



# *Illinois State Definitional Framework for Career Pathways*

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## Acknowledgements

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The following external organizations also supported the development of this dictionary:



## Executive Summary

### Intent & Structure

In the State of Illinois, the public and private sector alike are conducting a broad number of efforts pertaining to education, workforce development, and economic development through a lens of career pathways. This College and career pathways approach envisions that Illinois residents will be enabled to progressively build toward college and career success through aligned education, training, and employment opportunities over their lifetime. Career pathways in Illinois are administered by a variety of private, state, and local entities, and thus several state education and workforce committees, including an extensive base of stakeholders, conducted definitional work to ensure alignment across agencies, legal frameworks, and initiatives.

This document is comprised of four main components:

- (1) An introduction which provides a detailed background of the intent behind this work as well as the research and refinement processes involved in the development of the definitions included
- (2) The adopted Illinois State definition for Career Pathways
- (3) The adopted Illinois State definitions for elements within a career pathway program or system
- (4) Appendices containing related policy frameworks and definitions

### Current Status

As of this writing, this dictionary has been adopted by the Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships and Pathways (WRAP) Committee of the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth, and the Career Pathways definition has been formally adopted by all relevant State boards. This broad-based agreement reflects a major accomplishment through which Illinois is pioneering a new approach to collaboration across education, training, and workforce.

While agreement on these definitions is an accomplishment in and of itself, the current efforts related to these definitions centers on their operationalization. Both the WRAP Steering Committee and its member agencies have begun the process to identify key strategies needed to implement these definitions across their efforts. Such strategies will include alignment of funding opportunities, reporting requirements, stakeholder engagement, and more to ensure that these definitions truly become the way of working on career pathways within Illinois.

## Introduction

### Background

In the State of Illinois, the public and private sector alike are conducting a broad number of efforts pertaining to education, workforce development, and economic development. At the intersection of these efforts is a broad philosophy around college and career pathways that enable Illinois residents to progressively build toward college and career success through aligned education, training, and employment opportunities over their lifetime. A broad range of education and training programs and initiatives administered by a variety of private, state, and local entities fall within this system of college and career pathways. As such, several state education and workforce committees, including an extensive base of stakeholders, have embarked on definitional work to ensure alignment across agencies, legal frameworks, and initiatives.

This document includes the overarching Illinois State definition for Career Pathways, as well as definitions for career pathway program and system elements. These definitions have been developed and refined through research, stakeholder engagement, and thoughtful alignment to a variety of efforts, especially the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Illinois Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan, and the Illinois Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act. These definitions have been thoroughly reviewed by representatives of key State entities and committees pertaining to the broader education and workforce systems in Illinois, including:

State Agencies	State Committees & Entities
Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)	Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships & Pathways (WRAP) Committee of the Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth
Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)	Illinois P-20 Council College & Career Readiness (CCR) Committee
Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)	Illinois P-20 Council Data, Accountability, & Assessment (DAA) Committee
Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)	Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Apprenticeship Committee
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO)	Governor’s Office Education Team
Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)	

The ultimate goal of this document is to share the definitions that have been mutually agreed upon by relevant state agencies and committees in order to provide clarity to the broader fields of education and workforce development as programming and partnerships continue to develop and be implemented. In this unified presentation, the State hopes to convey that no single approach to education or workforce development stands alone; apprenticeships and other work-based learning, as well as other more education-specific efforts are all part of a broader system that supports Illinois residents in their pursuit of college and career success. These efforts are all in service of a broader State goal: the adequate preparation and connectivity of opportunities for individuals in Illinois to be successful in college, career, and beyond.

## Criteria for Inclusion

While many terms and definitions pertain to education and workforce training, in order to be included in this document, terms must meet certain criteria:

- (1) The term pertains to or deeply impacts multiple programs across State agencies; and/or,
- (2) The term applies to programming with funding from multiple federal agencies (e.g., WIOA-funded programming).

## Process for Updating this Document

If an agency undertakes a process by which they are developing a definition for a term related to career pathways and which meets the criteria above, that agency should proceed with the following steps:

- (1) Agency brings the definition under development to the WRAP Steering Committee for feedback and final approval; and
- (2) On a case-by-case basis, the WRAP Steering Committee will evaluate whether a particular definition should be elevated to the level of formal board or agency approval.

