome.

2) To be considered an individual with a very significant disability, he or she must have a disability that seriously limits two of his or her functional capacities, and must require one or more substantial VR services, in addition to the routine services of counseling and guidance, and information and referral to ensure a successful employment outcome.

3) To be considered an individual with a significant disability, he or she must have a disability that seriously limits one of his or her functional capacities and must require one or more substantial VR services, in addition to the routine services of counseling and guidance, and information and referral to ensure a successful employment outcome.

4) An individual is considered to be an individual with a non-significant disability when it is determined that his or her disability does not result in a serious limitation in functioning in any of the seven areas evaluated under this policy.

c) An individual who has been determined eligible for disability benefits pursuant to Title II (SSDI) or Title XVI (SSI) of the Social Security Act is considered to be presumed eligible for VR services and an individual with a significant disability, unless the analysis of his or her functional limitations and service needs, as described above, place the individual into a higher category of the order of selection.

Determination of Serious Limitation to Functional Capacities

a) For the purpose of determination of the degree of significance of disability, functional capacities shall include:

1. Mobility - the physical ability of an individual to move from place to place and move the body into certain positions. This includes such activities as: walking, climbing, kneeling, stooping, sitting, standing, and similar activities;

2. Self-care - the ability of an individual to perform activities related to his or her health and hygiene. This includes such activities as: grooming, bathing, eating, housekeeping, medical management, and money management;

3. Self-direction - the ability of an individual to organize, control and regulate his or her own personal, social, and work life. This includes such activities as: maintaining schedules and

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routines, following directions and established rules, organizing activities for oneself, and adjusting to changing circumstances;

4. Work skills - the ability of an individual to demonstrate skills necessary to perform jobs that exist in the current employment market, regardless of demand for the particular occupation or the individual's prior work experience. This includes such activities as: learning and maintaining work skills, cooperating with others in a work setting, using adequate decision making and problem solving skills, and using academic skills commonly required in the workplace;

5. Work tolerance - the ability of an individual to consistently and adequately perform a job based on the physical, emotional, environmental, and psychological demands of a specific work environment. This includes such activities as: maintaining performance on the job regardless of changes in environment such as cold and heat, demonstrating the strength and endurance to perform the job in question, and working the schedule typical of other employees in the same job;

6. Interpersonal skills - the ability of an individual to establish and maintain appropriate relationships with other individuals in the work place. This includes such activities as: engaging in necessary work-related communications, demonstrating behavior that is appropriate and acceptable in the work environment, cooperating with others in a team setting, and showing understanding and tact in dealing with others; and

7. Communication - the ability to convey and receive information efficiently and effectively. This includes such activities as: hearing and understanding ordinary spoken language; making one's self understood in ordinary conversation; writing or printing short notes and communications; and reading and correctly interpreting short notes, signs, and instructions.

b) A serious limitation to a functional capacity shall exist when the rehabilitation counselor determines it or instructor that the customer, because of his or her disability, has functional limitations in performing the major components of the activity or activities listed in subsections (a)(1) through (7) or needs accommodation to perform the activity.

c) The rehabilitation counselor or instructor shall use the criteria of consistency and substantiality when evaluating the degree of limitation to functional capacity. Consistency means that the individual's disability always or almost always limits the individual's functioning. Substantiality means the individual's disability has a major, significant impact on functioning and that the individual cannot perform the activity or finds it very difficult to perform the activity.

Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order

The priority of categories to receive VR services under the DRS order of selection policy are:

1. Individuals determined to have the most significant disabilities;
2. Individuals determined to have very significant disabilities;
3. Individuals determined to have significant disabilities; and

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4. Individuals determined to have disabilities.

For PY2016 the categories of most significant disability, very significant disability and significant disability will be open to services, unless a determination is made by the DRS Director that circumstances require a change in the categories open to service.

DRS does not plan to implement an exemption to the order of selection process based on specific service needs in order to retain employment.

(n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds

A. Goals

For PY2016, the Supported Employment Program (SEP) has set forth the following goals using Title VI, Part B funds.

