

2026 Supplemental Instructions to Modifying Economic Development Region Plans and Local Workforce Area Plans

Introduction

The following offers a guide to the major changes that were made to the guidance regarding the development of the required four-year plans for economic development regions and local workforce areas. The guidance was updated to support economic development regions and local workforce areas as they prepare their required modification to those plans.

In addition to address the changes in the guidance, economic development regions and local workforce areas should also incorporate new economic and workforce analysis based on the updated data packets (available here: <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning>).

Economic development regions and local workforce areas are encouraged to update other areas of the regional and local plans as needed and as they see fit.

Formatting

It is expected that regional and local plans follow the format of the Planning Guide (available here: <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning>), beginning with the chapter headings and addressing each item of required content in that chapter.

Economic development regions and local workforce areas are instructed to submit two versions of their modified plan. The first version must be a Microsoft Word document that utilizes Track Changes to show redline edits where changes have been made. The second version must be a clean version of the modification that does not include Track Changes or redline edits. Additional details regarding the timeline and submittal process are included in the Planning Guide.

1. Change Across All Chapters

“Workforce equity lens” is replaced with “responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility” (RIA). The aligns with language being used by the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board.

This requires regions/LWIAs to describe how RIA principles are incorporated into each chapter:

- Region Chapters
 - o Chapter 1.E
 - o Chapter 2.E
 - o Chapter 3.H

- Local Chapters
 - o Chapter 4.L
 - o Chapter 5.C
 - o Chapter 6.D

2. Major Changes in the Regional Planning Guidance

Chapter 1.B. Sector Partnerships section revised.

Updates that Economic Development Regions need to address include:

- An updated definition of a sector partnership
- Requirement to identify neutral conveners and geographic coverage
- Requirement to confirm partnerships are authentically business-led
- New directive prohibiting listing isolated sectoral activities
- TPM framework integration requirements

3. Major Changes in the Local Planning Guidance

Chapter 4.H Additions

Three new requirements were added to this section. They are:

4. Describe any efforts in the local area to support immigrants and migrants through appropriate and allowable workforce services.
 - a. This addition aligns local planning efforts with language and efforts included in Illinois WIOA Unified Plan.
5. Describe efforts in the local area to support SNAP program recipients.
 - a. This addition is in response to the new work requirements for SNAP recipients and will align local plans with the modification to Illinois' 2024 WIOA Unified Plan.
6. Describe plans in the local area to coordinate services with recipients of Workforce Pell Grants beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.
 - a. This addition is in response to the new Workforce Pell grants and will align local plans with the modification to Illinois' 2024 WIOA Unified Plan. While final rules regarding those grants will not be available when local workforce areas are drafting their modifications, local areas should describe how they are planning to coordinate with recipients of the Workforce Pell Grants.