## Illinois Career Pathways Definition Background

In 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, into law. It is the primary federal legislation governing workforce development, the strategy to enhance a region's economic stability and prosperity by improving the skills of the people in that community. The law took effect on July 1, 2015; it supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

WIOA requires coordination among four core partners who are responsible for the four titles of WIOA. The titles are:

1. Workforce development: Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO),
2. Adult education and literacy: Illinois Community College Board (ICCB),
3. Unemployment and labor services through the Wagner-Peyser Act<sup>1</sup>: Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), and
4. Vocational rehabilitation to individuals with disabilities: Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).

As WIOA implementation began in earnest, it became evident that the state of Illinois needed a statewide career pathways definition to guide its implementation of WIOA and other programs. At WIOA regional planning meetings, representatives from the Illinois Community College Board, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Women Employed, and the Chicago Jobs Council sought to address confusion about the different roles programs play in the overall career pathways system in Illinois by developing and adopting a unified state definition.

## Definition Development, Stakeholder Engagement, & Process for Adoption

WIOA legislation includes a career pathways definition, but that legislation does not govern the entirety of the state and systems that may engage in career pathway development in some way. Furthermore, it does not provide detail and clarity around its components, which created confusion among practitioners and providers of career pathways programs. Therefore, the initial group determined it was necessary to

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/NSC\\_TPIB\\_Wagner.pdf](https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/NSC_TPIB_Wagner.pdf)

pull in a wider group of stakeholders. In addition to Women Employed, the Chicago Jobs Council, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, we invited representatives from the Illinois Department of Employment Security, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Workforce Investment Board, the Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership, the Governor’s office, and employers.

We convened a series of meetings with the broad group of stakeholders and settled on the career pathways definition set forth in WIOA as our foundation, as it is already the required definition for workforce and adult education programs and likely to be the definition included in subsequent federal legislation for career and technical education in the future. However, the definition alone provided little by way of explanation for each of its eight components. The stakeholder group identified a series of best practices for career pathways for each of the components, as seen below, to provide guidance to policymakers, practitioners, and providers statewide.

After the group of stakeholders—which included a number of agency staff members—settled on a final definition, they included the definition on the agendas of their governing boards for approval. The approval process is as follows:

State Board or Committee	Meeting Date	Approval Granted
ICCB	December 1, 2017	Yes
ISBE	December 13, 2017	Yes
IWIB	December 14, 2017	Yes
IL P-20 Council CCR Committee	December 18, 2017	Yes
IL P-20 Council	March 12, 2018	Yes
IBHE	March 13, 2018	Yes
ISAC	June 14, 2018	Yes

### Illinois Policy Context for Career Pathways Systems

The definitional agreement on career pathways is situated within the context of several other State priorities and initiatives that contribute to the broader system of career pathways in Illinois. Governor Bruce Rauner established the Apprenticeship Plus initiative as part of the Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth in 2016 as an effort to promote the use of apprenticeships and related models to connect Illinois residents to gainful employment through learn and earn programs. As State work developed around a broader approach of college and career pathways, the Apprenticeship Plus committee was reshaped into the Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships and Pathways (WRAP) Committee, which includes members from across state education and workforce agencies. As part of their efforts, the WRAP Committee sought to develop clear and unified definitions for apprenticeship and apprenticeship-related activities. The WRAP Committee has also embedded Illinois’ participation in a Work-Based Learning Policy Academy through the National Governors Association (NGA) in as a core goal area of the project, and drawn connections to relevant definitions in that scope.