1. Serve customers recently placed into supported employment in a manner consistent with federal regulations, with an emphasis on moving as many individuals as possible into natural supports at the conclusion of ongoing support services.
2. Continue to expand the scope of those who receive services to include persons who are deaf-blind, persons with traumatic brain injuries, persons who are mentally ill, persons with significant hearing impairments and other persons with the most significant disabilities.
3. Develop new mechanisms for funding paid extended services, including cooperative agreements with other state agencies and local units of government.
4. Evaluate the most effective means of achieving employment outcomes for individuals traditionally served in supported employment services.
5. Ensure that no less than 50 percent of the Title VI Part B grant funds are used for long-term support services to youth with disabilities.

For PY2015, DRS will serve and employ 150 persons in supported employment utilizing Title VI Part B funds. In FFY2015 DRS served 166 individuals in supported employment using Title VI Part B funds and an additional 1,126 using other funds.

B. Utilization and Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

Title VI, Part B funds are used to purchase SEP services for customers. The Department administers its Supported Employment Program using contracts with community rehabilitation program agencies to place individuals in employment and provide ongoing support services. Contracts have been established with 42 entities throughout Illinois to provide services to eligible customers.

C. Youth with Disabilities

DRS has developed a contract monitoring mechanism to ensure that Title VI Part B funds are available to youth with disabilities and that at least 50 percent of grant funds are available to individuals in that

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category. In addition a reporting system has been developed to ensure that no individual participates in services funded with Title VI part B funds for longer than 48 months.

DRS has also worked with the state developmental disabilities agency and the state mental health agency to explore funding options for youth with the most significant disabilities who may exhaust support services utilizing Title VI Part B funds. It is expected that most individuals in that category will be eligible for services funded through one of the Medicaid waivers operated by those agencies.

DRS is also committed to continuing expansion of customized employment services as an option for youth with the most significant disabilities. In 2015 DRS was able to utilize one-time funds to create pilot projects for customized employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and has cooperated with the state developmental disabilities agency on customized employment projects as well as staff training on application of customized employment concepts.

(o) State's Strategies

DRS is pursuing several strategies to continually increase the number of employment outcomes, including: development of a business engagement strategy; establishment of stronger partnerships with local workforce boards; increasing business partnerships through the NET and other approaches; providing job placement training to all VR counselors; continuing an emphasis on establishing performance based contracts with community provider agencies; providing personal organization training to VR counselors; establishing outreach efforts to increase referrals to the VR program; and implementation of customized employment methodologies.

DRS is following three main strategies to increase median earnings. The first is to increase the number of individuals enrolled in university and community college programs. These individuals have higher earnings than those with less education. A second strategy is to identify individuals with work experience who may benefit from return-to-work services through the VR program. DRS has one community provider contract that focuses on return-to-work and it has higher than average earnings for the individuals it serves. The third strategy is expanded participation in the CSAVR Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP).

Community college enrollment has increased significantly in the last four years. In addition to supporting degree programs, DRS will work with local workforce partners to ensure that certificate programs relating to expanding sectors are a focus for individuals seeking post-secondary vocational training.

DRS intends to conduct outreach to rehabilitation hospitals, orthopedic clinics, physical therapy clinics and other professionals who are likely to be in contact with individuals who have disabilities and a work history but who are currently not working. DRS will work with the communications office to develop materials that will effectively communicate a message about how the VR program can benefit the individuals served by these professionals.

The Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) is focused on individuals with work experience who are seeking employment with larger, corporate-style employers who have structured hiring processes and make use of online systems to identify job candidates. DRS staff have worked closely with the national TAP development team and currently have over 500 customers who have enrolled in the system.

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DRS is pursuing a number of activities relating to transition services. DRS is establishing contracts with community agencies to conduct outreach activities to identify minority individuals who may benefit from VR services. In addition DRS continues to develop its relationship with the Chicago Public Schools, the third largest school district in the United States. DRS anticipates that enrollment, particularly of minority youth, will be greatly increased through these efforts. A recent focus of activity has been on working with community rehabilitation agencies to identify work-based learning opportunities for CPS students. This has been an aspect of transition services in Chicago that was developing at a slow rate and it was determined that additional resources were needed.

