



2021 PROCEDURES MANUAL

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

USING THIS MANUAL

ICON DEFINITIONS

Throughout the manual, you will find various icons to guide you. The table below lists the meaning for each icon.

 Help	Points the Grantee to information they need.
 Checklist	A checklist that the Grantee can follow to complete a task.
 Tip	Suggestions for handling things more efficiently.
 Example	A specific example of an activity, a document, etc.
 Definition	Explains key terms.
 Exception	A way of doing something that is an exception to the general rule and a description of why it is an exception.
 Important	Briefly states or refers the Grantee to specific procedures that implement policy.
 Policy	Briefly states or refers the Grantee to specific policy as it relates procedure. (use this in a box to highlight the list of policy and related resources)

UPDATES TO MANUAL

This manual is a resource for your organization in the implementation of the Youth Career Pathways Initiative. We would appreciate any feedback you might have to make this document as useful as possible. Feedback may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Additional information, either that is helpful or absolutely needed;
- Information in this manual that is misleading; and/or
- Information in this manual that is confusing.

Please send comments to Kenis Williams at kenis.williams@illinois.gov.

OVERVIEW

This Youth Career Pathways (YCP) project is intended to complement traditional Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) youth services and is based on WIOA protocols and policies. WIOA policies can be accessed at: [WIOA ePolicy](#).

In this chapter an explanation of youth career pathways, and this specific YCP project is provided. Sections will address:

- Program Background
- Theory of Action
- Career Pathways
- Targeted Populations

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In 2016, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board released a report that outlined a set of recommendations that will lead to creating sustainable career pathways for youth throughout the state, particularly with a focus on the needs of young people who are not in school and not working, coined *Opportunity Youth*. These pathways through the Youth Career Pathway (YCP) must align and support the vision, goals and strategies that are outlined in [Illinois' Unified State Plan](#).

One recommendation from this report was for the support of pilot programs through the YCP that re-engage youth back into the education and employment systems, through focused efforts on:

- Integrating workforce, education, and economic development services;
- Serving opportunity youth who face barriers to employment and education; and
- Incorporating practices that align with the statewide-adopted definition for a career pathway framework.

The goal of funding youth career pathways programs is to develop a framework, which supports regions to work collectively to connect Illinois' youth with careers in growth industries. As a Grantee, your goal is to develop this framework, and work collectively to connect youth in your service area with careers in growth industries.

This manual will provide direction and support to the Grantees awarded funding for YCP. The procedures outlined within include the expectations of the Illinois Department of Commerce for the Grantee in the administration, data collection, reporting, and service provision to enhance the success of all participants in the project in their quest for employment. As a recipient of funds, the Grantee is required to use Illinois Workforce Integration System (IWIS) in Illinois workNet for reporting and accountability.

ILLINOIS UNIFIED STATE PLAN

--Vision Statement--

Foster a statewide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and businesses to ensure Illinois has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the global economy.

THEORY OF ACTION

WIOA emphasizes deeper investment in a system, which supports employer-demand driven sector-based programs offered that address the diverse needs of young people. Sector-based initiatives at the regional level are approaches to workforce and economic development that improve access to good jobs and/or increase job quality in ways that strengthen an industry's workforce. For a complete explanation of the elements of career pathways, learner and system-focused frameworks, sector-based strategies and consortium models, go to the [Youth Career Pathways Public page](#).

The theory of action for addressing the needs of opportunity youth centers on development of career pathway systems, with both elements that pertain to the development of the learner and the system that supports that learner.

Career pathway programs focus on:

- a) Appropriate and meaningful assessment;
- b) Participant-focused instruction and training;
- c) Alignment with appropriate work-based learning;
- d) Supportive services and navigation; and
- e) Direct connections to employment.

CAREER PATHWAYS

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) places a strong emphasis on career pathways, defined as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services. A **Career Pathway** (as defined in WIOA) means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that:

1. Align with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
2. Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under 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.) (referred to individually in this Act as an "apprenticeship", except in section 171);
3. Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;
4. Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
5. Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
6. Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and
7. Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

CAREER PATHWAY FRAMEWORK

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. It includes collaborative partnerships with these entities, business, and industry, along with human services agencies, corrections and other community stakeholders, as a foundational structure for sustainability and high quality. Multiple entry and exit points are included to facilitate individuals building their skills as they progress along a continuum of education and training and advance in sector-specific employment.

TARGETED POPULATIONS

As stated above, WIOA emphasizes deeper investment in a system, which supports demand-driven programs that address the diverse needs of young people. Young people who are disconnected from either the employment and/or education system represent diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and circumstances, and although being disconnected “is both a consequence and cause of poverty, many of these young people come from moderate means.” (*The White House Council on Community Solutions. June 2012. Community Solutions for Opportunity Youth.*)

These grants are awarded for projects that not only address priorities identified in the Illinois’ Unified State Plan but also will incorporate the practices that align with the statewide-adopted definition for a career pathway framework. Projects must target opportunity youth who face barriers to continued education and employment and serve the populations included in the Illinois’ Unified State Plan including:

- Low-income individuals
- Individuals with disabilities;
- Justice involved youth;
- Homeless individuals;
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system;
- Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers;
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers;
- Single parents (including single pregnant women);
- Long-term unemployed individuals.