Further, WRAP identified connections to the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness ([PWR](#)) Act’s components around College and Career Pathway Endorsements ([CCPE](#)) on high school diplomas. After several years of broad-based stakeholder engagement and policy development, the PWR Act passed the Illinois House and Senate unanimously in May 2016, and was signed by the Governor in July 2016. The

PWR Act takes a student-centered and competency-based approach to assist Illinois students to prepare for and select the right postsecondary option, and ultimately obtain meaningful employment. The four aligned strategies in the Act require coordinated community systems involving school districts, postsecondary education institutions, employers, and other public and private organizations. The [CCPE Framework](#) establishes a system for school districts to award Endorsements on high school diplomas, which provide a mechanism for high schools, postsecondary education institutions, and employers to validate the work of students in preparing for a particular industry sector and include work-based learning, planning, and coursework components. These Endorsements are also related to the Postsecondary and Career Expectations ([PaCE](#)) Framework of the PWR Act, which provides a way for communities to organize career exploration and development, college exploration, preparation, and selection, & financial literacy requirements into an understandable format that can be shared with parents, teachers, and employers.

Related to both of these efforts around postsecondary and workforce readiness is the College and Career Readiness Indicator ([CCRI](#)) included in the school accountability framework of the State’s ESSA plan. The CCRI represents a multiple-measures approach to college and career readiness, and is aligned to the spirit of WIOA legislation and directly to the PWR CCPE framework. This indicator, based on the [Redefining Ready framework](#) developed by the American Association of School Administrators, combines academic components with career readiness components that span a variety of career exploration and preparation activities.

Additionally, the State of Illinois has agreed-upon structures for integrating core academic coursework with real-world learning beyond the secondary space. As such, definitions for [Bridge](#) and [Integrated Career and Academic Preparedness System](#) are included. Both types of programming serve adults re-entering the broader career pathways system, and are integral to ensuring the system provides adequate opportunity for a variety of populations.

Collectively, these definitions establish a continuum of employer engagement and work-based learning experiences within a career pathway system. As shown in the following diagram, experiences delivered across the continuum require varying levels of intensity of employer engagement. Employers can choose to provide opportunities anywhere along the continuum, and may begin with a lighter-touch opportunity (such as [career exploration](#)) and eventually build to a higher-level of engagement (such as an [apprenticeship model](#)). Other employers may be prepared to dive in and provide experiences further along the continuum.

Continuum of Employer Engagement & Work-Based Learning Experiences



### System Elements Definition Development, Stakeholder Engagement, & Process for Adoption

The definitions [below](#) are based on a combination of established statute and regulations, as well as research into national, state, and local best practices. PWR Act definitions are grounded in that statute, but have been further refined through interagency and stakeholder engagement. The definition for Registered Apprenticeship is directly tied to US Department of Labor regulations. Definitions pertaining to the CCRI are strategically aligned to PWR Act statute where possible, and are conceived as experiences predominantly at the secondary school level but which fit into a broader career pathways system in the same way that apprenticeships do. For some activities, these definitions were based on national research and collaboration with state and local partners. In some cases, implementation guidance supplements the base definition to provide greater clarity for agencies and providers.

These definitions have been vetted with stakeholders through a variety of engagement platforms: the WRAP Committee of the Children’s Cabinet, the Apprenticeship Committee of the IWIB, the CCR Committee of the P-20 Council, the DAA Committee of the P-20 Council, and the Illinois team for the NGA Work-Based Learning Policy Academy, among others.

In April of 2018, the WRAP Committee of the Children’s Cabinet moved to adopt these definitions and establish a plan for updating this document. Both the WRAP Steering Committee and its member agencies have begun the process to identify key strategies needed to implement these definitions across their efforts and in their engagement with their constituents. Such strategies will include alignment of funding opportunities, reporting requirements, stakeholder engagement, and more to ensure that these definitions truly become the way of working on career pathways within Illinois.

## Definitions

### Career Pathways

A career pathway means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that aligns both vertically and horizontally across Secondary Education, Adult Education, Workforce Training and Development, Career and Technical Education, and Postsecondary Education systems, pathways, and programs. Collaborative partnerships with these entities and business and industry, along with human service agencies, corrections, and other community stakeholders, serve as the foundational structure for high-quality and sustainable career pathways. A career pathway also includes multiple entry and exit points to facilitate individuals to build their skills as they progress along a continuum of education and training and advance in sector-specific employment.