DRS intends to develop agreements with local workforce boards to increase participation of youth with disabilities in work-based learning experiences targeted at out-of-school youth. There is a substantial overlap between the DRS population of youth with disabilities and the Title I population defined as out-of-school youth. Employer engagement efforts directed at creation of work-based learning experiences for young people should benefit those in both service categories to the greatest extent possible.

DRS has two approaches to expanding the number of business partnerships. The first is continuation of participation in the National Employment Team (the NET), an effort coordinated by the national CSAVR team. The employers targeted through this effort are national or multi-state employers who are looking to use VR agencies as a resource in identifying potential job candidates. The second approach is the creation of a business engagement team based on a business engagement strategy. DRS is working with the job driven VR technical assistance center in developing this strategy and training staff in its implementation. The businesses target in this approach will be those identified through the sector analysis conducted as part of the State's WIOA regional planning process.

DRS intends to continue development of innovative program options, including customized employment and individual placement and support (IPS) services. One strategy is continued involvement with national technical assistance resources, including subject matter experts made available through the DOL Vision Quest program. To date this has proven to be a valuable resource in that it provides objective analysis and recommendations affecting a number of state agencies serving people with disabilities. DRS is also continuing its cooperative relationship with the Psychiatric Research Center in developing and evaluating program expansion of IPS services to individuals with intellectual disabilities as well as to youth with serious mental illness.

Strategies Relating to Assistive Technology Services

DRS recognizes the importance of assistive technology services in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities. It is the intention of DRS to provide a broad range of AT services at all stages of the rehabilitation process, and to make the services available on a statewide basis. Toward this end, DRS provides training to staff on AT services, both at the initial staff training and on an ongoing basis. DRS employs technology specialists and arranges for contractual staff to be available to work with VR counselors to identify customer needs, locate AT providers, write plans and provide AT services. Staff are available to provide on-site consultation with VR counselors as well as on-site evaluation of customer needs.

DRS also has a central office purchasing specialist that works one-on-one with VR counselors to arrange purchasing of AT equipment and maximize use of VR funds. DRS also works closely with the Illinois Assistive Technology Project (the state AT grant recipient) to educate people with disabilities about AT products and services as well as demonstrate products that may be of use to individuals with disabilities.

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DRS provided a large award of ARRA funds to enable IATP to upgrade and modernize assistive technology supporting its services.

DRS initiated the loan to own program for distribution of assistive technology equipment in order to provide necessary devices to VR customers in a more timely fashion. This effort involves making larger purchases of frequently used assistive technology devices and transferring them to a customer as needed, rather than initiating a separate purchase for each individual. This has significantly reduced the amount of time required to deliver assistive technology equipment to customers, enabling them to move forward with their service plan sooner.

Strategies for Serving Individuals Unserved or Underserved by the VR Program

DRS recognizes that many groups do not have access to the VR program to the same degree as others. DRS has a number of strategies to address these needs and improve access. DRS employs specialist staff for services to deaf-blind individuals, a low-incidence disability with a high need for vocational assistance. DRS specialists work in consultation with VR counselors to provide services to deaf-blind customers, including training and job placement. DRS used ARRA funding in 2011 and 2012 to conduct two training events on deaf-blindness for counselors serving either blind or deaf specialty caseloads. The training events featured experts from the Helen Keller National Center, the primary resource in the US for deaf-blind services. In 2014 and 2015 DRS arranged for follow-up training events conducted by HKNC staff which involved DRS counselors and other staff serving deaf-blind individuals.

DRS also seeks to improve response to underserved groups by providing training to improve staff knowledge of various disabilities. As part of the 2013 staff needs assessment training, a strong need was identified for the medical aspects of disability for VR counselors and supervisors. DRS is pursuing online training options in medical aspects as well as possibly arranging for an external training resource to meet this need.

DRS continues in its efforts to implement a system of individual placement and support services (IPS) programs, formerly known as evidence-based supported employment programs, for individuals with serious mental illness. The IPS model is designed to provide employment services that are tailored to the specific needs of this population, which have traditionally been underserved by VR programs nationally. This has been a major undertaking involving extensive cooperation with the DHS Division of Mental Health, community providers, and university consultants. A number of new agencies have received placement contracts from DRS and a special evaluation process is underway. Fidelity reviews have proven to be a very strong tool for improving and shaping IPS services at the service provider level.