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The following guidance should help policymakers and practitioners implement state, regional, and local career pathways. The guidance is meant to clarify how a successful pathway—often comprised of one or more career pathway programs—should operate. This guidance also addresses the career pathway system, which sets the policies and procedures that shape career pathways and can assist with strong pathway development and sustainability. A-G represents elements of the WIOA Career Pathways definition, with added guidance to clarify and provide additional detail for each element.

(A) Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;

Career pathways should:

- Use labor market data, informed by state, regional, and local employers, to design sector-focused programs that meet the needs of the employers in the state, regional, and local economies.
- Regularly and meaningfully engage employers at every stage of pathway development in an interactive, ongoing relationship<sup>2</sup> and encourage employers to assume leadership roles
- Identify the certifications, licenses, and industry-recognized credentials that state, regional, and local employers require and craft programs leading to them.

(B) Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the National Apprenticeship Act.<sup>3</sup>

Career pathways should:

- Enable lifelong learning that ensures youth and adult participants can gain entry to and advance, as desired, through successive education and training programs, leading to stackable credentials<sup>4</sup> in a given occupational cluster.
- Lead to jobs in increasingly high-skill, high-wage, and/or high-demand industries.

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<sup>2</sup> “Meaningful employer engagement” is the process by which State and/or local stakeholders (e.g. training providers, colleges, workforce boards) convene with local and regional industry employers to discuss the skill and credential needs of their workforce and ways in which education and training programs can best prepare individuals.

<sup>3</sup> The Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

<sup>4</sup> A stackable credential is part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time and move an individual along a career pathway or up a career ladder.

- Ensure access and appropriate services for the targeted populations included in the State of Illinois Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Unified State Plan.<sup>5</sup>

(C) Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;

Career pathways should:

- Ensure participants have access to career exploration, academic advising, support with transitions through the pathway, and comprehensive individualized support services, such as, but not limited to, child care, transportation, and financial aid (where appropriate).
- Involve partnerships among K-12, postsecondary educational institutions, workforce training and development agencies, public and private employers, workforce boards, human services providers, and other partners to ensure participant access to the above services.

(D) Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities<sup>6</sup> and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

Career pathways should:

- Include career-focused instruction that integrates academic and technical content with foundational professional skills<sup>7</sup>, which are skills needed for success in education, and training, career, and life.
- Offer opportunities for [work-based learning](#)<sup>8</sup> experiences.
- Offer job placement assistant services that are tailored to participant needs at different points along the pathway.

(E) Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;

Career pathways should:

- Offer quality, non-duplicative training, coursework, assignments, and assessments<sup>9</sup> to accelerate progress, maximize credit and credential attainment, and increase student success.

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<sup>5</sup> Priority populations identified in the State of Illinois Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Unified State Plan are: Long-term unemployed; Low-income adults; Low literacy adults, including those without a high school diploma; Low-skilled adults; Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities; Those receiving public assistance; Out-of-school youth; Veterans; Migrant and seasonal farm workers; Re-entry individuals (ex-offenders); English Language Learners; Older individuals; Homeless individuals; Single parents; Youth in the foster system or who have aged out; Displaced homemakers; Veterans with disabilities; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

<sup>6</sup> “Workforce preparation activities” means activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment. WIOA HR 803, SEC. 203. DEFINITIONS (17)

<sup>7</sup> “[Foundational professional skills](#)” (often also called “soft skills” or “essential skills”) are the skills needed for success in college, career, and life, such as, but not limited to, punctuality, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving.

<sup>8</sup> [Work-based learning](#) provides participants with work-based opportunities to practice and enhance the skills and knowledge gained in their program of study or industry training program, as well as to develop employability. Examples include: Internships, service learning, paid work experience, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and apprenticeships.

<sup>9</sup> Non-duplicative (across education and training partners) assessments of participants’ education, skills, competencies, assets, and support service needs as they move through a career pathway and its programs.

- Encourage concurrent enrollment and [early college credit](#) opportunities that support progression through the pathway.
- Offer participant-focused education and training that incorporates flexible class formats, locations, and times that makes learning accessible and achievable for all populations. Strategies include, but are not limited to, modularized curriculum<sup>10</sup>, contextualized curriculum and instruction<sup>11</sup>, and virtual learning.

(F) Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and

Career pathways should:

- Create partnerships between programs that serve youth and adults of all skill levels to ensure that participants can in time earn a recognized postsecondary credential<sup>12</sup>, as desired.
- Enable participants to gain entry to or advance within a given sector or occupational cluster, facilitate efficient transitions to continuing education, and incorporate stackable and portable [industry-recognized credentials](#).
- Facilitate co-enrollment in programs administered by the core<sup>13</sup> and required<sup>14</sup> partners (as defined by WIOA), in addition to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T).

(G) Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Career pathways should:

- Involve partnerships with employers to support participant educational and career advancement through on-the-job training, customized training, corporate training, incumbent worker training<sup>15</sup>, and other work-based training strategies.
- Overcome barriers to entry to ensure that participants with diverse backgrounds and experience have the opportunity to enroll and succeed in a pathway.

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<sup>10</sup> “Modularized curriculum” is curriculum that is divided into shorter, ‘self-contained’ segments or chunks of instruction. The common module length can vary depending upon content, format, and schedule of the course.

<sup>11</sup> “Contextualized curriculum and instruction” is the practice of systematically connecting basic skills and academic instruction to industry, or occupational content.

<sup>12</sup> “Recognized post-secondary credential”, as defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, means a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree. <https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/Docs/wioa-regs-labor-final-rule.pdf>  
WIOA sec. 3(52)

<sup>13</sup> Core programs within WIOA are: WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula programs) administered by Department of Labor (DOL); Adult Education and Literacy Act programs administered by the Department of Education (DoED); Wagner-Peyser Act employment services administered by DOL; and Rehabilitation Act Title I programs administered by DoED.

<sup>14</sup> Required programs within WIOA are: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American Programs, HUD Employment and Training Programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs Program, Senior Community Service Employment Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs, Unemployment Compensation Programs, and YouthBuild

<sup>15</sup> “Incumbent worker training” is training that is developed with an employer or employer association (group of employers) to retain a skilled workforce or avert the need to lay off employees by assisting the workers in obtaining the skills necessary to retain employment.

An effective and efficient career pathway will also commit to equity for all participants and potential participants and continuous improvement. To ensure that is possible, the system will:

- Collect, share, and use evidence to identify and eliminate barriers to participant access and success.
- Include shared qualitative and quantitative evaluation of participant outcomes, with a focus on equity of access and services across participant groups, to inform the improvement of all programs within the pathway as well as the pathway itself.
- Disaggregate participant-level data to identify inequities in performance among participant groups and improve the outcomes of different participant groups.
- Include shared qualitative and quantitative evaluation of effectiveness in serving employers (the business community) in order to inform strategies for improvement.

## Work-Based Learning [Continuum](#) Elements

### Apprenticeship Models

An employer-driven, “learn while you earn” model that combines structured on-the-job training (OJT) with job-related instruction in curricula tied to the attainment of industry-recognized skills standards and leading to an industry credential. The OJT is provided by the employer, who hires the apprentice at the commencement of the program and pays the participant during the program.

#### *Registered Apprenticeship*

An apprenticeship registered with the U.S. Department of Labor meeting the standards defined by USDOL.

#### *Non-Registered Apprenticeship*

An apprenticeship that is not registered with the U.S. Department of Labor, but that meets all Registered Apprenticeship criteria other than application for registration.

#### *Pre-Apprenticeship*

A program that has a documented partnership with an employer and is designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a [Registered Apprenticeship](#) or [Non-Registered Apprenticeship](#) which includes all of the following:

- a. Training and curriculum that aligns with the skill needs of employers in the economy of the State or region and that has been designed to prepare participants to meet the minimum entry-level requirements of the Apprenticeship.
- b. Access to educational and career counseling, and other supportive services as needed by participants.
- c. Hands-on meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training activities, such as [Career Exploration](#) and [Career Development Experiences](#), and that reinforce foundational professional skills including, at a minimum, those outlined in the [Essential Employability Skills](#) framework.
- d. Upon successful completion of the program, participants are supported to apply for a [Registered Apprenticeship](#) or [Non-Registered Apprenticeship](#) program, and may receive preference for enrollment.