Not-for-Profit Community Rehabilitation Programs

Illinois has a well-developed network of community rehabilitation programs across the state, as well as an active trade association for those organizations. DRS does not believe that new community rehabilitation programs need to be developed at this time. DRS remains in contact with these organizations through ongoing discussions with the Facility Advisory Council, which has a rotating membership of program directors, who meet regularly with DRS administrators. The program manager for contracts as well as the bureau chief for field services attends meetings. The VR Director is closely involved with discussions about CRP services, both with the trade association as well as individual CRP directors.

DRS also has specific liaison relationships between VR counselors and community rehabilitation programs in their service area. In addition, DRS has project officers who monitor contracts with

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community rehabilitation programs and are very knowledgeable regarding the service capacity of the agencies and the needs of their customers. These organizational arrangements provide a high level of communication about service needs as they relate to community rehabilitation programs.

DRS believes that community rehabilitation program agencies will continue to play an important part in the overall system of services in Illinois. DRS anticipates that the overall percentage of outcomes associated with CRPs will remain relatively stable, and that an increase in employment outcomes overall will mean an increase in employment outcomes associated with CRPs.

While DRS continues to emphasize the need for counselors to pursue direct placements whenever possible, this does not mean a reduction in the number of outcomes associated with community provider agencies. Making effective use of both state and private resources is the most certain way to continue to achieve quality results for DRS customers.

Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities

DRS will use a localized strategy for assisting other components of the workforce system in working effectively with persons with disabilities. As noted elsewhere, DRS staff serve as members of local workforce boards and have the capacity to focus attention on disability-related issues. Concerns specifically related to program accessibility will be addressed at the local level with support from the DRS central office rehabilitation technology unit. In addition to local staff resources DRS will reach out to independent living centers in responding to accessibility concerns.

DRS will also work with its Title I agency to provide training to both DRS and local workforce staff on disability issues through webinars and other mechanisms. A key focus will be utilizing the Section 188 Disability Reference Guide developed by the DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy. This guide focuses on the concept of universal access and presents disability issues in the context of local workforce centers. DRS believes that training built around this resource will make a valuable contribution to program access for people with disabilities.

DRS will also pursue a strategy of expanding methods of communication, including electronic and computer connections, between DRS offices and local workforce centers. DRS is working with the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership to develop an electronic means of making referrals between DRS and workforce centers, increasing program efficiency and accountability while reducing barriers to participation for VR customers. In addition state level plans are underway to enhance data sharing capability for all core workforce partners.

Strategies for Innovation and Expansion Activities

DRS continues to solicit suggestions from staff and stakeholders about service needs that can be the focus of innovation and expansion activities. This process was used to develop new projects serving transition age youth, for example, as well as expansion of IPS services. To the extent possible, one-time funds were used as start-up funding for these new projects, with significantly lower performance expectations than for ongoing programs. These were considered to be pilot projects and were evaluated for effectiveness prior to conversion to standard contract formats.

Projects which were consistent with agency priorities and which represented the possibility of long term benefit were selected for funding. These have focused on outreach to minority communities, services to

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transition age youth, and expansion of IPS programs. Efforts have been made to determine the likely course of the project after the initial start-up phase is concluded.

A secondary effort has centered on effective marketing approaches in working with businesses and customers. DRS developed a short (1 minute 40 seconds) online video which is targeted at a general audience and which describes a variety of VR services and emphasizes options for making a referral to the DRS program. DRS believes this presentation is consistent with current communication patterns and presents a great opportunity for increasing referrals to the program.