### Youth Apprenticeship

A program for youth (ages 16 to 24) currently enrolled in secondary education or pursuing a high school equivalency, including those with disabilities, that include, at minimum, the following:

1. 450 hours of paid on-the-job training under the supervision of a mentor;
2. At least 2 semesters of related instruction that ideally counts towards a high school and/or postsecondary credential, but minimally leading to an [Industry Credential](#);
3. Ongoing and a final assessment measuring success in mastering skill standards;
4. Career exploration where participants learn about several positions within the employer and the field; and
5. Wraparound supports (e.g. case management and counseling) and holistic upskilling (e.g. technical skills and soft skills).
6. Upon successful completion of the program, participants are supported to apply for one or more of the following: entry-level employment, admission to a [Registered Apprenticeship](#) or [Non-Registered Apprenticeship](#) program, or admission to other articulated postsecondary education options (including 2- and 4-year programs).

#### Implementation Guidance:

- Program sponsors may serve a subset of youth within the 16-24 age range instead of the full range.
- Programs must include a documented partnership with an employer.

For any industry area where an [Industry Credential](#) does not yet exist, a group of employers that are representative of the industry (including small, medium, and large firms) in Illinois should determine the critical core competencies that participants should learn through the apprenticeship, and agree to a formal process for recognizing mastery of those competencies.

### Career Development Experience

A supervised work experience relating to an individual's career area of interest that:

1. Occurs in a workplace or under other authentic working conditions;
2. Is co-developed by an education provider and at least one employer in the relevant field;
3. Provides compensation or educational credit to the participant;
4. Reinforces foundational professional skills including, at a minimum, those outlined in the [Essential Employability Skills](#) framework; and
5. Includes a [Professional Skills Assessment](#) that assesses skill development and is utilized as a participant feedback tool.
6. Takes place for a minimum of 60 total hours.

*Implementation Guidance:* Career Development Experiences may include any of the following, provided the experience meets the definitional criteria: internship, school-based enterprise, supervised agricultural experience, cooperative education, research apprenticeship, remote work for a client or employer, student-led enterprise, or [youth apprenticeship](#). However, a Career Development Experience may not consist solely of technical training by an education provider.

### Career Exploration Activity<sup>16</sup>

An activity such as a job shadow, attendance at a career exposition, or employer site visit providing an individual with the ability to engage directly with employers, for the purpose of gaining knowledge of one or more industry sectors or occupations.

### Team-based Challenges

A group problem-based learning project relating to an individual's career area of interest that involves a problem relating to employers within that area, including mentoring from adults with expertise in that area, and requires the individual to present the outcomes of the project.

### Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning provides participants with work-based opportunities to practice and enhance the skills and knowledge gained in their program of study or industry training program, as well as to develop employability, and includes an assessment and recognition of acquired knowledge and skills. Examples include: internships, service learning, paid work experience, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and [apprenticeships](#).

## Additional Career Pathway System Elements

### Bridge Program<sup>17</sup>

Bridge programs 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. 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. The following definition outlines the key components of bridge programs in Illinois. This definition provides a foundation for bridge program design in Illinois.

#### *Bridge Program Core Elements*

Bridge programs assist students in obtaining the necessary academic, employability, and technical skills through three required components — contextualized instruction, career development, and support services. Required elements include:

- 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, tutoring, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services, e.g., transportation and childcare.

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<sup>16</sup> While related, a Career Exploration Activity in and of itself does not constitute a [Career Development Experience](#).

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/shiftinggears/ICCB\\_2012BridgeGuide\\_web\\_REV\\_FEB13.pdf](https://www.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/shiftinggears/ICCB_2012BridgeGuide_web_REV_FEB13.pdf)

Note: Career development and transition services should take into account the needs of those low-income adults who will need to find related work as they progress in their education and career paths.

## Dual Credit

### *Dual Credit [ISBE]*

A college course taken by a high school student for credit at both the college and high school level.

### *Dual Credit [ICCB]*

An instructional arrangement where an academically qualified high school student enrolls in a college-level course and, upon successful course completion, concurrently earns both college credit and high school credit.

### *Dual Credit [IBHE]*

"Dual credit course" means a college course taken by a high school student for credit at both the college and high school level.

## Essential Employability Skills

Foundational skills needed for success in college, careers, and life including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Personal Ethic: integrity, respect, perseverance, positive attitude
- b. Work Ethic: dependability, professionalism
- c. Teamwork: critical thinking, effective and cooperative work
- d. Communication: active listening, clear communication

*Optional Resources:* [Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework and Self-Assessment](#); Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act Essential Employability Competency Statements.

## Industry Credential

A work-related credential, certification, or license that:

1. Verifies, through a valid assessment, an individual's qualifications or competence in a specific skillset related to a particular industry or occupation;
2. Is issued by an industry-related organization or state licensing body with the relevant authority to issue such credentials; and
3. Is broadly sought or accepted by employers as a recognized, preferred, or required credential for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, or advancement purposes.

*Implementation Guidance:* While a credential issued by a postsecondary education provider is not an "Industry Credential," the coursework for the credential may qualify as a [Dual Credit Career Pathway Course](#) and will often prepare students for an Industry Credential examination. A student must,

depending upon the requirements of the industry credential, either receive the license or is eligible to receive a license pending the receipt of a high school diploma.

### **Integrated Career and Academic Preparedness System (ICAPS)**

An Accelerating Opportunities Initiative, seeks to address the needs of the adults in our community who are in need of a high school diploma. Recognizing that by 2018, two-thirds of the job opportunities will require some level of postsecondary education, it seeks to provide an opportunity for skill attainment. The ICAPS program includes dual enrollment in Adult Education and Career and Technical Education courses, leading to completion of the high school equivalency (GED), an institutional certificate, and at least one industry certification. Each program includes a pathway for students to continue their education, leading to a degree.

In addition to the unique programming offerings, intense support services are offered to ensure students have the tools needed to complete their studies and be successful in the workforce. A career navigator works with each student, assisting the student with any obstacles that arise.

### **Professional Skills Assessment**

A tool-based observational assessment of a participant's performance in a [Career Development Experience](#) given by an adult supervisor and shared with the participant that addresses foundational professional skills including, at a minimum, those outlined in the [Essential Employability Skills](#) framework. The Professional Skills Assessment tool is to be used primarily as a feedback tool and development strategy and not as the sole basis for a grade or credit determination.

*Optional Resource:* Illinois workNet's [Observational Assessment and Worksite Evaluation tools](#) may be used as a Professional Skills Assessment.

### **Young People**

Youth who are either in or out of school, aged 16-24 (inclusive of age 24).

## Appendix 1: College & Career Pathway Endorsement Example (PWR Act)



## Appendix 2: ESSA College & Career Readiness Indicator (CCRI)<sup>18</sup>

### Distinguished Scholar

- GPA: 3.75/4.0
- ACT: 30 or SAT: 1400
- At least one academic indicator in each ELA and Math during junior/senior year (Algebra II at any time)
- Three career ready indicators during junior/senior year
- 95% attendance junior and senior year

### College and Career Ready

1. GPA: 2.8/4.0
2. 95% attendance in high school junior and senior year

### AND

#### 3. Either:

(A) [College and Career Pathway Endorsement](#) under Postsecondary Workforce Readiness Act; OR

(B) All of the following:

- One academic indicator in each of ELA and math during the junior/senior year (or Algebra II at any time)
- Identify a career area of interest by the end of the sophomore year
- Three career ready indicators during junior/senior year

### Academic Indicators

ELA	Math
ELA AP Exam (3+)	Math AP Exam (3+)
ELA Advanced Placement Course (A, B, or C)	Math Advanced Placement Course (A, B, or C)
Dual Credit English Course (A, B, or C)	Dual Credit Math Course (A, B, or C)
IB ELA Course (A, B, or C)	IB Math Course (A, B, or C)
IB Exam 4+	IB Exam 4+
Transitional English (A, B, or C)	Transitional Math (A, B, or C)
	Algebra II (A, B, or C)
Minimum ACT Subject Scores of English 18, Reading 22	Minimum ACT Subject Score of Math 22, + Math in Senior Year
Minimum SAT Subject Score of Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 540	Minimum SAT Subject Score of Math: 540, + Math in Senior Year