Strategies to Overcome Identified Barriers to Program Participation by Individuals with Disabilities

The major barrier to participation in the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment program for individuals with disabilities concerns access to services. Because these programs are targeted at individuals with disabilities, there is no general barrier to participation on the basis of disability status. Rather, specific barriers arise when an individual is unable to participate in a program or communicate his or her needs to program staff. DRS provides a variety of access methods to individuals with disabilities, including the use of Braille and large print, sign language, computer assisted real time captioning and other specialized assistive technology. All DRS office locations are physically accessible, as are all program locations and public meeting sites. Individuals who do not speak English are provided with translation services in order to participate in the vocational rehabilitation program. Every effort is made to eliminate these types of barriers to participation.

(p) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

Evaluation of Performance on Goals

The Illinois VR program has established the following goals for FY2015 (from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015) in the most recently approved State VR Plan:

Goal 1: Employment Outcomes

DRS will increase the number of competitive employment outcomes to 5,750 in FY2015.

Results: This goal was not achieved. The number of competitive outcomes achieved in FY2015 was 5,386.

Goal 2: Average Wages

DRS will increase the average hourly wage earned by individuals achieving a competitive employment outcome to \$10.95 in FY2015.

Results: This goal was not achieved. The average hourly wage earned in FY2015 was \$10.47.

Goal 3: Average Hours Worked

DRS will increase the average hours worked per week by individuals achieving a competitive employment outcome to 28.5 in FY2015.

Results: This goal was not achieved. The average hours worked per week in FY2015 was 27.4.

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Goal 4: Rehabilitation Rate

DRS will increase the rehabilitation rate to 56.0 in FY2015.

Results: This goal was not achieved. The rehabilitation rate for FY2015 was 52.4.

Goal 5: University Enrollment

DRS will increase the number of individuals pursuing a degree and enrolled in a university to 2,200 in FY2015.

Results: This goal was not achieved. A total of 1,768 individuals participated in university training during FY2015.

Goal 6: Community College Enrollment

DRS will increase the number of individuals enrolled in community colleges pursuing a degree or credential to 1,000 in FY2015.

Results: This goal was exceeded. A total of 1,611 individuals participated in community college services in FY2015.

Goal 7: Return to Work Services

In FY2015 DRS will identify and serve 150 individuals seeking to return to work.

Results: This project was not implemented in FY2015.

Goal 8: Expand Transition Services

Goal 8.1: In FY2015 DRS will increase the number of minority transition age youth receiving services by 750 compared to FY2014.

Results: This goal was achieved. An additional 873 minority students with disabilities were served in FY2015 compared to FY2014.

Goal 8.2: DRS will increase the number of transition graduates achieving employment outcomes within the first year of leaving school to 1,500 in FY2015.

Results: This goal was not achieved. A total of 1,328 transition graduates achieved employment outcomes in FY2015.

Goal 8.3: In FY2015 DRS will work to improve the consistency and timeliness of service delivery to transition students through implementation of quality control procedures.

Results: This project was not implemented.

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Goal 9: Expand Business Partnerships

In FY2015 DRS will increase the number of NET-related business partnerships by 25 percent over the number for FY2014.

Results: This goal was achieved. The number of NET business partnerships increased by 38 percent during FY2015.

Goal 10: Strategic Planning

In FY2015 DRS will work with the State Rehabilitation Council to complete a VR Strategic Plan that will provide direction for the program for the next five years.

Results: This project was not implemented.

Goal 11: Enhance Workforce Partnerships

In FY2015 DRS will increase the number of VR customers receiving vocational training funded all or in part through WIA funds to 500. Of that number, at least 300 will achieve an industry-recognized credential as a result of participation in training.

Results: This project was not implemented.

Goal 12: Expand IPS Services

In FY2015 DRS will establish IPS pilot projects in 16 new locations, including expansion of IPS service concepts to persons with developmental disabilities and youth with disabilities.

Results: This goal was achieved through use of one-time funds. A total of 19 new projects were created during FY2015.

Goal 13: Establish a Vocational Training and Entrepreneurship Program

In FY2015 DRS will establish a facility at the ICRE-Roosevelt center in Chicago that will train youth with disabilities from across Illinois in vocational skills that will lead to employment, higher education or starting a business owned by the individual.

Results: This goal was partially achieved. Substantial portions of the work needed to establish the entrepreneurship program were completed in FY2015.