### Career Ready Indicators [Minimum of 3]

- [Career development experience](#)
- [Industry Credential](#)
- [Military Service or an ASVAB score of 31 or higher](#)
- [Dual Credit Career Pathway Course \(college credit earned\)](#)
- [Completion of a Program of Study](#)
- Attaining and maintaining [consistent employment](#) for a minimum of 12 months
- [Consecutive summer employment](#)
- 25 hours of [community service](#)
- Two or more organized [co-curricular activities](#)

<sup>18</sup> Approved at April 2018 Illinois State Board of Education meeting

## Appendix 3: Additional College & Career Readiness Indicator Definitions

While these career ready terms originate in the CCRI of the State's ESSA plan and thus are particularly relevant to high school students, they may also address career readiness activities for postsecondary students and out-of-school youth. Given that these were developed to reflect a high school context, some terms may need to be interpreted differently to reflect different population contexts such as older or out-of-school youth.

### *Military Service or an ASVAB Score of 31 or Higher<sup>19</sup>*

Either (1) split training enlistment, which entails enlistment at age 17 as a Junior with permission of a parent or guardian, attendance at Basic Combat Training before Senior year, training one weekend per month through Senior year with a local unit, and attendance at Advanced Individual Training after Senior year); (2) Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) participation; or (3) an Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) score of 31 or higher.

*Duration:* Junior and Senior year.

### *Completion of a Program of Study*

Completion of coursework necessary to qualify a student as a CTE Concentrator<sup>20</sup> over the course of Junior and Senior years of high school.

### *Consistent Employment for 12 Months*

Verified employment for a total of 480 hours<sup>21</sup> beginning with summer prior to Junior year and continuing through summer after Senior year, including summer employment.

*Implementation Guidance:* Employment may be verified through pay stubs, timesheets, or a signed letter from an adult supervisor that includes the number of hours worked. This excludes [Career Development Experiences](#) and any hours being counted toward Consecutive Summer Employment.

### *Consecutive Summer Employment*

Verified employment for two consecutive summers (120 cumulative hours per summer) beginning with summer prior to Junior year and continuing through summer after Senior year. Employment may be verified through pay stubs, timesheets, or a signed letter from an adult supervisor that includes the number of hours worked. This excludes [Career Development Experiences](#).

### *Community Service*

A volunteer service or activity performed by students to address a social issue in the community, such as (but not limited to) poverty, disaster relief, education, the environment, homelessness, or community wellness.

*Implementation Guidance:* The student must receive written verification by an adult, non-relative supervisor of the community service that both describes the services performed and documents the number of hours served.

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<sup>19</sup> Equates to "Military Service (including ROTC)" (proposed change to reflect accuracy in high school context).

<sup>20</sup> CTE Concentrator is a secondary student who has earned three (3) or more credits in a single CTE program area (e.g., health care or business services), or two (2) credits in a single CTE program area, but only in those program areas where two credit sequences at the secondary level are recognized by the state and/or its local eligible recipients. This definition for CTE Concentrator differs from the postsecondary definition as utilized by ICCB.

<sup>21</sup> This entails an average of 10 hours per week for 12 of 24 months

### *Co-Curricular Activities*

Activities, programs, and applied learning experiences that:

1. Are connected to or mirror the academic curriculum, but for which students do not receive academic credit; and,
2. Take place outside of school or after regular school hours, and may be operated by outside organizations.

*Implementation Guidance:* Acceptable co-curricular activities may include student newspapers, student council, musical performances, art shows, mock trials, honors societies, debate competitions, and mathematics, robotics, and engineering teams and contests. Students may count one extracurricular activity (e.g., sports team, general interest club, etc.) toward the two required co-curricular activities.

### *Dual Credit Career Pathway Course*

A college course taken by a high school student for credit at both the college and high school level, which is either a Career and Technical Education course or included within a career-focused instructional sequence for a College and Career Pathway Endorsement program in accordance with the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act.