Performance on WIOA Measures

Employment retention two quarters and four quarters after program exit

The best estimate of current performance on this measure is that 49.1 percent of individuals exiting the program (either successfully or unsuccessfully) were employed during the second quarter after program exit. In addition, 45.7 percent of individuals exiting the program were employed during the fourth quarter after program exit.

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Median earnings two quarters after program exit

The best estimate of current performance shows that the median quarterly earnings for individuals exiting the program was \$2,343.

Educational achievement

This is a measure of the number of individuals who earn a secondary diploma or a post-secondary credential during program participation or within one year after program exit. The best estimate of current performance is that 5,050 individuals meet this criterion. DRS serves a large number of students with disabilities as well as individuals enrolled in university and community college programs. DRS estimates that 4,250 participants earned a secondary diploma while participating in the VR program, and that 800 individuals earned a degree or other post-secondary credential while participating in the program or within one year after program exit.

Measurable Skill Gains

This is a measure of the number of individuals enrolled in a post-secondary training program who are making progress documented by achievement of a credential or other evidence of skill gains, such as grades. The best estimate of current performance is that 2,500 individuals meet this criterion.

(q) Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

DRS has faced a situation in the last five years where the number of individuals receiving supported employment services has declined substantially across the State. A number of factors have been examined to determine the causes of the situation but no single factor stands out. One issue has been apparent miscommunication with community providers about the distinctive features of supported employment with a defined service population. Another issue has been communication around job coaching as a separate support service for individuals participating in VR services, and supported employment as a comprehensive approach to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities. Another factor is a change made by DRS to its case management system to ensure that only individuals determined to have a most significant disability could participate in supported employment services.

DRS is committed to reversing this trend and serving individuals in supported employment at a higher rate in the coming years. One planned step is to develop a performance-based funding mechanism for supported employment. The current system has been used for over 25 years and relies on an hourly-based rate that does not effectively align the interests of the provider, the customer and DRS. This is part of an overall State effort to develop performance-based and outcome-based funding for community services whenever possible. DRS is aware that most other state VR agencies have some form of performance-based funding for supported employment services. We believe that adopting a similar system will increase provider interest in participation and improve results for customers.

DRS is also committed to dedicating substantial resources to provision of supported employment services to youth with disabilities. For many years DRS has supplemented the Title VI Part B grant funds with VR grant funds for supported employment contracts. For most providers there was no distinction between the contracts based on funding. In 2015 DRS began utilization of Title VI Part B funds for supported employment customers younger than age 25, as well as more closely tracking the total number of months of supported employment services. Current data indicates that about 30 percent of individuals participating in supported employment are younger than age 25.

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For several years DRS has not had access to state general revenue funds to provide long-term extended services for individuals completing time-limited supported employment services, whether using Title VI Part B funds or VR grant funds. DRS has focused on developing natural supports in the workplace as a form of unpaid extended services for individuals completing supported employment services. Completion of the program is defined as reduction of paid on-the-job supports to the minimum possible level.

DRS intends to complete agreements with the state developmental disabilities agency and the state mental health agency to provide long-term extended supports for individuals who have completed supported employment services through the VR program. In both cases there are likely to be state funded service options as well as Medicaid waiver program options for these individuals.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The Department of Human Services is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, ¹ and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act ² ;
2.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the Department of Human Services ³ agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ⁴ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ⁵ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ⁶ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ⁷ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

¹ Public Law 113-128.

² Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.³ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

³ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

⁴ No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁵ Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

⁶ No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁷ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

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4.	The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7.	The Secretary of the Department of Human Services has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
8.	The Secretary of the Department of Human Services has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
1.	Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2.	Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3.	Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with

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	<p>the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) is an independent State commission. (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. the non-Federal share, as described in 34 CFR 361.60. (d) the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (Yes/No) (e) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act . Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/No) (f) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. (g) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (h) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act . (i) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. (l) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.	<p>Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act. (c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as

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	<p>appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)</p> <p>(d) comply with all required available comparable services and benefits, determined to be available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act and.</p> <p>(e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:</p> <p>(a) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Financial Administration:</p> <p>(a) The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the</p>

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	individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.	Provision of Supported Employment Services: (a) The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The designated State agency assures that: i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.